

פרשת וירא / Parashat Vayera

Shabbat Cheshvan 17, 5769, November 15, 2008
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

5

Get Your Laws off my Body

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 18:1-22:24
הפטרה: 2 Kings 4:1-37
הברית: Luke 1:26-38, 24:36-53; 2 Peter 2:4-11
החדשה

10 In biblical exegesis, it is interesting to examine the ways pieces of tradition
have been assembled into a literary composition. In this week's parsha, Parashat
Vayera, we find an interesting assembly of words which allude to the fall into sin
in the Garden of Eden *in Bereshit / Genesis 19:5-9*. While studying and
15 interpreting the Holy Scriptures our endeavor is not only to understand the
literature within the biblical text and the extant historical materials that are
available to us but also learning the meaning and application of scripture as a
central part of our life. This week I would like to discuss the centrality of the
scriptures how it is understood and applied to our daily lives that will enable us to
walk in the footsteps of Yeshua the Messiah.

20

בראשית 19:5-9

5 וַעֲדִיזְקוֹן כָּל־הָעָם מִקְצֵהָ: וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ
אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה הוֹצִיָאם אֵלֵינוּ
6 וְנִדְעָה אֹתָם: וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵהֶם לוֹט הַפֶּתַחַה וְהִדְלִית סָנַר
7 אַחֲרָיו: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־נָא אַחִי תָרְעוּ: הֲנִה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי
8 בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתָּ אִישׁ אוֹצִיָאֵה־נָא אֶתְהֶן אֵלֵיכֶם
וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם רַק לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ
9 דָבָר כִּי־עֹלֶבֶן בָּאוּ בְּצַל קִרְתִּי: וַיֹּאמְרוּ | נִשְׁחַלְאָה
וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָאֶחָד בְּאֵל־לְנוֹר וַיִּשְׁפֹּט שְׁפוֹט עִתָּה נָרַע לָךְ
מֵהֶם וַיִּפְצְרוּ בְּאִישׁ בְּלוֹט מְאֹד וַיִּגְשׂוּ לְשֹׁבֵר הַדְּלָת:

בראשית 2:16-17

16 וַיִּצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל־עֵץ־הַגָּן אָכַל
17 תֹאכְל: וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְדַע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי
18 בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

Bereshit / Genesis 19:5-9
19:5 and they called to Lot and said to him, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.' m19:6 But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, 19:7 and said, 'Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. 19:8 'Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.' 19:9 But they said, 'Stand aside.' Furthermore, they said, 'This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.' So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. (NASB)

Bereshit / Genesis 2:16-17
2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.' (NASB)

25 Following along this week's parsha for the triennial cycle (*Bereshit / Genesis 19:1-20:18*) when Lot goes out to the people of Sodom to speak to them his use of the words "tov," "ra," and "yadu" in *Bereshit / Genesis 19:7-8* may point to a thematic connection to the Garden of Eden. In *Bereshit / Genesis 2:16-17* we find
30 "u'meetz ha'daat tov v'rah", Adam and Eve are told not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Examining the Hebrew text we find something very interesting which isn't apparent when reading the English translation. In *Bereshit / Genesis 19:8* Lot says he has two daughters which have not had relations with a man. The word for not having relations is the same root word for "knowledge" or "to know" found in *Bereshit / Genesis 2:17*. Essentially the same root word for
35 knowledge is used to represent having known someone sexually. In *Bereshit / Genesis 2:16-17*, having the knowledge of good and evil causes us to sin physically therefore, the connection between what we know and what we do is found here.

40 This text in *Bereshit / Genesis 2:16-17 and 19:7-8* is saying something more powerful than the simple fact of the existence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Lot telling the people his daughters have not had sexual relations with a man. The word "knowledge" is used in the Hebrew language with a sexual meaning. To have knowledge of somebody is to do so in a sexual or
45 physical way suggests there is a connection between what we know and what we do. In the real world, we often face situations where we are torn between our "conscious" (what we know is right) and the world (what we know we shouldn't do). Knowing G-d means emulating His ways, acting in accordance with the values he has laid out in the Holy Scriptures. With this in mind I would like to ask the following question.

50 **What are you doing with what you know?**

55 As we continue to study G-d's word we learn that sin is any want of conformity unto our transgression of the Torah of G-d not only on the outward conduct of life but also on the inward state and habit of the soul. Take for example what Lot did knowing the imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The Angels from the Lord told Lot to flee to the mountains.

60 ***Bereshit / Genesis 19:12-21***
19:12 Then the two men said to Lot, 'Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; 19:13 for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the Lord that the Lord has sent us to destroy it.' 19:14 Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, 'Up, get out of this place, for the Lord will destroy the city.' But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting. 19:15 When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, 'Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.' 19:16 But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his

75 *two daughters, for the compassion of the Lord was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. 19:17 When they had brought them outside, one said, 'Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.' 19:18 But Lot said to them, 'Oh no, my lords! 19:19 'Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die; 19:20 now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.' 19:21 He said to him, 'Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. (NASB)*

85 Lot lived in a city (Sodom) which was intrinsically vile and polluting. The sin of Sodom was so great that it called down the righteous wrath of G-d to its destruction. When the Angel's of G-d told Lot to flee to the mountains they were essentially saying here is what you should do, return to the Lord. Running to the mountains would be like returning to Abraham and having faith God will provide (i.e. *the mountainous region is watered by rain and therefore required faith G-d will provide the rain. The valley region was watered by the Jordan River requiring less faith.*) Lot did not want to run to the mountains, he chose to continue to remain in the valley region. Lot's choice to remain in the valley region was a testament to his moral character from his actions. This becomes apparent when shortly afterwards Lot commits sexual sin with his own daughters.
95 Lot's disposition to sin by his choice to stay away from the mountains led to the sinful act.

Examining these scripture verses should make us ask new questions about ourselves, our lives, and our relationship with the Lord. We are a people who strive to live out the ways and precepts G-d has laid out in the scriptures and more specifically in His Torah. The obvious question then becomes one of how we apply the scriptures to our lives as we are confronted with our daily lives. Once we come to knowledge of our sin and trust by faith in the cleansing work of Messiah, we turn from our former way of life, and strive to walk according to G-d's norms. Having come into the family of G-d we are now responsible to live in a way that exemplifies G-d's standards. (*I guess the question is what are G-d's norms, what are His standards?*) This is the meaning of *2 Corinthians 5:17*.

110 ***2 Corinthians 5:17***
5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. (NASB)

115 For those of us who are chosen to be His people, our longing should be for Him and Him alone. Interesting that G-d sees His relationship with Yisrael as a marriage. The book of Hosea is full of this type of message of infidelity on the part of Yisrael; she has committed spiritual adultery by pledging allegiance to other gods. From the very beginning (see *Bereshit / Genesis 2:24*), marriage is instituted by G-d as a revelation of His relationship with His chosen people. If we

do a play on words a little bit here, knowledge is to sexual relations, as sexual relations is to marriage. With this in mind what are you doing with the knowledge you have of the Lord? This is where we have to pay very careful attention to what G-d is trying to teach us. Everything happens for a reason; realize G-d is teaching you something even if it might seem insignificant.

Conclusion

This week we find a play on the words “tov,” (good) “ra,” (evil) and “hadaat” (Knowledge) which has in a sense its application in our lives. I believe the following kind of sums up what im talking about. **“Get in touch with what you are really after and be honest about it.”** When talking to the Lord “know” what you are really after or in other words “what is the bottom line?” Abram had a bottom line, he wanted to save lives. Lot on the other hand did not have a heart centered on the Lord. The question today is “where is your heart centered?” When it comes to the two areas of your life (i) spiritual, and (ii) physical; are your decisions today as significantly different between your spiritual and physical responses as that between Abram and Lot? One of the most significant ways we can be a light to the world is to affirm G-d’s norms in the area of our lives but the question is does your life fit follow after G-d’s norm? Or are you telling G-d to get your Laws off my body?

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever