

# פרשת וזאת הברכה / Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah

Shabbat Tishrei 19, 5768, October 18, 2008  
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d  
<http://www.matsati.com> | [matsati@matsati.com](mailto:matsati@matsati.com)

5

## Moshe's death and Yom Kippur?

### השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

הפטרה: Joshua 1:1-18

הברית: Revelation 22:1-5

החדשה

10 This week's parsha, Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah, begins with Moshe's individual brachot for the tribes of Yisrael. Moshe's closing remarks focus upon HaShem as the protector of Yisrael who provides close supervision (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26*), assistance in battle (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26-29*), and agricultural and economic prosperity (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26-28*). Prior to Moshe's death he blesses Yisrael so they will fulfil the goal in the Promised Land and that HaShem would bless them in their achievement of these goals. The goals refer to the people entering the land, conquering and occupying the land and finally becoming a holy nation before a Holy G-d. Following the blessing Moshe ascended from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo to the summit of the height that faces Jericho. HaShem then proceeds to show Moshe all of the Promised Land which the Lord promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov and their offspring. After Moshe saw the land he died. HaShem buried Moshe in the gorge in the land of Moab opposite Beth Peor and no one knows the burial place (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:6*).

15  
20  
25 In this week's parsha there is a very interesting rabbinic interpretation on Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah on the death and burial place of Moshe. This is interesting because it reveals something that is hidden in the rabbinic literature that many do not realize. Many religious Jewish men and women feel the need for a ransom at this time of Yom Kippur. Sadly traditional Judaism has gone for centuries without the Temple and without animal sacrifices. This topic of sacrifice and atonement has been given much thought and careful consideration. The issue of the centrality of blood atonement according to the Hebrew scriptures and the question of how Yeshua's death meet the requirements of an atoning sacrifice have been considered both by Judaism and Christianity. Though  
30  
35  
40 Judaism has its objections over Yeshua being the messiah there is still a centrality of atonement for sins this can be seen in various prayers from the siddur for example the traditional Morning Prayer service. The Morning Prayer service acknowledges the temple was destroyed "through our sins" but then asks G-d to accept prayer in the place of sacrifices calling upon verses like *Hosea 14:2*. This week I want to examine one claim that has been made against Yeshua as our atonement for sins. We will examine the rabbinic literature starting with Rashi's interesting interpretation of Moshe's burial place. To begin, let's look at the

portion of scripture concerning Moshe's death and get a little background information.

45

5 וְשֵׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲבֹר: וַיָּמָת שָׁם מֹשֶׁה עַבְד־יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ  
6 מוֹאָב עַל־פְּי יְהוָה: וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּנֵי בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מוֹל  
7 בֵּית פְּעוֹר וְלֹא־יָדַע אִישׁ אֶת־קִבְרָתוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:  
8 וּמֹשֶׁה בְּדָמָאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בָּמָתוֹ לֹא־כָהְתָה עֵינֹ  
9 וְלֹא־נָס לְחָה: וַיִּבְכּוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מֹשֶׁה בְּעַרְבַת  
10 מוֹאָב שְׁלֹשִׁים יוֹם וַיִּהְיֶמוּ יָמָי בְּכִי אֲבָל מֹשֶׁה: וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ  
11 בְּדַעַן מְלֹא רוּחַ הַכְּמָה כִּי־סָמַךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדָיו עָלָיו  
12 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֱלֹהֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־  
13 מֹשֶׁה: וְלֹא־תֵּכֵן עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כַּמֹּשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּ  
14 יְהוָה פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים: לְכָל־הָאֲתָת וְהַמְּוִפְתִּים אֲשֶׁר  
15 שָׁלַח יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעֹה וּלְכָל־  
16 עַבְדָּיו וּלְכָל־אֲרָצוֹ: וּלְכָל הַיָּד הַחֹזְקָה וּלְכָל הַמְּוִרָא  
17 הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה לְעֵינֵי כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

v. 4 כן בזנבוקי רפי. בהללי בעיניך דגש. v. 6 בגיא קרי. v. 7 לחו קרי. v. 12 ל' רבתי.  
v. 12 שם הפרשה [xxxiii 1-xxxiv 12] גאואל. והיא סדר א' [xxxiii 1]. ופסוקים  
אחד וארבעים. ומלים חמש מאות ושנים עשר. ואותיות אלף ותשע מאות ושמונים  
ותשעה. ואין בה חלוקה, והתחברו על שתי מלות רבבות אפרים חטף [xxxiii 17], וערפוי-  
טל [xxxiii 28], במארכה. וכתו' ב' ואת-בנו [xxxiii 9], ולא-נס לחו [xxxiv 7].

Here we are looking at the final verses in sefer Devarim (book of Deuteronomy) on the death of Moshe. HaShem had shown Moshe all of the Promised Land which was promised to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov and their offspring. After Moshe saw the land he died. HaShem buried Moshe in the gorge in the land of Moab opposite Beth-Peor and no one knows the burial place (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:6*). Now if you remember at Beth-Peor the children of Yisrael sinned sexually and worshiped Baal. Let's look at the scriptures quickly in *Bamidbar / Numbers 25:3-7*:

50

55

***Bamidbar / Numbers 25:3-7***

*25:3 So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel. 25:4 The Lord said to Moses, 'Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the Lord, so that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.' 25:5 So Moses said*

60

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:5**  
34:5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 34:6 And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day. 34:7 Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated. 34:8 So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an end. 34:9 Now Joshua the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the sons of Israel listened to him and did as the Lord had commanded Moses. 34:10 Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 34:11 for all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt against Pharaoh, all his servants, and all his land, 34:12 and for all the mighty power and for all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. (NASB)

to the judges of Israel, 'Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor.' 25:6 Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 25:7 When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, (NASB)

65

70

We have looked at the scriptures where Moshe was buried and we have reviewed the sin of Beit-Peor in Devarim. Now I mentioned earlier there was an interesting rabbinic interpretation made by Rashi on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:6* so taking into consideration Moshe was buried opposite to Beth-Peor and the sin of the people let's look at the rabbinic interpretation of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 34:6*.

75

### רש"י דברים פרק לד:ו

(1) ויקבור אותו. הקב"ה בכבודו. רבי ישמעאל אומר הוא קבר את עצמו. וזה הוא אחד משלשה אתין שהיה רבי ישמעאל דורש כן. וכיוצא בו ביום מלאת ימי נזרו יביא אותו (במדבר ו. יג). הוא מביא את עצמו. כיוצא בו והשיאו אותם עון אשמה (ויקרא כב. טו). וכי אחרים משיאים אותם. אלא הם משיאים את עצמם. מול בית פעור. קברו היה מוכן שם מששת ימי בראשית לכפר על מעשה פעור. וזה אחד מן הדברים שנבראו בערב שבת בין השמשות (אבות פ"ה מ"ו): (1) לא

80

I put the translation on the right and below I have also included an interpretation on Rashi from *Avot 5:6* below.

#### *Avot 5:6*

*It seems incongruous that a person as holy as Moshe should have been buried in a place associated with sinfulness. Rashi explains that the place was designated as Moshe's burial place before the sin occurred there. God nevertheless allowed the sin to take place there so Moshe's grave should atone for it (Mishmeres HaKodesh; Chidushei Maharil Diskin). Alternatively, God nonetheless kept the site for Moshe's grave after the sin of Baal Peor took place there so that the grave should atone for it (Maskil LeDavid).*

85

90

95

100

Now that you have read these rabbinic interpretations I want to ask if you grasp the significance of what you have just read? One of the most revered Orthodox Rabbi's whose commentary has made it in the Talmud and is accepted as standard and classic interpretation (a standard for learning the Torah) and who does not believe in Yeshua as the messiah is telling us that according to the Tanach and Jewish tradition the death of the righteous serves as an atonement for the sins of other men. In this week's parsha, Rashi tells us that the death of the righteous man Moshe and his burial next to Beit-Peor actually atones for the sins of the people who sinned at Beit-Peor. Now take note closely to the wording of Rashi here, he says the burial place was prepared since the Six days of creation to atone for the incident of Peor. The connection here is clear, even since there is

He buried him. The Holy One, Blessed is He, in His glory, buried Moshe. The Tanna Rabbi Ishmael said: Moshe buried himself. This is one of the three instances of forms of the word which R'Ishmael would interpret in this way. Likewise, we find, "On the day his status as a nazir is completed he shall bring him," where the clause containing the word "him," a form of את means he brings himself. Likewise, we find, "And they will cause them to bear the sin of guilt. Now, is it others who cause them to bear it? Rather, the verse means they cause themselves to bear. Opposite Beth-Peor. His burial place was prepared there since the Six Days of Creation to atone for the incident of Peor. This is one of the things which were created at twilight on Shabbat eve of the Six Days of Creation.

atonement for sin in the story of the Torah; the belief is a righteous man can make atonement for other men. Today there are no more sacrifices of atonement like what is described in the Bible and the Temple service. Furthermore, the belief/idea/concept that the death of a righteous atones is kind of hidden from the layman amongst Judaism's members. The point I want to make concerning this atonement is that this doctrine (the life of a righteous person can atone for the sins of others) is not something new that had been created by the Christian church; it is a thoroughly Jewish concept. The anti-missionaries have said that a man cannot make atonement for another man but in light of what we have just read I really question if they have studied their own Talmud. One such anti-missionary claim I have heard quite often is as follows:

115           **Claim**

          The life of one man cannot atone for the life of another. The Messiah could not atone for our sins because throughout the Book of Leviticus, only distinct species of animals are permitted for use in blood sacrifices.

120           To establish rabbinic Judaism's stance on this issue here are a few more places where rabbinic interpretation disagrees with this claim. For example, in a discussion in the *Talmud Bavli Mo'ed Qatan 28a*, the Talmud asks why Sefer Bamidbar / Numbers records the death of Miriam immediately after the section on the red heifer (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 19:1-20:1*). The Talmudic answer is that just as the red heifer atones, so also the death of the righteous atones (see what Rashi says to *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:1*). There is another instance where the Talmud asks why the death of Aaron recorded in conjunction with the Torah's reference to the priestly garments (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 20:25-28*). Again the answer is just as the garments of the high priest atone (see *Shmot / Exodus 28:38*) so also the death of the righteous atones. Note some rabbinic texts read "atones for Yisrael." This is really common in the Rabbinic literature. In *Vayikra / Leviticus Rabbah 20:12*, repeated elsewhere in *Yoma 2:1*, *Pesikta deRav Kahana 26:16*, etc. "Rabbi Hiyya Bar Abba said: The sons of Aaron [Nadab and Abihu] died the first day of Nisan. Why then does the Torah mention their death in conjunction with the Day of Atonement? It is to teach that just as the Day of Atonement atones, so also the death of the righteous atones." So, as you can see there are many instances where Judaism teaches the life of a righteous atones for others.

140           You should be aware that the Hebrew Scriptures, the Talmud, and the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic writings) all clearly teach that the death of the righteous has atoning power. With that said, when the Messiah, the righteous one, the perfect righteous one who laid down his life, it was the ultimate act of atonement in human history. This is the very heart of the gospel message, the Messiah, the holy and righteous servant of the Lord was smitten for the sins of the world and through his death we receive atonement for our sins and healing for our souls. The Messiah took our place. We sinned and he died for us. We were guilty and he was punished for us. We deserved death and he gave his life in our place. We rejected him and he accepted us. It seems too good to be true but this is a fact and

150 what is better, this is biblical and very Jewish too. The apostle Peter and Paul summarizes it pretty well in *1 Peter 2:22-25 and Romans 5:6-11*.

***1 Peter 2:22-25***

155 *2:22 "He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found on his lips." 2:23 When he was insulted, he didn't retaliate with insults; when he suffered, he didn't threaten, but handed them over to him who judges justly. 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the stake, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness - by his wounds you were healed. 2:25 For you used to be like sheep gone astray, but now you have turned to the Shepherd, who watches over you. (CJB)*

***Romans 5:6-11***

165 *5:6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, the Messiah died on behalf of ungodly people. 5:7 Now it is a rare event when someone gives up his life even for the sake of somebody righteous, although possibly for a truly good person one might have the courage to die. 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in that the Messiah died on our behalf while we were still sinners. 5:9 Therefore, since we have now come to be considered righteous by means of his bloody sacrificial death, how much more will we be delivered through him from the anger of God's judgment! 5:10 For if we were reconciled with God through his Son's death when we were enemies, how much more will we be delivered by his life, now that we are reconciled! 5:11 And not only will we be delivered in the future, but we are boasting about God right now, because he has acted through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, through whom we have already received that reconciliation. (CJB)*

180 The death of the righteous, the truly righteous, the Messiah, the High Priest of Yisrael and the nations, the Redeemer who pays for our sins certainly atones. Through the Messiah Yeshua, you can break your past sins, receive forgiveness of sins and start with a brand new beginning. Through Yeshua your life can be changed. The Messiah took your place and today can truly be your Yom Kippur, your day of atonement if you fully trust and believe in him.

185

190

**Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!**

\*\*\*\*\*

195 הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever