

Parashat V'zot Hab'rachah

פרשת וזאת הברכה

Shabbat Tishrei 19, 5771, September 27, 2010

32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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The God of the Upright Ones.

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

הפטרה: Joshua 1:1-18

הברית: Revelation 22:1-5

החדשה

In this week's reading, the last reading for the Jewish Year we find an interesting phrase "the God of Jeshurun" in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26* 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. (NASB) Yeshurun (Jeshurun) is the English transliteration for the Hebrew word that occurs four times in the Hebrew Bible, found in sefer *Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:26*. The word Jeshurun means "straight" or "upright one." In the scriptures, the Jeshurun is used as a symbolic (poetic) name for the people of Yisrael (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:26*), for the Land of Israel (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:5*), and for the Patriarch Jacob (who was renamed Yisrael in *Bereshit / Genesis 32:29*) (*Yeshayahu / Isaiah 44:2*). Rabbinical Judaism also interprets the name Jeshurun to be that of the Patriarch Yisrael in Midrash *Genesis Rabbah 77:1*. What can we learn from the use of the Hebrew word Jeshurun and why was this word transliterated into English in our English translations?

דברים 33:26-29

26 וְיִמִּיָּה דְבִאָדָה: אֵין כָּאֵל יִשְׁרוּן רִכַּב שָׁמַיִם בְּעֹרֶף
27 וּבְגִאוֹתָיו שְׁחָקִים: מְעַנֶּה אֱלֹהֵי קֶדֶם וּמִתַּחַת זִרְעֹת
28 עוֹלָם וַיִּגְרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵי אוֹיֵב וַיֹּאמֶר הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּשְׁכֵּן
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בְּדָר עֵינָיו יַעֲקֹב אֶל-אֲרֶץ דִּגְן וְתִירוֹשׁ
29 אֶהְיֶה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יֵרֶפְאוּטָל: אֲשֶׁרֶף יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי כְמוֹתָ עִם
נוֹשַׁע בַּיְהוּדָה מִגֵּן עֹרֶף וְאֲשֶׁר-חָרַב נְאוֹתָהּ וַיִּכְחָשׁוּ
אֵיבֵיהָ לָהּ וְאַתָּה עַל-כְּמוֹתֵינוּ תִדְרֹךְ:

The word Jeshurun may have a relationship to the same root word yesharim meaning "upright." It is interesting to note that in Parashat Balak, Balak appears to use the word yesharim (upright) as a play on the word Jeshurun to also refer to the people of Yisrael (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 23:10*).

Devarim/Deuteronomy 33:26-29

33:26 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. 33:27 'The eternal God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove out the enemy from before you, And said, 'Destroy!' 33:28 'So Israel dwells in security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His heavens also drop down dew. 33:29 'Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you, a people saved by the Lord, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their high places.' (NASB)

10 ׀ יִתְחַשְׁבֵּ׃ מִי מִנָּה עֵפֶר יַעֲקֹב וּמִסָּפֶר אֶת־רֵבַע יִשְׂרָאֵל *Bamidbar / Numbers*
 11 תָּמַת נַפְשִׁי מוֹת יִשְׂרָיִם וְתָהִי אַחֲרֵיתִי כְּמָהוּ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר *23:10 'Who can count*
 35 *the dust of Jacob, Or*
number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, And let my
end be like his!' (NASB) The use of yesharim may be done so in a poetic form to
draw a parallel to the people of Yisrael being an upright people.

40 Why does Moshe use the name Jeshurun as an alternative name here for
 Yisrael? The name Jeshurun is formed from the verb “yashar” meaning “to be
 upright” and may give some indication of the original meaning of the name of
 Yisrael. In the earliest stages of the Hebrew language the use of the “jot and
 tittle” as described in *Matthew 5:18* were not used being a much later addition
 (typesetting feature) for helping with reading and pronunciation of the language.
 45 Therefore, there was no differentiation between the letters “sheen” and “seen.”
 The name “Yisrael” might mean “upright of God” by the juxtaposition of the two
 words “yasar” and “el” to form the word “Yisrael.” In the four places the word
 Jeshurun is used, reading the context, indicates that the name is used showing
 God’s care for Yisrael and His covenant relationship with her. *Devarim /*
 50 *Deuteronomy 33:26 'There is none like the God of Jeshurun, Who rides the*
heavens to your help, And through the skies in His majesty. 33:27 'The eternal
God is a dwelling place, And underneath are the everlasting arms; And He drove
out the enemy from before you, And said, 'Destroy!' 33:28 'So Israel dwells in
security, The fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of grain and new wine; His
 55 *heavens also drop down dew. 33:29 'Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is like you,*
a people saved by the Lord, Who is the shield of your help And the sword of your
majesty! So your enemies will cringe before you, And you will tread upon their
high places.' (NASB) The context here is showing God as protector, provider, and
 shield for the people of Yisrael.

60 The use of the phrase “*the God of Jeshurun*” at the end of the Torah I
 believe has two very significant implications (points). Firstly, this phrase
 expresses the importance of understanding the faithfulness of God to His people.
 God has chosen to dwell among His people and God declares that she (Yisrael) is
 “*His portion*” and the “*allotment of His inheritance*” in *Devarim / Deuteronomy*
 65 *32:9*. Regardless of the people of Yisrael’s disobedience, the scriptures say she
 became “*fat*” and “*selfish*,” the phrase “*Jeshurun kicked*” means Yisrael
 rebelled; God established His glory upon the earth by preserving Yisrael. The
 faithfulness of God to Yisrael has as its primary purpose the revelation of God’s
 greatness and not Yisrael’s importance. Secondly, the meaning of the word
 70 “*Jeshurun*” emphasizes the faithfulness of Yisrael to God. “*The God of*
Jeshurun,” meaning “*the God of the upright ones*” directs our attention to the
 people of faith. The “*upright one*” is one that has faith and lives a life of
 faithfulness. These two can never be separated. The Torah, Neviim, and
 Ketuvim (Tanach, OT) and the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings, NT)
 75 present three concepts, (i) to believe, (ii) to have faith, and (iii) to be faithful.
 These three concepts are all expressed by the same word groups (i.e. emunah =
 faith) that bring a certain clarity to the interconnectedness of faith and faithfulness
 for a believers life. The consistent message is that a genuine faith always results
 in faithfulness, and that faithfulness is the fruit of genuine faith.

80 So the questions for this week are “am I an upright one?” Have I been
taking my relationship with God seriously enough to live my life faithfully to God
according to the scriptures? Am I a part of the family of God by genuine faith
and faithfulness as the scriptures say I should be? The whole reason why Yeshua
85 considered even the smallest stroke of the Torah to be important in *Matthew 5:17-
20* was because God’s righteousness is revealed in our desire to obey and please
Him. Ultimately, God revealed His righteousness in His Son Yeshua. Yeshua is
the radiance of His glory (*Ivrit / Hebrews 1:3*) thus; Yeshua is the complete and
full revelation of the Father to us as the scriptures indicate in *John 8:19 So they
90 were saying to Him, ‘Where is Your Father?’ Jesus answered, ‘You know neither
Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.’ (NASB)*
and *John 14:7 ‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also;
from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.’ (NASB)* Faith and faithfulness
means we are becoming more and more like Yeshua as we are conformed to the
image of the Son (*Romans 8:28-30*). “Am I an upright one?” if your answer is
95 not “Yes” then it is time to carefully re-evaluate your faith in Yeshua (Jesus).

Questions to Reflect Upon

- 100 • *As I live out my faith, have I connected the Bible to the world God created
in such a way that his word is real to me?*
- *Has the Bible lost its influence on my life and relationship with God?*
- 105 • *Have I fully embraced Yeshua in faith and lived faithfully to what I believe
to be true according to the Bible?*

Heavenly Father,

110 Help me to live my life in faith and in faithfulness to You. I thank You for
the blessing and the wonderful revelation of Your righteousness that is revealed in
Your Son Yeshua. Please continue to work in my life, conform me unto the
image of Your Son as it is written in *Romans 8:28-30*. Thank You for such a
wonderful salvation. In Yeshua’s Name I pray.

115 Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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