

Parashah #51

(Updated: 9.04.10)

Nitzavim ~ נצבים ~ You are all standing

Torah: D'varim/Deuteronomy 29:9(10) ~ 30:20

Haftarah: Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 61:10 ~ 63:9

B'rit Hadashah: Romans 9:30 ~ 10:13; Ivrim/Hebrews 12:14-15

CHAPTER 29

This week's Torah portion, (neat-zah-veem) *Nitzavim*, literally means “*all of you are standing*”. However, it could more accurately be translated as “*taking a stand*”.

(Given matters of 2010, are we taking a stand or are we just standing? It has been said a person who will not take a stand will fall for anything. This is SO true in today's culture. If we heed the multitude of voices in our day, we will be tossed about like a boat in a storm. This can cause us to be shipwrecked as many are today. It is time to take a stand for the Living Torah, Yeshua, who through faith is not hard for us to follow. Just as important, it is time to take a stand for obedience to the Written Torah which, we are told this week, is not too hard to follow by doing so in faith.)

We are told this portion covers the last day of Moshe's life. He is speaking to all the people from the least to the greatest, young and old, men and women. Soon he would not be with them any longer and I believe he was trying to emphasize to them each one of them had the responsibility for one another. Each would be obligated to help others observe Torah and help them avoid violating it.

Verses 9-14 emphasize HaShem is binding Himself to Israel through the Torah. It teaches the categories into which Moshe divided the people and suggests everyone was responsible for as many others as they could influence. For instance:

- leaders may be able to affect masses of people;
- women, their immediate families and neighbors;
- children, their friends and classmates and
- laborers, their co-workers.

The commentary for **verse 10** indicates minors could not legally accept a covenant but HaShem wanted them to share in the event. Additionally, He wanted their parents or elders to know they had the responsibility to raise their children in Torah. In fact, the (hah-lah-kah) *halakhah*, Hebrew for *way to walk*, says a community must provide Torah education for its young (i.e. nursery, school, etc.) even before building itself a synagogue.

“But I am not making this covenant and this oath only with you. Rather I am making it both with him who is standing here with us today before Adonai our G~d and also with him who is not here with us today.” Verse 14 (15) assures the covenant was binding even to the unborn generations who were not present to enter into it. Now, let’s see . . . if we are all the children (seed) of Abraham and verse 13 says Adonai swore it to our ancestors, *Avraham/Abraham*, *Yitz’chak/Isaac*, and *Ya’akov/Jacob*, this means the words of Torah are applicable to each of us as well, right?

For those who claim the “Old Testament” is no longer valid and it is only for “the Jews”, here are some questions which need answers.

- Are those who believe in *Yeshua/Jesus* adopted into His family?
- Are they grafted-in?
- Who or what are they adopted into or grafted into?
- Did Yeshua abolish His very own, everlasting covenants?

I think NOT!!! Scripture is VERY clear on that matter! According to the above verse, “the covenant was binding even to the unborn generations who were not present”.

Once again there is a warning against idolatry. Since they had lived in *Mitzrayim/Egypt* and would soon be in Canaan, *B’nei Yisra’el/Children of Israel* would have first hand knowledge of the nature of idolatry. As a result they might be tempted to experiment with Egyptian or Canaanite pagan life-styles. Even today, people knowing right from wrong still try to rationalize away their behaviors of pagan idolatry, evil and immorality. (Verses 15-18)

Verse 18 (19) is a source of disaster! The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash renders this verse as “Peace will be with me, though I walk as my heart sees fit”. The Complete Jewish Bible’s translation says “I will be all right, even though I will stubbornly keep doing whatever I feel like doing . . .” And the verse continues “so that I, although “dry” (sinful) will be added to the “watered” (righteous).” This is gross arrogance and for whatever reason, some folks feel they are immune from physical or spiritual death. In my opinion, they view themselves as gods. Furthermore, in verses 19 & 20 (20 & 21), with regard to verse 18, Adonai says He will not forgive that person. Instead Adonai’s anger and jealousy will . . .

- Blaze against this person
- Every curse will be upon him
- His name will be blotted out from under heaven
- He will be singled out to experience every one of the bad curses of Torah

This reminds me of a former husband, who was raised in a main line denomination and had a call on his life to minister. He had an incredible personality and was a very convincing person. Certainly, *Yeshua/Jesus* was his Savior. However, Yeshua wasn’t L~rd over his life. The enemy got hold of him and turned him every way but loose. Nonetheless, he felt he could do no

wrong. Personally, I have a problem with the “once saved, always saved” mentality. According to **Galatians 5:19-21**, “. . . those who do such things will have no share in the Kingdom of G~d!” If this has offended you, please forgive me. I’m merely repeating what *Rav Sha’ul/Rabbi Paul* wrote to the Galatians. Remember, he was a Torah obedient teacher.

Moshe warns/prophesies concerning B’nei Israel/Children of Israel abandoning Torah and worshipping false gods in **verses 24-27 (25-28)**. He further tells them they will be uprooted and thrown into another land – “as it is today.”

Moshe assures the nation, in **verse 28 (29)**, “hidden sins” are HaShem’s responsibility and He holds no one responsible but the sinners themselves. However, the Sages teach everyone is obligated to safeguard the integrity of Israel against openly committed sins. The rest of **verse 28 (29)** says, “But the things that have been revealed belong to us and our children forever, so that we can observe all the words of this Torah.” As I understand the rest of this verse, once we have been made aware of the words of Torah, we are held responsible and accountable to observe and obey them. And, this is still true today.

CHAPTER 30

Israel’s national history is very clear. Allegiance to HaShem brought blessings while sinful behavior brought curses. Inevitably, when the nation was disloyal to HaShem there were consequences. However, when they did repent, HaShem would shower his people with much benevolence.

Verse 1 “. . . then you will take it to your heart” indicates to me it is not enough to KNOW to be obedient; you need to emotionally FEEL it as well – take it to heart. The Complete Jewish Bible’s rendering of **verse 1** is “. . . at last you will start thinking about what has happened to you.” Most often when this happens, repentance will follow. In fact, Ramban, the noted Sage, indicates this passage is to serve as a commandment to assure *B’nei Israel/Children of Israel* sooner or later they will repent and be redeemed.

“. . . and you will return to Adonai you G~d and pay attention to what He has said, which will be exactly what I am ordering you to do today - you and your children, with all your heart and all your being.” (**verse 2**) *Moshe/Moses* told the children of Israel when they returned to HaShem, He would return to them. The concept of returning to HaShem is called repentance. It is one of the most important messages of Torah. Repentance is also a central thrust of Yeshua’s teachings as well. Yeshua’s message was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (**Mattit’yahu/Matthew 4:17**).

In Hebrew, the verb for *repent* is (shoov) *shuv* (שוב) and *repentance* is (teh-shoo-vah) *teshuvah* (תשובה). It means to turn around or to turn back and go in the other direction. To repent means to quit sinning, turn around and start doing good. It is more than just a

change of mind. **Teshuvah demands a change in behavior**. It is about starting over fresh and trying to do better. Repentance happens when a person realizes he/she has sinned and his/her sin is offensive to HaShem. When one regrets their misdeeds, confesses them, renounces them and endeavors to change behavior, this is repentance. A person can only repent when he is honest with himself about his faults, shortcomings, character flaws and weaknesses.

Interestingly, 19th Century writers talking about salvation made the point that they looked for changes in people's lives after receiving Yeshua before they would consider this an actual salvation. Today this is seldom practiced.

My heart leaps with joy when I read passages like **verses 3 and 4**. Let's read it right now! "At that point, Adonai your G~d will reverse your exile and show you mercy; He will return and gather you from all the peoples to which Adonai you G~d scattered you." These very things are happening; we are living in these times!!! Isn't it exciting to see the mighty hand of our L~rd at work? Additionally, I feel this entire chapter is descriptive of the "Greater Exodus"!! (See **Yirme'yahu/Jeremiah 16:14 & 15**)

Oh, wow!!! Can you believe **verse 6** is in Torah? "Then Adonai your G~d will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, so you will love Adonai you G~d with all your heart and all your being, and thus you will live." When I was walking in "churchianity", I was taught only the "churched" people's hearts were circumcised but here it is in the Torah! I guess the New Testament isn't really "new" after all!!!!

The above verses of Chapter 30 also seem to be one of Moshe's major prophecies. First, **verse 1** says these verses will take place AFTER HaShem scatters the Children of Israel throughout the nations. Since we know they haven't even entered The Land, the scattering is obviously a future event. Also in **verse 1**, these events take place after ALL the blessings and curses.

Verse 2 indicates the event in **verse 1** follows a return to Torah. This statement leads us to conclude the man-made religiosity or the "Traditions of Men" both in Judaism and the grafted-in church will no longer be in effect.

Verse 3 talks of this being the end of the captivity. Since **Ezekiel 4:5-6** indicates a much longer captivity for the ten northern tribes, it can be concluded both house (Israel and Judah) don't return at the same time. Consequently **verse 3** is dealing with ALL the tribes since Moshe was addressing all of them here.

Verse 4 speaks words very similar to Yeshua's (**Mattit'yahu/Matthew 24:31**) when He talks about the in-gathering AFTER the tribulation (**Mattit'yahu/Matthew 24:29**). This seems to further reinforce the end-times timing of this event.

Verse 5 tells us HaShem's promise to the Fathers will be fulfilled and **Ya'akov/Jacob** (all the tribes) will possess the entire Promised Land. This has never happened YET!!!

Finally, in **Acts 1:6** Yeshua is asked if He will restore the Kingdom at that time. In that day, everyone knew this was/is one of Messiah's future acts. Remember, He said, "I come for the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Northern Kingdom)". **Ezekiel 37:19-24** also speaks of this event and indicates it will happen under Yeshua, the King (when He returns).

There are a couple of things I want to share from **verses 11-14** so bear with me as we walk through this. First of all, these verses make it very clear about Torah being accessible. ". . . **it is very near you – in your mouth and your heart . . .**" Moshe encourages *B'nei Isra'el / Children of Israel*. Torah is not beyond their reach – if they will make a sincere effort to grasp it. In essence, he is assuring them they do not need a prophet to bring heavenly messages to them before they can come close to HaShem. The verse also speaks of mouth, heart and deed. Primarily, HaShem wants the sincerity of heart. Some commandments involve speech, which inspires the heart and some involve deeds which, in turn, inspires speech (according to some of the Sages). The bottom line is ". . . **it is very near you – in your mouth and your heart . . .**" To suggest otherwise is to call Adonai a liar and ignore the very Word we are exhorted to hear. Within the Word, we find our fate – and it is greatly lacking in shades of gray. Life or death, good or evil, the blessing and the cursing (I call them consequences for disobedience) – our options are severely limited. Most of us don't like such black and white terms. So rather than choosing, we spend our lives testing our alternatives. We either "walk in His ways" or we're walking away. The choice between extremes appears a simple one – "life" seems to be the obvious choice. But when we "choose life", whose life are we choosing? Are we prepared for the death it entails?

If we "choose life", will we "cling to Him" with all our strength, taking hold of Him as we let ourselves go? By choosing to live, we are obligating ourselves to a life which no longer belongs to us. When we "choose life", then "He becomes our life". The life we had is no more. Gone are: life versus death, good versus evil and G~d versus ourselves. These are the plain and simple choices set before us. Yet here we are still trying to make up our minds. If we truly love Adonai our G~d, we will do more than just give Him our hearts. We will do as He says: we will give Him our ears and our hands, and gain life through the loss of ourselves.

Torah In The Womb

This is one of the "neater" teachings I am familiar with. If you already know it, please indulge me. The Sages teach every unborn baby is taught the Torah in the womb and is caused to forget it at birth. Thanks to this prenatal teaching, everyone has an affinity for Torah and even someone who never had the privilege of studying Torah may be inspired with wisdom. When given the opportunity to study, Torah will not be foreign to him but something he once knew.

This part of our Torah portion ends, **verses 15-20**, with an exhortation. The choice between Torah, which is life, and a diametrically opposed way, which is death – and G~d urges His people to choose life!

Verses 16 says, “. . . I am ordering you today to . . .

- Love Adonai your G~d
- Follow His Ways
- Obey His mitzvot, regulations and rulings

“For if you do, you will . . .

- Live and
- Increase your numbers and
- Be blessed in the land you are entering in order to possess it.”

Heaven and earth are mentioned in **verse 19**. Heaven and earth are never rewarded or punished but then, they never deviate from the function ordained for them. Surely we should not deviate from the function HaShem ordained for us which is obedience to His Torah. In fact, we are rewarded for our obedience! Baruch HaShem; Kodesh Sh'mo (Bless HaShem; Holy is His name)!!!

Remember, in **Mattit'yahu/Matthew 5:17-18** Yeshua reminds us about heaven and earth being witnesses when He says as long as they exist, Torah will be with us! Have you looked around lately? Have heaven and earth passed away? No, I didn't think so! As Yeshua says, Torah is also still with us.

Nitzavim ~ נִצְבִים ~ Standing (You are all standing)

Haftarah: Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 61:10 ~ 63:9

This is the seventh and final Haftarah of consolation and addresses the ecstatic time of redemption, as well as the years of exile. In **62:1**, HaShem says “For Zion's sake, I will not be silent . . .”, which Targum Yonatan renders as a warning, as long as Israel is dispersed, there will never be peace and tranquility in the world. As a matter of fact, history bears this out just as it will bear out the rest of the prophecy. (As I am writing this, the prophesied division of **Yerushalayim/Jerusalem** has been agreed to in principle. Oy vey!!!) The closing verses describe HaShem as a Warrior coming from battle, his garments splattered with the blood of Edom, the offspring of **Esav/Esau**, ancestor of the Roman Empire, which brought about the current exile.

The restoration of The Land is alluded to in **62:4** so it is no longer desolate and **verse 5** talks of the marriage while **verses 11 and 12** talk of the return of **Meshiach/Messiah**. These all seem to parallel **D'varim/Deuteronomy 30:1-5**.

The Haftarah ends with the words in which HaShem joins Israel in its exile “in all their troubles He was troubled”. Those who are Torah pursuant and study the truth of scripture know Israel is never truly abandoned. HaShem is watching and preventing the assassins from carrying out their full intentions. If one corner of Israel’s exile becomes unbearable, HaShem prepares the way for the next stage in the journey to the Messianic Era, always sharing Israel’s travail.

Nitzavim ~ נצבים ~ Standing (You are all standing)

B’rit Hadashah: Romans 9:30 ~ 10:13; Ivrim/Hebrews 12:14-15

Romans 9:30 ~ 10:13

Chapter 10:8 “. . . The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” is a direct parallel to **D’varim/Deuteronomy 30:11-14**. David Stern, in his Jewish New Testament Commentary indicates we are to “do” the Word. It is not about following rules legalistically but it is the word about trust we are to proclaim. This would require publicly acknowledging our trust which entails our heart and our mouth.

Ivrim/Hebrews 12:14-15

In **verse 15**, *Rav Sha’ul/Rabbi Paul* indicates no “root of bitterness” shall spring up causing trouble and contaminating many. This directly parallels **D’varim/Deuteronomy 29:17(18)**. **Verse 14** indicates we are to continue pursuing peace and holiness. Without peace and holiness, no one will see the L~rd. Those who think giving intellectual acknowledgment of G~d’s existence and the Messiahship of Yeshua will “get them into heaven” are in for a rude awakening and disappointment if these are not accompanied by good deeds and submissiveness to HaShem.

The designated Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 81

And I want to add **Psalm 90** because it is a Psalm *Moshe/Moses* wrote!

Next week’s lesson: Parashah #52

Vayelekh ~ וַיֵּלֶךְ ~ He went

Torah: D’varim/Deuteronomy 31:1-30

Haftarah: Hoshea/Hosea 14:2-10; Mikhah/Micah 7:18-20; Yo’el/Joel 2:15-27

B’rit Hadashah: Ivrit/Hebrews 13:5-8

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim

Shavuah tov (have a good week)!!!

Before closing, I need to mention last week was the midway point of the month of (eh-lool) **Elul**, Hebrew for **search**, which is a time to draw near to HaShem. One of the ways to draw near to Him is to draw near to those who are a part of our lives, our family, and our community.

I wish I were in a position to be with you at this moment, eye to eye so to speak, but since this is physically impossible, please know these words truly come from my heart.

This is a very special time of the year for me and my forefathers. This is the month of Elul which means "search" in Hebrew. Elul is also a Hebrew acronym for "Ani l'dodi v'dodi li", which means, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine", from the Song of Solomon 6:3. It is a time of introspection & preparation for Yom Teruah (Day of the Awakening Blast i.e. the Sound of the Shofar) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

It is important to do these things on a daily basis but it is imperative nothing is overlooked. So, in preparing for these special moedim, (appointed times of the L~rd) please forgive me for the things I have said and/or done which may have offended and/or hurt you.

May the New Year 5771/2011, bring us all to greater humility before our Father and before each other.

My heart's desire is to live in such a way all my thoughts, words and actions will be "Kiddush HaShem" (a blessing and an honor to our heavenly Father).

Ahavah veh tefilot (Love & prayers) Batyah

If you are serious about your Hebraic Roots walk, let me encourage you to consider taking these steps, too. It is an ideal time during the 10 Days of Awe (of repentance) between **Yom Teruah / Feast of Trumpets** and **Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement**, to set things straight, much as some do in January (i.e. New Year's resolutions). I want to emphasize here these **moedim/appointed times** are not man's invention or man's celebration, but are the **specific times** our Heavenly Father commanded, for us to honor **Him**, and they are in **His Word**. Which are you going to follow? The appointed times of our Heavenly Father or the Traditions of Man?

The Sages teach **Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement** or **Yom HaKippurim/Day of Atonements** is the day on which HaShem purifies us from all our errors, forgives our mistakes and turns His ear to our pleas. As Hebraic Roots Believers, we understand He forgives and purifies us from our sin(s) any day when we make **teshuvah** (when we **repent and return** to Him). I am thankful for that and I am also thankful that my Abba Father has been very patient with me in becoming **obedient to His Word**.