

VAYELEKH - AND HE WENT.

Written by Rabbi Philip Hammond.. Posted in Reconciliation Parashah

Our next teaching comes from parashah **VAYELEKH – AND HE WENT.**

Devarim/Deuteronomy 31:1-30; Micah 7:18- 20

31 So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2And he said to them, "I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross this Jordan.' 3It is the LORD your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the LORD has spoken. 4The LORD will do to them just as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and to their land, when He destroyed them. 5The LORD will deliver them up before you, and you shall do to them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you. 6Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you." 7Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall go with this people into the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. 8The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." 9So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, 11when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. 12Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. 13Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." 14Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting. 15TheLORD appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood at the doorway of the tent. 16The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you

are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ¹⁷ Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they will be consumed, and many evils and troubles will come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' ¹⁸ But I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they will do, for they will turn to other gods. ¹⁹ "Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel. ²⁰ For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant. ²¹ Then it shall come about, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify before them as a witness (for it shall not be forgotten from the lips of their descendants); for I know their intent which they are developing today, before I have brought them into the land which I swore." ²² So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel. ²³ Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you." ²⁴ It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, ²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ²⁶ "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you. ²⁷ For I know your rebellion and your stubbornness; behold, while I am still alive with you today, you have been rebellious against the LORD; how much more, then, after my death? ²⁸ Assemble to me all the elders of your tribes and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to witness against them. ²⁹ For I know that after my death you will act corruptly and turn from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, for you will do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of your hands." ³⁰ Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song, until they were complete: Deuteronomy 31:1-30 [NASB]

We have some intriguing passages of scripture within this Parashah. Passages that tell us that even though Israel will come and enter into the Promised Land it will not be long before Israel will be guilty of worshipping foreign gods; it was a problem then and it is a problem now. The current scene regards the position of Israel, [both Houses] is very similar in many ways to the historical event we have before

us in this Parashah. Most of the Children of Israel are waiting outside of the Promised Land, and are yet to enter. Those wanting to enter are growing in number each and every day and are pressing to be allowed to reside in the Promised Land. This increase in “passion” for the Promised Land is a prophetic move but it comes with its challenges and failings, but we know HaShem will bring it to pass, because He has promised to do so.

One of the facts we continue to ignore to our own peril, is the fact that HaShem holds “ALL THE CARDS”, no one person/persons or faith system or any so called deity will win the battle against HaShem, He cannot and will not be defeated. This is an enormous statement when one considers the ramifications that are attached to such a statement. I am persuaded that we mere mortals cannot fully grasp the complete picture of such a fact. The one “group” that should come closest to having a full and complete picture of this fact is the Whole House of Biblical Israel. We tell the other nations and peoples that we do, when in reality our behaviour and suspect man made “laws/Torot/Torahs”, tell a different story. As a people we have been so distant from HaShem for so long that we are guilty of believing our own lies and deceitful hearts. This always results in disaster for the Children of Israel, yet we continue to walk this destructive path.

“Prior to [his] destruction a man’s heart grows haughty; but prior to honor there is humility.” Proverbs 18:12 [AST]

“Haughty eyes and a proud heart are the plotting of the wicked, a sin.” Proverbs 21:4 [AST]

“One who trust his heart is a fool, but one who walks with wisdom will escape.” Proverbs 28:26 [AST]

For the most part we, the Children of Israel, have followed and continue to follow our own haughty proud hearts, convincing ourselves that our hearts are pure, thereby having the audacity to justify our rejection and rebellion against HaShem’s Holy Torah. We have been so focused on building our own “kingdoms” and glorifying our own names, thus creating our own “precious” treasure chests, that we have buried the treasures of HaShem from our sight. The Master Yeshua had some wise words relating to this subject.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:21 [KJV]

These words came on the back of some more advice from the Master.

“Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where

neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19-20 [NJB]

We need to be very aware and honest as to where our focus regards treasures are placed. Yeshua tells us to store our treasures in heaven, and not to store them on earth. This is advice of extreme importance, as treasures stored in heaven are safe, nothing can harm treasures stored in heaven, yet treasures stored on earth are far from safe and will end up being destroyed in one way or the other. Without over dramatizing the issue there is one who is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to destroy the Children of Israel.

“Keep sober and alert, because your enemy the devil is on the prowl like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.” 1Peter 5:8[NJB]

We are told to stand up to him.

“Stand up to him, strong in faith and in the knowledge that it is the same kind of suffering that the community of your brothers throughout the world is undergoing.” 1Peter 5:9 [NJB]

We have enough enemies attempting to destroy the Children of Israel, without us becoming a supporting act for our own destruction, yet we seem almost determined to involve ourselves with our own destruction. We do this by engaging in a stiffed necked response to the instructions of our Father in heaven, where the best treasures are both kept and come from. Allow me to ask a question. If we are to store treasures in heaven does that not mean they must be allowed in heaven, the present abode of HaShem? This obviously being the case we must then ask what is allowed and just as importantly what is disallowed into the dwelling place of HaShem and who actually makes the decisions regarding these matters. HaShem of course makes those decisions, but has He left us ignorant of how those decisions are made? The answer is that HaShem hasn't left us without a means of knowing how He makes such decisions, He has given us a set of instructions that outline the decision making process. Why do both Houses insist on rearranging those instructions to suit themselves and then have the audacity to expect a ticket to dwell in the Promised Land, free from our enemies? Instead of standing up to the enemy, we invite him into our Houses, to sit at our tables, with a willingness to placate him so we can store our earthly treasures. This is a sad pattern for the Children of Israel, but it must stop and will stop at a time of HaShems choosing.

We would do well to re-visit the chosen passage from our Parashah.

"HASHEM said to Moses, 'You will soon be sleeping with your ancestors, and this people is about to play the harlot by following the gods of the foreigners of the country, among whom they are going to live. They will desert Me and break My covenant, which I have made with them. That very day My anger will blaze against them; I shall desert them and hide My face from them. A host of disasters and misfortunes and overtake them to devour them, and when that day comes they will say, "If such disasters overtake me, surely HASHEM my God cannot be with me?" Yes indeed, I shall hide My face that day, on account of all the evil which they will have done by turning to other gods.'" Deuteronomy 31:16-18 [NJB]

When we make a choice to follow the gods of the foreign nations, then HaShem will cease to show His face towards us. He will hand us over to our enemies until we come to our senses and repent in a Biblical manner. HaShem will bring us to the point whereby we have no other choice other than to accept and employ His instructions to our lives, or be destroyed. It is only when we accept and employ His Torah that we can lay up treasures in heaven, as the only treasures allowed in heaven are built on and from the Holy Torah. This also means the only treasures that will be allowed into the Promised Land will be the same treasures allowed in heaven. Consider these facts for a moment and absorb what this means for the Children of Israel. As you consider these facts keep in mind these are not new facts they are facts that have their foundation way back in the "book of Genesis". HaShem is the Master, he is in control and He not only expects His Children to follow His instructions but actually demands it. This is not some ego trip for HaShem, the Holy One of Israel, blessed be his name, but it is because His instructions are the perfect set of instructions for His chosen people.

We have some challenges ahead of us, because we need to change our historical behaviour. It appears after thousands of years and chances to do so; we have failed to "rewrite" history. Sadly it reminds me a little of the situation before the flood, a situation whereby HaShem had to take complete control, resulting in the destruction of those who refused to turn away from evil and follow His instructions. HaShem calls following other gods evil and such evils produce evil or rotten fruit.

"Make a tree sound and its fruit will be sound; make a tree rotten and its fruit will be rotten. For the tree can be told by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can your speech be good when you are evil? For words flow out of what fills the heart. Good people draw good things from their store of goodness; bad people draw bad things from their store of badness." Matthew 12:33-35 [NJB]

The nation of Israel is to produce good fruit, not rotten fruit. We, the nation of Israel, are to produce and provide a supply of fruit that helps heal our people and the nations. We can only do this if we plant "fruit

trees” that come from a pure uncontaminated seed base. Where do we find such a base? Well we will not find it amongst the gods of the nations, we will not find it in systems and faiths that oppose those of HaShem as these only produce rotten fruit that end up costing us dearly. We need to go to the storehouse of HaShem and take the seed from this storehouse in order to grow the tree that will produce the fruit needed for the healing of our nation. It is only through the helping “Arm” of HaShem that we will witness a historical change to the behaviour of our people, thus our nation. If we do not take the opportunity to undertake this change through the current conditions that HaShem has afforded us, then we will face a serious response from our Father in heaven.

The fact is that Hashem will not be mocked. Unfortunately, our history shows we are not afraid to mock HaShem, and our current behaviour appears no better, but as a popular catch cry says; “be afraid, very afraid”, as our lives are in the Hands of the Living God. May we no longer be found guilty of perverting the Word of the Living God, instead let us become guilty of planting pure seeds supplied by our Father; seeds that grow into treasures that can be stored in heaven, because their source is from above. James had some thoughts on this.

“Make no mistake about this, my dear brothers: all that is good, all that is perfect, is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with Him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow caused by change. By His own choice He gave birth to us by the message of the truth so that we should be a sort of first-fruits of all His creation. Remember this, my dear brothers: everyone should be quick to listen but slow to speak and slow to human anger; God’s saving justice is never served by human anger, so do away with all impurities and remnants of evil. Humbly welcome the Word which has been planted in you and can save your souls. But you must do what the Word tells you and not just listen to it and deceive yourselves.” James 1:16-22 [NJB]

We have great opportunity before us, we have the perfect gift from heaven to help us take “advantage” of this opportunity, let us not waste it by being a stiff necked people, unwilling to challenge ourselves. Not only do we have an opportunity before us but we, the Children of HaShem have a great responsibility before us as well, we have the responsibility to be faithful to HaShem, over and above all others. We have a responsibility to shun other gods, and to help people gather treasures that can be stored in heaven. Are we up to the task?

We serve a wonderful God, as there is no God like the God of Israel, and no nation like the nation of Israel, and no land like Eretz Yisrael.

Blessings to all citizens of biblical Israel,
Rabbi Philip Hammond.