

MORDEKAI'S DRASH — KI TISSA



Torah: *Ki Tissa* (When you elevate), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 30.11-34.35
Haftarah: *Yekhezkel* (Ezekiel) 36.16-38 *Shabbat Parah*
Suggested Messianic Writings: 2 Cor 3.1-18

Shalom,

As our parashah opens, Moshe is still up on the mount with ADONI, receiving the rulings for living a righteous life, which he will deliver back to the nation of Israel. The opening thought is generally translated something like, “when you take a census...,” but the literal translation is, “when you elevate the heads....” It therefore seems that the taking of the census of the people of Israel was to do more than simply get a count, but rather the idea of “lifting up the head” was to impress an importance upon each individual – you are in the count, therefore you matter. To lift up the head is to bring hope. Yeshua said, in Luke 21.28 regarding the troubles in the end times, for us to “lift up our heads, for our redemption is drawing near.” When one is without hope, the head tends to turn down. “My soul, why are you so downcast? Why are you groaning inside me?” (*Tehillim/Psalms* 42.6(5), 12(11); 43.5). For this particular census, everyone over twenty years of age was required to give a half shekel offering to the service of the tent of meeting. Each one’s offering was an atonement (כַּפָּר, *kaphar*) for their soul, for their life; Torah commanded that an offering was to be taken during a census to avoid an outbreak of a plague. King David did not follow this edict during one instance and learned his lesson the hard way (see *Shmuel Bet/2 Samuel* 24).

More instructions are given pertaining to the building of the Tabernacle, through chapter 31, including the express command that Shabbat was to be continually observed, even *during* the building of the Tabernacle. That should cause us to stop and ponder about our current activities – do we stop what we are doing for our one day to be separated with ADONI? Two items are of particular note here. One is that ADONI considers Shabbat to be *of greater importance* than even building the Tabernacle. “You shall observe... you are to keep... verily you shall keep...” etc are some of the various English translations. The Hebrew in 31.13 is “**אָחַךְ** *ahk*” which literally means “above all, surely, certainly.” Nothing regarding the construction of the Tabernacle was of more importance to ADONI than the observance of Shabbat. Secondly, Shabbat was not a new creation given just to Israel at this time. From the beginning, ADONI had set aside, sanctified, separated, and blessed the seventh day. ADONI created a seven-day week, and He blessed the seventh day. Verse 17 infers that from creation the seventh day was to be set apart forever for all mankind. However, somewhere along the line mankind drifted from observing Shabbat. So ADONI chose a certain people – Israel – to be His “first-born” set apart people, and instructed them concerning the seventh day.

ADONI said, “You are to observe *My* Shabbats... through all your generations; so that you will know that I am ADONI, who sets you apart for Me. You are to keep *My* Shabbat, because it is set apart for you.” The duty of Israel then was to bring the Word of ADONI to the world. This Israel did, albeit in a rather stumbling manner, by preserving the Tanakh through the ages.

Sh'mot 19 tells us that Israel came to the Sinai region in the third month from leaving Egypt. Moshe then went up on the mountain to be with ADONI for forty days. The Sages teach that the people miscalculated the time of his return by a day, and became discouraged. People tend to panic and do distorted things if left on their own without solid leadership. Thus *hasatan*, the adversary, came in and easily deceived some of the people. Have you ever had a time when ADONI did not do something you wanted Him to do within your time frame, or at all, and so you became discouraged, or angry, or gave in to a temptation that came?

The golden calf incident is a blot in the history of Israel – while Moshe was receiving the Ten Commandments on the mountain, the people were down below breaking them. HaShem sent Moshe down because of this event, calling them “your people” because He knew the brand-new covenant was being broken. Not fully understood is the fact that Moshe did not smash the tablets simply in a moment of

rage, rather, in the ancient middle-east, a covenant would be written in stone, and whenever violated, the stones would be ceremonially shattered to signify that the covenant was broken. The people would have realized this fact immediately when they saw what Moshe did.

Then Moshe asked for whoever was for ADONI to come join him. Sadly, no tribe but Levi came. Moshe was not only their close relative since he was a Levite; he was actually the head of the tribe just because of who he was. Because of doing so, the tribe of Levi would soon replace the first-born of Israel as the *Kohanim*, the Priests, for the nation. The gist of the story has remained the same throughout history – those who are involved in the most grotesque of sins are generally the loudest, hoping to force their way upon the rest of society. The true followers of the Creator will stand firm against the odds, but the large percentage of the fence-straddling population remains quiet, possibly even unsure of their stand. The prophets encountered this problem often. *Eliyahu* (Elijah) did upon telling the people of Israel to decide who their stand was with – ADONI or Ba'al. “The people answered him not a word” (1 Kgs 18.21).

Moshe did some strong intercession on behalf of Israel, and persuaded ADONI to re-establish the covenant by appealing for ADONI to remember His promises to the Patriarchs. ADONI relented, and declared that He would go with Israel to drive out their enemies, but Israel was not to go astray after the gods of other nations, which ADONI views as adultery. Then Moshe descended the mountain with the new copy of the Ten Commandments, ADONI's renewed covenant with the nation of Israel.

Moshe had by this time spent so much time “sitting at the feet” of ADONI that his face shone with the glory. *Sha'ul* (Saul/Paul) wrote concerning this event in 2 Corinthians 3. *Kefa* (Peter) wrote in 2 Kefa 3 that in Sha'ul's words were things difficult to understand and easy to distort. That has happened to the chapter in 2 Corinthians; some people believe that there is no life or truth in the Old Testament, or the Older Covenant, because Messiah Yeshua has come to remove the veil caused by the reading of such. He has “freed us from the Law!” Far from it; rather, the idea is that the *Ruakh HaKodesh* (the Holy Spirit) has *not yet* been allowed to write the truth upon the tablets of the hearts of those who have *not yet* accepted Yeshua as Messiah. This passage of course is speaking in particular of the Jewish people who follow the teachings of the *Tanakh* (Old Testament), but still have a veil over their eyes regarding the truth of Yeshua. We must pray for that veil to be lifted, and at the same time pray for the veil to be lifted from the eyes of “New Testament only” believers to the truths of Torah, which is also from Yeshua (“obey *all* that I have commanded you”). The goal is for Jew and Gentile to be one in Messiah.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)