

## **#52 Vayelech Deuteronomy 31:1-30**

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- \* Be refreshed and built up by God
- \* Live in God; we have an eternal hope to live in; a future city of God in God's presence.
- \* Come out of your deep connections to the world; make the effort to live as God's kingdom people.
- \* Celebrate and acknowledge your freedom from sin; be focused on staying connected to God.

Vayelech means, "he went." Moshe is now 120 years old and God has told him that he will not cross over into the Land. What does he do with the time he has left? He serves others.

He tells Israel and Y'hoshua (Joshua) that God will go before them and to boldly enter the land. Moshe then wrote down the Torah, gave it to the Cohanim, and told them that they were to read it to the people every seven years on Sukkot. Moshe and Y'hoshua go to the tent of meeting and God tells them that the people would someday disobey God. Because of that they were to write a song that the people should learn as a testimony. Yehováh commissions Y'hoshua and Moshe finishes writing the Torah which was to be kept by the Ark. Moshe assembles all the leaders and tells them they will provoke God with their evil and he teaches them the Ha'azinu that God told him to write.

In this portion, they are encouraged to boldly trust in God and to do what God told them to do, and there are consequences for doing what is wrong. These are all things that we need to apply and remember for our lives.

Also, in this portion Moshe wrote a song (called the Ha'azinu which means to listen) to remind Israel that they will provoke God with their evil. While we like to hear and sing about good things, we also need to hear that God knows what we think and do, and that we need to apply ourselves to doing what is right and good. Rabbi Shaul says in Galatians that we shouldn't be deluded, "A person reaps what he sows;" Galatians 6:7 NKJV. If a person sows what is bad God sees that. So, sow good and God will reward us with eternal life (Galatians 6:8). A pretty good trade off; we do what is good, are rewarded for doing good, and then get rewarded with eternal life with a good God.

It says in Hebrews 10:28-31 NKJV, "Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." God will forgive us if we repent. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" 1 John 1:9 NKJV.

Israel is told to be strong in this portion, "Be strong and of good courage;" Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV. On a personal not, I felt committed this week during study to be bold and strong.

The Haftarah for Vayelech is Hosea 14:2-10, Micah 7:18-20, and Joel 2:15-27 during the 10 days of repentance. It is called Shabbat Shuvah which means Shabbat of return. In The haftarah, Hosea uses pictorial imagery and He tells Israel to return to God; nothing but God can save us and make us beautiful, stable, and prosperous (Lilly, tree roots, olive tree), pleasant, protected, fertile, cause us to cover the land, and have joy (fragrance, shadow, grain, vine, wine). Ephraim will even repent of its idols because of what God is doing in Israel. It makes sense; God's ways are fruitful and right; those who do what is right will have life through them, but the sinful will stumble.

In Micah it says that God will forgive for He is merciful. He will have compassion and cast their sins into the depths of the sea. On Yom Teruah, we sometimes do a ceremony where we throw bread into a body of water or river and as the bread gets carried away (or eaten), we think of our sins going away. It says in Micah that God will keep His promise of truth and mercy that has been promised to the children of Abraham and Jacob. The gist of the Haftarah for Joel is, blow the trumpet and gather the people, the bride, to meet the bridegroom. We might think of where Shaul (Paul) shared this; the New Testament portion comes from the Tanakh (Old Testament portion).

Of course, we understand these scriptures in Joel as the coming of the Messiah for His 1,000 year reign (with the believers both Old Testament and New Testament believers). Joel says to let the priests ask for you to come Lord. Then God will supply their need, exalt Israel, and protect them. Do not fear; the land will be pleasant and fruitful. Have joy for God is faithful. My people shall not be put to shame and You will know that God is with you.

Joel 2:26-27 CJB says that someday Israel will never again be shamed: "You will eat until you are satisfied and will praise the name of ADONAI your God, who has done with you such wonders. Then my people will never again be shamed. You will know that I am with Isra'el and that I am ADONAI your God, and that there is no other. Then my people will never again be shamed." Joel is talking about a future time when believers for all time will be with our Messiah. They will never again fail and sin.

Shaul saw that we would be part of that by accepting Yeshua as our Messiah and living right. "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame;'" Romans 10:11 NKJV. When Shaul wrote that, they would have understood that the Messiah would help them to be part of the future kingdom. Israel was put to shame when they sinned. Just as God freed Israel from the Egyptians so they could be free to serve God, Yeshua came to set us free from sin so we can serve God.

We need stay faithful to God, be refreshed, and built up by God. Today, I saw an old man by himself reading his Bible and I had this thought, that he was building himself up. How many of us need to be comforted and built up? Just tonight before I started writing this, I committed myself to God and declared in my heart that He is my God. We build ourselves up in different ways.

One of those ways is to fellowship with other believers. Talking about the early believers it says in Acts 2:42 CJB, "They continued faithfully in the teaching of the emissaries, in fellowship, in breaking bread and in the prayers." They were devoted to being faithful, to understanding the Bible, to learn about the Messiah, to get together, to eat together, and to pray. In our modern culture we often apply these things to ourselves as individuals, but in the Jewish culture, this is something they did when they got together on Saturdays. They were faithful to observe Shabbat, to learn, to eat together like Jews do on Shabbat, and to pray. These things were considered an important part of our Messianic life.

Our personal devotion is important, but our devotion to God with one another is important too. There are a lot of people in our modern times that think they are can be in relationship with God all by themselves. I knew someone who thought that way and he started to become opinionated and rude. Perhaps his philosophy of how to live out the Bible was being influenced by his belief about fellowship. The Bible says we are not to live that way. "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but **exhort one another** daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end;" Hebrews 3:12-14 NKJV.

Individual times of thinking about our relationship with God can be powerful. This is often when we make personal decisions about our spiritual lives. But God wants us to also be part of a body of believers. Shaul (Paul) says, "For just as there are many parts that compose one body, but the parts don't all have the same function; so there are many of us, and in union with the Messiah we comprise one body, with each of us belonging to the others. But we have gifts that differ and which are meant to be used according to the grace that has been given to us;" Romans 12:4-6 CJB. How can we do that without fellowship with one another.

Someone once asked me if they had to go to church to be a believer. Going to church is not a prerequisite, but first, we become a believer in the Messiah and then we follow God's commandments. We are to actually follow through with what we believe. Live in God; for we have an eternal hope to live in; a future city of God in God's presence. The Haftarah for today says we have a great future to look forward to where we won't fail anymore. I vote for that! We will rise from the dead, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God;" Job 19:25-26 NKJV. It may surprise you to know that this was Job's expectation. It was Israel's expectation and it is our expectation too.

Yochanan (John) wrote about the final end time, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away;" Revelation 21:3-4 NKJV. I've had people tell me they don't want to go to heaven. They either don't believe or they don't understand how amazing it is going to be. "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him;'" 1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV.

Come out of your deep connections to the world; make an effort to live as God's kingdom people. God wants us to turn towards Him and not turn our backs to Him. That's what it means in the Bible when it tells us to repent; don't turn away from Him. Jeremiah 25:5 NKJV, "Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings."

### **What possible types of deep connections to the world can you name?**

- \* Society has expectations that can have a hold on us. Some people work morning, noon, and night for financial gain and place high value on having a nice house. Don't overdo it. Include spiritual goals in your life.
- \* Be released from looking good and actually do what is right and good. Some go to church and don't even get out of the parking lot before they get upset.
- \* Some families get together to drink alcohol and make it the focus of their time together. Remember to drink in moderation. Don't make alcohol your main activity.
- \* Some treat TV, sports, education, or hobbies as the main focus of their lives instead of God. While these things are not bad and they can be fun and productive, we still need to put God on the top of the list.
- \* Some people make philosophy and personal beliefs their priority in life instead of God.
- \* We should have deep connections to sin; absolutely no way.

Yochanan (John) tells us not to sin, but there are also things we do that can make us less of a believer than we should be. Yochanan said, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world —the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and

the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever;" 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV. Some of the worldly things in our lives can keep us from being all we should be.

Most of all, Yochanan says doing what is right is what makes us righteous, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. **He who practices righteousness is righteous**, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil;" 1 John 3:4-8 NKJV. I don't want any part of my life to be associated with the devil.

Yeshua (Jesus) set us free from sin so we could live good lives and do what is right and good. I think everybody who can reason realizes that that good produces a good life. Even if you are poor, you can still have a good life through God. We should celebrate and acknowledge our freedom from sin (have a positive attitude); be focused on staying connected to God. We have reason to celebrate what we have.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:2-5 NKJV.

"The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord. Proverbs 21:31 NKJV. Horses were used to help win battles. God will help us to win our spiritual battles. The things we have, the strength we have, and all the influence we exert cannot match what God can do and will do. Then in the future, our destiny will be fulfilled; have joy in the Lord Yehováh and stay faithful. Overcoming something means we take action. We have the ultimate victory through Yeshua and our God. It is worth living for God.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 NKJV

"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, ....<sup>1</sup> but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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<sup>1</sup> "The strength of sin is the law," 1 Corinthians 15:56 NKJV, is a confusing translation. Strength is actually the Greek word that means miraculous power. It should probably read 'the great power of (against) sin is the law.' This rendering completely fits the context! The simplest explanation is the meaning. "g1411. δύναμις dynamis; from 1410; force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle);" – [Strong's Enhanced Dictionary](#).