

כִּי־תָבוֹא

KI TAVO/WHEN YOU COME IN Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8(9)

Something extraordinary is about to happen. The people are soon to enter into His Presence in the Land of Promise. For 40 years, outside of the Land, יהוה has been teaching His chosen ones the Torah. Now, once they cross the Jordan, they will be able to fully keep His instructions. In **Ki Tavo**, immediately we are introduced to the bringing of the “**first fruits**” and the ceremony surrounding it:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:1 "And it shall be, when you come into the Land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, ² "that you shall take some of the **first of all the produce of the ground**, which you shall bring from your land that יהוה your Elohim is giving you, and put *it* in a basket and go to the place where יהוה your Elohim chooses to make His name abide. ³ "And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to יהוה your Elohim that I have come to the country which יהוה swore to our fathers to give us.' ...

You can continue in chapter 26 to read the full proclamation. The passage is actually well known because it is part of the traditional Haggadah, read during Pesach/Passover. But what is יהוה's motivation for asking the Israelite farmer to make this declaration? The sages say it is not just about being thankful. The real purpose was about “**identity**.” By saying these words, each person identified with the sequence of events from the days of the patriarchs to the exodus and then on to the conquest of the Land.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes:

“Knowing the story of one’s people was an essential part of citizenship in the community of faith. Not only that, but it was also said in the first person: ‘My father...then the Lord brought us out of Egypt... He brought us to this place.’ It is this internalization of history that led the rabbis to say: ‘In each generation, every person should see himself as if he personally came out of Egypt.’ This is history transformed into memory.”

A person’s “**identity**” is what determines his behavior. If one sees himself as part of Israel, part of the set-apart, His “**treasured possession**,” then one will be more likely to behave in a holy manner, obedient to His commandments:

Proverbs 23:7 For as he hath thought in his soul, so *is* he

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:18 "Also today יהוה has proclaimed you to be His **treasured possession**, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments

יהוה gave His people an “**identity**” so that they could act accordingly. Our whole lives are to be given over to serving the vision of the Kingdom, in practical as well as spiritual ways. And with that said, I’d like to point to another topic mentioned more than once in our Parasha, that is, the “**strangers, the fatherless, and the widow.**” The first time they are mentioned in **Ki Tavo**, is in reference to the required “**tithes**”:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:12 " When you have finished laying aside all the tithe of your increase in the third year -- the year of tithing -- and have given it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, ¹³ "then you shall say before יהוה your Elohim: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from my house, and also have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten *them*.

Let’s consider how important these special groups of people are to יהוה:

Psalm 68:4 Sing to Elohim, sing praises to His name; Extol Him who rides on the clouds, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him. ⁵ A **father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is Elohim** in His holy habitation.

In fact, in the listing of the “**curses,**” we read there is judgment for the one who “**perverts justice due the stranger, fatherless, and widow**”:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 27:19 '**Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.**' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

So, let’s take a look at each one of these groups. First the “**orphan**” or as it is often translated – the “**fatherless.**” In traditional Hebrew thinking, a child may have a mother, but he is still considered “**fatherless.**” In other words, he is someone without a leader, without someone who is showing them how to live a righteous, set-apart life. We live in a world where many people who have physical “**fathers,**” may be considered “**fatherless.**”



In the Brit Chadasha (N.T.), the heart of יהוה for the “**fatherless**” and the “**widows**” is emphasized:

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before Adonai and the Father is this: to **visit the fatherless and widows in their trouble,** and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

יהוה longs to be seen as “our Father”:

Isaiah 63:16 Doubtless You are our Father, Though Avraham was ignorant of us, And Israel does not acknowledge us. You, O יהוה, are our Father...

Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:6 ...Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?

Jeremiah 3:19 " But I said: 'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?' " And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'

Matthew 6:9 "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

We are never without a “father”:

Psalm 27:10 When my father and my mother forsake me, Then יהוה will take care of me.

Through faith in Yeshua we are brought through “adoption” into “sonship”

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of Yah, to those who believe in His name

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, Elohim has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

We were all spiritual orphans until our Father, reached out in love and chose us. When we can embrace who we are as His children, we can have faith that He will continue to love us, lead us, and teach us in His ways:

John 14:18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

“Widows” make up the second people group. A “widow” in Torah times was in a very vulnerable position. She had lost her protector. If she had young children, or was childless, she had no means of providing for herself. She was then forced to depend on the members of the community.



יהוה had special concern for the “widow.” Like the orphan, Torah tells us that “**He hears their cry**”:

Shemot/Exodus 22:22 " You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. ²³ "**If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry**

The Almighty also looks after the “widow’s” inheritance:

Proverbs 15:25 יהוה will destroy the house of the proud, But **He will establish the boundary of the widow.**

“Widowhood” even seemed to be associated with a certain amount of disgrace:

Isaiah 54:4 " Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; For you will forget the shame of your youth, And **will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.**

But יהוה cares and gives her a promise:

Isaiah 54:5 For **your Maker is your husband,** יהוה of hosts *is* His name; And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; He is called the Elohim of the whole earth.

Yeshua noticed the absolute faith of the “widow” in the Temple. She was poor in the world, yet rich in faith:

Luke 21:1 And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, ² and He saw also a certain **poor widow** putting in two mites. ³ So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴ "for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for Elohim, but she **out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.**"

Now we come to the “stranger,” the ger (גֵּר). The root means to live among people who are not blood relatives. A “stranger” in Israel was largely regarded as a proselyte. His intention was to live within Israelite society. He was given many of the same rights – could eat the Pesach/Passover lamb and could celebrate the Feasts. The “Torah” applied and still applies to the “stranger”:

Shemot/Exodus 12:49 "**One Torah** shall be for the native-born and for the **stranger** who dwells among you."

יהוה loves the “stranger” and gives him “food and clothing”:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 10:18 "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and **loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.**

In fact, Israel was also to love the “stranger” as themselves:

Vayikra/Leviticus 19:34 'The **stranger who dwells among you** shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall **love him as yourself**; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* יהוה your Elohim.

Messiah Yeshua was a Torah teacher. Did he do a midrash on **Ki Tavo**? Consider this verse:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:12 " When you have finished laying aside all the **tithe of your increase in the third year** -- the year of tithing -- and have given *it* to the Levite, the **stranger**, the fatherless, and the widow, **so that they may eat within your gates and be filled**

A “**stranger**” could come into your “**gates**” and “**eat.**” Israelites were even commanded to lay aside money for this. With this in mind, Yeshua tells the story of a “**rich man**” and the beggar, “**Lazarus**”:

Luke 16:19 " There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ "But there was **a certain beggar named Lazarus**, full of sores, who was **laid at his gate**, ²¹ "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Avraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Avraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ "Then he cried and said, '**Father Avraham**, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' ²⁵ "But Avraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Did the rich man feed Lazarus? No, he did not.



In the end, the rich man was “**cursed**,” just as was prophesied in Devarim:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 27:19 '**Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the stranger**, the fatherless, and widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Devarim/Deuteronomy 28:47 " Because you did not serve יהוה your Elohim with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, ⁴⁸ "therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom **יהוה will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything**

The rich man begged Avraham to send Lazarus to his father’s house to warn his five brothers. But Avraham tells the rich man, “**listening to Moshe should be enough.**” Even Messiah “**rising from the dead**” would only speak of the same words that יהוה spoke through Moshe:

Luke 16:31 "But he said to him, 'If **they do not hear Moshe** and the prophets, neither will they be **persuaded though one rise from the dead.**' "

Well let's consider this "**rich man**" for a moment. What do we know about him? Not much. We don't even know his name. We know he's probably of Israel because he refers to "**Father Avraham.**" That means he should be a Torah keeper. In fact, he could be keeping Sabbath, honoring his father and mother, not an adulterer, not one who covets...so, what commandment was he breaking? An Israelite was responsible for the "**stranger within his gates.**" Lazarus sat in the midst of the rich man's property. The rich man had no mercy for him and gave him no provision. יהוה takes this very seriously. In fact, when an Israelite put aside his "**tithe for the poor,**" he was to say:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:13 "then you shall say before יהוה your Elohim: 'I have removed the holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also **have given them to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,** according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I "**forgotten**"

It is easy for us to "**forget**" those who are "**strangers, fatherless, and widows.**" They aren't usually "**lying in our gates.**" Yet I hope we can take on the heart of יהוה. The "**rich man**" suffered the curse. According to the prophets, "**judgment**" is coming again:

Malachi 3:5 And I will come near you for **judgment**; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, **Against those who exploit** wage earners and **widows and orphans, And against those who turn away a stranger** -- Because they do not fear Me," Says יהוה of hosts.

Yeshua also referred to "**judgment,**" and without comment I share these verses:

Matthew 25:31 " When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. ³³ "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' ³⁷ "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Adonai, when did we see You hungry and feed *You*, or thirsty and give *You* drink? ³⁸ 'When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You*? ³⁹ 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.' ⁴¹ "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² 'for **I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'** ⁴⁴ "Then they also will answer Him, saying, Adonai, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or

in prison, and did not minister to You?'⁴⁵ "Then He will answer them, saying, '**Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.**'⁴⁶ "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Our Father loved us when we were the “**stranger.**” He now expects nothing less than the same from us. We can’t say the “**fatherless, the widow, and the stranger**” are not our business. They ARE our business. יהוה has chosen us that we might “**defend**” them.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 10:19 "Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 1:17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.

Is that not the meaning of this verse in **Micah**? Yes, it’s the Torah lifestyle.

Micah 6:8 He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does יהוה require of you But to **do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your Elohim?**

Shabbat Shalom!

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