

## MATOT (*tribes*)



Swearing an oath

Moses describes the laws of oaths; the Israelites battle the Midianites; the tribes of Reuben and Gad request to dwell outside of the Land of Israel.

**Numbers 30:1** And Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning *the* Children of Israel saying, *This is what יהוה has commanded.* 2 If a man makes a vow to יהוה or obligates himself by swearing an oath; he will not break his word; he will do all that he said he would do. C-MATS

**Question:** What does it mean “he will not break his word”? He shall not desecrate his word. A believer's word is sacred; for him to violate it is a desecration. Everyone must watch their own words, whether spoken, sung, or written. He must do what he says he is going to do. *Chumash*

**Question:** What is יהוה giving man the right to do in this verse? By means of an oath, one may either prohibit oneself or require oneself to perform an act. His oath is so strong that a person violating it can suffer the court-imposed penalty of lashes. *Chumash*

**Question:** What are the two types of a vow? (a) One can prohibit to himself something that the Torah permits, by saying, for example, "I will not eat bread for thirty days." (b) One may obligate oneself to bring an optional offering or to perform an optional commandment, such as to tithe to a particular charity. The oath under discussion in this passage is the first type, a voluntarily adopted prohibition (banning yourself from something). With the exception of a vow to perform a commandment [such as (b) above], one cannot use a oath to require oneself to perform an act; for example, if someone were to declare, "I make a oath to go to sleep on time," it is not binding under the terms of this passage, because you are not prohibiting yourself from doing something. *Chumash*



Numbers 30:3 If a woman also makes a vow to ליהוה and obligates herself by an oath, *while she is young* in her father's house; 4 And hears her father אָתָּה her vow and her oath with which she has obligated herself and her father holds his peace: then all her vows will stand and every oath with which she has obligated herself will stand. 5 But if her father disapproves אָתָּה her on the day that he hears her vows; not any of her vows or her oaths with which she has obligated herself will stand: and ויהוה will forgive her, because אָתָּה her father has expressed his disapproval. C-MATS



Numbers 30:6 And if she has a husband, when she vowed or uttered anything out of her lips with which she obligated herself, 7 And her husband heard *it* and held his peace on the day *that* he heard *it*: then her vow will stand and her oaths with which she obligated herself will stand. 8 But if her husband expressed his disapproval on the day *that* he heard *it*; then he will void **אֶת־** her vow, which she made **וְאֵת** *and* that which she uttered with her lips with which she obligated herself and **וַיְהִי** will forgive her. C-MATS

**Question:** Who has authority to break a woman's vow? The father has rights over his daughter as long as she is in his home. This means that she is under his jurisdiction, not that she is physically in his premises; if she was married or divorced, her father has no rights. The husband has authority over his wife to break her vows. The husband's authority is restricted to vows that might cause the woman personal discomfort or which might affect the relationship between husband and wife. *Chumash*

**Question:** How much time does a man have to break a vow that his wife or daughter has made? Here the Torah refines the term “**on the day that he heard it.**” He does not have a full twenty-four hour period, but only until the beginning of the next day, sundown of the day on which he heard of the vow. If the man stops the woman from keeping her vow after this time period, then the sin falls on the man. Anyone who causes another person to sin takes his place regarding the punishment for transgression. *Chumash*

**Question:** A woman's father (when the woman is single) or husband (when she is married) may annul the vows, oaths, and obligations she makes upon his first hearing of them. This applies not only to the words of the woman's mouth constituting a commitment, but the meditations or issues of her heart as well. Since issues of the heart are not necessarily spoken, how is a husband or father to know when a heart issue exists so that he may intervene on behalf of those in his house? Praying in the Spirit increases a man's magnetic field of influence and increases your heart's frequency. Praying in the Spirit is more than just the evidence of the Spirit, praying in tongues activates the Spirit in you. The human body has a magnetic field and frequency. Increase His magnification and frequency in you; tune in and turn up the volume of His voice. This increased sensitivity reveals heart issues when the husband (or father) is present with his wife and family. Be sure to set aside time to be around your family, not just time for activities, but time to cultivate the relationships in your family. Praying in the Spirit increases your intuitive sense of what is going on in the heart of your wife or daughter that needs to be tenderly addressed. Being in tune with their hearts; staying close, you will be able to annul the things which may be harmful for your loved ones.

**Question:** What about the man himself? Who can deliver him from the entanglements of careless vows, oaths, and obligations? The One who connects heaven to earth, the author of the test, the One Elohim, **יְהוָה** can renounce our vows, oaths and obligations. Though a man may not break his vows, he can go to **יְהוָה** in prayer. Praying in the Spirit reveals your own heart and releases or makes known the words or heart issues that need to be annulled by his Head, Yahusha! *Chumash*

Numbers 30:9 But every vow of a widow and a woman who is divorced, with which she has obligated herself, will stand against her. 10 And if she vowed *in* her husband's house or obligated herself by an oath; 11 And her husband heard *it* and held his peace with her and did not express his disapproval: then all אָתָּה *her* vows will stand and every oath with which she obligated herself will stand. 12 But if her husband has made אָתָּם *them* void on the day he heard *them*; *then* whatever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning her oath will not stand: her husband has made them void; and וַיְהִיָּה will forgive her. 13 Every vow and every binding oath to obligate her, her husband may establish it or her husband may make it void. 14 But if her husband holds his peace from day to day; then he establishes אָתָּה all her vows or אָתָּה all her oaths, which *are* on her: he confirmed אָתָּם *them*, because he held his peace on the day *that* he heard *them*. 15 But if he wants to make אָתָּם *them* void after he has heard *them*; then he will bear אָתָּה *her* iniquity. 16 These *are* the statutes which commanded אָתָּה יְהוָה Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *while she is still young in* her father's house. C-MATS



**Question:** Should we ever tell someone we will do something and then not do it? Why do you think it hurts people more when we say 'yes' and don't do it than if we say 'no' in the first place? While no one likes having his requests refused, it is preferable to facing the bigger let down of counting on someone for something and then having it not happen.

**Question:** What, if anything, is ethically wrong with not keeping one's word? Besides the harm it can cause others who make decisions based upon what one has told them, it undermines the stability of the world as people cease to trust each other and can no longer interact in good faith.

**Question:** Are there any situations when it is right to tell people what they want to hear, even if it isn't what you truly mean? Certain times, such as when we give someone a compliment to lift their spirits, there is room to exaggerate for the sake of kindness. However, in general, people ultimately feel better when we are straight with them, even if they seem disappointed at first.

# keep your word & have integrity

**Question:** Why should we keep our word? More than just being a nice thing to do, how seriously we take our promises shows how seriously we take ourselves. When a person gives his word, he is basically putting his reputation on the line, and by keeping it, he shows that he respects himself, and that will cause others to respect him too.

**Question:** Does a person still need to keep his word if he really meant it when he promised, but then later changed his mind? A person's word is a very serious thing, and we should be sure when we promise something, that we're ready to follow through. When we make a commitment, we need to honor it, no matter what, even if we later change our mind.

**Question:** Must we literally do everything we say we will? It depends. Sometimes we just mention something casually, like 'I'm going shopping today.' This is a plan, not a promise. Although there are some spiritually attuned people who are careful not even to say these types of things lightly, nevertheless, not fulfilling it isn't really a breach of trust. But if we go out of our way to commit ourselves, or promise to do something, it is very important to keep to it, if at all possible.

**Question:** Why should we be very careful about what words come out of our mouth? The Divine Bridegroom wants to train His Betrothed Bride to be very, very careful with the utterances of her mouth. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. What comes out of our mouths is therefore very, very important. Indeed, our mouths and other organs of speech have been recreated by יהוה, in order that, through them as well as the other members of our bodies, we may bring honor and glory to יהוה. The words which come out of our mouths reveal what is inside of us.

**Matthew 12:34 O generation of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned. C-MATS**



James 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless Elohim, even the Father; and with it we curse men, which are made after the image of Elohim. 10 Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? 12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries, a vine, and figs? No fountain can both yield salt water and fresh water. C-MATS

Ecclesiastes 5:4 When you make a vow to Elohim, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools: **אָנֹכִי** that which you vow *to* pay. 5 Better is it that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay. 6 Suffer not your mouth to cause to sin **אֶת־בְּשָׂרְךָ** your flesh; neither say you before the angel, that it was an error: why should Elohim be angry at your voice and destroy **אֶת־עֲמָלְךָ** work of your hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams there are vanities and in many words: but **אֶת־אֱלֹהִים** Elohim you *should* fear. C-MATS

1 John 2:5 But whosoever keeps his word, in him is the love of Elohim perfected: that is how we know that we are in him. C-MATS

Psalm 89:34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips. C-MATS

Numbers 23:19 Elohim is not a man that lies; or the son of man who repents (*changes his mind*): He said *it* and He will do *it*. He has spoken and he will bring it to pass. C-MATS

Proverbs 8: 6 Hear, for I will speak excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. 7 For my mouth shall utter **אֱמֶת** truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. 8 All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverse in them. C-MATS

Proverbs 13:3 He that guards his mouth keeps his life; but he that opens wide his lips shall have destruction. C-MATS



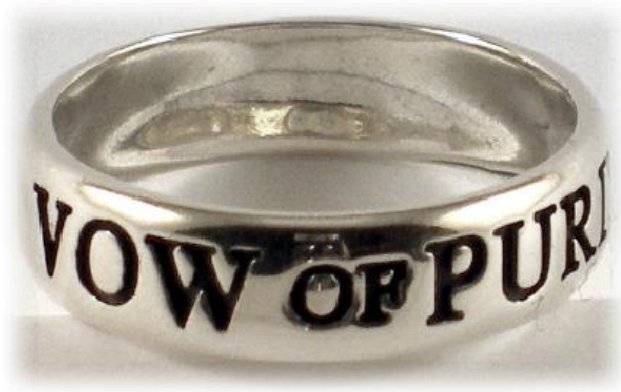
**Question:** Does the Torah ever instruct us to make vows or swear oaths?" Yahusha said in **Matthew 5:33** **Again, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not swear falsely yourself, but shall perform unto יהוה your oaths: 37 But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no: for whatsoever is more than these comes from evil.** No, it doesn't do anything of the sort. It only tells us that, if we choose, as an act of free will, to make a vow or declare an oath [such as, for instance, a Nazarite vow of abstinence from grape products, haircuts, and contact with the dead – Numbers 6:2 **Speak to the Children of Israel ואמרת and you say to them that when either a man or a woman makes a special type of vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves to יהוה**), then whatever we say we are going to do we must do. Yahusha did not change anything – He merely clarified the intention of יהוה – **And you will not swear by My name falsely, neither will you profane the את- name of your Elohim: I am יהוה. Leviticus 19:12.** All Messiah did was reiterate how important it is that we should never make promises we cannot keep. Believers are to be people so known for their truthfulness that they have no need to vow that they will keep their word. Let us not make promises that we cannot keep and be faithful to do what we say in big and small things.

**Question:** Why is it important that we not say publicly we are going to do something, and then not do it? Because we are emissaries of יהוה – and if we as His emissaries do not do what we say we will do, His Name will be profaned. Yahusha said, **But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is Elohim's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. Matthew 5:34-36.** Yahusha was merely pointing out that יהוה – not us -- is in control of all aspects of our world; hence we are in no position to make vows or oaths. Yahusha was teaching us to seek His will, and perform His Words -- not go around foolishly proclaiming our own ideas about what ought to happen. The "voice" by which the Redeemed of יהוה are to live is His Voice -- not our own.

**Question:** What are some vows and oaths that are made today?



Marriage vows to love and remain faithful



Vow of Purity to abstain from sex until marriage



Oath of the military to protect our country



Public servant's oath to protect the public





Public Leader's oath to defend the Constitution of the United States



Doctor's oath to protect life



Oath in court to tell the truth

**Numbers 31:1** And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 2 Avenge *the Children of Israel* מֵאֵת *from the Midianites: then afterward you shall be gathered (taken by death) unto your people.* 3 And Moses spoke to the people saying, Arm men from among yourselves for war and let them go against the Midianites *to carry out* יהוה vengeance on Midian. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did יהוה tell Moses to go to war with Midian? The two nations of Moab and Midian teamed up to make big problems for the Israelite people as they were on their way to the Land of Israel. Even though both nations were in on it together, יהוה told us to respond more strictly against Midian, because the quarrel had nothing to do with them, and they were making trouble for no reason. We should not quarrel at all! We should definitely not butt into other people's quarrels, that aren't any of our business. When we see a quarrel, unless we can genuinely help to make peace, we should keep our noses out of it!



**Question:** Why should we stay out of quarrels? It is tempting when we see people arguing to want to 'put our two cents in'. It may seem harmless, but it isn't. Besides simply not being our business, also more people being involved tends to heat things up and makes the quarrel grow bigger. Quarrels are like fire that burns people for life and is the cause of much of the world's troubles. Who in his right mind would want to jump into a fire?

**Question:** Why do you think the Torah considers the one who enters into other people's quarrels as being more destructive than the quarrelers themselves? Quarreling is in itself a very destructive activity. It is a root cause for much of the world's strife throughout history and today. Yet sometimes a person feels threatened in some way, and his heated emotions and desire to defend himself drag him into a quarrel. Someone who joins into a quarrel even though he is not compelled by the emotional intensity of being personally affected by it has done something much more destructive.

**Question:** Is it ever appropriate to enter a quarrel, such as to protest an injustice, etc.? There are rare times when, yes we must step in to prevent an injustice. However, this should only be done with much caution and after much consideration of the situation and our motives.

**James 4:1 From where come wars and fighting among you? Do not they come from your lusts that war in your members? 2 You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not. 3 You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts. 4 You adulterers and adulteresses know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with Elohim? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of Elohim. C-MATS James 4:5 Do you think that the scripture said in vain, The spirit that dwells in us lust to envy? 6 But he gives more grace. Wherefore he said, Elohim resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble. 7 Submit yourselves to Elohim. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to Elohim, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of Adonai, and he shall lift you up. 11 Speak no evil one of another, brethren. He that speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the Torah, and judges the Torah: but if you judge the Torah, you are not a doer of the Torah, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are you that judge another? C-MATS**

**Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up conflict, but he who is slow to anger quiets disagreements.**

**Proverbs 17:14 The start of an argument is like the first break in a dam; stop it before it goes any further. 19 He who loves a quarrel loves sin; If you brag all the time, you are asking for trouble. 28 Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue.**

**Proverbs 20:3** Any fool can start arguments; the honorable thing is to stay out of them.

**Proverbs 26:17** Getting involved in an argument that is none of your business is like going down the street and grabbing a dog by the ears. **20** Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, quarreling stops.

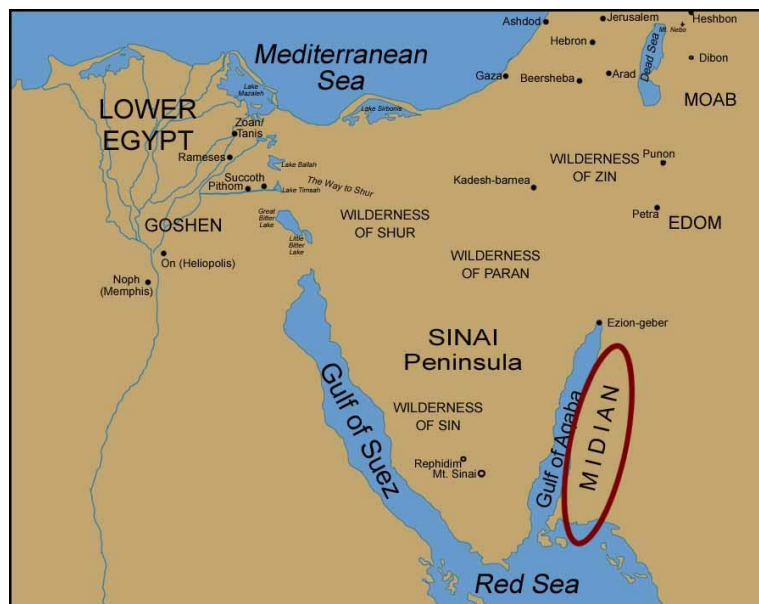
**2 Timothy 2:24** And the servant of Adonai must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, **25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if Elohim peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; **26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. C-MATS

**1 Corinthians 3:3** You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

**Numbers 31:4** Send a thousand to war from every tribe throughout all the tribes of Israel. **5** So there were from the thousands of Israel, a thousand from *every* tribe, 12,000 armed for war.

C-MATS

**Question:** Who went to fight against the Midianites? All the tribes, including Levi were equally represented in the fighting force, and they were accompanied by Phinehas who had, in a sense begun the task by slaying Zimri and Cozbi, and thereby ending the plague that the Midianites had brought upon the Hebrew people. The two halves of Joseph -- Manasseh and Ephraim -- were counted as one tribe for the purpose of this war. *Chumash*





Numbers 31:6 And Moses sent **אֶתָם** *them*, a thousand from every tribe to war *against* **אֶתָם** *them*, **וְאַתָּה** *and* Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, with the consecrated instruments and the trumpets to blow in his hand. C-MATS

**Question:** What were the consecrated instruments taken into war? The Ark containing the broken Tablets of the Law and the Kohen Gadol's gold Headplate, on which was inscribed the sacred Four-letter Name of יהוה. Phinehas took with him the Kohen Gadol's Breastplate so that the Urim v'Tumim would answer any questions that arose while they were at the battlefield. *Chumash*



Moses Ordering the Slaughter of the Midianites

Numbers 31:7 And they made war against the Midianites as commanded **אֶתָּה** יהוה **אֶתָּה** Moses; and they killed all the males. 8 **וְאַתָּה** *and* the kings of Midian they killed, *along with the others who were slain*; **אֶתָּה** Evi, **וְאַתָּה** *and* Rekem, **וְאַתָּה** *and* Zur, **וְאַתָּה** *and* Hur **וְאַתָּה** *and* Reba, the five kings of Midian: **וְאַתָּה** *and* Balaam, the son of Beor, was also killed with the sword. 9 And took captive *the Children of Israel's* **אֶתָּה** *the women of Midian* **וְאַתָּה** *and* their little ones **וְאַתָּה** *and* all their cattle **וְאַתָּה** *and* all their flocks **וְאַתָּה** *and* all their goods *they took as spoil*. C-MATS





Five Kings of Midian Slain by Israel

**Question:** Why was Balaam killed in the battle at Midian? The successful plan to seduce Israelite men had originated with Balaam, and he had come to Midian to claim his reward. Thus, his intended victims were able to apprehend him and punish him as he deserved. It is significant that he was killed by the sword. Esau was blessed with the sword of murder and violence and Jacob was blessed with the voice of prayer and prophecy. Since the evil Balaam had tried to take Jacob's blessing and use it to curse Israel, now Israel used Esau's blessing, the sword, against him.



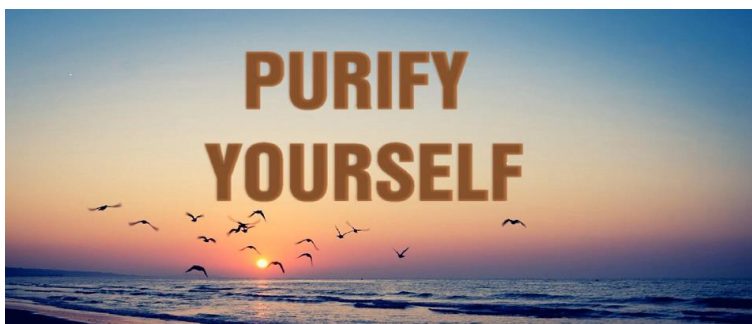
The Women of Midian Led Captive by the Hebrews

Numbers 31:10 וְאֵת and all their cities in which they lived וְאֵת and all their camps they burnt with fire. 11 And they took אֶת־ all the spoil וְאֵת and all the booty, *all the people and animals they had captured*. 12 And they brought to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the congregation of the Children of Israel אֶת־ the captives וְאֵת and the spoils וְאֵת and the plunder camped at the plains of Moab, which *are* by the Jordan *near* Jericho. 13 And Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the princes of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. 14 And Moses was angry *with* the officers of the army, the captains over thousands and hundreds, which came from the battle. 15 And Moses said to them, Why have you saved all the women? 16 These *women* caused the Children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit sins in בִּיהוּה in the matter of Peor (*Baal*) and there was a plague among the congregation of יְהוּה. 17 Now kill every male child and kill every woman who is not a virgin. 18 But all the female children, who are virgins, you may keep alive for yourselves. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did Moses rebuke the officers of the army? Moses was angry with the officers of the army because they had allowed their troops to spare women who were known to have participated in the orgies-- and they, not the Midianite men, were primarily responsible for inciting the sins that had caused the plague. To Moses it was clear that there was no excuse for permitting known harlots to survive. As a result, Moses ordered them to execute punishment against the guilty people. It is the responsibility of leadership to learn from the past to improve the future. Having seen how the sins at Peor took place and how there had been no resistance to them until Phinehas acted, the commanders should have gleaned the lesson that they had to maintain proper control. *Chumash*

**Question:** 'Being kind to the cruel will lead to being cruel to the kind.' How do you understand this idea? A person has to look at the big picture. For instance, on the surface it might seem kind and merciful to pardon a violent criminal or terrorist and free him from jail. However a deeper look will show us that such a person is likely to hurt innocent people if we let him go—therefore freeing him would in fact be an act of cruelty. Additionally, on a spiritual level, once a person skews true values and a clear outlook by being inappropriately kind, his lack of ethical clarity will likely cause him to eventually act inappropriately cruel.

**Question:** What if being kind to someone would mean being unkind toward ourselves—what takes priority? It takes balance. If doing something for someone else causes us a minor inconvenience, most likely we should nevertheless help. If however what someone asks of us involves serious harm or compromise of our values, we should know that it is no act of kindness to do it and we come first.



Numbers 31:19 **וְאַתֶּם** *and you* stay outside the camp *for seven days*: whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any *dead person* must purify *both* **אֶתְּכֶם** *you* and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day. 20 And purify all *your* garments made of skins and goats *hair* and all things made of wood. 21 And Eleazar the priest said to the men of war which went to the battle, **זֶה** *This is the ordinance of the Torah which commanded* **אֶת־יְהוָה** Moses; 22 Only **אֶת־הַזָּהָב** the gold **וְאֶת־הַכֶּסֶף** and the silver, **אֶת־הַנְּחֹשֶׁת** the brass, **אֶת־הַבַּיִשֶׁת** the iron, **אֶת־הַרְּתִיבִים** the tin **וְאֶת־הַעֲדָיִם** and the lead, 23 Everything that may endure the fire, you will make it go through the fire and it will be clean: However it will be purified (*cleansed*) with the water of separation: and all that cannot endure the fire you will make go through the water. 24 And you will wash your clothes on the seventh day and you will be clean and then you will come into the camp. 25 And **יְהוָה** spoke to Moses saying, 26 Take **אֶת** *the booty (spoils)* that was taken *both* of man and beast **אֶתְּכֶם** *you* and Eleazar the priest and the chief **אֲבוֹתֵי** *fathers* of the congregation: 27 And divide into two parts **אֶת־הַבַּיִשֶׁת** the booty between those experienced men who went out to battle and between all the congregation. C-MATS



The Dividing of the Spoils of the Midianites

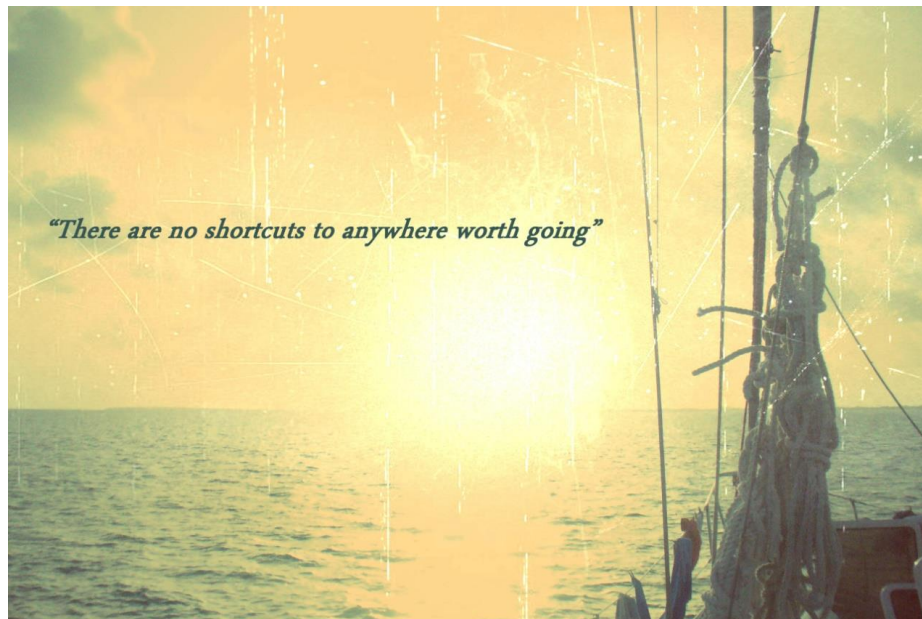


**Question:** How were the spoils from the battle divided? יהוה commanded how the spoils should be divided. The greatest share went to those who actually fought and put their lives in danger, the rest of the nation shared to a lesser extent, and a specified portion was to be tithed to the Tabernacle treasury and to the Levites. The Torah gives the totals of the spoils in detail to show that Israel had conquered a large and prosperous nation. *Chumash*

**Question:** What does this teach us? We get as much out of something as we put into it. יהוה didn't tell us to divide the spoils equally among everyone. Rather, those who exerted themselves more in battle got more. We can learn from here that the more we invest in an activity and take it seriously, the more we'll get back in the end.

**Question:** Do you think there is anything spiritual about working hard at a task? יהוה gave each of us special talents and the energy to use them. When we exert ourselves at a task, we are acknowledging יהוה's gifts to us and declaring that we see life as meaningful. Of course, we should be sure that we're using our talents and energy in a positive way.

**Question:** Do you think there are any shortcuts to life - that is ways to achieve something worthwhile without trying? While it may sound nice in theory - life doesn't work that way. All genuine life achievements only come one way - through dedication and effort.



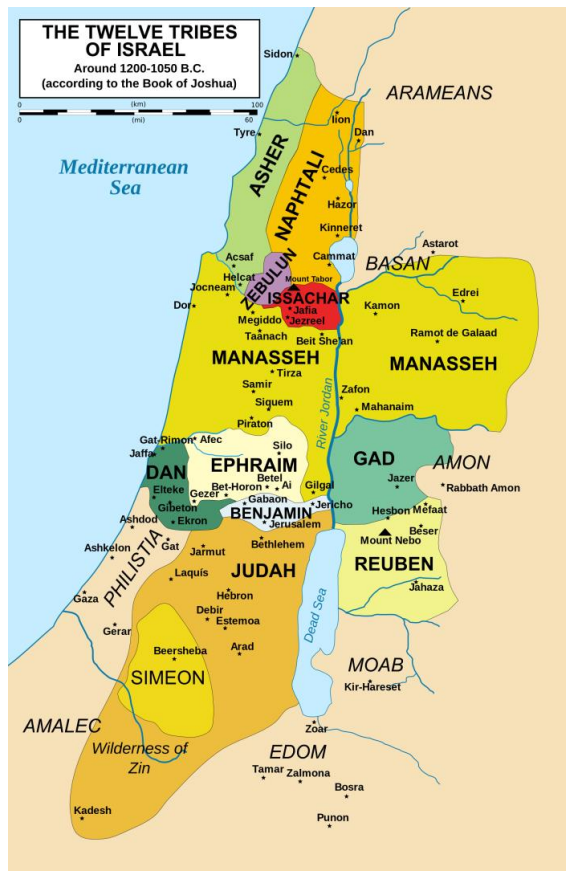
**Question:** What life-lesson could someone learn from working hard for what we get? When someone takes the easy way out and doesn't take his tasks seriously, he can think it doesn't matter. But in truth, there are always consequences and by choosing not to try hard - we are choosing not to accomplish.

work hard now. it'll pay off later.



chibird

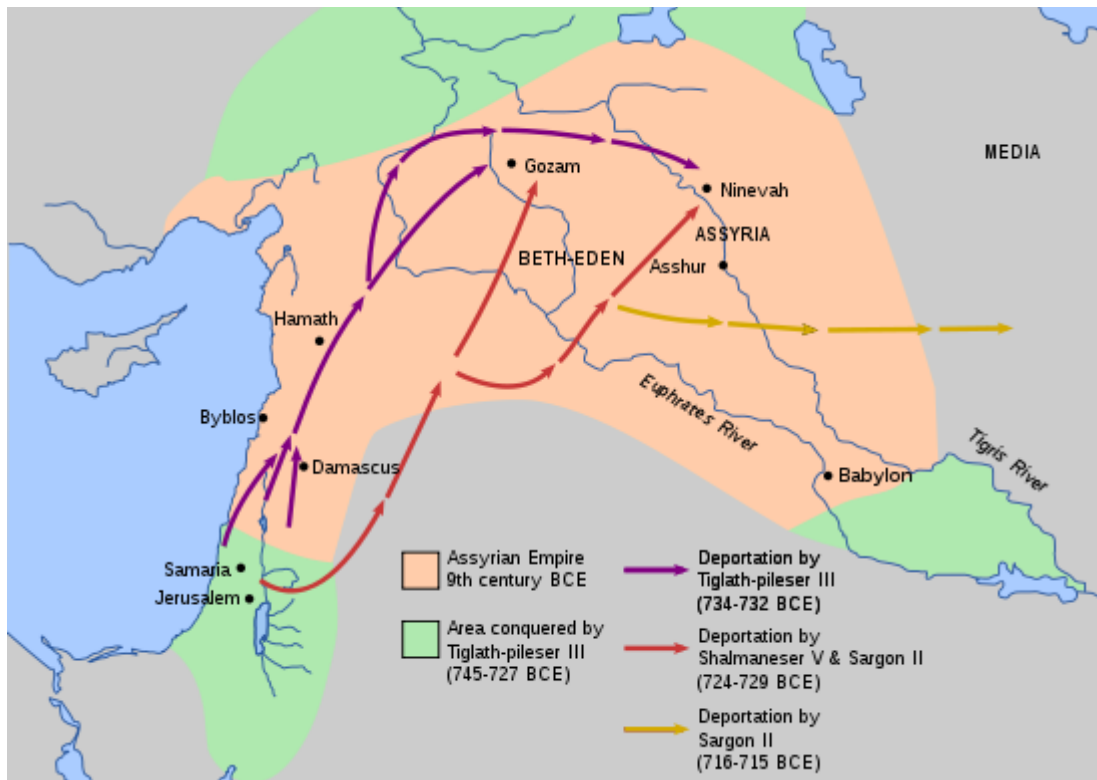
Numbers 31:28 And levy a tax to *give to יהוה* **מֵאֵת** *from the men who went out to battle:* 1/500 of the people, cattle, donkeys and sheep: 29 Take *it* from their share and give *it* to Eleazar the priest as a heave *offering* for יהוה. 30 And the half from *the Children of Israel*, you will take 1/50 from the people, cattle, donkeys, flocks and *any type of animal* and give **אֲתָם** *them* to the Levites, *who take care* of the Tabernacle of יהוה. 31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as commanded יהוה **אֶת־** Moses. 32 And the booty, over and above *the portion* which the men who went to war had taken, *was* 675,000 sheep, 33 And 72,000 cattle, 34 And 61,000 donkeys, 35 And 32,000 persons in all, consisting of women who were virgins. 36 And the share of the portion of those who went out to fight was 337,500 sheep: 37 And יהוה *tithe* from the sheep *was* 675. 38 And 36,000 cattle; of which יהוה *tithe* *was* 72. 39 And 30,500 donkeys of which יהוה *tithe* *was* 61. 40 And 16,000 persons of which יהוה *tithe* *was* 32 persons. 41 And gave Moses **אֶת־** *the tribute heave offering (tithe), which was יהוה'* to Eleazar the priest as commanded יהוה **אֶת־** Moses. 42 And *the Children of Israel's* half, which Moses divided from the men that fought, 43 Now the half *that pertained to* the congregation was 337,500 sheep, 44 And 36,000 cattle, 45 And 30,500 donkeys, 46 And 16,000 persons; 47 Moses took *from the Children of Israel's* **אֶת־** *portion, 1/50 of the persons and animals and gave אֲתָם* *them* to the Levites, *who took care* of the Tabernacle of יהוה; as commanded יהוה **אֶת־** Moses. 48 And the officers, who *were in charge of the* thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and hundreds, came near to Moses: 49 And they said to Moses, Your servants have taken **אֶת־** *the sum of the men who went to war and there was not one man missing.* 50 We have therefore, brought **אֶת־** *an oblation (offering) for יהוה* from what every man has taken *from the* gold jewelry, chains, bracelets, rings, earrings and belts, to make atonement for our souls before יהוה. 51 And took Moses and Eleazar the priest **אֶת־** *the gold of them even all their jewelry was brought.* 52 And all the gold of the *offering* that they offered up to ליהוה, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels (16,750 or 420 pounds of gold) **מֵאֵת** *from the* captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds. 53 For the men of war had taken booty (*spoils*), every man for himself. 54 And took Moses and Eleazar the priest **אֶת־** *the gold מֵאֵת* *from the* captains of thousands and hundreds and brought אֹתוֹ *it (him)* into the Tabernacle of the Congregation *for a memorial (reminder)* for the Children of Israel before יהוה. C-MATS



Reuben and Gad ask for land on the other side of the Jordan

Numbers 32:1 Now *the* children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great amount of cattle: and when they saw אֶת־ the land of Jazer אֶת־ and the land of Gilead and that the place *was* good for cattle; 2 *The* children of Gad and *the* children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, Eleazar the priest and to the princes of the congregation saying, 3 Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo and Beon, 4 *This* country which יהיה defeated before the congregation of Israel *is* a land *good* for cattle and your servants have cattle: 5 Therefore, they said, If we have found favor (*grace*) in your sight, then give הִיא־ this אֶת־ the land to your servants for a possession and do not bring us over אֶת־ the Jordan. C-MATS

**Question:** Why did the tribes of Gad and Reuben have so many cattle? Gad and Reuben were distinguished for their military ability and plundered larger numbers of animals than did the other tribes. The Reubenites and Gadites were rich, possessing large amounts of cattle, but they loved their possessions so much that they separated themselves from their fellow Israelites and settled outside the Land of Israel. As a result, they became the first tribes to be taken away into exile. **1 Chronicles 5:26** And stirred up the Elohim of Israel אֶת־ spirit of Pul king of Assyria אֶת־ and the spirit of Tilgoth-pilneser king of Assyria and he carried them away, even the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and brought them to Halah and Habor and Hara and to the river of Gozan, to this day. C-MATS



Assyrian Deportations of the Israelites

Numbers 32:6 And Moses said to *the* children of Gad and to *the* children of Reuben, Will your brothers go to war וְאַתֶּם and you not go? 7 Why then discourage אֶת־ heart of *the* Children of Israel from going over into the land which יהוה has given them? C-MATS

**Question:** If they were settling in a different land, what was the problem with not participating in the war for the land of Israel? Though יהוה's people are dispersed to many parts of the world, they are strongly united and psychologically interdependent. Thus, when one of יהוה's people in any part of the world experiences misfortune, his brothers throughout the world feel compassion and express concern. Moses was not questioning the legitimacy of their action, but rather saying to them, "Considering the emotions of the Israelite people, it would be impossible for you to sit *calmly and enjoy your land in Jordan when at the same time your brethren are engaged in war*". Chumash

Numbers 32:8 *This is what your fathers did, when I sent אֶתֶם them from Kodesh-barnea (sacred place in desert) to see the land. 9 For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw אֶת־ the land, they discouraged אֶת־ the heart of the Children of Israel, so they would not go into the land which יהוה had given them. 10 And יהוה anger was aroused that day and he swore saying, 11 Surely none shall see of the men that came up out of Egypt from twenty years old and upward אֶת־ the land, which I swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; because they have not completely followed me: 12 Except Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite and Y'hoshua, the son of Nun: because they have completely followed יהוה. 13 And יהוה anger was aroused against Israel and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of יהוה was consumed. C-MATS*



Numbers 32:14 And now you, a group of sinful men, have risen up in your father's place to *increase the* fierce anger of יהוה towards Israel. 15 *If* you turn away from him, he will once again leave them in the wilderness; and you will destroy all these people. 16 And they came near to Moses and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones: 17 But we will be ready and armed *for battle to march* before *the* Children of Israel until we have brought them to their place: and our little ones will live in the fortified cities, because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return to our houses until every man from *the* Children of Israel has received *his possession of land for an inheritance*. 19 But we will not have an inheritance אִתָּם *with them* on the other side of *the* Jordan, westward; because our inheritance is on this side of *the* Jordan, eastward. C-MATS



The hills of Gilead (current day Jal'ad, Jordan), where Gad and Reuben settled

Numbers 32:20 And Moses said to them, If you will do *this* אֵת *matter* and if you will go armed before יהוה to war, 21 And all your soldiers will go armed *and cross over* אֵת *the* Jordan before יהוה until he has driven out אֵת *his* enemies before Him, 22 And the land is conquered before יהוה: then you will return and be guiltless before מִיְהוָה and before Israel; and אֵת הַאֲדָמָה *this* land will be your possession before יהוה. 23 But if you will not do this then you have sinned to לִיְהוָה: and your sin will find אֵתְכֶם *you* out. 24 Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep; and do that *which you have spoken*. 25 And *the* children of Gad and *the* children of Reuben spoke to Moses saying, Your servants will do as my master commands. 26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks and all our cattle will be there in the cities of Gilead: 27 But your servants will pass over, every man armed for war before יהוה ready for battle, as my master said. C-MATS

**Question:** What did the tribes of Gad and Reuben say that they would do? They were fully prepared to send their troops into the Land and take a leading role in the wars until they were successfully concluded. However, their response revealed a shortcoming in their priorities. The Reubenites and the Gadites cherished their property more than human life, putting their cattle before their children when they told Moses in Numbers 32:16, “we will build sheepfolds here for our cattle and cities for our little ones”. Moses told them that their priorities were wrong and that they should rather do the more important things first, when Moses told them in Numbers 32:24, “Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep”. The different priorities apply to the words of Ecclesiastes 10:2, “A wise man’s heart is at his right hand”— applying to Moses — and “but a fool’s heart at his left” — applying to the Reubenites and the Gadites. יהוה told the Reubenites and the Gadites that as they showed greater love for their cattle than for human souls, there would be no blessing in it for them. Their fate applies to the words of Proverbs 20:21 “An inheritance *may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end shall not be blessed*”.  
*Chumash*

**Question:** How did the tribes of Gad and Reuben change their minds after their talk with Moses? The people of Gad and Reuben understood the subtle messages in Moses' response and they reworded their assurance accordingly; now they put their families ahead of their livestock. Also they committed themselves only to fight, as Moses had stipulated. *Chumash*

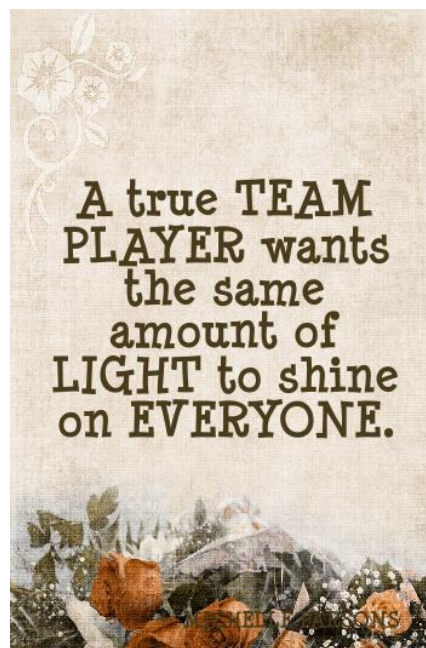
Numbers 32:28 So commanded concerning them Moses אֶת Eleazar the priest וְאֶת and Y'hoshua the son of Nun וְאֶת and the chief אֲבוֹת fathers of the tribes of the Children of Israel: 29 And Moses said to them, If will cross over the children of Gad and the children of Reuben with you אֶת the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle, before יהוה and if the land is conquered before you; then you will give them אֶת the land of Gilead for a possession: 30 But if they do not cross over with you armed for battle, they will have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. 31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered saying, אֶת As has said יהוה to your servants, so we will do. 32 We will pass over armed for battle before יהוה into the land of Canaan, וְאִתָּנוּ and with us אִתָּנוּ you hold (possess) our inheritance on this side of the Jordan may be ours. C-MATS

**Question:** Why do you think it is important for a group's morale to have everyone participate? There is a certain power and excitement involved with doing something as a group, or team. When everyone works together, they are highly motivated and can do more than they could by themselves. But this type of feeling is only created if everyone is really willing to participate. Each member of a group gives to it more than he is aware.

**Question:** What special responsibilities does a person have when he or she becomes a member of a team? Being part of a team means you should become a "team player" -- this means you go out of your way to pitch in to the group effort, even if you don't particularly feel like it. It means focusing on the needs of the team and trying to help to fill those needs as best you can. If everybody on the team were to be only concerned about himself or herself, the group would never get anywhere. Team players help everyone else get into the "team spirit".

**Spiritual Exercise:** Are you a team player? Do you cooperate with your family members? Do you work well with others at your job? Do you keep a positive attitude and the “We can do this” spirit? Do you complain and bring down others in your family or job? This week encourage others and work together without complaining to achieve your common goals.

**Question:** How do complainers at work affect how you perform your job? How can you keep them from affecting your work ethic? Avoid those who you know are complainers. Seek positive people to work with. If this is impossible, then bring a positive attitude with you to work and maybe your positive outlook will influence them to see life in a more positive way.



Numbers 32:33 And Moses gave to *the* children of Gad and to *the* children of Reuben and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, **אֶת־** kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites **אֶת־** and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan, the land with the cities on the coasts and the cities of the country around it. 34 And built *the* children of Gad **אֶת־** Dibon, **אֶת־** and Ataroth, **אֶת־** and Aroer, 35 **אֶת־** and Atroth, Shophan, **אֶת־** and Jaazer, and Jogbehah, 36 **אֶת־** And Beth-nimrah **אֶת־** and Beth-haran fortified cities and folds for sheep. 37 And *the* children of Reuben built **אֶת־** Heshbon, **אֶת־** and Elealeh, **אֶת־** and Kirjathaim, 38 **אֶת־** And Nebo, **אֶת־** and Baal-meon, (*these names have been changed*) **אֶת־** and Shibmah: and *they* gave other **אֶת־** names to the cities which they built. 39 And *the* children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, went to Gilead and dispossessed (*conquered*) **אֶת־** the Amorites who *were* in it. 40 And gave Moses **אֶת־** Gilead to Machir, the son of Manasseh; and he lived in it. 41 And Jair, the son of Manasseh, went and captured **אֶת־** *the* small towns in it and called them Havoth-jair. 42 And Nobah went and captured **אֶת־** Kenath **אֶת־** and the villages in it and called it Nobah (*to bark*), after his own name. C-MATS

**Question:** The tribe of Manasseh had not asked for land on the east bank; why did Moses now include them? Seeing that the land of Gilead was too large for only two tribes, Moses asked if any other tribes would prefer to settle there. In response, part of Manasseh volunteered, perhaps because they had abundant flocks. The term “half” is used in connection with Manasseh, but it can also mean part, as it does in this case, because only two of Manasseh's eight families settled on the east bank (**And the rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half tribe of Manasseh all the region of Argob together with Bashan, which was called the land of giants. Jair, the son of Manasseh, took אֶת־ all the country of Argob to the coasts of Geshuri and Maachasi and called אֹתָם them after his own name, אֶת־ Bashan-havoth-jair to this day. And I gave אֶת־ Gilead to Machir. Deuteronomy 3:13-15**) Moses tried to avoid the danger that the two tribes on the east bank would tend to be isolated from the rest of the nation and fail to benefit from the greater holiness of Israel. By placing half of Manasseh there, he assured that the eastern part of Manasseh would maintain close contact with their family to the west, and this closeness would have a beneficial effect on the tribes of Gad and Reuben as well. *Chumash*

## Do You Know?

1. The Torah teaches that we should never break a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A father can break a vow of his \_\_\_\_\_ and a husband can break the vow of his \_\_\_\_\_.
3. How long does a father or husband have to break the vow once they learn of it?
4. Moses told the Israelites to kill all the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Moses rebuked all the officers of the army, because they saved the Midianite \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The men who went to war had to remain outside the camp and be purified for \_\_\_\_\_ days.
7. The booty from the battle was divided between the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The captains of the army brought יהוה a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ to thank him for not one of their men being lost in battle.
9. The testimony of at least \_\_\_\_\_ people must convict a murderer.
10. The daughters of Israel were required to marry a man from their own \_\_\_\_\_.

### Answers:

1. Vow/oath
2. Daughter, wife
3. that day only
4. Midianites
5. women
6. seven
7. men who went to war and the congregation
8. gold jewelry
9. 2
10. tribe



# Haftorah



Jeremiah the Prophet

Jeremiah recounts how יהוה appointed him as prophet -- despite his initial reluctance to accept the task -- and tells of the encouragement יהוה gave him to fulfill his crucial mission. He then describes two prophetic visions he was shown. The first featured an almond tree branch. יהוה explained to Jeremiah that just like an almond tree is very quick to blossom, so too יהוה will carry out his plan -- to punish the tribe of Judah for their sins -- in due haste. The second vision was that of a boiling pot whose foam was directed northward. יהוה explained that this was an allusion to the afflictions the Israelite people would suffer at the hands of the people from the north of the Promised Land, namely Babylon. יהוה will cause the kingdoms of the north to lay siege on Jerusalem and Judea and He will pass judgment on the tribe of Judah due to their abandonment of יהוה's ways and their idol worship. יהוה then encouraged Jeremiah to deliver the prophecy and not to fear the people who would certainly not take kindly to such harsh words. The *Haftorah* ends with a reassuring prophecy to the people that יהוה would still love them and protect them.

**Jeremiah 1:1** The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that *were* in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: **2** To whom the word of יהוה came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. **3** It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, to *the* end of *the* eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, to *the* carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. **4** Then the word of יהוה came to me, saying **5** Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you and I ordained you a prophet to the nations. **6** Then said I, alas, Master יהוה certainly I cannot speak: for I *am* a child. **7** But יהוה said to me, do not say *that* I *am* a child: for you will go to all that I will send you and whatever I command you, you will speak. C-MATS

Jeremiah 1:8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with you to deliver you, said יהוה. 9 Then יהוה put forth אֶת־ his hand and touched my mouth. And יהוה said to me, certainly, I have put My words in your mouth. 10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. 11 Also the word of יהוה came to me, saying Jeremiah, what do you see? And I said I see a rod of an almond tree. 12 Then said יהוה to me, you have seen well: for I will watch over My word to perform it. 13 And the word of יהוה came to me *the second time*, saying what do you see? And I said I see a seething pot; and the face of it *is* toward the north. 14 Then יהוה said to me, out of the north evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, said יהוה; and they will come and they will set everyone his throne *at* the entering of the gates of Jerusalem and against all the walls of it round about and against all the cities of Judah. 16 And I will utter My judgments against them concerning all their wickedness, who have forsaken Me and have burned incense to other gods and worshipped the works of their own hands. 17 You therefore gird up your loins and arise and speak to them אֶת־ all that I command you: be not dismayed at their faces, otherwise I confound you before them. 18 For, certainly, I have made you this day a defended city and an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes of it, against the priests of it and against the people of the land. 19 And they will fight against you; but they will not prevail against you; for I *am* with you, said יהוה, to deliver you. Jeremiah 2:1 Also the word of יהוה came to me, saying 2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying so said יהוה; I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal (*wedding ceremony*), when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown. 3 Israel *was* sacred to יהוה and the firstfruits of His increase: all that devour him will offend; evil will come on them, said יהוה. 4 Hear you the word of יהוה, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel: 5 So said יהוה, what iniquity have your fathers found in Me, that they are gone far from Me and have walked after vanity and are become vain? Jeremiah 2:6 Neither said they, where *is* יהוה that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land *that* no man passed through and where no man lived? 7 And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit of it and the goodness of it; but when you entered, you defiled אֶת־ My land and made My heritage an abomination. 8 The priests did not say where *is* יהוה? And they that handle the Torah knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me and the prophets prophesied by Baal and walked after *things that* do not profit. 9 Wherefore I will yet plead with you, said יהוה and with your children's children will I plead. 10 For pass over the isles of Chittim and see; and send *to* Kedar and consider diligently and see if there be such a thing. 11 Has a nation changed *their* gods, which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for *that which* does not profit. 12 Be astonished, O you heavens, at this and be horribly afraid, be you very desolate, said יהוה. 13 For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. 14 *Is* Israel a servant? *Is* he a home born *slave*? Why is he spoiled? 15 The young lions roared on him and yelled and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant. 16 Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken *the* crown of your head. 17 Have you not procured this to yourself, in that you have forsaken אֶת־ יהוה your Elohim, when He led you by the way? C-MATS

Jeremiah 2:18 And now what *have you to do* in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? Or what *have you to do* in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? 19 Your own wickedness will correct you and your backslidings will reprove you: know therefore and see that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that you have forsaken אֱתֵי יהוה your Elohim and *that* My fear *is* not in you, said Master יהוה of hosts. 20 For of old time I have broken your yoke and burst your bands; and you said I will not transgress; when on every high hill and under every green tree אַתְּ you wander, playing the harlot. 21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a well established seed: how then are you turned into *the* degenerate *plant of* a strange vine to Me? 22 For though you wash yourself with lye (*soap*) and take you much soap, *yet* your iniquity is marked before Me, said Master יהוה. 23 How can you say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See your way in the valley, know what you have done: *you are* a swift dromedary (*young female camel*) breaking loose in her ways; 24 A wild donkey accustomed to the wilderness that sniffs the wind at her pleasure; *in* her occasion who can turn her away? All they that seek her will not weary themselves; in her month they will find her. 25 Withhold your foot from being unshod (*shoeless*) and your throat from thirst: but you said there is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers and after them will I go. 26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so *is the* house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes and their priests and their prophets, 27 Saying to a tree, *you are* my father; and to a stone, אַתְּ you have brought me forth: for they have turned their back to Me and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, arise and save us. 28 But where *are* your gods that you have made yourselves? Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble: for *according to* the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah. C-MATS

## Brit Chadashah

Matthew 5:33 **Again, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not swear falsely yourself, but shall perform unto יהוה your oaths: 37 But let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no: for whatsoever is more than these comes from evil.**

### A Truthful No

Our word - and the promises we make - are not something to take lightly. In this week's portion we learn about how important it is not to say we'll do something unless we really mean it. We should say 'yes' when we mean yes, and 'no' when we mean no. Numbers 30:2 If a man makes a vow to יהוה or obligates himself by swearing an oath; he will not break his word; he will do all that he said he would do. C-MATS

### YES AND NO

Jonathan was relaxing on his bed with his Nintendo Switch when he heard his mom's voice calling him from the bottom of the stairway.

"Jonathan! Jon, do you hear me?"

Jonathan pressed 'pause,' dragged himself off his bed and stuck his head out of the doorway to his room.

"Yeah, Mom. What's up?"

"I need some more formula for the baby. Could you run over to the One-Stop on your bike and pick some up for me? She's going to be up from her nap in a little while, and she's going to be hungry!"

That was the *last* thing Jon felt like doing right then, but he didn't feel like getting into an argument with his mother either.

"Um, sure Mom, no problem. Just give me five to finish up my game, okay?"

"Well, all right, but just five minutes, okay? I left money on the table. I'm going to rest a bit until she wakes up."

"Okay."

With that, Jonathan, happy to have avoided a scene, returned to his former position and lost himself in his Nintendo Switch once again.

After about an hour, Jonathan was startled out of his latest game by the sound of shrieking coming from the room next door. *Uh-oh*, he thought to himself. *The baby must have taken a real short nap.*

His mom came into the room holding a weeping, hysterical baby. "Jonathan, I can't find the formula you went out to get. Where did you leave it?"

"Sorry, Ma. I didn't go yet. I don't really want to go."

"If you didn't want to go, why did you tell me you would do it? I was counting on you."

"I know, Ma. I didn't want you to feel bad if I said no, so I said yes."

"But Jonathan, I feel a lot worse now when I have nothing to give the baby! Why did you say yes when you really meant no? Now you have no choice. Run to the store and get the formula, before I take away your Nintendo Switch for the week."

*The next day, at school...*

"Hey, Larry, guess what?"

"Hey, Jon, what's up?"



"I got the new, updated version of Mario Kart 8. Why don't you come on over to my house this afternoon and we'll play? We can use my dad's big computer screen. I'm sure he'll let us!"

"Cool, Jon. Thanks for the invite. What time?" "Come about five, okay?" "Okay. You got it."

Jonathan rushed home from school that day to get everything ready for his friend. He called his dad at work and asked him for permission to use his screen, and his dad agreed. Jon carefully disconnected the screen and attached it to his own computer, but it took a lot longer and was more complicated than he thought, and he had to disturb his dad a few times to ask him some questions. When he finally got that done, he realized his room was a mess, and he ran around stuffing things under his bed and throwing stuff away so it would at least look decent. Finally, he realized there was nothing good to eat in the house, so he jumped on his bike and made it to the One-Stop in no time flat.

At 4:59, he threw himself down on the couch and waited for his friend to arrive, huffing, puffing, and exhausted from all his efforts. At 5:20, he started to get a little worried, wondering when Larry would show up. 6:00 - still no Larry. At 6:30 he tried to call Larry's house, but there was no answer.

*He must've had to stop somewhere on the way here and he got held up,* thought Larry. At 7:00 he gave up, and went into the kitchen to eat his supper, which had long gone cold.

Next day, Jonathan went looking for Larry first thing. "Where were you yesterday?" he almost shouted. "I waited for you the whole afternoon! I called your house and there was no answer!"

Larry was calm. "I know. We went to my grandmother's house yesterday. We'd been planning it for weeks. Besides, I already have Mario Carts at home."

Jonathan was confused. "But if you already knew you were going somewhere, why did you agree to come over to my house? Why did you say yes when you really meant no?"

He was shocked to hear his mother's words coming right out of his own mouth!

"Um I don't know ... you looked like you really wanted me to come and it just seemed kinda easier to agree than going through the whole, 'Well, why not,' conversation and making you disappointed or whatever. Usually whenever people ask me to do things, I just say yes, and either I go or I don't. What difference does it make anyway?"

Jonathan was silent. All he could think about was the disappointed look on his mother's face and how he let her down.

"Your words do make a difference," Jonathan said slowly.

Larry just shrugged and walked away, but Jonathan took the lesson home with him and let it stay for a long time. From then on, everyone knew that Jonathan's word was as good as gold. By him, yes meant yes and no meant no. Period.

**Question:** What life-lesson do you think Jonathan learned from what happened? He had told himself that he didn't have to stick to doing what he said he would and that it was better to agree to do something and not really mean it than to get someone upset by saying 'no'. But after he saw how he had messed up his mom and how much it hurt when his friend did it to him, he realized that a person's word should be kept and therefore he would only say he'd do something if he meant it.

**Question:** Why do you think it hurts people more when we say 'yes' and don't do it than if we say 'no' in the first place? While no one likes having his requests refused, it is preferable to facing the bigger let down of counting on someone for something and then having it not happen.

**Question:** What, if anything, is ethically wrong with not keeping one's word? Besides the harm it can cause others who make decisions based upon what one has told them, it undermines the stability of the world as people cease to trust each other and can no longer interact in good faith.

**Question:** Are there any situations when it is right to tell people what they want to hear, even if it isn't what you truly mean? Certain times, such as when we give someone a compliment to lift their spirits, there is room to exaggerate for the sake of kindness. However, in general, people ultimately feel better when we are straight with them, even if they seem disappointed at first.

**Resources:**

*The Stone Edition of The Chumash*

*The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures* **C-MATS** [www.AlephTavScriptures.com](http://www.AlephTavScriptures.com)

“Weekly Torah Portion” from [www.aish.com](http://www.aish.com) (stories)