

His Leaders

"⁸'Grant atonement for Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, Adonai, and do not put innocent blood on Your people Israel.' Then atonement will be granted to them for the blood. ⁹So you will purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in Adonai's sight" (Deut. 21:8-9).

This week's *Parasha* is *Shoftim* (*Judges*) and it concludes with the beautiful prayer cited above. If there is a country in the world that needs to be "*purged of the guilt of innocent blood*" (the Blood of Abortion), it is the US. In particular, the ending of the prayer is extremely applicable to our time because we must "*do (naase) what is right in Adonai's sight*". In the last three weeks the H.S. has emphasized the '*we will do, and we will obey*' (*Naase V'Nishma*) component of His Divine Strategy for KS. But also, in this *Parasha* we are introduced to the Almighty's system of justice and leadership, mainly, Judges, Levites, Kings, Prophets and the Military. In this *portion* He establishes many principles that are fundamental to governing His people. A good example of this is: "*"⁶By the word of two or three witnesses..."* (Deut. 17:6a). This was a principle emphasized by *Yeshua* (e.g., *Matt. 18:16*) and *Rabbi Sha'ul* (e.g., *2 Cor. 13:1, 1 Tim. 5:19*). How much trouble would we avoid if we followed this witness principle in everything? "*¹⁵A single witness shall not rise up against a person for any offense or sin that he commits. By the word of two or three witnesses is a case to be established*" (Deut. 19:15).

Husbands are *sitting in a place of authority* in their homes. In fact, they are compared in Scripture to kings especially when it comes to protection and responsibility. A great example of that responsibility is: ¹⁸"*Now when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself a copy of this Torah on a scroll, from what is before the Levitical kohanim.* ¹⁹*It will remain with him, and he will read in it all the days of his life, in order to learn to fear Adonai his God and keep all the words of this Torah and these statutes.* ²⁰*Then his heart will not be exalted above his brothers, and he will not turn from the commandment to the right or to the left—so that he may prolong his days in his kingship, he and his sons, in the midst of Israel* (Deut. 17:18-20). Do you have a copy of *Adonai's Torah* that is to be with you to "*read in it all the days of his life, in order to learn to fear Adonai your God and keep all the words of this Torah and His statutes?*"

I was also reminded in this weekly portion of our responsibility toward The Lord's ministers (His Levites & Cohanim). Scripture states that we shall give them: ¹⁴*The firstfruits (the tithe) of your grain, of your new wine, of your oil, and the first fleece of your sheep, you are to give him.* ⁵*For Adonai your God has chosen him from all your tribes to stand and serve in the Name of Adonai—him and his sons forever* (Deut. 18:4-5).

Then there are also the restrictions imposed on military service, such as ¹⁶*What man has planted a vineyard but has not put it to use? Let him go back to his house—otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would begin to use it.* ⁷*What man has become engaged to a woman but has not married her? Let him go back to his house—otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would marry her'* (Deut. 20:6-7).

In next week's *Parasha* we will read: ⁵*"When a man takes a new wife, he is not to go out with the army or have any duty passed over to him. He is to be free at home for one year and make his wife happy"* (Deut. 24:5). How many marriages do you know that adhered to this *Torah* principle? If yours did not, then you should repent and ask the Lord to forgive you (your ignorance or disobedience) and restore what He would have otherwise done for your marriage if you had adhered to His Principles!

Since the theme of this week's *Parasha* is leadership, I would like to take this opportunity to share on a few guiding principles in our KS leadership. The two primary points that are present in any congregation are: (1) the message and (2) the messenger (or leader). These are also critical in *Kol Simcha*. What can we say about our Leadership Team? I am personally a person motivated by balance and integrity, but so are our KS Leaders. We do not want to be misunderstood. I strive to live by the things that I preach and to attempt to stay in a centrist position with respect to critical issues, but so do our KS Leaders. We are truly

developing a congregation that is not based on everyone else's rules. We have endeavored to be *Na'ase V'Nishma* people, respecting one another's rights (even the right to disagree). I am personally motivated by the character quality of being considerate. Marilyn is the most considerate person I know. Consideration is an application of the golden rule, and it was evident in *Yeshua*, His apostles (*His talmidim*), and in Rabbi Paul's (*Sha'ul's*) ministry. My very favorite verse in the *Psalms* is: "*But I—I will walk in my integrity. Redeem me and be gracious to me*" (*Ps. 26:11*).

We do not know everything, and we do not claim to do so. I do not claim to be *the anointed* nor do I fail to recognize that I am flesh and thus, subject to the *Romans 6-7* struggle. Each member of your leadership team has readily admitted before you some of his or her failures and struggles. Yet at times, I sense from the congregation a reluctance (a slight pushback) to give us the space and confidence to fully lead you. Scripture states that "*without faith (trust) it is impossible to please Adonai*" (*Hebrews 11:6*), and similarly without *trust* it is impossible to lead God's people. You always have to ask yourself the question: *Is it possible that God is speaking to me via this imperfect KS leader?* We your KS Leaders cheerfully join *Rabbi Sha'ul* and say: "*And still I show you a far better way (TLV) {and yet show I unto you a more excellent way (KJV)}*" (*1 Cor. 12:31*). *Shabbat Shalom!*