

## There are Many Paths, but Only One Journey

*"<sup>1</sup>These are the words (eleh hadevarim) that Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan – in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Di-Zahab. <sup>2</sup>It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea. <sup>3</sup>Now Moses spoke to Bnei-Yisrael, according to all Adonai had commanded him for them – in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month"(Deut. 1:1-3).*

A crossroads is a powerful symbol representing pivotal moments of choice, change, and potential transformation in a one's life. It often signifies a point of indecision, where one must choose between different paths, each with potentially significant and different consequences. The crossroads can also be a site of encounters, where one can meet individuals or even *The Almighty*. He is present in our lives at all times – even at those times when we are hard-pressed, squeezed into a corner, and unsure about which fork on the road to take or what is the next step to take. Life's crossroads can be very painful and confusing. One of Webster's definitions of a crossroad is: "*a crucial point especially where a decision has to be made.*" Do you find yourself at a crossroad today? If not, you might in the near future. But by discerning that:



- *We are not alone.*
- *Scripture gives us guidelines that bring encouragement and discernment.*
- *We can gain new strength to endure and choose properly.*

Robert Frost encountered such a crossroad in his work *The Road Not Taken*:

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler; long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same.*

*And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.*

What a beautiful metaphor about crossroads – critical junctures that necessitate life-changing decisions. Some we prepare for as they approach like a marriage, a career, or a move to a new home. Others, perhaps even most, intersect our lives unexpectedly, like the sudden news of a death in the family, or the loss of a job, or the loss of good health. How do we make wise decisions at such crucial times? How do we maintain our equilibrium when we've been broadsided by bad news?

The Apostle Paul was suddenly blinded at the crossroads with the decision to continue persecuting Believers or become one himself (See *Acts 9:1-6*). He chose the road less traveled (which is the straight-and-narrow path of faith in and to follow *Yeshua*), and that made all the difference. Years later in a letter to the Philippians, the Apostle explained how he had since learned to handle life's crossroads in any

circumstance: *"<sup>11</sup>I am not saying this because I am in need – for whatever circumstance I am in, I have learned to be content. <sup>12</sup>I know what it is to live with humble means, and I know what it is to live in prosperity. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment – both to be filled and to go hungry, to have abundance and to suffer need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through Messiah who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:11-13).*

Moses and Israel were at a crossroad in *Devarim*, in front of the *Yarden* (Jordan). Moses knows this is the end-of-the-line for him. His advice will be: **choose life** and it is as applicable today as it was back at the closing book of the *Torah*. Whatever the crossroad, the Apostle Paul found *Yeshua* was always there and was always willing to strengthen and guide him on his journey, even down the road less traveled. And the same is still true for us today.

### ***When Temptations Cross Our Path***

Temptation stalks us all. It demands that we make a decision which way to go. And though we may not be able to stop it from attacking, we can **resist** and elude its grip. Here are three practical suggestions so that the next time temptation strikes, you will be able to stand and resist as *Messiah Yeshua* did His:

**First: Don't *Be Alarmed... Expect It!***

The more you expect temptation, the less alarmed you'll be by all of its prowling and growling. None of us are free from its presence. It roams in the minds of even the holiest of people. And though none of us can actually see it or touch it, we can prepare for this invisible marauder by adopting a watchful attitude. Temptations aren't nearly as dangerous when nothing they can do surprises you anymore.

**Second: Don't *Be Blind... Detect It!***

Whether Satan is directly behind it or not, temptation has innumerable methods of attack, few of which are easy to detect. So stay alert; watch for signs; become a skilled tracker who can spot temptations before they have a chance to strike.

**Third: Don't *Be Clever... Reject It!***

There's a name for those who flirt with temptation: **victim!** It will devour anyone who dares toy with it, the same as any real lion would in the wild. Do not play with temptations. You can never take the killer instinct out of this wild thing and make it your pet. But you can learn how to protect yourself as *Messiah Yeshua* did by meeting this enemy head on with *The Sword – His written Word* (and BTW, He quoted *Devarim!*): *"<sup>9</sup>How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to Your word. <sup>10</sup>With my whole heart have I sought You, let me not stray from Your mitzvot. <sup>11</sup>I have treasured Your word in my heart, so I might not sin against You" (Ps. 119:9-11).*

Good advice! ***Shabbat Shalom!***