

KI TAVO – “When You Come”

DEUTERONOMY (D’VARIM 26:1 – 29:8)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In this portion Moses begins to conclude his address that details commands given to Israel as they prepare to enter the land.
2. The sidrah begins with presentation of *bikkurim* (first-fruits) and tithes at Sanctuary.

CHAPTER 26: FIRST FRUITS & TITHES

1. Verse 1: “When you come (כי תבוא *ki tavo*) into the land” – indicating a law that is binding when in the land.
 - a. That is not to say, the principle doesn’t apply outside the land.
2. Verse 2: “Shall take the first fruit of the ground” – and bring it to the Sanctuary.
 - a. Rabbis conclude not every fruit but seven mentioned in Deut. 8.
 1. Wheat
 2. Barley
 3. Vines
 4. Figs
 5. Pomegranates
 6. Olives
 7. Dates
3. The individual is to bring it to “the place” where the LORD causes His name to dwell.
 - a. His name is His “authority” and it inhabits that place.
 - b. The person proclaims he has come into the land, evidence of God’s faithfulness.
 - c. His thank offering is evidence Israel is in possession of the land.
4. Verse 5: “A wandering Aramean was my father who went down into Egypt...”
 - a. “A nomadic Aramean” referring to Jacob.
 - b. Hosea 12:12 says that Jacob “fled to Syria” or Aram.
5. The word translated as “wandering” is from root אבד *abad* and denote “straying” or “lost.”
 - a. It also means “to destroy.”
6. Some translators render this “An Aramean sought to destroy my father.”
 - a. The Aramean would be Laban who sought to prevent Jacob from returning to Canaan.
 - b. Laban intended to kill Jacob but was warned against it by God.
 - c. This reminds of Pharaoh’s pursuit of “Jacob” from Egypt.
 - d. Laban would then be considered a “restrainer.”
7. If this interpretation is correct then we are reminded of a future restrainer of Jacob.
 - a. He is called the Assyrian – the anti-Messiah.

“The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. . . . Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: ‘O my people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of

Egypt. For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will my anger in their destruction.’ And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt. It shall come to pass in that day that his burden (the Assyrian) will be taken away from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.” – Isaiah 10:21, 24-27

8. Notice that the “Assyrian” is likened to Pharaoh of Egypt who pursued and tried to restrain.
 - a. This is to happen again with Anti-Messiah.
 - b. This is the object, I believe, of Paul’s restrainer.

“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Y’shua Messiah and **our gathering together to Him**, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Messiah had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day **will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed**, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time**. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. And **then the lawless one will be revealed**, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”

– 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10

9. The context of this passage is “our gathering together” unto Y’shua.
 - a. Which will not happen until the “falling away.”
 - b. The word is *apostasia* typically understood to mean “falling away” from faith.
 - c. Word literally means “departing” or “departure.”
 - d. Tyndale, Coverdale and Geneva version render it “departing.”
10. Some have made this to be speaking of the “rapture” from earth.
 - a. Consider the pattern: Jacob fleeing to Canaan; Israel fleeing to Canaan.
 - b. Being restrained by Laban and Pharaoh.
11. Perhaps, this to be understood to mean when Israel “departs” all nations to return to land.
 - a. The one “restraining” is not Holy Spirit but the one who doesn’t want Israel to flee.
 - b. He is the one to be revealed – the son of perdition (destruction).
12. Greek word for “perdition” is related to Apollyon whose Hebrew equivalent is Abaddon.
 - a. Abaddon comes from אָבָד *abad* – “to destroy” – word used in verse 5.
13. The point would be, those pursued by Assyrian are thankful to be in land and offer firstfruits.
 - a. It is emblematic of their deliverance from evil and provision given by God.
14. The person mentions that Israel was “few in number” when first going to that nation.
 - a. But emerges a “nation, great, mighty and populous.”
15. Verse 8: Goes on to declare that God brought us out with “signs and wonders.”
 - a. Hinting that, in the redemption, signs and wonders will follow.

b. Joel alludes to this.

“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.” – Joel 2:31

16. Verse 10: The individual declares “I have brought the first fruit of the land that You, LORD, have given me” – referring to the land more so than the fruit.
17. Tradition says that to set apart the first fruits one would tie reed grass around that fruit.
 - a. Those first fruits would be taken to Jerusalem with much fanfare and celebration.
18. Verse 12: Tithing is addressed.
 - a. Tithe was taken from crops on a three year cycle.
 - b. First tithe was given to Levite every year.
 - c. Second tithe was taken to Jerusalem in the first, second, fourth and fifth years.
 - d. Tithe of the poor is taken the third and sixth years.
 - e. The seventh year (*sh'mittah*) and the Jubilee (*yovel*) there is no tithe required.
19. Verse 13: “You shall say, ‘I have put away the hallowed things out of my house.’ ”
 - a. The third year in cycle is called the “year of tithing” in verse 13.
 - b. Also called “year of removal” – all tithes over those years must be paid.
 - c. He is declaring unto the LORD that he has obeyed God’s command concerning tithe.
 - d. He has removed all tithe from his house keeping nothing back for himself.
 - e. The tithe is referred to as *שקדש ha'kodesh* – the tithe is “holy” to God.
20. Commentary notes that this is a “confession of tithes” even though no sin is committed.
 - a. It is thus argued that this hearkens back to the Golden Calf incident.
21. If Israel had not sinned at Sinai, priesthood would have remained with firstborn of all Israel.
 - a. Every person would be considered a “sanctuary”; no need to take tithes to Levites.
 - b. But because it did happen and tithes must be taken to Levites, we “confess.”
22. Interesting to note this seeing that we are “temples of the Holy Spirit.”
 - a. We are also called “royal priesthood.”
23. Verse 14: “I have not eaten thereof in my mourning” – as a mourner.
 - a. Second tithe and all sacrificial meats was to be eaten in spirit of joy.
 - b. Tithes or gifts shouldn’t be given begrudgingly or in “mourning.”
 - c. Nor does he partake of it in a ritually unclean state because it is “holy.”
24. Verse 14: He mentions that he has not given of it to the dead.
 - a. Some believe this in opposition to Egyptian custom of placing food in tombs.
 - b. Others believe it alludes to sacrifices of food items to obtain favor of evil spirits.
 - c. The custom of “trick or treat” is related to this latter custom.
25. Verse 15: The individual then appeals to God to look from heaven and bless people and land.
 - a. This is acceptable when one has walked in obedience even in tithing.
26. Verse 17-18: Moses reminds Israel they have acknowledged the LORD as their God.
 - a. Likewise, God acknowledged them as His “treasure” (Heb. *סגולה s'gulah*).
27. Verse 19: Obedient Israel is to be “high above” all nations.
 - a. That they truly might be a “holy” – set apart – nation as God has said.
 - b. This reminds of what was said in Exodus 19:6.

CHAPTER 27: CROSSING THE JORDAN

1. When Israel crossed the Jordan, they were to conduct a ceremony in which the nation would affirm the covenant and its terms by:
 - Writing the law on twelve stones at Mt. Ebal.
 - Erecting an altar at Mt. Ebal.
 - Covenant was to be ratified at Ebal and Gerizim.
 - Twelve curses were to be pronounced there.
2. This happened and is recorded in Joshua 8:30-35.
3. Verse 1: “Moses commanded the people” – indicating each individual had obligation to obey.
 - a. The nation could be preserved from destruction because of each person’s commitment.
4. Verse 2-3: In these verses Moses commands Israel to set up “great stones” to write the Law.
 - a. These stones were to contain “all the words of the Torah.”
 - b. Some believe this to be the stones that Joshua collected from the Jordan.

“Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; and Joshua said to them: ‘Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, What do these stones mean to you? Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.’ ” – Joshua 4:4-7

5. Whatever the origin of these stones, they were to be plastered over and the “tablet” where the words of the Torah would be written for all to see.
 - a. If the stones picked up by the twelve men, that has interesting connotations.
 - b. John the Baptist was in Bethabara (Jn. 1:28) “house of crossing.”
 - c. Where Israel crossed over the Jordan.

“Do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” – Matthew 3:9

6. Is it possible that these “stones” he referred to are the ones set up by Joshua?
 - a. And those are the ones on which words of the Torah are written?
 - b. That there are twelve is interesting but that they are slates for Torah is fascinating.
7. Some argue that only “some” of the words could be written on these stones but the discovery of the Hammurabi Code (about 8,000 words) is written on one stone.
 - a. Would be entirely possible to write all of Torah on 12 stones.
 - b. One Jewish commentator (Ibn Ezra) declared that all Torah was written on them.
8. This was to accentuate God had brought them here and obedience would keep them here.
9. Verse 4-5: These stones along with an altar was to be set up in Mt. Ebal (curses).
 - a. This doesn’t contradict what we learned in Chapter 12 – altar in Sanctuary.
 - b. That law came into force only after the Land was conquered.

10. Notice the first thing Israel did, upon entering land, was to build an altar for worship.
 - a. Pilgrims, upon arrival in New World, first built a meeting house for worship.
11. No iron tool was to be used – altar represented that which restores peace/oneness (שלמים *shalamim*) between Israel and God.
 - a. Was not to be polluted with the use of iron, symbol of war and division.
 - b. Tubal Cain was artificer of things made with bronze and iron (Gen. 4:22).
 - c. Traditionally these articles were weapons.
 - d. The stones of altar were “unhewn stones” - literally “whole” or “peaceful” stones.
 - e. The Hebrew word is שלמות *sh'lemot* from same root as שלים *shalom*.
12. Upon this altar the people would offer burnt offerings and sacrifice “peace offerings.”
13. Verse 8: They were to write the words on the great stones “very plainly.”
 - a. Some rabbis suggest this means in 70 languages so all could see.
 - b. Some say it was written so no one could claim that the Levites had exclusive access.
 - c. Levites were given Moses’ scroll for safekeeping.
14. The Hebrew words are שלמות *baer ha'tev* suggest “skillfully” and “beautifully” written in a clear fashion that is distinguishable as black is from white.
 - a. Hinting that there is no gray area.
 - b. These words gave birth to the school of *soferim* or “scribes.”
 - c. These men were to read, study and, later, write or copy the words.
 - d. Their faithfulness to do that is evident with discover of Dead Sea Scrolls.
15. Verse 12: Moses assigns those tribes who were to stand on Gerizim and bless:
 - Simeon
 - Issachar
 - Levi
 - Joseph
 - Judah
 - Benjamin
16. Verse 13: Assigns tribes to stand on Ebal and to curse:
 - Reuben
 - Gad
 - Asher
 - Zebulun
 - Dan
 - Naphtali
17. According to tradition, priests with ark were between the two mountains.
 - a. They would turn to Gerizim and recite blessings and then to Ebal and recite curses.
 - b. Whether blessings or curses, the people would respond “amen.”
 - c. No doubt, the scene was overwhelming.
18. One reason for ceremony was to demonstrate all Israel was responsible to obey.
 - a. Could not think that individuals could sin in private without repercussions.
 - b. Individual sins will erode the fabric of the nation overall.
19. Although there were tribes to bless, the blessings are not mentioned.
 - a. Blessing would be recited before the curse.
20. Verse 15: “Cursed is the man that makes a graven image” – Aaron made one.
 - a. To which the people would respond, “Amen” or “So be it.”

21. The other curses:
 - Dishonoring parents.
 - Removing neighbor's landmark.
 - Causing the blind go astray – understood to be the morally weak and undisciplined.
 - Perverts justice for the stranger, widow and orphan.
 - Prohibited relationships.
 - Bestiality.
 - Conspiring against one's neighbor.
 - Taking a bribe.
22. Verse 26: Summed by statement, "Cursed is one that doesn't confirm this Torah by obeying."
 - a. Torah must be accepted "in full" and not claim that any one command is invalid.
 - b. This curse not imposed on one who commits sin but one who denies its relevancy.

CHAPTER 28: BLESSINGS AND CURSES

1. It is interesting that George Washington took oath of office with hand on this passage.
 - a. Oath was taken at Federal Hall in NYC on Wall Street.
 - b. In his address he said:

"No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency.... We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself ordained."

2. In other words, as a nation, we owe our existence to the Almighty and should live by His rules.
 - a. Essentially the very thing Moses was conveying to Israel.
3. In that same address Washington wrote that the country would endure:

"until the people of America shall have lost all virtue; until they shall have become totally insensible to the difference between freedom and slavery; until they shall have been reduced to such poverty of spirit as to be willing to sell that pre-eminent blessing, the birthright of a freeman, for a mess of pottage: in short, until they have been found incapable of governing themselves and ripe for a master."

4. In other words, the nation would no long endure if we abandoned the principles that brought about our birth as a nation.
 - a. Essentially what Moses was conveying to Israel.
5. Before he died, Moses informed Israel what blessings would overtake them if they obeyed God and what would befall them if they didn't – this chapter is called "the Warnings."
6. Verse 2: The blessings of obedience will "overtake" them – as if they were entities.
7. Verse 3: Will be blessed in city and field – even if the city is overturned, he will be blessed.
 - a. In an end-time context, if cities are overturned, blessed are delivered (Lot) or warned.

8. Verse 4: Blessed is fruit of your body and your land – alludes to relationship between the two.
 - a. We are formed from dust of the earth and should produce good fruit.
 - b. When we do, the dust from which we came responds accordingly.
 - c. When we don't, the land responds accordingly.
9. Verse 5: “Blessed will be your basket and kneading trough.”
 - a. Metaphors for harvest of fruit and daily bread.
 - b. Word for “basket” is same word used in 26:2 – presented before the LORD.
 - c. It is evidence of His faithfulness to keep His promise concerning the land.
10. Verse 8: “He will bless you in the land” – therefore no need for international trade to survive.
 - a. The land will be proficient in caring for all your temporal needs.
11. Verse 9: “He will establish you as a holy nation IF you keep His commandments.”
12. Verse 10: “All the peoples of the earth shall see” that the LORD is with you and will fear.
 - a. Each nation has its own beliefs but will see that the LORD is source of all blessing.
 - b. This verse alludes to the mandate given to Israel – to be a light to the nations.
 - c. In order to attain this goal, must obey His commands and be set apart from nations.
13. Verse 12: The rain will come to the land in its appropriate season.
 - a. Too much rain when not needed can be a curse; little rain when needed a blessing.
14. Verse 13: Israel will be the head and not the tail; possible to be over some and under others.
 - a. Israel, when obedient, will be subservient to no one but the Creator.
15. For the rest of the chapter, Moses outlines the curses that will befall disobedient Israel.
 - a. As you read, you see that the blessings have become curses.
 - b. God's laws have a reverse side to them only visible when we disobey Him.
16. It appears that these curses are generally national and not individual.
 - a. That is not to say that they can't pertain to individual.
 - b. It is to say that, nationally, if the tendency is disobedience the nation can expect curses.
17. Verse 23: “And your heaven will be as brass and the earth under you, iron.”
 - a. Brass is נחשת *n'choshet* and iron is ברזל *barzel*.
 - b. These are the items mentioned in conjunction with Tubal Cain (Gen. 4:22).
 - c. These things are affiliated with the Adversary.
 - d. Hints to me that the heavens and earth will be working against the one in disobedience.
18. Verse 29: “You shall grope in noon day as a blind man gropes in darkness.”
 - a. A blind man in daylight is noticed by people who can pity him; not in darkness.
 - b. So the disobedient will not be pitied as a blind man isn't noticed in darkness.
19. Verses 30-33: Israel would fall victim to conquerors who would consume everything.
 - a. Nothing could be called their own; not even their children and wives.
 - b. Romans shipped younger Jews to Rome as slaves and to gratify their lusts.
20. Verse 36: “The LORD will bring you and your king unto a nation you don't know.”
 - a. Jehoiachin was carried into Babylon with 10,000 of his countrymen (2 Kings 24).
 - b. Being in foreign lands would lure one into assimilating into that culture and religion.
21. Verse 42: “The locusts possess all your trees and the fruit of the land.”
 - a. The word “possess” means to dispossess the former owner – not devour.
 - b. How could locusts “possess” a man's fields and trees? Is this a hint about future?
22. Locusts in Scripture:
 - Locusts brought in by “east wind” (Exodus 10:14-15).
 - Amalekites, Midianites and people of the east (Judges 7:12).

- Locusts come into the land from the wilderness (Joel 2:3).
 - Locusts in Revelation 9 from the abyss.
23. Verse 43: “The stranger in the midst of you shall rise up above you” – as you go lower.
 - a. Note “in the midst” – this is the methodology of the Adversary.
 - b. Hinting that Israel comes under the heel of the Adversary?
 - c. God’s people would become servants to those they once mastered.
 24. Verse 45: “These curses will pursue and overtake you” – as blessings, spoken of as entities.
 - a. If disobedient, nothing can stop these curses from overtaking the people.
 25. Verses 46-48: Curses will serve as sign because “you did not serve the LORD.”
 - a. “By reason of abundance” – the abundance seduced them into disobedience.
 - b. This said before they actually entered the land.
 - c. Because they didn’t serve God they will serve “your enemy” sent against you.
 - d. Through the enemy, God puts a “yoke of iron” upon their necks.
 26. Ezekiel speaks to this issue – because of disobedience being turned over to other nations.

“Because they had not executed my judgments, but had despised my statutes, profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. Therefore I also gave them up to statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live.”

– Ezekiel 20:24-25

27. In short, because you thought My laws were too strict, I’ll turn you over to other’s laws.
 - a. You won’t be able to live according to their laws.
28. Even though these curses have come upon Israel in past, I see hints of the future.
 - a. Blessings becoming curses.
 - b. Abundance seducing people into disobedience.
 - c. The enemy in the midst of you.
 - d. The “yoke of iron” referring back to the yoke of Assyrian broken (Is. 10).
29. In fact, verses 49-50: “The LORD will bring a nation...of fierce countenance.”
 - a. Assyrians were first to come against Israel followed by Babylonians.
 - b. Their “fierce countenance” caused them to take no pity.
 - c. This is terminology used by Daniel speaking of anti-Messiah (Dan. 8:23).
30. Now note the next verse:

“You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits (Heb. means “narrow place”) in which your enemy shall distress you.” – Deuteronomy 28:53

31. Word translated “straits” from root that means “pressure forcefully”; “tribulations.”
32. Footnote: spelling of the word צִדִּיק *tzik* (from צוֹק *tzuk*) is distinguished from צַדִּיק *tzadik* (“righteous”) by missing ך *dalet*- “door.”
 - a. Disobedience will lead to tribulation under anti-Messiah.
 - b. Provokes men to turn to the Word, the Messiah Y’shua (the door).
33. Verse 56: Things get so bad that the most delicate of women will become monsters.
 - a. Applies to the gentlest of men as well.
 - b. Personalities will be changed by the harsh conditions of the “tribulations.”

34. Verse 60: The “tribulations” will intensify until the “diseases of Egypt” cling to you.
 - a. The same plagues that Israel saw fall upon the Egyptians.
 - b. Moreover, plagues not mentioned will also fall upon His disobedient people.
 - c. In Revelation, judgments resembling those of Egypt are poured out.
35. Verse 64: “The LORD will scatter you among all peoples...to serve other gods.”
 - a. This is reiterated in Ezekiel 20.
 - b. The word serve is same word used for “bondservant.”
 - c. Their lives will be lived in fear of sudden and unexpected death.
36. Verse 68: “The LORD will bring you back into Egypt” – repealing prohibition in Ex. 17:16.
 - a. Slaves would dread idea of returning to land where he was once enslaved.
 - b. When Jerusalem destroyed by Romans, Jews were forced into slavery.
 - c. Many of them were sent to Egypt; some to mines and more to the arenas.
 - d. Slave market was glutted and many were not bought but starved (v. 68).

CHAPTER 29: TIME TO KNOW

1. Verse 1-2: Moses reminds them that they saw all the great signs in Egypt.
2. Yet, “the LORD has not given you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear until today.”
 - a. The time had come for them to understand – as they enter the land.
 - b. Prophesied that when His people enter the land, law would be on their hearts.
 - c. Reminds of Paul’s statement quoting Isaiah:

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 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.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” – 1 Corinthians 2:7-10