
WEEK 3 SCRIPTURE READING

5779 / 2018-19

A person wearing a white, textured robe is shown from the chest down, holding a terracotta jug. The jug is tilted, and a stream of water is pouring from its spout. The person's hands are visible, holding the jug. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

by Roly Buys

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Parashah Lekh-Lekha | “go forth, yourself” | לך-לך Week 3

Somewhere between the Past and the Future

The verse that stands out for me this week is:

Genesis 12:8 “He left that place, went to the hill east of Beit-El and pitched his tent. With Beit-El to the west and ‘Ai to the east, he built an altar there and called on the Name of ADONAI.”

We are reading about the journey and the process of claiming the Land that had been promised to him.

Whilst he had a valid / legitimate claim, we should note a few pointers in the way Abraham goes about this, in comparison with what we witness today.

- ◆ Abraham **maps** out the Land promised to him.
- ◆ Abraham **build** GODLY Altars dedicating the Land to YHVH.
- ◆ Abraham **waits** until YHVH says it’s the Time and the Season.



What do we see today ...

- ◆ People want to take the Land by force
- ◆ People want to get Land without paying for it
- ◆ People want to enforce rights that are not foundational to good society

Consider this ...

- YHVH does not mention detail for the want of adding words for us to read.
- Instead each word / description made is placed there for a reason.
- We need to understand why Abraham chooses to build an altar between these two cities.

Meaning of Strong's 1008 "*Beit-al*"

Strong's 1008: bath-al	• The House of GOD
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Meaning of Strong's 5857 "*ah'e*"

Strong's 5857: ah'e	• A heap of ruins / rocks
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And this comes to pass in:

Joshua 8:28-29 *"So Y'hoshua burned down Ai and turned it into a tel forever, so that it remains a ruin to this day. The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening; at sundown Y'hoshua gave an order, so they took his carcass down from the tree, threw it at the entrance of the city gate and piled on it a big heap of stones, which is there to this day."*

Let us think about what we have just learnt ...

We know that the Tabernacle stood at Bethel for years ...

In this portion we come to understand that it is a position in MESSIAH that we all want to reach.

It is that time when we have fully dealt with:

- the past,
- renewed our minds and hearts,
- completely dealt with our own ego.

It is a journey ... it is an aspiration ...

On the other hand, we know that much of our lives are the "HEAP OF RUINS" – we are leaving that behind us (in the past) and moving forward to a life of Holiness (purity).

This portion teaches us that we are somewhere along this path of life.

Hopefully, we are further away from the heap of ruins and closer to the House of YHVH.

Circumstances, trials and tribulations may push you back along this road.

Hurts and wounds from fellow believers may cause you to take a detour, but one thing is certain ... the destination is clear.

What we do with this is our choice ...

In many ways this is a similar journey as Abraham when he starts out at UR - the difference is that you and I have the record of his choices, and the roadmap of his trip, to help us keep on track.



We have a NEW Destination

- ◆ It is the Living Stone Tabernacle.
- ◆ Let us not make the same mistakes that the children of Israel made on their journey!
- ◆ We don't want to go to Beth-al today.

In the past, it was a **place of worship**.

Sometimes man tries to build his own altar - as was the case of Jeroboam.

We don't want a Beth-al, or a Dan, or an Ai in our lives.

A. Bethal

- ◆ This is the place of the first altar.
- ◆ It is the place where the Tabernacle stood for hundreds of years
- ◆ It is the place that we know and where we feel at home / comfortable with

If you really think carefully, you will realize that this is the place where RELIGION rules:

- a) Where **traditions of man are the norm** (this is the way our fathers did things – don't rock the boat).
- b) Where **culture and ritual are more important** than the WORD, or the Holy Spirit.
- c) Where **traditions and ritual fulfil the needs of man - man** no longer wants to be accountable to YHVH in any way.

Matthew 15:7-9 *"You hypocrites! Yesha'yahu was right when He prophesied about you, 'These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. Their worship of Me is useless, because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.'"*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *"For the time is coming when people will not have patience for sound teaching, but will cater to their passions and gather around themselves teachers who say whatever their ears itch to hear. Yes, they will stop listening to the truth, but will turn aside to follow myths."*

B. Dan

- ◆ The altar of Dan is set up near pagan places.
- ◆ If you visit the site today, you will find the supposedly GODLY Temple not far from the pagan temple.
- ◆ The message ... it is great / acceptable to mix GODLY Worship with anything else that you like.
- ◆ Dan speaks of convenience.

- a) You see, it is far to walk to Jerusalem for every Feast ... today, you can go just around the corner and it is alright!!
- b) You see, this way you save both time and money ... after all, this temple will not expect a tithe as there are no real Levites here.
- c) Laziness is an integral part of human nature – if we can find an easy way to serve YHVH (it is all grace and no obedience) ... then why not?

Dan speaks of empty worthless, man-made worship!

Matthew 7:13-14 *“Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”*

C. Ai

We have already seen that Ai is a heap of rocks / ruins.



- ◆ In the physical domain something of little value.
- ◆ In the spiritual domain this speaks of “uncleanness and being unholy”.
- ◆ It describes the circumstances under which a man is prohibited from entering the Tabernacle.

- a) In the **Book of Joshua** we read about the attack that goes horribly wrong for the Israelites.
- b) We know that the real reason is the work of one man who chose to allow pagan idols from the battle of Jericho to be brought into the camp.
- c) However, the city of Ai is a difficult battle field.
- d) The enemy city is built like a rabbit hole ... small streets, difficult fighting terrain and a place where a few men could hold off a significant army.
- e) Ai closely represents the enemy camp where sin, generational curses and hurts cause deep rooted issues that will not easily see the light of day.
- f) These have to be drawn out into the open so that they can be dealt with – in Joshua’s case, he devises a strategy of an ambush.

Joshua 7:3-5 *“So Y’hoshua set out for Ai with all the people who could fight. Y’hoshua chose 30,000 men, the most courageous of his troops, and sent them out by night. He instructed them, “You are to **lie in wait to ambush the city from behind**. Stay close to the city; and all of you, be ready. I and all the troops with me will approach the city; and when they come out to attack us, as they did before, we will run away from them.”*

Joshua 7:6-8 *“They will chase after us until we have drawn them away from the city; because they will say, ‘They’re running away from us, as they did before’; so we’ll run away from them. Then you will **jump up from your ambush position and take possession of the city**, for ADONAI your God will hand it over to you. When you have captured the city, you are to set it on fire; do according to what ADONAI has said. Those are your orders.”*

What should we think about this week?

1. Have you dealt with the things of the past, or are you walking through life carrying a bag of heavy rocks with you wherever you go?
2. Are you desperately seeking pure Worship, and have come to stand before YHVH to ask Him to take the burning coal to your mouth so that your words can be Holy?
3. Have you removed all of the pagan festivals (Valentine, Easter, Christmas, and so forth), from your calendar and instituted YHVH’s Cycle of Feasts?
4. Have you turned your family in the direction of the New Jerusalem?

A FINAL THOUGHT

- ❖ Often we carry burdens that are either not ours to carry, or are burdens that should be laid down once and for all time.
- ❖ We cannot put on the pieces of armour suggested by Paul, if we have loads of our past history on our shoulders ... the parts of the armour of God will simply not fit over the burdens.
- ❖ In which case you are not fit to go to war AND that means you will not take your Land.



Heavy burdens on our shoulders!

BLESSING

Numbers 6:24-27

“Y’varekh’kha YHVH v’yishmerekha.
May YHVH bless you and keep you.

Ya’er YHVH panav eleikha vichunekka.
May YHVH make His Face shine on you and show you His favour.

Yissa YHVH panav eleikha v’yasem l’kha shalom.
May YHVH lift up His Face toward you and give you peace.

In this way they are to put **My Name** on the people of Israel, so that I will BLESS them.

