

## Parashat Shophtim- Judges at the Gates

# Netzarin Antoecie

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Parashat Shophtim: **Devarim [Deuteronomy] 16:18-21:9**

**Devarim 16:18-17:13**

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## Justice Must Be Administered

**Devarim [Deuteronomy] 16: 18** "Appoint judges and officers within all your gates, which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes. And they shall judge the people with righteous right-ruling. **19** "Do not distort right-ruling, do not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. **20** "Follow righteousness, righteousness alone, so that you live and inherit the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you. **21** "Do not plant for yourself any tree as an Asherah [a pagan sacred pillar] near the altar of יהוה your Elohim that you make for yourself. **22** "And do not set up a pillar, which יהוה your Elohim hates.

**Devarim [Deuteronomy] 17: 1** "Do not slaughter to יהוה your Elohim a bull or sheep which has any blemish, any defect, for that is an abomination to יהוה your Elohim. **2** "When there is found in your midst, in any of your cities which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the eyes of יהוה your Elohim, in transgressing His covenant, **3** and has gone and served other mighty ones and bowed down to them, or bowed to the sun or to the moon or to any of the host of the heavens, which I have not commanded, **4** and it has been made known to you and you have heard and have searched it out diligently. Then see, if true: the matter is confirmed that such an abomination has been done in Yisra'el,

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### Justice Must Be Administered

5 then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has done this evil matter and you shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. 6 "At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he that is to die be put to death. He is not put to death by the mouth of one witness. 7 "The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death and the hand of all the people last. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst. 8 "When any matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, or between stroke and stroke – matters of strife within your gates – then you shall rise and go up to the place which יהוה your Elohim chooses, 9 and you shall come to the priests, the Lēvites and to the judge who is in those days and shall inquire. And they shall declare to you the Word of right-ruling, 10 and you shall do according to the word which they declare to you from that place which יהוה chooses. And you shall guard to do according to all that they instruct you. 11 "Do according to the Torah in which they teach you, according to the right-ruling which they say to you. You do not turn to the right or to the left from the word which they declare to you. 12 "And the man who acts arrogantly, so as not to listen to the priest who stands to serve there before יהוה your Elohim, or to the judge, that man shall die. So, you shall purge the evil from Yisra'el. 13 "And let all the people hear and fear and no longer do arrogantly.

**Torah:** [Devarim \[Deuteronomy\] 16:18-21:9](#), [Haftarah: 51:12-52:12](#),

**Netzarim Ketuvim:** [Yahuchanan \[John\] 1:19-27](#).

**Introduction:** In this portion Mosheh continues in his final speeches to the people with a vital but heavy subject being that of appointing Judges [**Shophtim**], and law enforcement officers [**shotrim**]. These Judges would not only teach but interpret the Laws of the Torah. It is then the role of the officers to enforce the Torah on the Judges behalf. It is this concept of Judging & enforcing today that we will hope to fully appreciate as relating to Law & grace which for some has been a slippery slope.

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## MOSHEH TEACHING

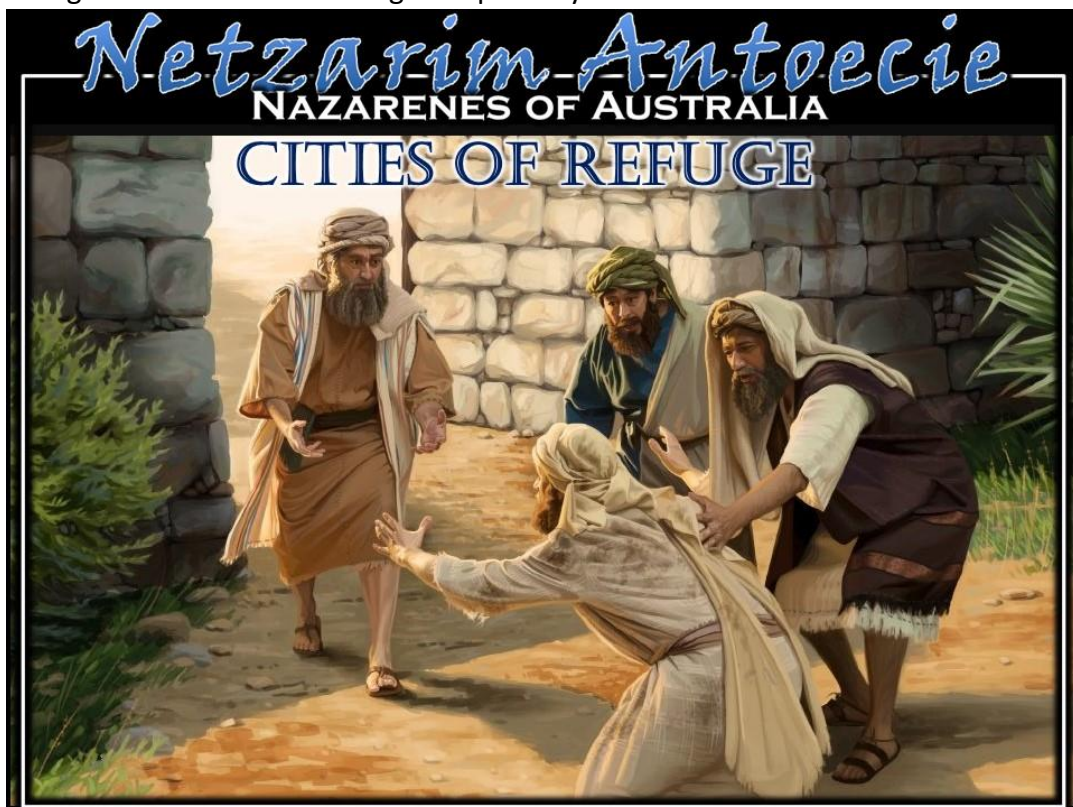


### Events in the Torah Portion:

1. Fair Judges are to be appointed & blemish free sacrifices detailed.
2. Mosheh instructs on the conditions of choosing a Melek [a King].
3. The Kohanim [the Priests] & the Levites were to have no personal property inheritance since they were especially chosen to be servants of YHWH & He was their appointed inheritance.
4. Prohibitions concerning fortune telling, divination & occult practices are given to cause the people to have faith only in YHWH.
5. Matters concerned with true & false Prophets are mentioned.



6. The appointment of the 6 Cities of refuge to which one may flee for an accidental killing that would then be Judged impartially.



7. Mosheh also declares the need for at least two witnesses in capital punishment cases with severe punishment for false testimony.

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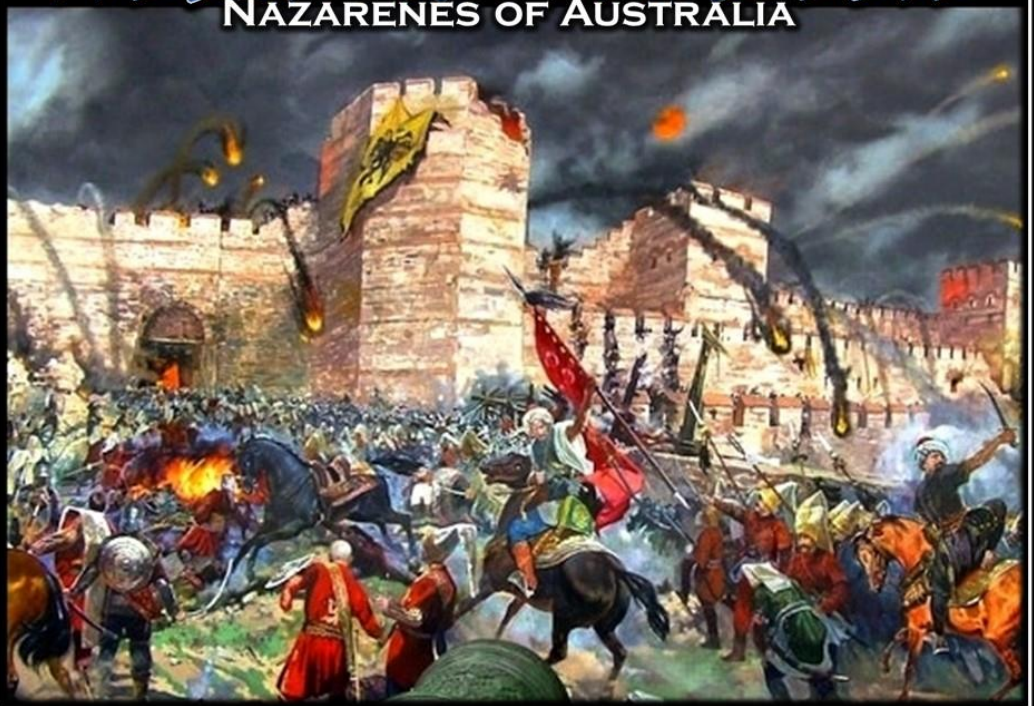
## Capital Punishment



Details concerned with military service & exemptions detailed with peaceful overtures to be made before possible annihilation.

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8. Even with a siege a command is given not to cut down fruit trees.
9. Finally, procedures for unsolved murders are given.

**The Foundation of Any Society:**



It is of great importance that today we come to see whether the rule of Law in some way has been superseded by Chesed [Grace] as some might think or is that a misunderstanding. We therefore begin with these words from Scripture that reveal how translators have an ability to cause a dividing wedge to produce a negative thought where there should not be one as in:

**Yahuchanan [John] 1:17** For the Law [the Torah] was given by the hand of Mosheh; [but] mercy [Chesed] and truth came through the hand of Yeshua [Yahusha] the Messiah.

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**Blue Letter Bible**

Greek Interlinear :: John 1:17 Aa

Q Jhn 1:17 KJV • TR Q Entire Chapter Go to Bible Switch Word Order

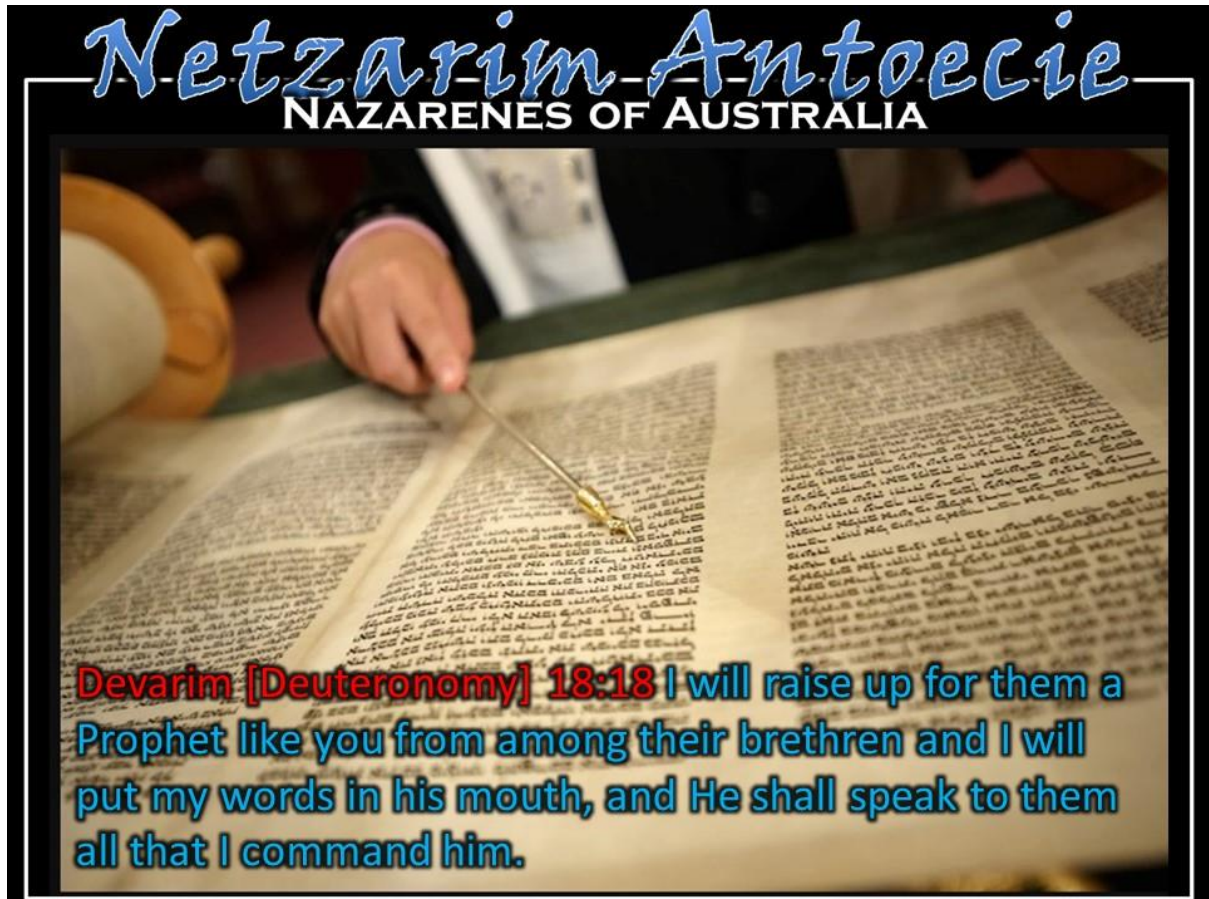
**English Word Order** [Legend]

**John 1:17 (KJV | TR)**

	hoti	nomos	didōmi	dia	mōysēs	charis	kai	alētheia	ginomai
	ε3754	ε3551	ε1325	ε1223	ε3475	ε5485	ε2532	ε225	ε1096
v17	ὅτι	νόμος	ἐδόθη	διὰ	Μωσέως	χάρις	καὶ	ἀλήθεια	ἐγένετο
	For	the law	was given	by	Moses,	grace	and	truth	came
	CONJ	N-NSM	V-API-3S	PREP	N-GSM	N-NSF	CONJ	N-NSF	V-2ADI-3S
	dia	iēsous	christos						
	ε1223	ε2424	ε5547						
	διὰ	Ἰησοῦ	Χριστοῦ						
	by	Jesus	Christ.						
	PREP	N-GSM	N-GSM						

It is the insertion of **“but”** that has completely changed the mental thoughts of many about this verse, a word that is absent from the Greek with the verse rather just continuing its thought.

Any logical person today has no doubt that Law & order is the very foundation of any healthy prosperous society. Mosheh himself declares that YHWH will raise up a Navi [**a Prophet**] from their midst that they must hear & so we read in:



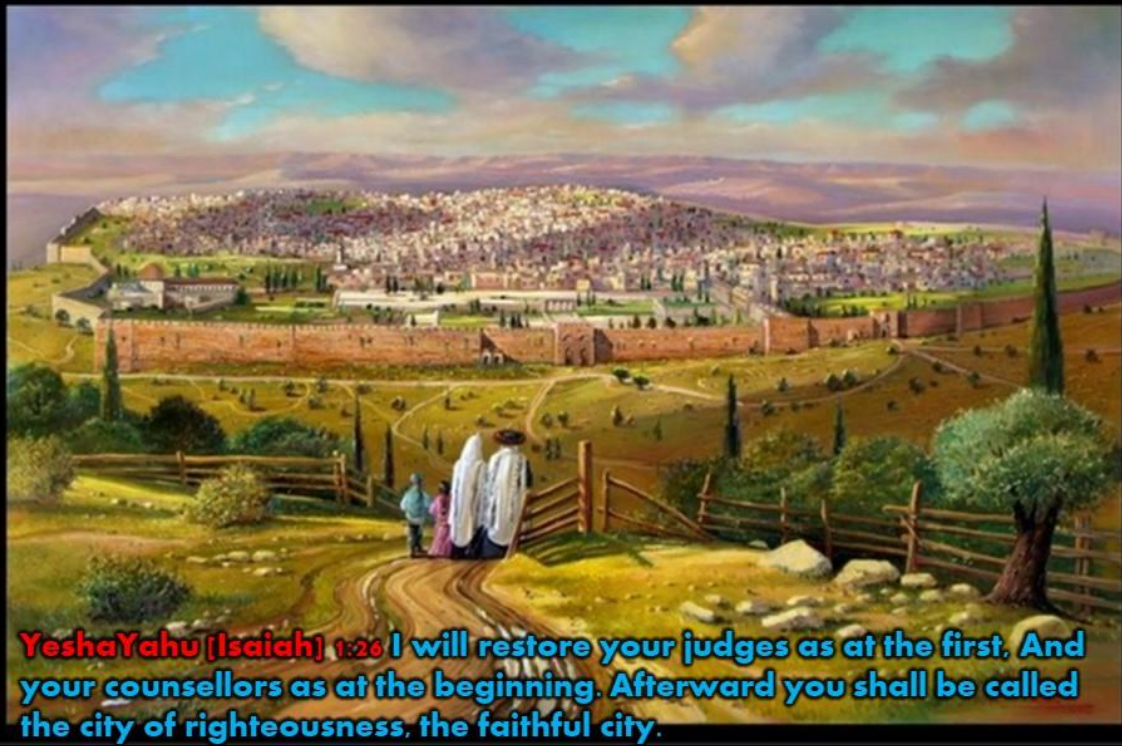
**Devarim [Deuteronomy] 18:18** I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren and I will put my words in his mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command him.

Since YHWH had entered a marriage covenant with Yisrael which they broke the Messiah would come to restore that covenant therefore the relationship, not without any of his former laws that reveal character. Yeshua therefore comes to restore the heart of man to desire to fulfil his instructions **[the Torah]** not abolish it.

There is a wonderful thought that comes to us from the Navi **[the Prophet] YeshaYahu** [Isaiah] in the days of the final redemption when Messiah reigns in:

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**YeshaYahu [Isaiah] 1:26** I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

The beauty of this promise is that when the Messiah returns to rule & reign in righteousness, there will be no need for **“enforcers”** of the Torah because all His people will have a deep desire to obey YHWH & only counsellors will be needed to explain the decisions of the Judges. That will be a blessed time.



The Need For Today:



We need only turn on the News to see if Law is necessary & we know the answer. Law brings with it a sense of peace & security. Recently we have seen riots even in the U.S. and in many other countries & many would say our world is in for a difficult time. Unfortunately, within religious circles judgement & Law has been frowned on because of a verse like this in:



**MatithYahu [Matthew] 7:1** “Do not judge, lest you be judged. **2**“For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. And with the same measure you use, it shall be measured to you.

We are all aware that no one likes being judged. This reading however continues with a judging that is righteous as opposed to self-righteous, self-seeking, hypocritical or other kinds of unfair judgements.

A common extract from scripture about tithing that has commonly be used is in fact about judging not about tithing at all as found in:

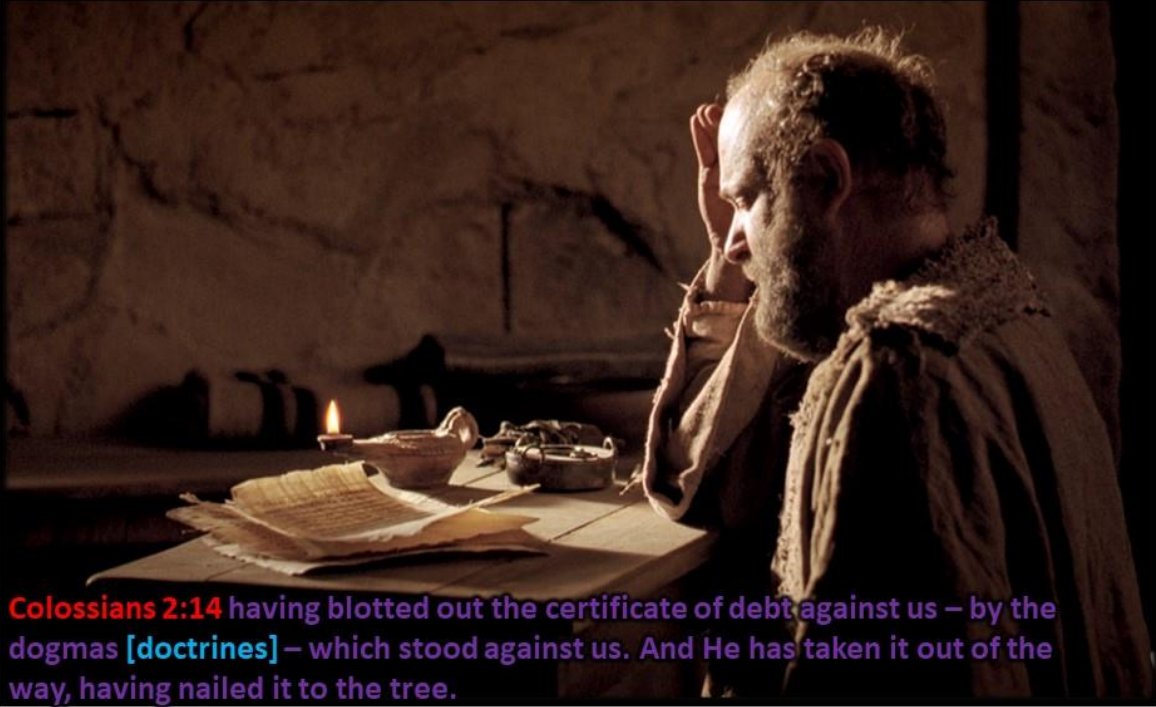


**Luke 6: 37-38** “And do not judge and you shall not be judged at all. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned at all. Forgive and you shall be forgiven. **38**“Give and it shall be given to you. A good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over shall be put into your lap. For with the same measure with which you measure, it shall be measured back to you.”

In truth in the course of seeking to nullify the Law we now come to:

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**Colossians 2:14** having blotted out the certificate of debt against us – by the dogmas [doctrines] – which stood against us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the tree.

Many have considered this to mean the Law or Torah was nailed to the tree, but this is far from the truth. **Shaul** [Paul] however was rather speaking of the undeserved forgiveness of sins because of our debt requiring punishment & that debt was nailed to the Tree. Therefore, it is best to understand Scripture in its context. In the days of Yeshua when a criminal was executed as Yeshua was, it was common practice to nail a list of his crimes on the tree. This is why a plaque read above Yeshua saying “this is the King of the Jews.” This was supposedly His crime.

**Knowing the myriad of sins hanging over him we find these words from King David when he prayed in:**

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**Tehillim**  
**[Psalms] 51:9**  
**Hide Your face**  
**from my sins**  
**and blot out**  
**all my iniquity.**

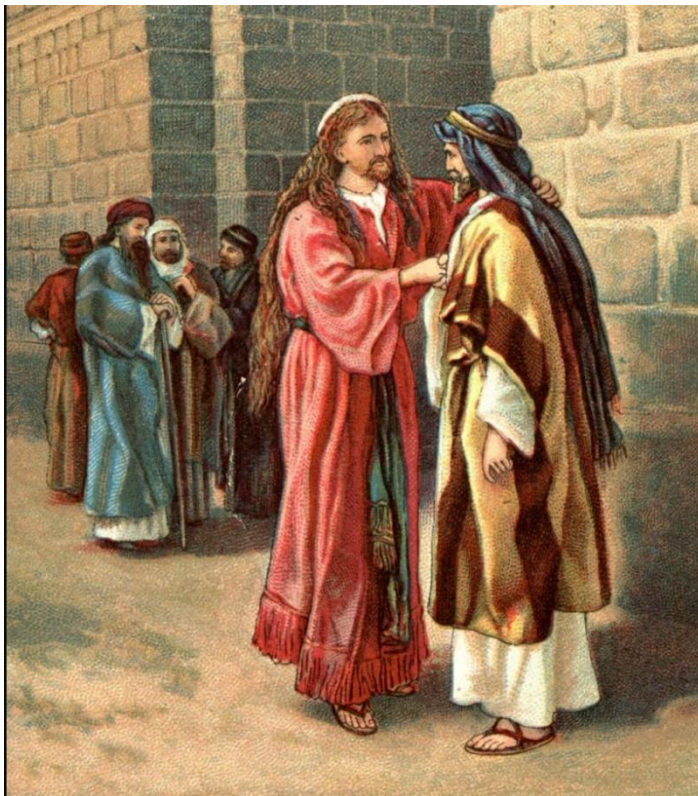
**Tehillim [Psalms]**

**51:9 Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.**

It is therefore the list of transgressions that we need blotted out that we might live & not the Law that was nailed to the Tree.

## The Significance of Gates:

In our reading we see that the Judges & officers were to be appointed in all the gates. We might wonder what this means but it was common practice that Judgment was made at the gates of a city where cases were heard. From this we find examples like lot at the gate of Sodom & why Absalom stayed at the gate to speak to all with a grievance as we read in:



**Sh'muel Beyth [2 Samuel] 15:2 Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Yisrael." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." 4 Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice."**

We therefore come to see that Gates served a direct purpose where Justice was to be served. Also, a City Gate made it vulnerable to attack as they were made of wood. An interesting note at this point is that where there was a Gate there was invariably a Well right near it. The purpose of these wells was to put out the fiery arrows of the Enemy which were shot at the wooden gates to cause them to burn so they could be breached. We can now see the symbology that we read in the Brit Chadashah or the Nazarene Writings in:

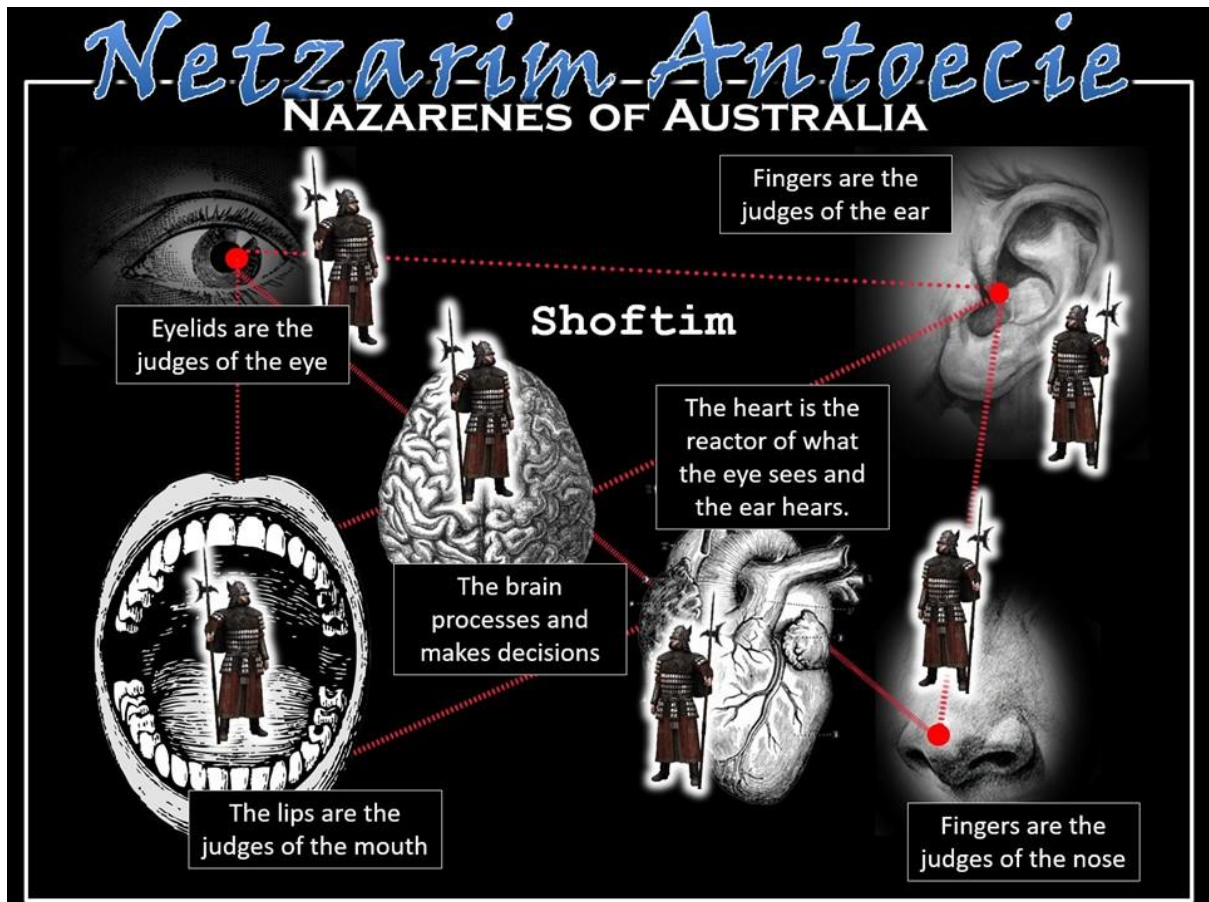
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*Ephesians*  
**6:6**  
Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

**Ephesians 6:16** above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Gates had the universal function of bringing things into the City and taking things out which will become more apparent. The Gates therefore in the Life of a believer represent places of authority in your personality. These places could be said to be where you take things in or out like the eyes, ears, mouth where the areas of Judging include the brain or heart.



the Unlike the walls of your personality that represented thoughts and feelings the Gates represent the places you make decisions therefore the places you say **“yes”** to YAHWEH or no to Ha Satan therefore like the Gates of the City they allow or reject things from entering or send out or retain things from leaving.

### The Final Appropriation of Gates of Judgement in our Lives:

From the Book of NechemYAH (Nehemiah) we see a great picture of the Rebuilding of the Esteem & Honour of the Great City that YAHWEH has eternally chosen to place his Name and presence. To the Believer this story is a great Metaphor because we too are the City of our great Elohim & need our walls rebuilt but to fully be protected from external attack YAHWEH needs our Gates rebuilt and hung as well as they are our weakest point of entry. They therefore reflect on the decisions one makes and are expressed by the Words one speaks whether they be constructive or potentially destructive. We may find in our Shabbat liturgy the following and it would be good to reflect on how this has the potential to guide our words as declared in:

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**TEHILLIM (PSALMS) 19:14**  
**MAY THE WORDS OF MY**  
**MOUTH AND THE MEDITATION**  
**OF MY HEART BE ACCEPTABLE**  
**IN YOUR SIGHT, O YAHWEH,**  
**MY STRENGTH AND MY**  
**REDEEMER.**

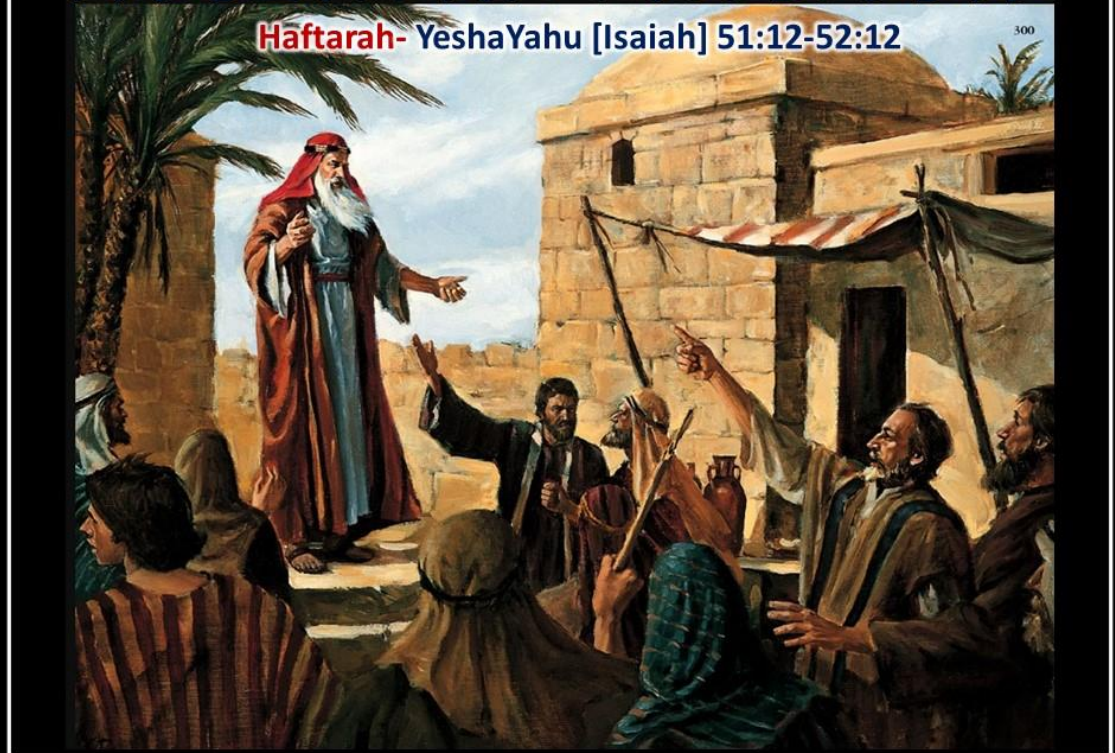


**Tehillim (Psalms) 19:14** May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O YAHWEH, my strength and my Redeemer.

In truth if we truly are in Messiah, we will hopefully come far nearer to the place of not needing Judges & especially law enforcement but in the society we live they are essential though in our faith filled Assemblies we may hopefully need more the assistance of Counsellors since we also have our greatest counsellor being the Ruach Ha Kodesh [the Holy Spirit] who binds us all together.

**Haftarah:** YeshaYahu [Isaiah] 51:12-52:12

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Elohim Redeems Yerushalayim

**Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 51: 12** "I, I am He who comforts you. Who are you that you should be afraid of man that dies, and of the son of man who is made like grass? **13** "And you have forgotten יהוה your Maker who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you continually fear, all the day, because of the rage of the oppressor, when he has been preparing to destroy. And where is the rage of the oppressor? **14** "Bowed, he hastens to be loosened, that he should not die in the pit and that his bread should not fail. **15** "But I am יהוה your Elohim, stirring up the sea with its waves roaring. יהוה of hosts is His Name. **16** "And I have put My Words in your mouth and with the shadow of My hand I have covered you, to plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth and to say to Tsiyon, 'You are My people.'"

**Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 52: 1** Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Tsiyon, put on your garments of splendour, O Yerushalayim, the set-apart city! For no more do the uncircumcised and the unclean come into you. **2** Shake yourself from the dust, arise and sit down, O Yerushalayim. Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck, O captive daughter of Tsiyon! **3** For thus said יהוה, "You have been sold for naught and you are redeemed not with silver."



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### My People Shall Know My Name

4 For thus said the Master יהוה, "At first My people went down into Mitsrayim [Egypt] to sojourn there and Ashshur [Assyria] oppressed them without cause. 5 "And now, what have I here," declares יהוה, "that My people are taken away for naught? Those who rule over them make them wail," declares יהוה, "and My Name is despised all day continually. 6 "Therefore My people shall know My Name, in that day, for I am the One who is speaking. See, it is I." 7 How pleasant upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims deliverance, who says to Tsiyon "Your Elohim reigns!" 8 The voice of your watchmen! They shall lift up their voices, together they shout for joy, because eye to eye they see the return of יהוה to Tsiyon. 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Yerushalayim! For יהוה shall comfort His people, He shall redeem Yerushalayim. 10 יהוה shall lay bare His set-apart arm in the eyes of all the nations. And all the ends of the earth shall see the deliverance of our Elohim.

Even though Yisrael had forgotten YHWH he still comforts them because He is YHWH their Elohim who made everything YHWH Tsavaot [YHWH of Hosts] is his name. Yerushalayim had experienced the Lord's anger, but a time of restoration will come & Zion will put on beautiful garments of honour and dignity. A time when messengers spread the good news of the return of redeemed Yisrael. Shaul [Paul] broadened this Millennial reference to the preaching of the good news that Messiah will reign personally over His Kingdom & that the comfort & honour of the Holy City will be magnificently restored.

## Netzarim Ketuvim: Yahuchanan [John] 1:19-27

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## Netzarim Ketuvim- Yahuchanan [John] 1:19-27



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## Yahuchanan [John] Gives His Witness

**Yahuchanan [John] 1: 19** Now this was the witness of Yahuchanan [John] when the Yahudim [Jews] sent from Yerushalayim priests and Lēvites to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." **21** And they asked him, "What then, are you Ēliyahu [Elijah]?" So he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." **22** Therefore they said to him, "Who are you, so that we give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" **23** He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of יהוה,' as the prophet Yeshayahu [Isaiah] said." **24** And those sent were of the Pharisees, **25** and they asked him, saying, "Why then do you immerse if you are not the Messiah, nor Ēliyahu, nor the Prophet?" **26** Yahuchanan [John] answered them, saying, "I immerse in water, but in your midst stands One whom you do not know, **27** the One coming after me, is preferred before me, who has become before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen."

In this reading we see that the Yahudim [the Jews] had most surely heard of Yahuchanan [John] the immerser and his miraculous birth to Elisheva [Elizabeth] who was extremely aged & now how he was preaching in the wilderness. Out of this concern the Pharisees sent Priests & Levites to ask Yahuchanan [John] some very pointed questions about his identity. They expressly asked whether he was the Messiah, or EliYahu [Elijah] or the Prophet which is a reference to our reading from Devarim. Just as Mosheh said that a Prophet like him would arise among them so answered Yahuchanan [John]. He makes it quite clear that there stands one among them one who was greater than he. Just as these Yahudim [Jews] would refuse Yeshua the one spoken of by Mosheh the same is true today but those that truly embrace & accept him as Master are exceedingly blessed and called children of the living Elohim.

**Amein! Shavua Tov Aleychem [A Good Seven Unto You]**