

*Parashat Mattot/ Masei- To Vow or not to Vow that is the Question:*

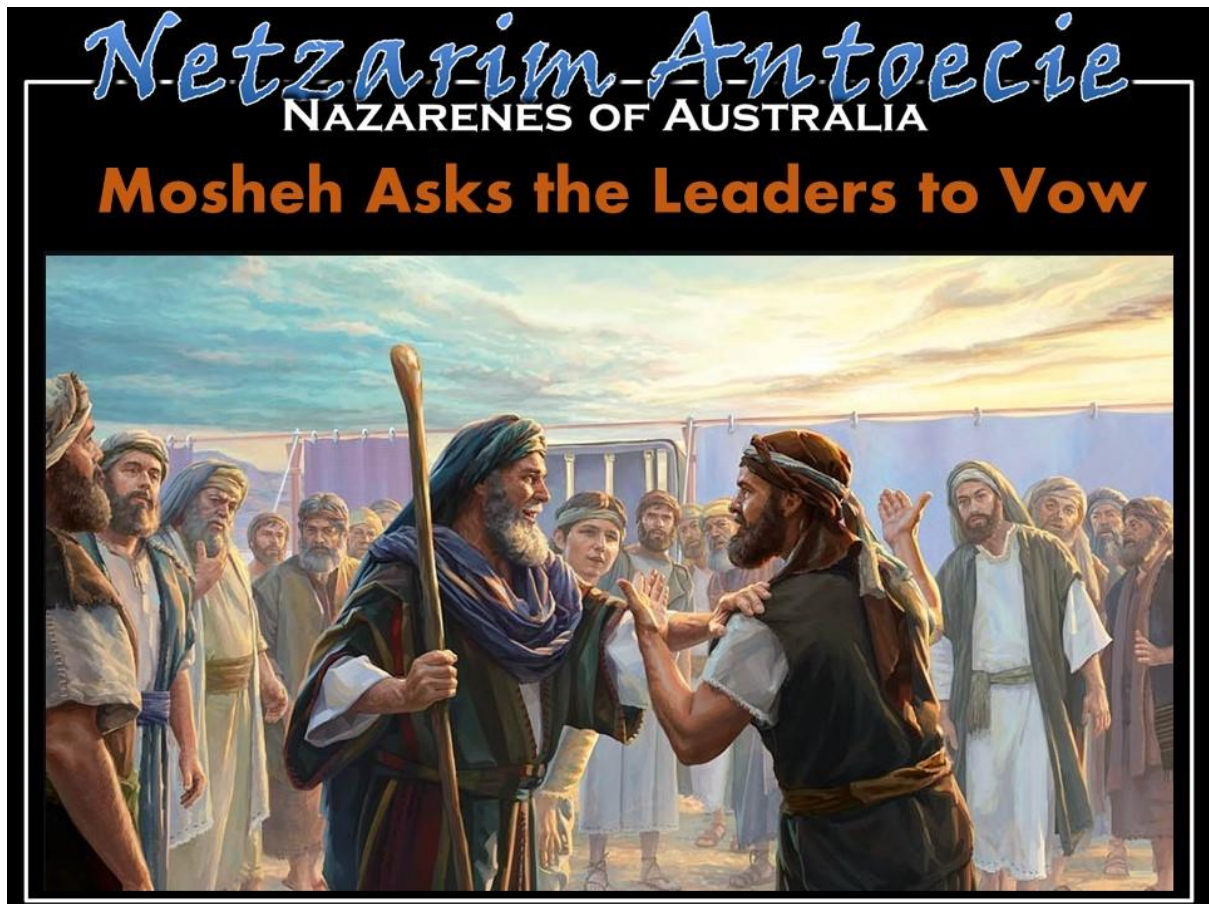
**B'midbar (Numbers) 30:2-32:42**

**Full Aliyah list**

**[1<sup>st</sup> Aliyah: 30:2-17, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aliyah: 31:1-12, 3<sup>rd</sup> Aliyah: 31:13-24, 4<sup>th</sup> Aliyah: 31:25-42, 5<sup>th</sup> Aliyah:31:42-54, 6<sup>th</sup> Aliyah:32:1-19, 7<sup>th</sup> Aliyah:32:20-42]**

**Torah:**

This week's readings are quite comprehensive as they deal with Parashat Matot & Masei and comprise numerous individual stories:



-These include Mosheh [Moses] asking the leaders for a vow.

-The slaughter of the Midianites that seduced Yisrael & their five Kings.

-The tribe of Reuven & Gad asked to stay on the eastern side of the Yarden [Jordan].  
These men the make a vow to lead the advance until all the land is taken.

# Netzarim Antoecie

## NAZARENES OF AUSTRALIA



-The 42 journeys' of Yisrael from Mitsrayim are recounted.

# Netzarim Antoecie

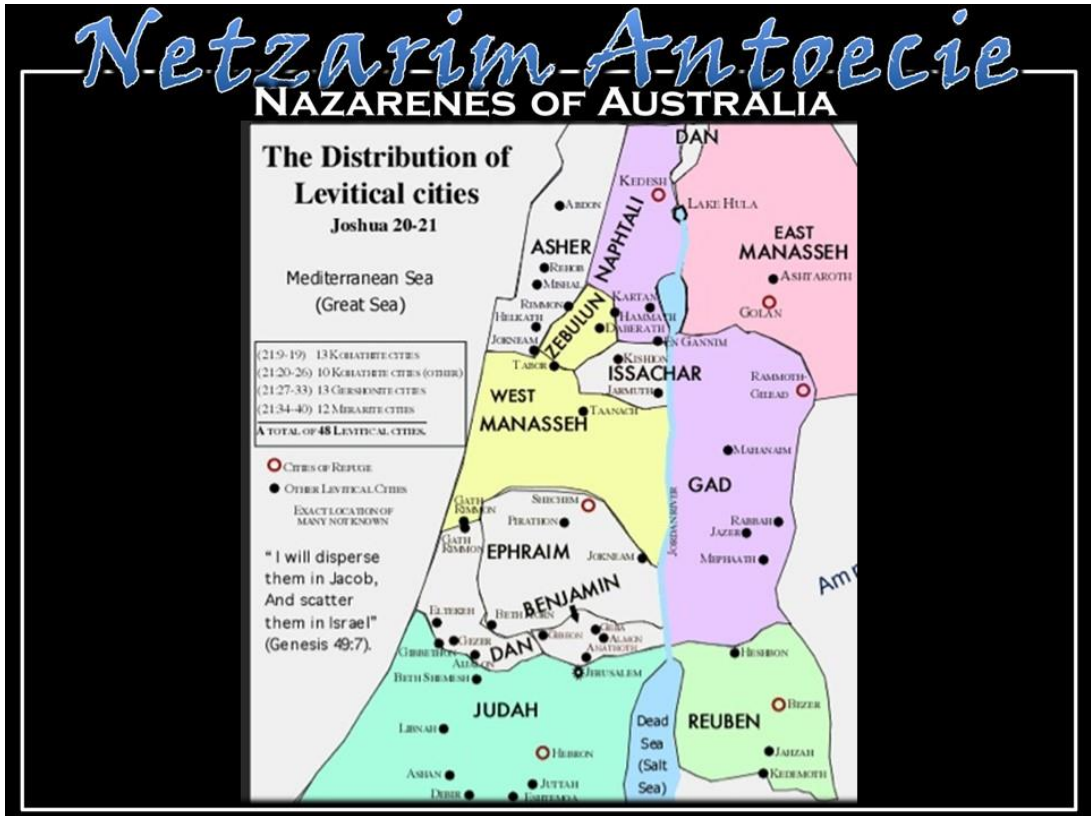
## NAZARENES OF AUSTRALIA



# The Division of Canaan

-The division of Canaan is determined.





-The 48 cities that are given to the Levites.



-The cities allocated for refuge for people who cause accidental deaths.

With this great list of events, I wish to address a section concerned with the Laws of Oaths and Vows since Yisrael was just about to enter the promised land. This should be significant for us too as we too live our lives with an expectation of entering a promised land too which is the Kingdom of Heaven so our Oaths & Vows towards the Almighty should be significant.

In the Culture of Today, Oaths or Vows do not seem to hold much credibility but they are significant in the Torah and to YHWH which we will shortly see. A Vow or Oath should be seen as having a status like that of a Torah Commandment. Therefore, a Vow or Oath enables a person to create new Halachah [supplemental laws outside Torah].

If we think of an example of a **Vow**, we will possibly think of Chanah (Hannah) the mother of **Sh'muel** [Samuel] for in her exceeding anguish of being barren we read this in:

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Sh'muel Aleph (1 Samuel) 1:11 Then she [Chanah] made a vow and said, "O YHWH of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to YHWH all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head."

We now know that Elkanah based on our Torah reading for a Husband, could have nullified her Vow since Torah gave him that authority. We do however know that YHWH greatly blessed this Vow by making Shemuel [Samuel] a great Prophet responsible for anointing Shaul [Saul] the 1<sup>st</sup> King of Yisrael & ultimately anointing David as King, the blessed ancestor of King Messiah Yeshua. Shemuel (Samuel) was also credited with being an exceedingly righteous judge over Yisrael and amazingly he was indeed a descendant of Korach (Korah) who rebelled against Mosheh and was swallowed by the ground as we discovered in a previous Scripture reading. To show how seriously Chanah [Hanah] and therefore her Husband considered a Vow we read this in:



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## NAZARENES OF AUSTRALIA



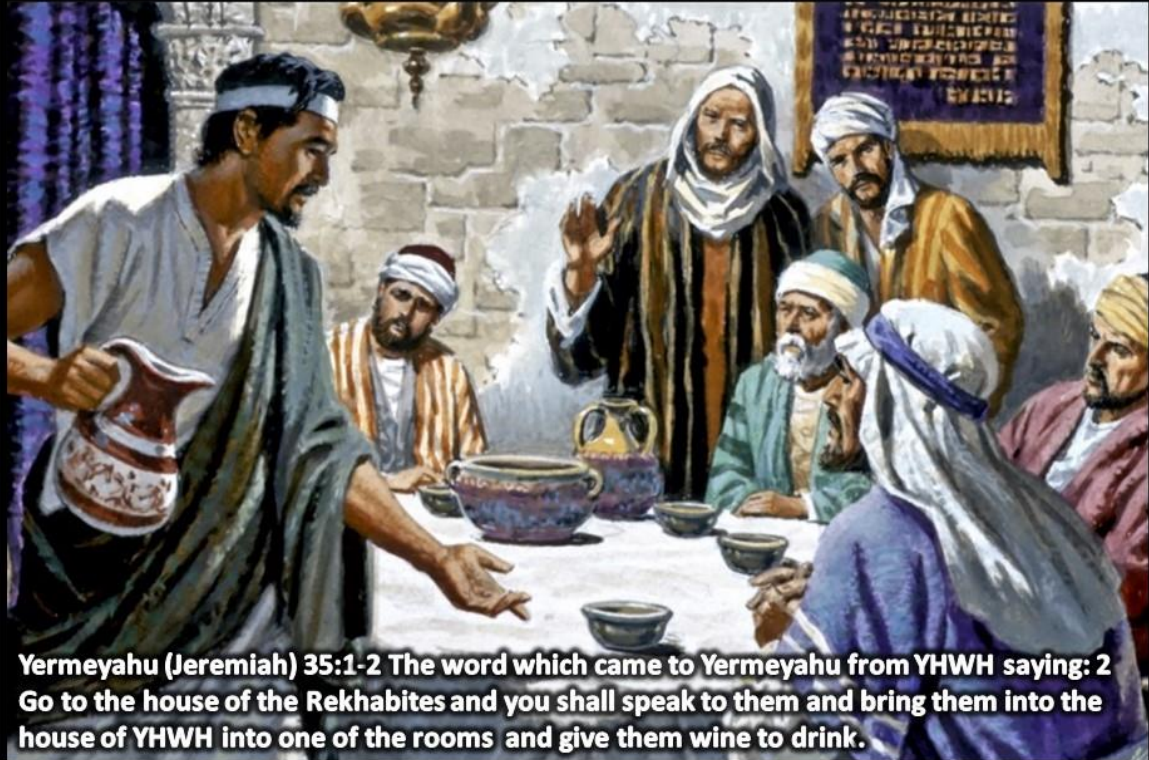
1 Sh'muel [Samuel] 1:24 Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of Yahweh in Shiloh. And the child was young. Then they slaughtered a bull and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, "O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to YAHWEH the Lord. 27 For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28 Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be lent to YAHWEH."

Can you imagine giving away your child the moment he is weaned which means when the child can eat solid food & is off the mother's milk. Hanah therefore could then only see him once a year when they came up to the Mishkan [Tabernacle] in Shiloh. This shows amazing faith in YAHWEH above a mother's natural instincts which would have caused her much anguish. YAHWEH however in his great mercy blessed her further with three sons & two daughters.

To further emphasise the value that YHWH places on the keeping of a Vow or Oath I would like to present a unique example as found in the book of YermeYahu (Jeremiah) that reveals how great, keeping an Oath is:

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## NAZARENES OF AUSTRALIA



**5 Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rekhabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine."**

Why would YAHWEH wish YermeYahu [Jeremiah] to place before these men wine if not to teach the value of Oaths which is revealed in the following for, we read:

**35:6 But they said we do not drink wine because Yonadab the son of Rekhav our Father commanded us saying "you do not drink wine neither you nor your son's forever. And do not build a house neither sow seed, nor plant a vineyard but dwell in tents all your days and so we have obeyed.**

This entire story is about the honour that YHWH was giving these descendants who were not even Yisraelites but descended from Mosheh's Father-in-Law but obeyed **Yonadab** who is recorded as from the time of David about 200 years earlier and YHWH was comparing them to his disobedient people.

The real blessing comes to these Rekhabites with these words from YermeYahu remembering that their vow was not even to YHWH:

**YermeYahu 35:18 Thus says YHWH of Hosts: because you have obeyed the command of Yonadad your father and guarded all his commands YHWH says "of Yonadad son of Rekhav there shall never cease to be a man to stand before Me."**



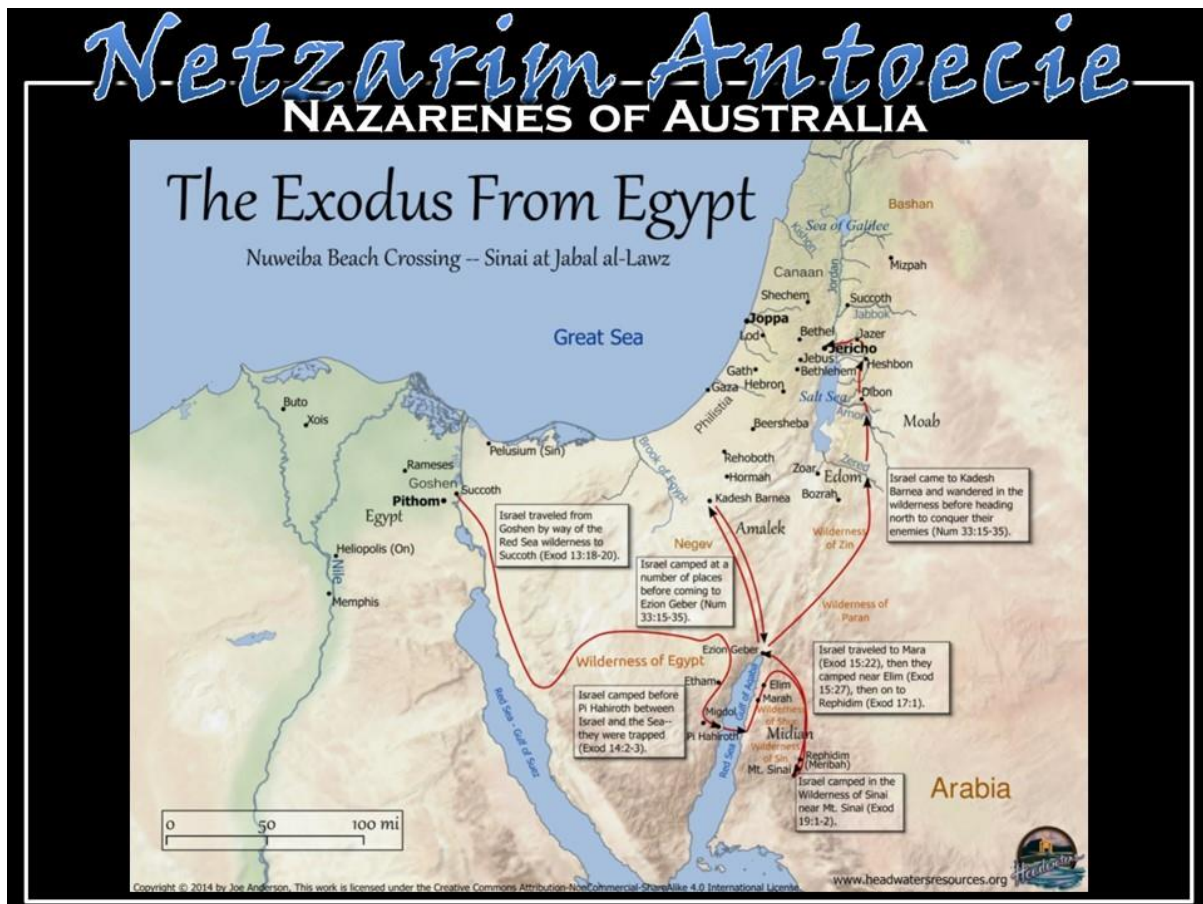
What we come to see from this story is how much YHWH desires a people who without reservation will maintain a vow even one given to them that is passed down, because it reveals true character. Therefore, before YHWH, passionate adherence to a Vow or Oath is a sacred thing which if they are done before Him must be kept as we will see in the Netzarim Ketuvim [New Testament] reading. Too often we might make promises whether to other people or even to YHWH yet do not consider them binding or as serious as a Vow or Oath but just as Chanah (Hanah) we should take them more seriously.



It is for this reason; we should consider how vital is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) when we can come before YHWH & have those Vows which we have failed to keep annulled.

## Parashat Masei

**Torah: B'midbar (Numbers) 33:1-10**



In this portion [Aliyah] we have a summary of the route that Yisrael followed though there are different thoughts about that. There were in all 42 encampments 14 before the mission of the Spies and the last 8 in the 40<sup>th</sup> year revealing that the people also enjoyed long periods of rest with only 20 encampments occurring during the intervening 38 years. Just as it is suggested that the journey was about always going forward to the next dimension of the plan of YAHWEH, we might also see, that the same intent is pertinent to us too as we journey towards our destiny in YAHWEH who desires us to be ever moving forward in our relationship with him which hopefully moves forward from **Glory to Glory**.

**Haftarah: YermeYahu (Jeremiah) 1:1 –2:3**

In the Haftarah Matot or the readings of the Prophets we are confronted with the coming Judgement of YAHWEH upon his people because of their breaking of their Oath to him. This reading can also be seen as an Oath given by YAHWEH concerning his Judgement upon his people. It therefore commences with the appointment of **YermeYahu** as the Prophet to speak for YAHWEH. Since this begins the three weeks from the 17<sup>th</sup> of the month of Tammuz when the city walls of Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] were breached until the divinely ordained




destruction of both Temples on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month of Av the "**Haftorot of Affliction**" are read throughout all Synagogues among the Jews.

As a sign of the impending judgement, we read this in:

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**YermeYahu [Jeremiah] 1:11**  
Moreover, the word of YAHWEH [the Lord] came to me, saying, "YermeYahu [Jeremiah], what do you see?"

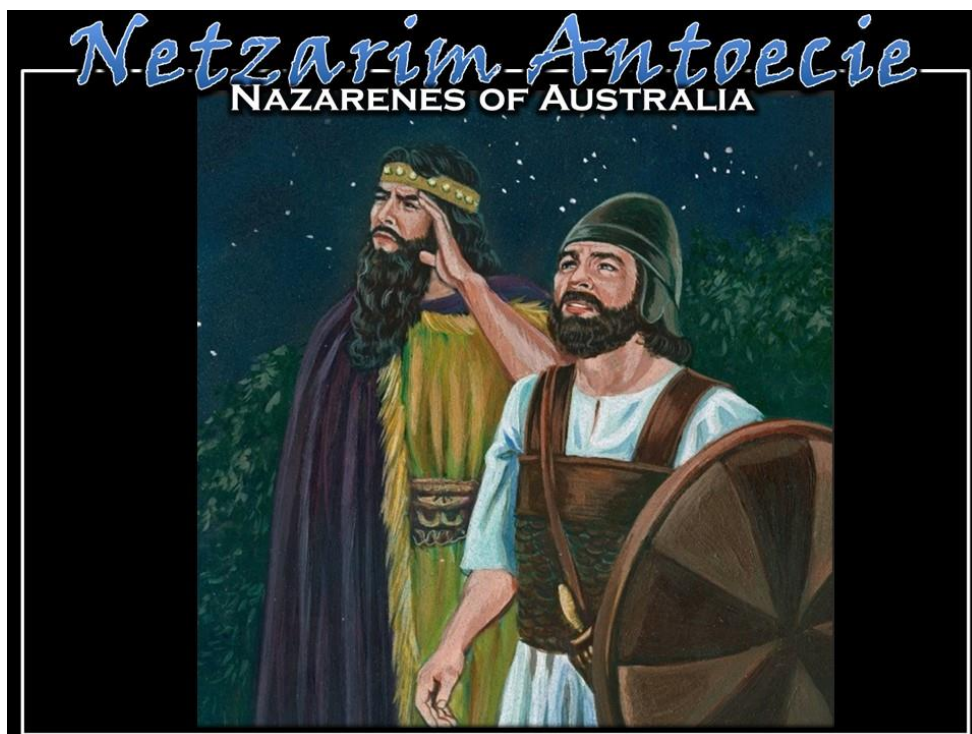
And I said, "I see a branch of an almond tree."

**12** Then YAHWEH [the Lord] said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."

YermeYahu [Jeremiah] actually said he saw "**An almond wood staff/stick**" though many scriptures have "**branch of an Almond tree**". This is significant in that the Almond tree was the 1<sup>st</sup> to be awakened after the sleep of winter, blooming earlier than the other trees. This therefore was a symbol of YAHWEH's eagerness for early Judgement that YermeYahu was to announce. It all seems very reminiscent that the word of YAHWEH is much like an Oath that He must fulfil quickly that we may understand how valuable He considers the word that leaves his mouth. Do we today see our words with that kind of value that we must above all else do what we have said?



What is interesting is that this also reminds us of Aaron's almond rod that budded that YHWH had chosen from among all the rods to represent him. This Almond branch also had a representation of the tree of life and that the Rod is believed to be planted by King David on the Mount of Olives found in this story in the Following which is the 1<sup>st</sup> time the Mount of Olives is mentioned in Scripture when David escapes the City of Yerushalayim after his son Absalom [Avshalom] takes his throne:

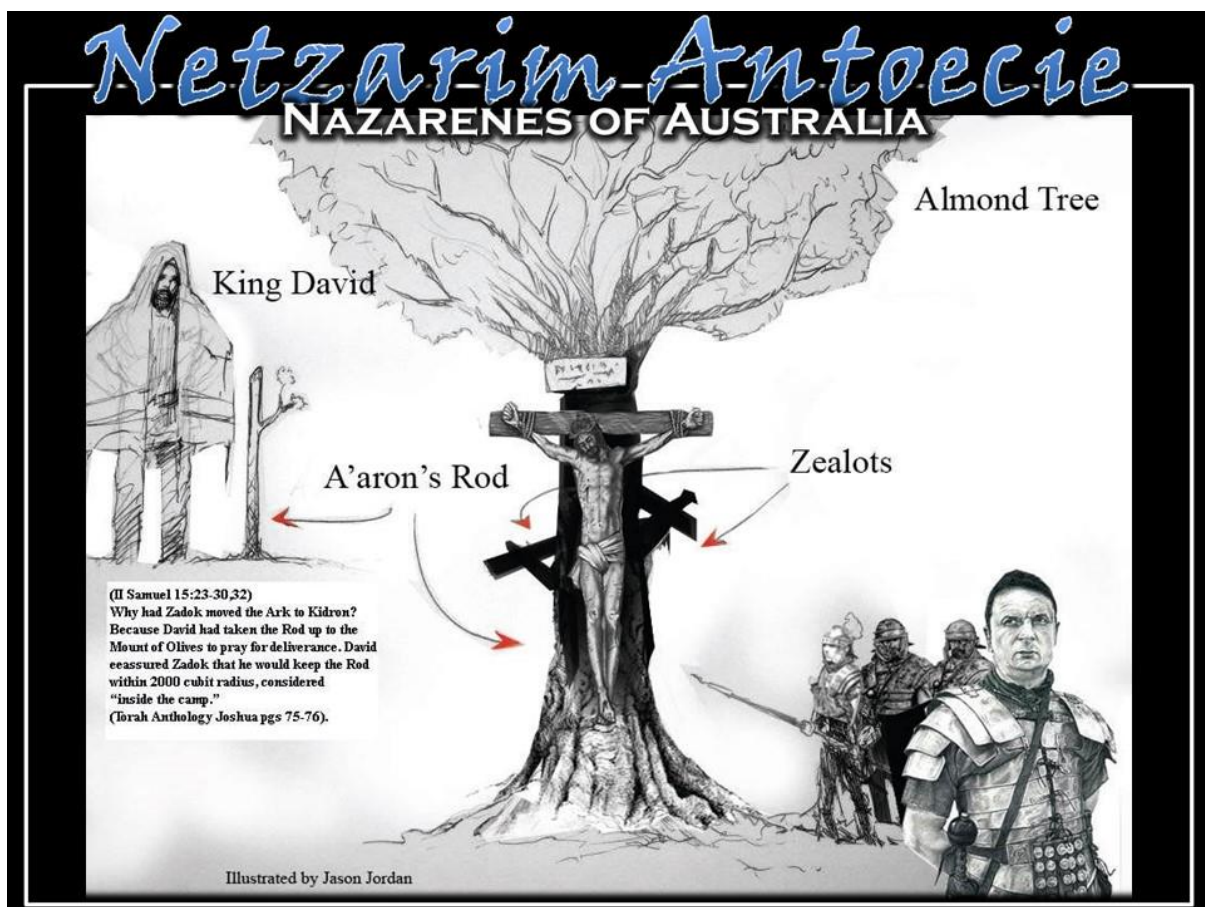




2 Sh'muel [Samuel] 15:23-30,32 Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." Therefore, Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of Yahweh back to Jerusalem. And they remained there. So, David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up...to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped Yahweh.

Why had Zadok moved the Ark over to the Kidron? This was because David had taken the Rod of Aaron up to the Mount of Olives to pray for deliverance. David reassured Zadok that he would keep the Rod within the 2000-cubit radius considered inside the camp (Torah Anthology Joshua pgs. 75-76):

It is thought that David then had his epiphany of Tehillim [Psalms] 22 here & planted the Almond staff that spouted on the Mount of Olives knowing it would become the instrument of redemption upon which Yeshua was hung being the ultimate sign of the Judgement of YHWH upon sin.



Thus, we see the enormous significance that the sign of the Almond Branch or staff represents.

Haftarah Masei is a presentation of the case that YHWH has against his people that will culminate with the judgement that will leave Yerushalayim and Yahudah desolate of its inhabitants, though YHWH concludes with a promise of blessing if they do **Teshuvah** [repentance] and return to Him. The Most far-reaching Oath from Elohim comes from the Prophet Yoel [Joel] in:

**Yoel 2:32** And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of YAHWEH Shall be saved.

This great Vow from Elohim is then repeated in **Acts 2:21 & Romans 10:13**

Netzarin Ketuvim: MattithYahu (Matthew) 5:33-37



From this reading Messiah reveals that he did not forbid swearing but rather that he clarified that our Oath should be a simple **“yes”** without adding things we have no power over. The Hebrew Rebbim [teachers] had forbidden the taking of Oaths in YHWH's name lest one would be destroyed by YHWH (**Hilchos Shavous 11:13**)

We then are to swear but only by the name of YHWH as per Torah:

**Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:13** Fear YHWH your Elohim and serve him and swear by his name.



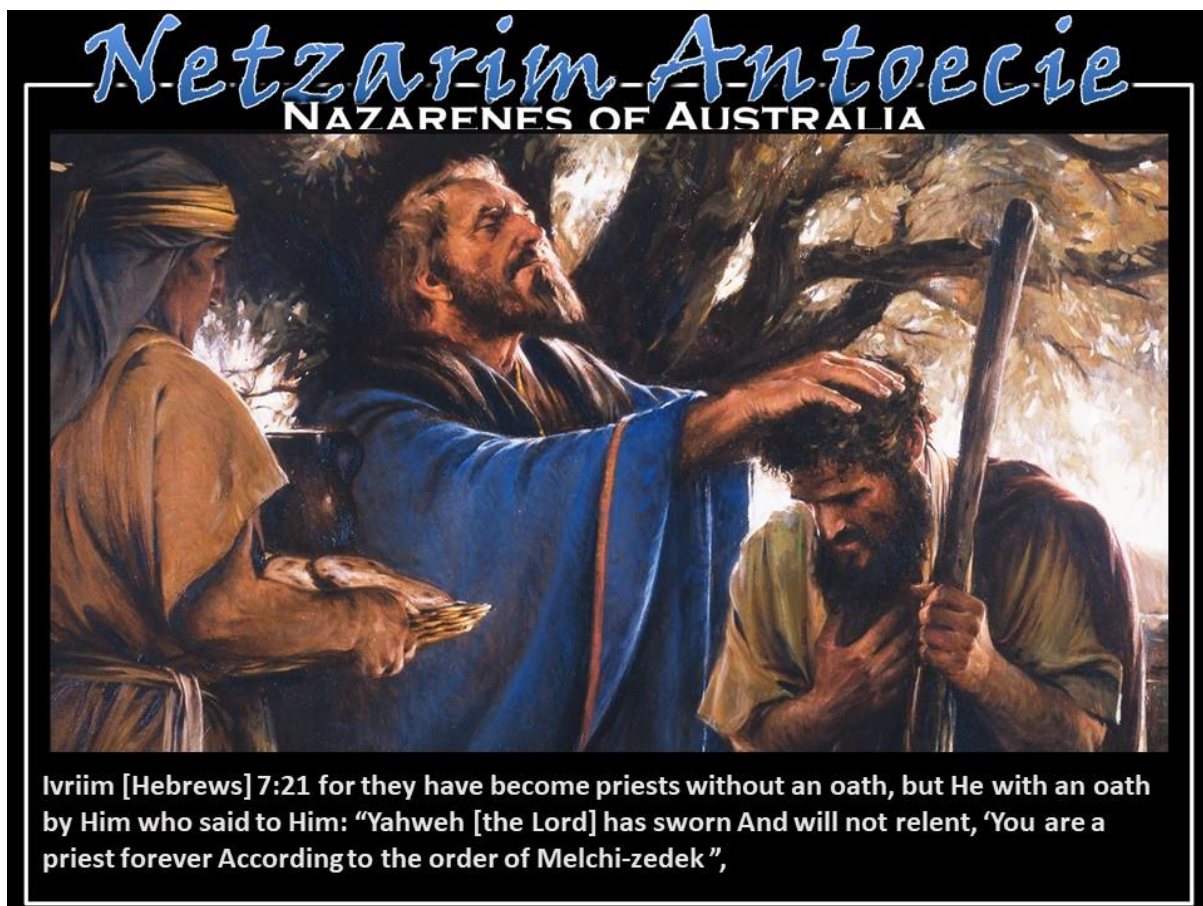
Many people in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century were swearing by objects such as the Altar of the Beyth Ha Mikdash (Temple) and not upholding their Oath. The reading in the **Baal Shem Tov** the Hebrew version of Matthew makes the point clearer:

**MT 5:34 But I say to you not to swear in vain in any matter,**

The early believers understood that Yeshua [Yahusha] was not prohibiting Vows but was prohibiting vain Oaths since Shaul paid for 4 men who took a Nazarite vow in **Acts 21:23** and made one himself in **Acts 18:18**.

### Conclusion:

In this great portion we have come to see how an Oath or Vow should become a truly special word since even YAHWEH made Oaths of which we read concerning Yeshua an Oath that is the anchor to our Soul in:



It is the belief in the unchanging character of the Creator of all & belief in his Word that comes to us as an indisputable oath that faith in His Magnificent son & what he has achieved for us is true & that we can rejoice in the great hope we have that he will indeed fulfil all his promises & bring us with Him to Glory.