

Va Etchanan- Beggars Can't be Choosers

Torah: Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:23-7:11, Haftarah: YeshaYahu [Isaiah] 40:1-26,

Netzarim Ketuvim: MatithYahu [Matthew] 23:31-39.

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**Beggars
Can't Be
Choosers**

Parashat Va Etchanan:
Devarim [Deut] 3:23-7:11

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Entering The Promised Land

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 3: 23 "And I pleaded with יהוה at that time, saying, 24 'O Master יהוה, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand, for who is a mighty one in the heavens or on earth who does according to Your works and according to Your might? 25 'I pray, let me pass over and see the good land beyond the Yardēn [Jordan], this good hill country and Lebanon.' 26 "But יהוה was enraged with me, for your sake and would not listen to me and יהוה said to me, 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me about this matter. 27 'Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward and look with your eyes, for you do not pass over this Yardēn. 28 'But charge Yahusha [Joshua] and strengthen him and make him brave, for he shall pass over before this people and causes them to inherit the land which you see.' 29 "And so we dwelt in the valley opposite Bēyth Pe'or.

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4: 1 "And now, O Yisra'el, listen to the statutes and the judgements which I am teaching you to do, so that you live and shall go in and possess the land which יהוה Elohim of your fathers is giving you. 2 "Do not add to the Word which I command you and do not take away from it, so as to guard the commands of יהוה your Elohim which I am commanding you. 3 "Your eyes have seen what יהוה did at Ba'al Pe'or, for יהוה your Elohim has destroyed from your midst all the men who followed Ba'al Pe'or. 4 "But you who are clinging to יהוה your Elohim are alive today, everyone of you.

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The Wisdom of the Torah

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:5 "See, I have taught you laws and right-rulings, as יהוה' my Elohim commanded me, to do thus in the land which you go to possess. 6 "And you shall guard and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the peoples who hear all these laws and they shall say, 'Only a wise and understanding people is this great nation!' 7 "For what great nation is there which has Elohim so near to it, as יהוה' our Elohim is to us, whenever we call on Him? 8 "And what great nation is there that has such laws and righteous judgements like all this Torah which I set before you this day?

Introduction: This entire Torah portion this week could be said as having a direct reflection on what Mosheh faced as he considered his situation as he spoke to the Nation of Yisrael on the eastern side of the **Yarden** [the Jordan]. We know from previous readings that YHWH had forbidden Mosheh from entering the land of promise because he dishonoured YHWH by not obeying his word when he hit the rock. It is from this standpoint that Mosheh addresses the Children of Yisrael in the hope that they will maintain their honour of YHWH by being obedient to all that He had commanded, emphasising the means by which this may be achieved.

The Events in the Portion:

1. Mosheh pleads with YHWH to enter the promised land but is refused.
2. He encourages the people of the treasure they have in the Torah reminding them about the day it was given & consequences for their failure to obey.
3. Mosheh appoints the three cities of refuge on the east side of the Yarden.
4. Mosheh repeats the ten Commandments & that it is directed to future generations too.
5. Mosheh also gives Yisrael the Shema containing the fundamental truths found in the Book of the Law.
6. Finally, Yisrael is instructed to destroy the Kenaanites with their idols & not to intermarry.



Our reading commences with Mosheh recalling how he pleaded with YHWH but is instructed that he can only view the entire fruitful land from the top of the mountain.



As a result, Mosheh in addressing Yisrael reviews their history beginning with the exodus from Mitsrayim [Egypt], followed by the giving of the Torah & also predicts that a falling away to worship idols with occur with Yisrael be exiled from their land to be scattered among the Nations. Therefore, he then reiterates [repeats] the **“Ten Commandments”** giving them **“the Shema”** a statement of faith as a means of holding true to YHWH.

Understanding Va Etchanan



The image shows a screenshot of a Hebrew translation website. At the top, there is a logo that reads "Netzarin Antoecie NAZARENES OF AUSTRALIA" in a stylized blue font. Below the logo, there is a navigation bar with three tabs: "DO IT IN Hebrew", "TRANSLATE", and "MY SAVED WORDS". The "TRANSLATE" tab is active. Below the navigation bar, there is a text input field with the Hebrew text "ואתחנן" (Va Etchanan) entered. Below the input field, there are two dropdown menus: "Hebrew" and "English", with a "swap" button between them. A "Translate" button is located to the right of the dropdown menus. Below the input field, there is a section titled "Translation: Hebrew to English" which shows the Hebrew text "ואתחנן" and its English translation "And I beg". At the bottom of the translation section, there are three buttons: "save", "vowels: OFF", and "cursive: OFF".

From the Hebrew English dictionary we come to understand that **“Va Etchanan”** has the meaning of **“and I begged”** though it is often rendered as **“and I pleaded”** as it comes from the verb **“Chanan”** meaning to implore, from the noun **“Chen”** meaning **“Favour.”** Therefore, we could best say it means **“I did seek YHWH’s favour.”** In Yahudi (Jewish) liturgy **“Tachanun”** are prayers begging for the favour & mercy of Elohim. Also, **Ana B’korach** is usually translated as **“We beg you.”**

The question then arises! Is begging or excessive pleading contrary to Torah and can we think of other people in Scripture that begged to receive something? What comes to mind?

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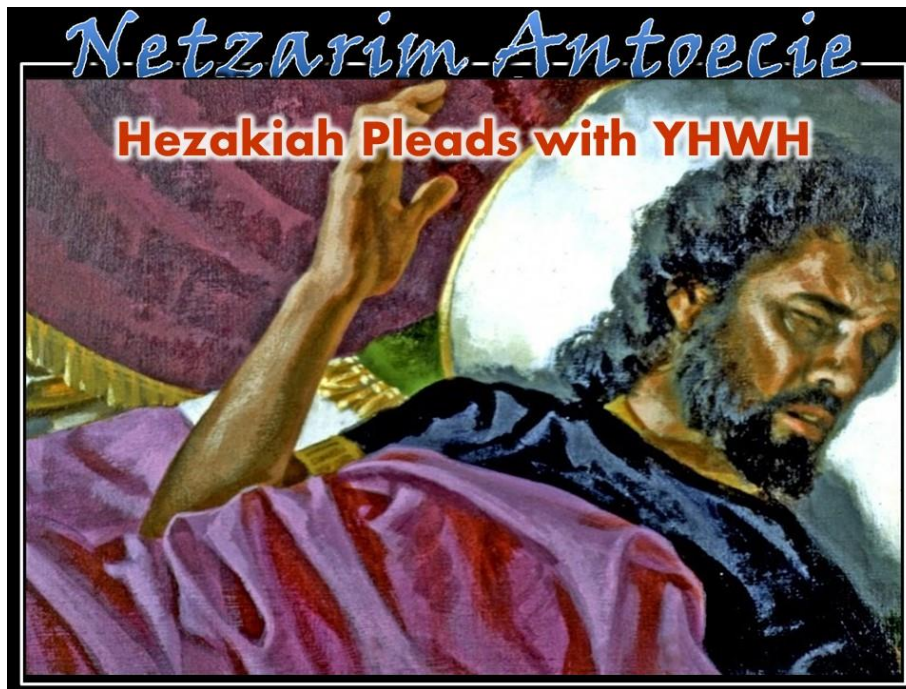
Esau loses His Birthright & Blessing



Surely, we remember that when Esau gave his birthright to Yaacov [Jacob] & then finally his blessing was taken by deception, and we find him desperately pleading with his father & we read this:

Bereshiyth [Genesis] 27:38 my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

We also read of Hezekiah when **YeshuYahu** [Isaiah] comes to him with a word from YHWH that he will die & he turns his face to the wall to plead with YHWH with these words:



Melekim Beyth [2 Kings] 20:3 "I beseech you, O YHWH remember now, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." And ChizkiYahu [Hezekiah] wept bitterly.

Let us also not forget **Chanah** [Hanah] who pleaded bitterly for a son as we read previously with these words in:



Sh'muel Aleph [I Samuel] 1:10 And she was in bitterness of soul and prayed to YHWH and wept in anguish.

This portion therefore begins with Mosheh recalling his desperate plea to YHWH that he might enter Canaan knowing that YHWH had declared that he was disqualified from entering the Land of Promise.



This was detailed in **B'midbar (Numbers) 20**. Mosheh had therefore dishonoured YHWH as his appointed servant, demonstrated anger towards the people & disregarded YHWH's instruction by striking the rock.

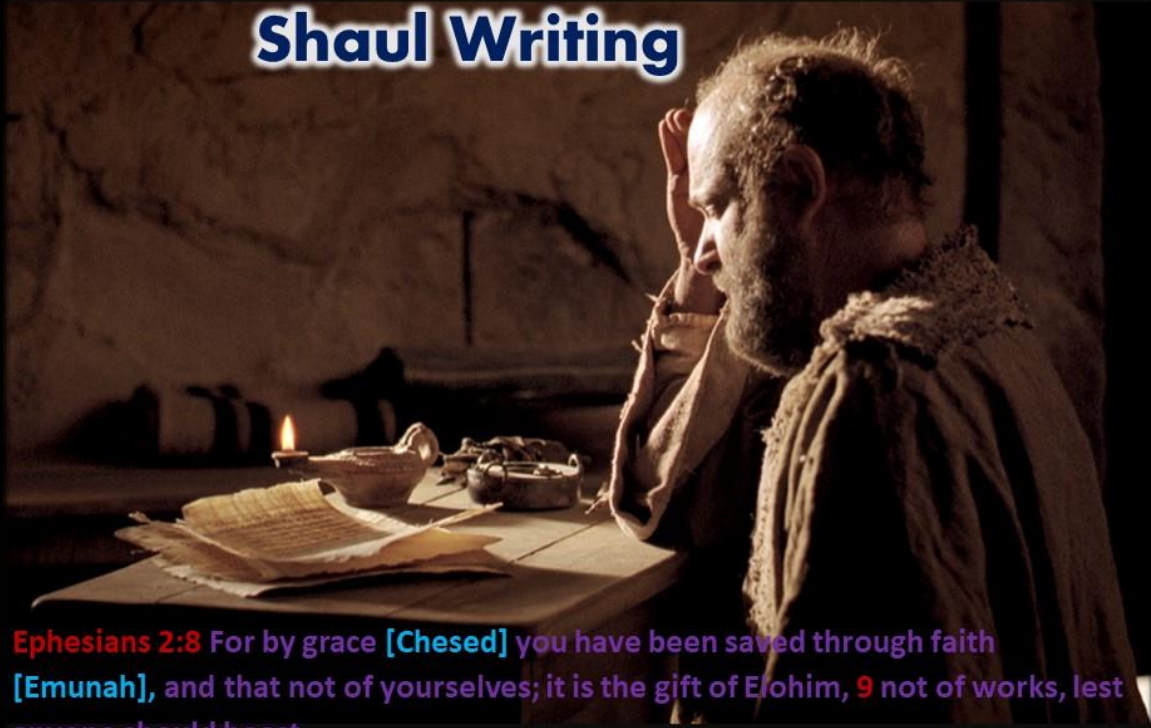
Mosheh in this passage is revealing that it is only by the undeserved favour of Elohim that his favour is received and that he as the leader was held more responsible for not obeying the word of YHWH and had to accept His final judgement since nothing he had done since could atone or gain what he so desperately desired.

This is the same picture of the Favour through which we receive Salvation. **Shaul** [Saul/Paul] makes that abundantly clear in in:

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Shaul Writing



Ephesians 2:8 For by grace [Chesed] you have been saved through faith [Emunah], and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of Elohim, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

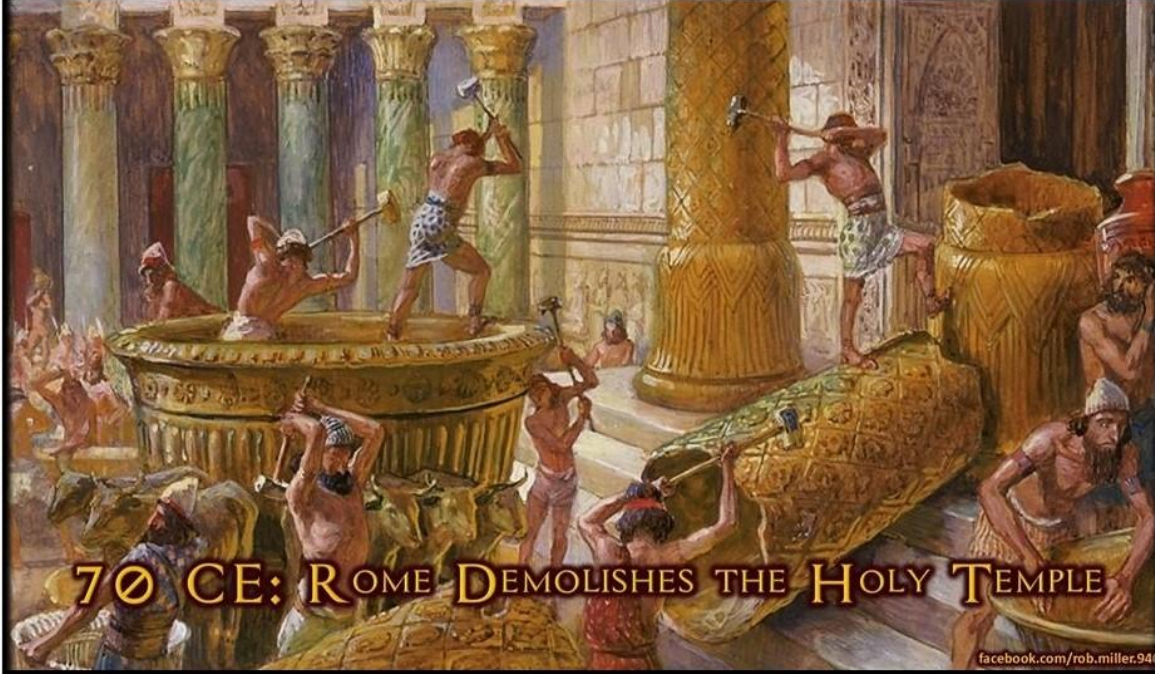
Ephesians 2:8 For by grace [Chesed] you have been saved through faith [Emunah], and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of Elohim, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Therefore, what we learn from Scripture is that Salvation is purely a gift of Elohim and as faithful believers who know we need not do anything to appropriate our salvation since it is an act of overwhelming “Chesed” (undeserved favour) this knowledge alone should in no ways diminish our obedience but rather propel us to greater obedience for what we have already been promised through the blood of Yeshua.

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Tisha B'Av



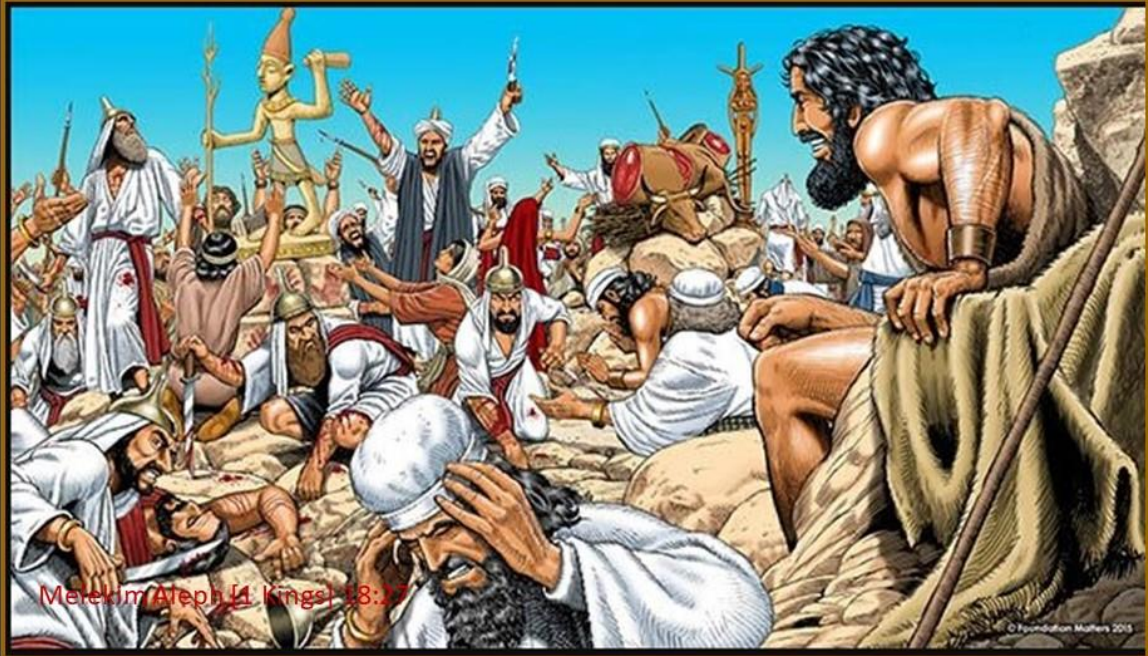
As we have just completed **Tisha B'Av** meaning the ninth of Av & the destruction of **Yerushalayim** & the **Beyth Ha Mikdash [The Holy Temple]** can we in some way fathom how this reading could be associated with our Torah portion. The Ninth of Av is of course related to mourning for the destruction of both Temples, but the question arises **“should we mourn in an attempt to coerce the Almighty into allowing the rebuilding of the third Temple”** or is that the wrong approach.

When I went on a Mission trip to South Korea in 2012, I experienced what a typical congregational prayer meeting was like and saw people wailing & weeping and were told that they did that in order to receive what they wanted from YHWH. The more extreme were the wailings and emotions the more they believed they would receive. Somehow, I felt that this was not the purpose of true intense prayer. I realized there is scriptural evidence of this sort of coercive wailing petitioning but where:

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EliYahu [Elijah] & the Prophets of Baal



In fact, it comes from **Paganism** and the worship of Baal with the prophets of Baal crying out all day, cutting themselves till blood ran freely & leaping on the Altar until **EliYahu** [Elijah] mockingly said this in:

Melekim Aleph [1 Kings] 18:27 “Cry aloud, for he is an El, either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey or perhaps he is asleep & needs to be awoken.

How could **EliYahu** [Elijah] have such confidence except by knowing the Elohim he served in a very personal way & truly knowing YHWH's nature & character.

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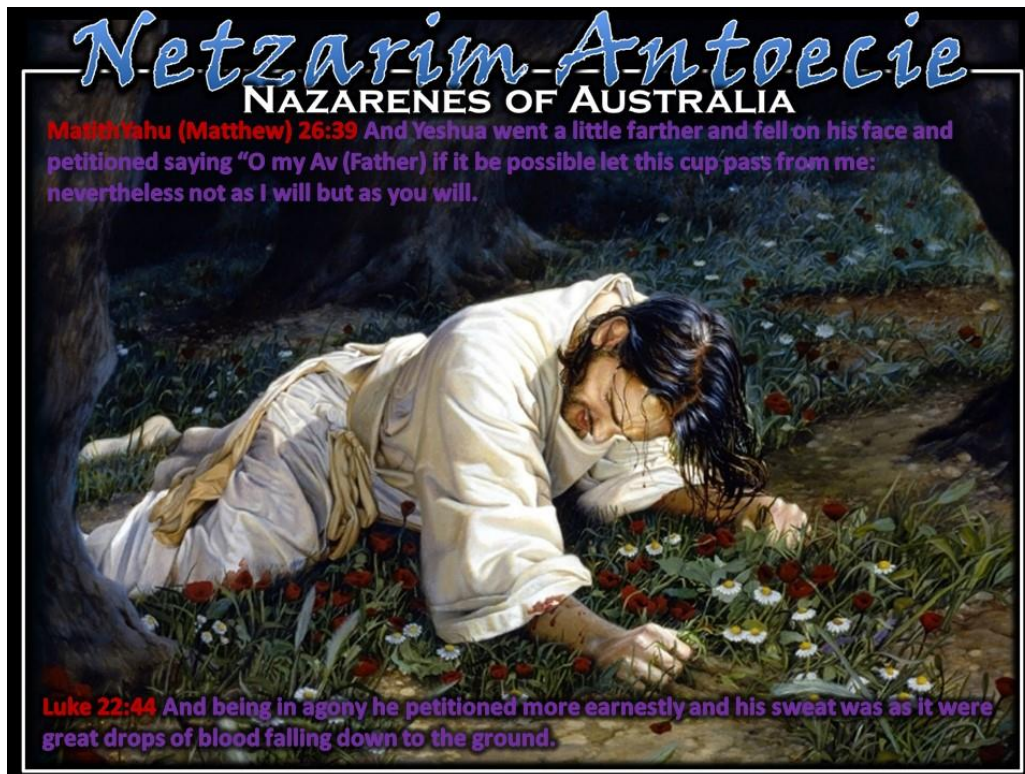
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Surely the mourning that we may participate in, on the 9th of Av should be as a sign of our intense true repentance for the sins of our Forefathers and to show our deep desire to humble ourselves and submit to the perfect will of YHWH and to his plan for Yisrael and the World as a whole. If it is not, then we are like a spoilt child who wants something so bad that it will cry out until he gets what it wants. Is not a good child one who is obedient to its parent believing that the Parent will give its desires at the appropriate time because it knows the love of the Parent? This does not exclude pleading but knows and trusts when enough is enough. Therefore, this concept is more about absolute faith & trust and not coercion to get what is desired.

We have examples of intense prayers from faithful servants and interestingly both of these examples speak of bringing these petitions three times which may give us some indication to an appropriate degree of petitioning. Firstly, we see it with our Master **Yeshua [Yahusha]** in the Garden of Gethsemane.

We know that our Master Yeshua being in the form of a man felt all the anguish of his humanity and in that pain he felt the heavy burden of Sin which He was called to endure so we read in:



MatithYahu (Matthew) 26:39 And Yeshua went a little farther and fell on his face and petitioned saying “O my Av (Father) if it be possible let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as you will.

In Luke we receive an even clearer picture of the degree to which this petition was directed to his Father and the description of the physical agony that it produced:

Luke 22:44 And being in agony he petitioned more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

There is no doubt just how severe his emotional torment was, yet in all this he totally submitted to the Father's purpose & plan. What we see here is Yeshua pleading three times not to finally get His own way but rather to be strengthened to fully accept the will & purpose of his Father.

We also have another example of pleading and that is of **Shaul (Paul)** with this same type of pleading with the same result as ascribed to Mosheh in:

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Corintyah Beyth (2 Corinthians) 12: 8-9 Concerning the thorn in the flesh I pleaded with the Master three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, "My Favour is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Corintyah

Beyth (2 Corinthians) 12: 8-9 Concerning the thorn in the flesh I pleaded with the Master three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, "My Favour is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

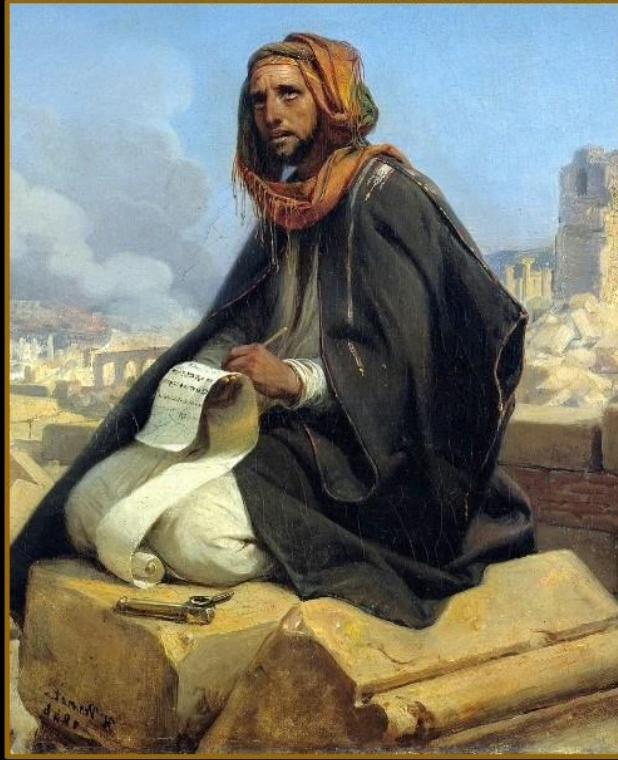
From this portion what we specifically gain from Mosheh is the knowledge of the exceedingly great "**Chesed**" or favour that YHWH displayed over his people & who was faithful to the promises He made to the Fathers. Therefore Mosheh continues to encourage Yisrael to listen to all the decrees and ordinances that they were taught and not to add or subtract from them but to observe all YHWH's "**Mitsvot**" (Commandments) that they would receive all the promises that had been given them since he so dramatically understood the pain of not fully adhering to the word of YHWH but even more importantly that through the failure of his obedience the honour to YHWH was greatly diminished and had severe consequences.

This is lesson for us. Truly, humble righteous faithful people know they can never have a claim on the mercy of YHWH but they also know there is never an end to his mercy:

YermeYahu (Jeremiah) the Prophet so aptly writes these words after the destruction of Yerushalayim & the Temple when all its inhabitants have been cruelly dragged away in chains to be captives in Babylon highlighting the consequences of disobedience but then encourages his people with these words.

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Lamentations 3:22-23
Through the mercy of
YHWH we are not
consumed because his
compassions fail not.
They are new every
morning; Great is your
faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23 Through the mercy of YHWH we are not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness.

Surely these are words of compassion to draw the people of YHWH back to Covenant in resolute **T'shuvah** (Repentance).

Conclusion:

The emphasis of this message is totally on the goodness & favour of Elohim but also on our response to his goodness. **Mosheh** in giving his heartfelt speeches to his people is fully aware that though YHWH's mercies never fail He also must stay true to His Divine Kadosh [Holy] word. It is with this thought that Mosheh desires to do everything in his power to prepare Yisrael to take the promised land & through his words about the **Torah** & the **Shema** to cause Yisrael to hold true to all that YHWH has commanded.

We see this true nature of trust in the Word of YHWH found in our **Master & Lord Yeshua** in the time of His arrest when Shimon Kepha desires to prevent His arrest with these words of our Master in:

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Kepha in Defence of the Master



MatithYahu [Matthew] 26:53-54 Then Yeshua said to him, “return your sword to its sheath, for all who grasp the sword shall perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of Messengers [angels]? **54** How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that say it must happen thus?”

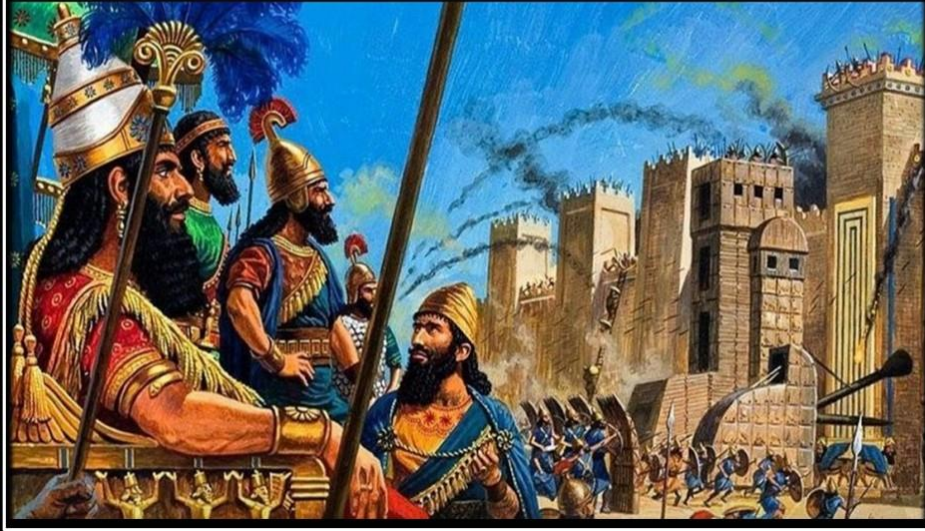
May we never cease to desire the ways of YHWH & be spurred on in our **faithfulness** & **loyalty** to our **Master Yeshua** for all he has done for us that all honour may go to the Father the Elohim of all Creation.

Haftarah: YeshiYahu (Isaiah) 40:1- 26

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Haftarah: YeshaYahu 40:1-26



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The People of Elohim are Comforted

Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 40: 1 "Comfort, comfort My people!" says your Elohim. 2 "Speak to the heart of Yerushalayim and cry out to her, that her hard service is completed, that her crookedness is pardoned, that she has received from the hand of יהוה double for all her sins." 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of יהוה; make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim. 4 "Let every valley be raised and every mountain and hill made low. And the steep ground shall become level and the rough places smooth. 5 "And the esteem of יהוה shall be revealed and all flesh together shall see it. The mouth of יהוה has spoken." 6 The voice said, "Cry out!" and he said, "What do I cry?" "All flesh is grass and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. 7 "Grass shall wither, the flower shall fade, when the Spirit of יהוה has blown on it! Truly the people is grass! 8 "Grass shall wither, the flower shall fade but the Word of our Elohim stands forever." 9 You who bring the good news to Tsiyon, get up into the high mountain. You who bring the good news to Yerushalayim, lift up your voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid. Say to the cities of Yahugah [Judah], "See your Elohim!" 10 See, the Master יהוה comes with a strong hand and His arm rules for Him. See, His reward is with Him and His recompense before Him. 11 He feeds His flock like a shepherd, He gathers the lambs with His arm and carries them in His bosom, gently leading those who are with young.

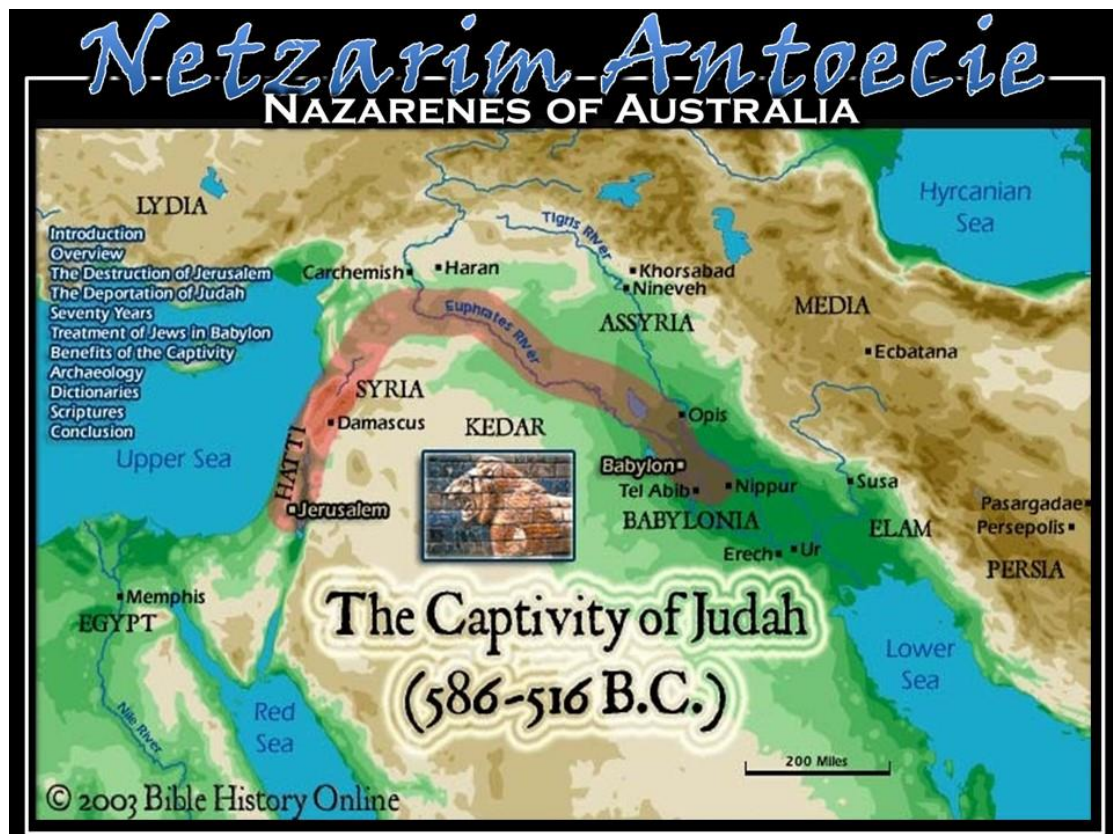
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The People of Elohim are Comforted

Yeshayahu [Isaiah] 40: 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and measured the heavens with a span and contained the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? **13** Who has meted out the Spirit of יהוה, or as His counsellor taught Him? **14** With whom did He take counsel and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of right-ruling? Who taught Him knowledge and showed Him the way of understanding? **15** See, nations are as a drop in a bucket and are reckoned as dust on the balance. See, He lifts up isles as fine dust. **16** And Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. **17** All nations before Him are as a non-entity and they are reckoned by Him, as less than a speck and emptiness. **18** And to whom would you liken Ēl? And what likeness would you compare to Him? **19** The workman moulds a graven image and the goldsmith overspreads it with gold and the silversmith casts silver chains. **20** He who is too poor for such an offering chooses a tree that does not rot. He seeks for himself a skilled craftsman to prepare a carved image that does not totter. **21** Did you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? **22** It is He who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in,

Through Yisrael's abundant sins **Nebuchadnezzar's** army takes captivity all Yahudah [Judah] taking away it's people to Babylon.



This reading, however, teaches us that through the mercy of YHWH and because of his covenant YHWH would never change his plan and purpose for Yisrael because they are his Covenant people, and he is unchangeable. Though the plan of YHWH does not change what we gain from this reading, is that sin does have consequences but YHWH through his Prophets was now bringing comfort to his people.

‘We read each week in our liturgy that **“His anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime.”**

This therefore is the theme, even of the **9th of AV** when his anger was vented on both Temples but that his favour lasts forever which hopefully is the comfort that he brings even to us since his plan stands strong, so we know always that **“Simchah”** or joy comes in the aftermath of sorrow.

We see this with the Disciples who were so full of sorry over the loss of their Master & fear for their own lives that they were hiding behind locked doors until the appearing of Yeshua and we read these words in:



Luke 24:41 They still did not believe out of their great joy, and they were amazed.

just as the final redemption is a constant encouragement for his people so it should be for us that we may look with exceeding joy and great anticipation to the return of our King, Yeshua [Yahusha] Ha Mashiach [the Messiah] who will reign in perfect Righteousness.

Netzarim Ketuvim: MatithYahu (Matthew) 23:31- 39



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The Condemnation of the Hypocrites

Matithyahu [Matthew] 23: 29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, **30** and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in the blood of the prophets.' **31** "Thus you bear witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who did murder the prophets— **32** and you fill up the measure of your fathers! **33** "Serpents, brood of adders! How can you escape the judgment of Gehenna? **34** "Because of this, see, I send you prophets and wise men and scholars of Scripture. Some of them you shall kill and impale and some of them you shall flog in your congregations and persecute from city to city, **35** so that on you should come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Heḅel [Abel] to the blood of Zeḳaryah, son of Bereḳyah, whom you murdered between the Dwelling Place and the altar. **36** "Truly, I say to you, all this shall come upon this generation. **37** "Yerushalayim, Yerushalayim, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to her! How often I wished to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you would not! **38** "See! Your house is left to you laid waste, **39** for I say to you, from now on you shall by no means see Me, until you say, 'Blessed is He who is coming in the Name of יהוה!' "

In this reading we see Yeshua lamenting over Yerushalayim how her people were just like their forefathers in rejecting him and the Prophets sent to them, but Yeshua also laments exceedingly over the soon coming destruction of the **Beyth Ha Mikdash** (the Temple) as a consequence of the sins of the people. YHWH however is compassionate and Yeshua reveals that her comfort will come when Yisrael declares:

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of YHWH.” A quote from **Tehillim [Psalms] 118:26**

When Yisrael collectively repents & petitions YHWH for her redeemer at a time of absolute disaster then Messiah will return, and they will confirm the very words that Yeshua had so passionately articulated.

May we also join with that great desire to see Yeshua our beloved Messiah return that we too can join with them in declaring, **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of YHWH.”**

With this hope may we live our lives soberly denying unrighteousness & worldly lusts with this thought as found in the letter to Titus which says in:



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The Glorious Appearing

Titus 2:13 Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great Elohim and Saviour Yeshua the Messiah.

Titus 2:13 Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great Elohim and Saviour Yeshua the Messiah. **Amen! Shavua Tov** [A good week unto you]

Tehillim: Tehillah (Psalm) 70