

36 - Va'Etchanan - Outline

Regarding the 9th of Av

- It's important to mourn on the 9th of Av
 - to express our anguish over the loss of the Temples and the suffering in the world
 - to connect with greater Israel, including those grafted in
 - to activate our emotions in a life-giving way in this season of training the emotions
- the antidote to the 9th of Av
 - the Sages say the first Temple was destroyed because of idolatry and the second because of *sinat chinam*, baseless hatred, hatred without a cause
 - the antidote to baseless hatred is baseless love – grace, mercy, unconditional love
 - Yeshua says in John 15 that they hated *Him* without a cause
 - that generation also fought a lot internally among the various religious sects
 - have we improved? Talmud: “A generation in which the Temple is not built is considered to be one in which it was destroyed,” (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1)
 - how do we most clearly show this kind of unmerited love? – by loving our enemies
 - Yeshua, Matthew 5: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”
 - a parable: “A holy man was engaged in his morning meditation under a tree whose roots stretched out over the riverbank. During his meditation he noticed that the river was rising, and a scorpion caught in the roots was about to drown. He crawled out on the roots and reached down to free the scorpion, but every time he did so, the scorpion struck back at him. An observer came along and said to the holy man, ‘Don't you know that's a scorpion, and it's in the nature of a scorpion to want to sting?’ To which the holy man replied, 'That may well be, but it is my nature to save, and must I change my nature because the scorpion does not change its nature?’” (<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=13829>)
 - a quote: “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.” – Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
 - *Martin Luther King, Jr. Men of Integrity, Vol. 1, no. 1.*
 - story: Farmer Brings Milk to Enemies During War (<https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2014/january/3012714.html>)
 - story: Man Feeds Enemies in Prison (<https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2003/september/14582.html>)

Va'Etchanan Summary

- starts with Moses telling how he pleaded with God to allow him to enter the Land:
 - “And I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying, ‘O Lord GOD, you have only begun to show your servant your greatness and your mighty hand...”
(Deuteronomy 3:23-24)
 - “Va’Etchanan” = “And I pleaded”
- Aleph-Beta divides the rest of the portion into 3 mini-speeches set off by a similar sentence that includes the phrase “statutes and rules” (“chukkim” and “mishpatim”) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNKD6AkI8gs&list=PLmG0INuEBb3BHcFiSS8mqo6n80hhMBZcn&index=40&t=817s>); these sentences occur at the chapter breaks for chapters 4, 5, 6
 - **mini-speech 1:** emphasizes what Israel has seen with their own eyes, how God is near to them in an absolutely new way and what He has done for them from Egypt onward
 - main portion: prohibition of idolatry
 - **mini-speech 2:** repetition of the 10 commandments followed by a reminder of how the people were filled with fear and asked Moses to be their intercessor
 - **mini-speech 3:** contains the Shema, including the first line and the section that begins, “You shall love the Lord your God...”

The Salvation Pattern in the 3 Movements of the Portion

- seeing the pattern of salvation here is an encouragement to us in this season
- the Salvation Pattern is everywhere; we just need to develop the sensitivities to pull it out of whatever we’re looking at
 - helps us see His greatness and the greatness of His design and stand in awe of Him
 - each salvation progression illuminates the others
 - each is a combination of metaphors that tell the same story, the same progression, but always in a unique way (the metaphors of coming out of Egypt, the 7 days of creation, the harvests, etc. – usually mixed together)
- the portion starts in sin and death, which is the context for salvation
 - it goes out of its way to begin at the end of chapter 3, where Moses’ petition is rejected by God; it brings up Moses’ sin that prevents him from entering in, and it also mentions the mountains upon which he will die – sin and death

	Key Word in 1 st Verse	Main Ideas	Ending Scene
Speech 1 (ch. 4)	live	vision; idolatry prohibited (spirit)	3 Cities of Refuge estab.
Speech 2 (ch. 5)	learn	hearing; covenant (soul)	people fear the Lord
Speech 3 (ch. 6-7:11)	do	doing; love for God via the flesh (body)	judgment

- Speech 1, Deu 4
 - “And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, THAT YOU MAY LIVE, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you” (Deuteronomy 4:1)
 - the first idea that follows the “statutes and rules” part is “that you may live”
 - the beginning of salvation is rebirth, *reconnection* to God as we are removed from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of light
 - 2 emphasized ideas
 - what they have seen
 - vision emphasized in verses 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 19, 34, 35
 - vs. 3: “Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor” (Deuteronomy 4:3)
 - mentions both vision and idolatry
 - vision is very spiritual, but it also robs us of free will; what we see, we know we have seen
 - as with a child, God is willing to show Himself more openly to a new Believer to help provide some foundation for their belief
 - Grant has said that everything begins with light, and light is connected to vision; it’s how we see.
 - prohibition on idolatry
 - at the beginning of salvation, we turn our backs on other gods and choose God, alone
 - final scene: Moses establishes 3 Cities of Refuge
 - they speak to the beginning of salvation: escape from the death demanded by justice
- Speech 2, Deu 5
 - “And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall LEARN THEM and guard and do them’” (Deuteronomy 5:1)
 - key word from 1st verse: learn
 - a phase of education (adolescence)
 - 2nd key word: hear
 - key ideas: hearing and covenant
 - the deepening of relationship
 - hearing is a more mature form of contact with God
 - more grounded in physicality, therefore cloaks God more, therefore allows for faith

- grounded in time: the brain waits to hear a sentence in its entirety, then constructs meaning
 - faith begins with hearing (Romans 10)
 - a progression in the human face
 - eyes – foundational belief, highest, spiritual
 - ears— education, understanding, holiness, faith (grounded in time)
 - nose—discernment (actual particles activate smell)
 - mouth—doing, consuming so we can do (most physical)
 - final scene: Israel fearing God and asking Moses to be their intercessor
 - “For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived?” (Deuteronomy 5:26)
 - two great fruits of hearing (which we should be “hearing” as we read the Word):
 - understanding of God’s holiness and utter purity
 - understanding of our inclination to fall into uncleanness
- Speech 3, Deu 6-7:11
 - “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, THAT YOU MAY DO THEM IN THE LAND to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long” (Deuteronomy 6:1-2)
 - key idea in 1st verse: do
 - what is the heart of the Shema? “love God”
 - we love God by doing
 - we do especially with our physical being
 - Shema: love God with all our heart (levavcha), soul (naphshecha), and resources (me’odecha)
 - the three start in the middle of the body and work downward, emphasizing the flesh, the physical:
 - lev/heart – seat of ruach and emotions
 - nephesh/”soul” — seated in gut, animal instincts
 - me’odecha/resources – the legs, arms
 - how do we love God?
 - lev: control fear and develop an emotional warmth for God
 - nephesh: control our animal appetites and put those appetites to use to fill the earth and strengthen our bodies
 - me’odecha: we resist the desire to hoard wealth and instead use our resources and time for His kingdom

Yeshua

- Sabbath Commandment Difference Points to the Messiah
 - one big difference between 10 Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy: 4th commandment
 - Exodus: Sabbath connected to God having CREATED for 6 days and rested on the 7th – Sabbath connected to creation
 - Deuteronomy: “remember you were a slave in Egypt and God brought you out” – Sabbath connected to redemption
 - what has changed from Exodus to Deuteronomy
 - 40 years of struggling with the Torah have happened
 - the 1st generation needed redemption, but Egypt wasn’t their fault; the next generation needed redemption for the sin that they knowingly committed, failing to live up to the Torah
 - their sin is their own, and they need redemption
 - the drive to Yeshua
 - Israel can ask, “But who, then, can keep this Torah perfectly?” The answer is that no one can, which leads us to the need for the atoning work of the Messiah.
 - this drive to Yeshua is very much a part of this time of year
- The Flow of the Torah, Haftarah, and Brit Chadashah Points to the Messiah
 - key words from each tell a kind of story: “And I pleaded with God...saying, please let me go over and see the good Land beyond the Jordan;” “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God;” “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight.”
 - again, a push toward the Messiah: “I pleaded for the good life, and God comforted me by telling me to get ready for the coming of the Messiah.”
 - note that Moses does, indeed, make it into the Land, as he is present with Yeshua and Elijah at the Mt. of Transfiguration
 - the key is that only Yeshua can bring you into the Land

36 – Va’Etchanan – Transcript (not exact)

Hello and welcome to Beth Tikkun and Spiritual Seasons, where we are digging into the weekly Torah portions in the light of God’s yearly pattern of salvation that we see in the calendar. This week we are in parsha Va’Etchanan, which starts near the end of Deuteronomy chapter 3 and stretches to the middle of chapter 7, about 3½ chapters.

Before we get into the portion today, I want to do something just a little different. Today as I’m recording it is the 9th of Av, which began last night. And so I want to begin by bringing in a few short thoughts and stories related to a particular aspect of the day. The 9th of Av is a day of mourning largely because the first Temple was destroyed on this day, and then six-and-a-half centuries later, the second Temple was destroyed again on this day.

It's important for us to mourn on the 9th of Av. For one thing, mourning with Israel on this day connects us within the greater body of Israel, including those of us grafted into Israel. And mourning on this day is also a good use of the emotions. We have been talking a bit about training the emotions in the heat of summer, and the 9th of Av comes during summer's hottest days. Let this day be a time where we intentionally activate our emotions in a life-giving way. We know that we can jinn up our emotions, so to speak. Sometimes that's good and sometimes not so good. Today is a day we should do that in a way that helps us to empathize with the plight of others and the world in general. And in doing that, we are also connected to others and to the past.

The Sages have asked what caused the destruction of the Temples. They answer that the first was destroyed because of Israel's idolatry and the second for baseless hatred, hatred without a cause, *sinat chinam*. And we know that Yeshua says in John 15 that they hated HIM without a cause. But it was more than that for Yeshua's generation. They hated EACH OTHER baselessly as the various religious factions fought internally. That was a long time ago, but have we improved? The Talmud says, "A generation in which the Temple is not built is considered to be one in which it was destroyed," (Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1), meaning that if God chooses to not rebuild His Temple in our generation, we are like the generation in which the Temple was originally destroyed. And isn't this the case? Over and over again we choose to focus on our small differences rather than the mountain we have in common. And in focusing on our differences, we are driven apart.

So, the rabbis say that if baseless hatred is the cause of the destruction of the Temple, then the cure is baseless love, love without a cause, love that is unmerited; we might use the word "grace" or the phrase "unconditional love."

And how do we most clearly show this kind of love that is unmerited? We can show this especially by loving our enemies. We read Yeshua's words in Matthew 5: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:43-48). Yeshua loved His enemies to the point of dying for them. We are called to do the same as we follow Him.

On this topic of loving enemies as the antidote to the 9th of Av, I want to bring now a parable and a couple of quick stories about unmerited love, especially for enemies - first, the parable (<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=13829>): "A holy man was engaged in his morning meditation under a tree whose roots stretched out over the riverbank. During his meditation he noticed that the river was rising, and a scorpion caught in the roots was about to drown. He crawled out on the roots and reached down to free the scorpion, but every time he did so, the

scorpion struck back at him. An observer came along and said to the holy man, 'Don't you know that's a scorpion, and it's in the nature of a scorpion to want to sting?' To which the holy man replied, 'That may well be, but it is my nature to save, and must I change my nature because the scorpion does not change its nature?'"

If you are a reborn child of God and follower of Yeshua, your nature is do kindness, even to an enemy. The kindness may not be returned, but that does not change your nature. Kindness to enemies IS YOUR VERY NATURE. Do not fight against that.

Now a quote from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (*Martin Luther King, Jr. Men of Integrity, Vol. 1, no. 1.*): "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend." Once again: "Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."

And now I'll share two true stories that illustrate this idea that Dr. King is sharing.

Farmer Brings Milk to Enemies During War

The Bosnian War during the early 1990s pitted Bosnian Serbs against Muslims, making the sides bitter enemies...Rosa and Drago Sorak, a Bosnian Serb couple, told [the story that] during the war the Muslim police took away their oldest son, Zoran, for questioning. He never returned.

Five months after Zoran's disappearance, Zoran's wife gave birth to a girl. The mother was unable to nurse the child. The city was being shelled and there were severe food shortages. Infants were dying in droves. The family gave the baby tea for five days, but she began to fade. "The baby was dying," Rosa Sorak said. "It was breaking our hearts."

But on the fifth day, just before dawn, the Soraks heard someone stomping up to their front door. It was their Muslim neighbor, Fadil Fejzic, one of the few people in town who owned a cow. He was wearing black rubber boots and holding a half a liter of milk. Other families insulted Fadil and told him to let the children of their enemies die. But Fadil, the man with a cow and heavy black rubber boots, kept showing up on their porch—for 442 days in a row, until the Soraks' daughter-in-law and granddaughter left the country.

The Soraks said they could never forgive those who took Zoran from them. But they also couldn't forget the kindness of their neighbor Fadil. Drago Sorak said. "The milk he had was precious, all the more so because it was hard to keep animals. He gave us 221 liters. And every year at this time, when it is cold and dark, when we close our eyes, we can hear the boom of the heavy guns and the sound of Fadil Fejzic on the stairs."

Here was the power of love. What this illiterate farmer did would color the life of another human being, who might never meet him, long after he was gone.

Source: Adapted Chris Hedges, War Is a Force that Gives Us Meaning (Anchor, 2003), pp. 50-53
<https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2014/january/3012714.html>

And one last story, this one from 1930's Russia.

Man Feeds Enemies in Prison

In 1938, in a Russian prison, about 250 miserable men were herded together in one small cell. Among them was David Braun.

Soon David became aware of a Greek Orthodox priest in their midst. The old man had been thrown into prison because of his faith. His peaceful, radiant face made him stand out in that awful place like a candle in the dark. You couldn't miss him. It was probably because of this that he became the target for the sarcastic and blasphemous remarks of two of the prisoners. They were continually harassing him. They bumped into him. They mistreated him. They mocked everything that was holy to him. But always the priest was gentle and patient.

One day David received a food parcel from his wife. When people are constantly hungry, receiving a food parcel is something that can't be described; it has to be experienced. David opened the parcel. As he looked up, he saw the old priest looking at his bread with longing eyes. David broke off a piece and gave it to him. To his amazement the priest took the bread, broke it, and gave it to his two tormentors.

"My friend," said David, "you are hungry. Why did you not eat the bread yourself?"

"Let me be, brother," he answered. "They need it more than I. Soon I will go home to my Lord. Don't be angry with me."

Soon after that he died. But never again in this cell did David hear mockery and blasphemy. The old priest, a true servant of the Lord, had fulfilled his commission.

Source: Cornelia Lehn, Peace Be With You (Faith and Life Press, 1980), p. 91

<https://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2003/september/14582.html>

Let these stories of those who walked true to the teaching and example of Yeshua be encouragements to us to do likewise. We fight baseless hatred through unmerited love.

Va'Etchanan Summary

Let's turn now to parsha Va'Etchanan. This portion contains some important passages, including one of the most famous of all, the Shema, which is recited two times daily during the daily prayers and maybe a third time before going to bed. The portion begins with Moses telling the people how he pleaded with the Lord to let him cross over the Jordan and see the good land God had prepared for them. "Va'Etchanan" means "And I pleaded." Moses describes how God doesn't allow him to take the people across the Jordan, but He directs him to go up a summit east of the Jordan to see the Land, and God also tells Moses to charge Joshua and encourage and strengthen him because he will be the one to take them over the river.

Aleph-Beta divides the rest of the portion into three mini-speeches that are each set off by a similar sentence that includes the phrase "statutes and rules," or "chukkim" and "mishpatim"

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNKD6Akl8gs&list=PLmG0lNuEBb3BHcFIS8mqo6n80hhMBZcn&index=40&t=817s>) The first two of these key sentences begin with Moses saying effectively, “Listen to the statutes and rules,” “shema,” and the third simply says, “These are the statutes and rules...that God commanded me to teach you.” The three mini-speeches are also marked by chapter breaks, 4:1, 5:1, and 6:1, though the third speech continues into chapter 7.

The first mini-teaching emphasizes what Israel has SEEN WITH THEIR OWN EYES, how God is near to them in an absolutely new and unique way on the earth and how He brought them out of Egypt and what they saw and heard as they stood before Him at Mt. Sinai. In the main part of this speech, Moses implores Israel to be careful to not make any idols.

At the end of speech number 1, we are told that Moses set aside three Cities of Refuge east of the Jordan.

Speech number 2 is a repetition of the 10 commandments, which Moses follows with a reminder of how the people were filled with fear and awe of God such that they requested for Moses to talk to God for them. God says that what they have spoken in their fear of Him is good, and He even says that He wished they would always have such a heart toward Him, that they would always fear Him and keep His commandments so that things would go well for them and their descendants.

Speech number 3 contains the Shema, including the first line of the Shema and the section that begins, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your resources.” So the third speech is focused on a commandment to love God.

The Salvation Pattern in the 3 Movements of the Portion

I want to do a bit of a deep dive now into these three movements of portion Va’Etchanan to see the Salvation Pattern within them, a progression that is meant to be an encouragement to us at this time of year when we are at the low point of the 3 Weeks and the 9th of Av. If you can stick with me here, I think you’ll be amazed at the way God has designed this portion. It might help, though, to download and print out the outline that is linked below the video.

As I have been saying all along in this series of teachings, the Salvation Pattern is everywhere. We just need to develop the sensitivities to pull it out of whatever it is we’re looking at. On the one hand, being able to see God’s deeper pattern makes us simply stand in awe of Him and the wonders He has created. But on the other hand, by seeing this story of salvation in so many diverse places, we understand the whole thing more deeply because each of these pictures shines a new light on the others. The more you see and learn, the more you are able to spot each of the steps because there are many metaphors for each step. Often God mixes together metaphors from many different progressions in one scene.

Before we get to the 3 movements of this portion, the portion goes out of its way to begin in the previous chapter with Moses describing how he pleaded with God to allow him to enter the Land. God refuses. And Moses references here the place that he will ultimately go to die,

Pisgah, which is the summit area east of the Jordan where Mt. Nebo is. God tells him he will be able to see the Land from there but that he will not go in. So, this is important, the portion is going out of its way to begin with A PICTURE OF SIN AND DEATH, Moses' sin at Meribah that prevents him from entering the Land and his eventual death on Mt. Nebo. We begin with sin and death. The beginning of the salvation pattern for everyone after Adam is the sin of the fathers that results in the death that we are born into. Death is the context for salvation.

Let's move forward now to speech number 1, starting in Deuteronomy 4. Now, as part of the opening formula for each speech, the first verse of each gives reasons for learning and obeying the commandments. If we look at the reason that's mentioned first in each case, we'll see part of the emphasis of each speech. For speech number 1, the reason has to do with living, that they would live. That which dies in the Lord must be reborn. The beginning of the salvation pattern is new life, reconnection to God as we are brought out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light. The first verse here reads like this: "And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, THAT YOU MAY LIVE, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you" (Deuteronomy 4:1).

As we read through this first speech, we see that Moses emphasizes two ideas here: what Israel has seen with their eyes, and that they should be careful to have no other gods, the prohibition against idolatry. This process of rebirth early in the pattern – picture Passover – involves us making a choice as to who we will follow, who will be our God. We turn our backs on the gods of Egypt and walk out of that place. And in doing that, we who were already living in a place of death experience a new kind of death and a rebirth as we are placed in God's kingdom and connected to Him in a new way.

But why the emphasis on sight here in this first speech? First, let's make the case that vision is emphasized here. Vision and sight are mentioned in verses 3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 19, 34, and 35. We see it early in verse three, which sets the tone: "Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor" (Deuteronomy 4:3). In verse 3 we have both the main topics of this first speech, what their eyes have seen and the grave error of following false gods, in this case Baal Peor. Moses is saying, "Remember what you SAW, and choose God!"

So, what does vision have to do with early stages of salvation? In many ways, vision is both a very spiritually elevated sense but also one that robs us of the need for faith. If we see it, we've seen it. There's no need to trust when you've seen it. And in many ways, this is what God gave to Israel at the beginning of His relationship with the nation. They saw the plagues He poured out on Egypt. They saw the splitting of the Sea. They saw the pillar of cloud and fire during the wilderness journey.

What vision is is God allowing Himself to be seen early in our salvation journey often through miraculous circumstances, or situations that one has to stretch to call a mere coincidence. God is willing to show Himself more boldly when we are very young in Him. But that's not where we

are meant to end up. As we mature, God withdraws that obvious vision so that we have the opportunity to trust Him, to walk in faith. Yeshua comes with miracles that are His witnesses; His miracles testify that His words are true. He doesn't expect people to just believe Him without tangible evidence. And when He is resurrected, He appears to His followers and even allows them to touch His wounds. And so Moses begins here by saying, "Remember that you saw this!" or at least their parents had.

Even if it's hard to follow what's going on in these speeches and this progression, just pick up on these different points that are associated with different points in the progression – sight with the first one, for example. And sight has to do with light, the very beginning. Grant said recently in a teaching, "Everything starts with light," and light is connected to vision. That's how we see.

As if to cap off this first speech, we are told that Moses appoints three Cities of Refuge east of the Jordan. Why is this here? I think the message is that at the beginning, we are rescued from the death sentence. We escape from death. The one who flees to a City of Refuge, by rights, should be killed by the Avenger of Blood. This is what justice demands. But by His grace, God opens the way of salvation.

Moving forward to the second speech, which starts in chapter 5, we have the key word "learn" here. The first verse of speech 2 reads, "And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, 'Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall LEARN THEM and guard and do them'" (Deuteronomy 5:1). "Learn" is the first reason given here. This is a stage of education. In the previous speech, the word was "live," and here now it is "learn." After we are reborn, returned to life, there is a phase of growing up that is centered on textbooks and learning. It's the life stage called "adolescence."

But did you notice there was another emphasized idea in that first introductory sentence? Along with learning, we twice have the idea of "hearing." Listen again: "And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, 'HEAR, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak IN YOUR HEARING today, and you shall learn them and guard and do them'" (Deuteronomy 5:1). The bulk of this speech is a repetition of the 10 commandments, which is what Israel HEARD directly from God at Mt. Sinai. And Moses points out that at this point it wasn't about seeing but hearing. Whereas speech 1 emphasized seeing and choosing God, the emphasis in this second is hearing and covenant with God. After seeing comes hearing. After choosing God comes covenant with God.

We can actually see the progression we're talking about in the layout of the human body. This is an important teaching here because these human senses and abilities crop up everywhere in the Torah, and when they do, each carries a specific flavor with it in terms of the salvation pattern. If we look at just the human face, we have sight first, highest, then the ears below that. That undeniable vision comes first. Hearing is a bit lower down, so it's going to be a bit more grounded in physicality, especially time. Vision is nearly instantaneous. But with hearing, we have to wait for a sentence to be completely spoken before our brains can assemble it and

draw meaning out of it. Again, vision doesn't require much faith. We see what we see. But faith begins with hearing, we are told in Romans 10.

There are more lessons as we continue down the face, by the way. Lower still comes the nose, which is associated with discernment and a higher level of maturity. Actual physical particles entering the nose are what activate our sense of smell, so we're getting more physical again. Finally we come to the mouth, our organ of speech and our organ of consuming the physical world so that we can do work in the world. Let it be a lesson to us that our own speech should come last after several other phases of development.

Back to speech 2 now, the final scene in this second speech is Israel fearing God and asking Moses to be their intercessor for them. The people say to Moses, "For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived?" (Deuteronomy 5:26). They are beginning to understand God's purity and their impurity. Two of the great fruits of hearing, and for us two of the great fruits of reading the Word of God, are 1) an understanding of God's holiness and utter purity and 2) an understanding of our own tendency for falling into uncleanness. If we are reading the Word of God, if we are listening daily in this way with open ears, and we aren't hearing about God's holiness and our own inclination to fall, then we aren't hearing well.

Lastly, in the third speech that starts in chapter 6, we have the Shema. The key idea here in the first verse connected to the commandments is "do." The verse says, "Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, THAT YOU MAY DO THEM IN THE LAND to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long" (Deuteronomy 6:1-2). So we see some other ideas connected here, the length of life, the opening up of time. So if you're following the progression of key words connected to the commandments, they are "live," "learn," and "do."

And so we've also progressed from seeing to hearing to doing. This third speech is where we read the Shema. And what is at the heart of the Shema? It's really the commandment to love God. Well, how do we love God, and what does that have to do with doing? The emphasis here is that you love Him by doing with your physical being, your flesh. And so we've moved now to bringing rectification to the flesh, and that involves loving God, and loving is doing. Speech 1 deals with two spiritual concepts, life from the dead and worship of God alone. Speech 2 deals with soulish concepts, including learning and covenant. And now speech 3 should emphasize the flesh, the body, and that's exactly what we see here.

We can see the emphasis on loving with our physical being in the Shema, itself. Have you ever noticed that the Shema is very specific in the three parts of us that we are to love God with? It says, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). In English, the progression of these three doesn't really come through, but the three words in Hebrew are "levavcha," "naphshecha," and "me'odecha," or

“lev,” “nephesh,” and “me’od.” These three are working their way down from the middle to the lower body and then beyond. The heart is mentioned first, “levavcha.” It is the seat of the ruach and the emotions. The nephesh is mentioned next, and it’s seated in the gut and associated with the animal drives and instincts. “Me’odecha” is understood to be our physical resources, especially money. How do we love God? We love God with our emotions by rejecting worldly fears and embracing a warmth toward God; we love God with our nephesh by controlling our animal appetites and by putting those appetites to use to fill the earth and to strengthen our bodies; and we love God with our resources by rejecting our desire to accumulate and hoard wealth and instead put our resources and our time to use for God’s kingdom, furthering it and strengthening it.

So at the end comes love and echad. And then at the very end comes judgment. And we see this too in the final scene attached to this third speech where we see God meting out reward for those who love Him and destruction for those who hate Him.

Again, you just stand back and look at what God has designed here, and it’s jaw-dropping. But it doesn’t emerge quickly. It takes time. It takes building on the insights of others, which means you have to first listen to the insights of others. Someone at Aleph-Beta does a video on three mini-speeches in Va’Etchanan, and someone else can see those speeches from a slightly different angle. The community works together to build our understanding. And in the end, God emerges from the Torah to wave at us.

Yeshua

Sabbath Commandment Difference Points to the Messiah

Well, let’s turn now to a focus on Yeshua in this discussion. I want to make two quick points here. The first has to do with the one big change that we see in this restatement of the 10 commandments, which Grant points out in one of his teachings on Va’Etchanan. That big change is found in the fourth commandment regarding the Sabbath. In Exodus, the commandment to keep the Sabbath is connected to the creation story. It says there in Exodus 20 to remember the Sabbath, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:11). So there we have the Sabbath connected to God creating in 6 days and resting on the seventh. Here in Deuteronomy, on the other hand, the Sabbath is not connected to creation but to redemption: “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day” (Deuteronomy 5:15). Here in Deuteronomy the Sabbath is connected to coming out of Egypt.

What has changed for the nation from Exodus to Deuteronomy? Well, 40 years have passed after Israel agreed to uphold the covenant. That’s a lot of time to struggle and fall and to be in need of redemption in a new, very personal way. They needed to be redeemed from Egypt originally, but Egypt wasn’t their fault. They were born into that situation of slavery. It’s different here in Deuteronomy. This is long after they have agreed to be personally responsible

to the Torah. They are older and they have been walking with God and now their sin is their own. At first, the connection is to creation. Now the connection is to redemption.

But Israel might say, “Yes, we sinned knowingly against the covenant. And we are sorry for that. And we can literally see the death our sin causes. Our hands are rough from digging graves here in the wilderness. But what COULD we have done? How can we live up to this Torah perfectly? Who can do that? God, do something!”

It’s a sentiment that is very much on our lips in this part of the calendar. And it leads us straight to Who? It leads us straight to the Messiah. Israel is older, and now they can see better the need for the redemption of the Messiah, and Joshua is about to step up for them.

The Flow of the Torah, Haftarah, and Brit Chadashah Points to the Messiah

Lastly here today, I want to make a quick connection between the Torah, haftarah, and Brit Chadashah readings. When we bring out just the few most important words from each reading, a flow emerges. It goes like this: “And I pleaded with God...saying, please let me go over and see the good Land beyond the Jordan;” “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God;” “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight.”

Can you see that again we are being pushed toward the Messiah? I pleaded with God for the good life, the full life. Allow me to cross over, Lord! God says, “I see your distress and your humility. Be comforted. The wholeness you seek will, indeed, be granted to you in due time. Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. The answer I’m providing for you, the way that I am providing for you to follow, is the Messiah. Prepare your own pathways now so that He can follow them in to dwell with you. Prepare the pathways of your hearts now. Repent.” And so the three readings work together to say, “I pleaded for the good life, and God comforted me by telling me to get ready for the coming of the Messiah.”

And we should note that Moses does, indeed, make it into the Land of Promise. We see him there at the transfiguration. Moses is able to get into the Land, but he has to do so THROUGH YESHUA; that is God’s design.

Well, that’s all for today. Thank you for listening. May God help us to be a people who mourn for that which breaks God’s own heart. May we be a people who are quick to show love to our enemies, and in doing so, may our enemies be turned into friends. May He awaken us more deeply to the story of Yeshua in the Word and in the world. And may we rise up to be the people He has made us to be. Shalom!