



Lesson
Bechukotai / “In My Statutes”

Leviticus 26:3 – 27:34
Jeremiah 16:19 – 17:14
Luke 14:1 – 15:32

GRAFTED IN FELLOWSHIP
KING GEORGE

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All scripture references are Hebraic Roots Bible (HRB) unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE: Parashat Bechukotai is read together with Behar except in leap years. When the portions are read together, Haftarat Bechukotai (Jeremiah 16:19-17:14) replaces the haftarah for Behar.

My Notes:

Your Notes:

Historical Context:

- Jeremiah was probably not much older than King Josiah (21 years old), when YHVH first commissioned him to prophesy
- In the early years, King Josiah had not yet discovered the Torah or instituted religious reforms
- The people of Judah practiced religious forms and traditions inherited from earlier generations (sounds like us today) and adopted from foreign nations
- They did not realize they polluted their worship of YHVH with idolatry forbidden by Torah (just like today)
- Their ignorance of scriptures allowed them to believe that they served YHVH appropriately through sacrifices at high places and aberrant cultic practices
- **Jeremiah 7:30** – For the sons of Judah have done evil in My eyes, says YAHWEH. They have set their idols in the house on which is called by My name, in order to defile it.
- Some of the people offered their children as sacrifices to the god Molech just outside Jerusalem’s walls
- YHVH commissioned Jeremiah to announce His judgment against Judah
- He warned Jeremiah not to take a wife or have children because of the horrid doom to come
- **Jeremiah 16:5** – For so says YAHWEH, Do not enter into the house of mourning. Do not go to weep or moan for them. For I have removed My peace with loving-kindness and compassions from this people says YAHWEH.
- Jeremiah foresaw the terrible slaughter
- YHVH told him not to mourn for the people – not to mourn with the mourner or to feast with those celebrating
- The people of Judah would go into exile
- When the people asked Jeremiah why he uttered such dark predictions, YHVH answered through Jeremiah:
+ **Jeremiah 16:11-12** – 11 Then you shall say to them, Because your fathers have forsaken Me, says YAHWEH, and have walked after other gods, and have served

them, and have worshiped them, and have forsaken Me, and have not kept My Torah. 12 And you have done more evil than your fathers. For, behold, you each one walk after the stubbornness of his evil heart, without listening to Me.

- Jeremiah's prophecies did offer a ray of future hope
- YHVH promised that one day he would regather His scattered people and restore them to the land
- That monumental, future redemption will eclipse even the redemption from Egypt

In Depth:

Why this for Haftarah?

- The sages chose this passage of Jeremiah as the haftarah for Parashat Bechukotai because they detected a subtle reference to the laws of the Sabbatical years
 - + Jeremiah 17:4 – And you, even through yourself, will let drop from your inheritance which I gave you. And I will cause you to serve your enemies in a land which you do not know. For you have kindled a fire in My anger; it will burn forever.
- The Torah portion's curses for covenant infidelity conclude with a description of the land of Israel lying desolate
 - + This will allow the land to rest because of the years of neglect of this commandment
 - + Leviticus 26:34-35 – 34 Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths, all the days of the desolation. And you shall be in the land of your enemies; then the land shall enjoy rest, and shall enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 It shall rest all the days of the desolation, that which it has not rested in your Sabbaths while you lived on it.

Salvation of the Nations

Jeremiah 16:19 – O YAHWEH, my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the nations shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, Our fathers have inherited only lies, vanity, and there is no profit in them

- While the people of Judah practiced idolatry and apostasy, Jeremiah could foresee a day when even the pagan nations would renounce idolatry and turn to YHVH
- One midrash states: "In the time of Mashiach, the nations will admit the worthlessness of every known religion, cult and belief other than Torah Judaism, which is the only one not man-made."
- Zechariah 8:22 – And many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek YAHWEH of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to seek the favor of the face of YAHWEH.
- Isaiah 45:23 – I have sworn by Myself, the Word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.
- How ironic that the people of Israel worshipped the gods of the nations, making YHVH jealous
- Deuteronomy 32:21 – They made Me jealous with a not-El; they made Me angry by their vanities; and I shall make them jealous by a not-a-people; by a foolish nation I shall make them angry.
 - + Jeremiah 16:21 – Therefore, behold, I will make them know this time; I

The Table of the Heart

Jeremiah 17:1 – The sin of Judah is engraved with an iron pen. It is carved on the tablet of their heart with the point of a diamond, and on the horns of your altars,

- YHVH told Jeremiah that the sin and idolatry of Judah was engraved like an inscription written in stone
- Biblical Hebrew uses the word “heart” like Modern English uses the word “mind”
 - + Something written on the heart is remembered and rehearsed in the mind
 - + These thoughts direct our actions
- **Proverbs 3:3** – Mercy and truth will not forsake you, tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,
- **Proverbs 7:3** – Tie them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.
- God’s commandments are to be upon our hearts so that we will live them out
 - + **Deuteronomy 6:6** – And these Words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart.
- Jeremiah’s generation etched idolatry and sin into their hearts’ tablets
- Like an addict returning to his vice, they kept sin always on their minds
- They cared for their cultic sites and high places the way that parents hold affection for their children
- In fact, they cared for their idols more than their children – even offering their children as sacrifices to Molech
- The description of sin etched on the tablets of the heart illustrates the human condition
 - + **Romans 8:7** – because the mind of the flesh is enmity towards Elohim; for it is not subject to the Torah of Elohim, for it is not possible to be so.
- The sin etched in stone cannot be erased
 - + **Romans 7:19** – For it is not the good that I desire to do that I do. But it is the evil that I do not desire, that I do.
 - + **Romans 7:22-23** – 22 For I delight in the Torah of Elohim according to the inward man; 23 but I see another law in my members having warred against the law of my mind, and taking me captive by the law of sin being in my members.
- Sin is engraved upon our minds so that our natural inclination is to rebel against YHVH
- But do not despair!
- **Ezekiel 11:19-20** – 19 And I shall give to them one (echad) heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh, 20 so that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments, and do them. And they shall be to Me for a people, and I will be to them for Elohim.

- **Jeremiah 31:31** – Behold, the days come, says YAHWEH, that I will cut a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
- **Romans 7:24-25** – 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this mortal body? 25 I thank YAHWEH through Yahshua Messiah our Master! So then I myself with the mind truly serve the Torah of Elohim and with the flesh the law of sin.

Mountain of Mine

Jeremiah 17:3 – O My mountain in the field! I will give your wealth, all your treasures, for prey, your high places for sin throughout all your borders.

- When YHVH punishes Judah for her sin, He will give her wealth and treasures to the plunderers
- The holy Temple of Zion and the high places of idolatry will both have the same fate
- YHVH refers to the Temple as “mountain of Mine”
- In English, we have different words for hill and mountain
- In Hebrew, it is the same word “har” for both
- The “hill of YHVH” is “His holy place”
- + **Psalm 24:3** – Who shall go up into the hill of YAHWEH? And who shall stand in His holy place?
- **At the same time of the final redemption...**
 - + **Zechariah 8:3** – So says YAHWEH: I have returned to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And Jerusalem shall be called a City of Truth, and the mountain of YAHWEH of Hosts, the Holy Mountain.
 - + **Isaiah 2:3** – And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mount of YAHWEH, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob. And He will teach from His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion the Torah will go forth, and the Word of YAHWEH from Jerusalem.

The Shemittah

Jeremiah 17:4 – And you, even through yourself, will let drop from your inheritance which I gave you. And I will cause you to serve your enemies in a land which you do not know. For you have kindled a fire in My anger; it will burn forever.

- This verse says the people of Judah will “let go” of the land
 - + shamat (שָׁמַט)
 - + **Exodus 23:11** – And the seventh year you shall let it rest and let it lie fallow, and the needy of your people shall eat. And what they leave, the animals of the field shall eat. So you shall do to your vineyard, to your olive yard.
 - + “let it rest” = shamat
- In addition to letting the land rest, Torah requires lenders to forgive loans in the 7th year
 - + Employs the use of shamat
 - + **Deuteronomy 15:2** – And this is the manner of the release: Everyone who has a loan to his neighbor shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother, because a release has been proclaimed for YAHWEH.
 - + Remission = shemittah (shamat [root])
 - + Release = shamat

- + YHVH's remission = shemittah (shamat [root])
- The Sabbatical year law recurs in Parashat Behar
 - + **Leviticus 25:3-4** – 3 You shall sow your field six years, and you shall prune your vineyard six years, and shall gather its produce. 4 And in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest to the land, a Sabbath to YAHWEH. You shall not sow your field, and you shall not prune your vineyard.
- The curses contained in Parashat Bechukotai cite the neglect of the Sabbatical year as the reason for Israel's exile
 - + **Leviticus 26:34-35** – 34 Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths, all the days of the desolation. And you shall be in the land of your enemies; then the land shall enjoy rest, and shall enjoy its Sabbaths. 35 It shall rest all the days of the desolation, that which it has not rested in your Sabbaths while you lived on it.
- Targum Yonatan translates Jeremiah 17:4 as a direct reference to the shemittah year:
 - + "And I will bring an adversary against your land so that it will be desolate, as in the year of release."
- Tz'enah Ur'enah reads,
 - + "You will be forced, against your will, to heed the laws of *shmittah*, for you will be exiled from your land. I will avenge Myself because of the inheritance which I gave you, and because you did not observe *shmittah* within it."
- 2 Chronicles also ties Jeremiah's prophecies and Israel's failure to observe the Shemittah years
 - + **2 Chronicles 36:21** – in order to fulfill the Word of YAHWEH in the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths; all the days of the desolation it kept the Sabbath, to the full measure of seventy years.
- Due to the references to the shemittah year, this is why this section of Jeremiah was chosen for Parashat Bechukotai

The Two Trees

Jeremiah 17:7 – Blessed is the man who trusts in YAHWEH, and YAHWEH is his refuge.

- The man who trusts in his own strength is like a bush in the desert – dried and withered
- The man who trusts YHVH is like a tree planted by the water
 - + **Jeremiah 17:8** – For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters. It sends out its roots by the stream, and it will not fear when the heat comes; but its foliage will be green; and it is not anxious in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit.
- This imagery is almost identical to Psalm 1:
 - 1 Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of scorners. 2 But his delight is only in the Torah of YAHWEH, and he meditates in His Torah day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivulets of waters, which will give its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf will not wither, and all which he does will prosper. 4 Not so are the wicked, but they are only as chaff which the wind drives about. 5 On account of this the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For YAHWEH is knowing the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked shall perish.

- Psalm 92:13-14, also describes the righteous tree
13 Those planted in the house of YAHWEH, in the courts of our Elohim, shall flourish.
14 They shall bear fruit in old age; they shall be fat and fresh,

The Deceit of the Heart

Jeremiah 17:9 – The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurable; who can know it?

- We have already discussed Hebrew heart vs Modern mind
- YHVH says the human mind is deceitful and sick
- Who can understand his own heart?
- Layers of self-justifications, rationalizations, reconstructions bury the truth
- The log in a man’s eye blinds him to his own shortcomings
- Yet he sees the speck in someone else’s eye
- We conceal our sins even from ourselves
- YHVH reveals our secret sins
+ Psalm 90:8 – You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your face.
- Our minds are finite – limited
- Who can possibly sort through all the confusion and limitations of the mind and render judgment?
- Only YHVH!
+ Jeremiah 17:10 – I, YAHWEH, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.
+ Jeremiah 11:20 – But, O YAHWEH of Hosts who judges with righteousness, who tries the reins and the heart, let me see Your vengeance on them. For to You I have laid open my cause.
- Since we are neither YHVH (Who tries the feelings and the heat), nor are we on the level of the Yeshua, we are not to judge others
- By the measure we judge others, we will be judged!

The Partridge and the Eggs

Jeremiah 17:11 – As a partridge broods and does not hatch, so is he who makes riches, and not by right; it will leave him in the middle of his days, and in his end he will be a fool.

- Jeremiah is providing a proverb comparing a man who profits through fraud or unrighteous gain to a bird called a “kore” (קֹרֵא)
- Translations are typically partridge or cuckoo
- According to ancient Israelite ornithology, the kore-bird was known to adopt the eggs of other birds, nest them, and hatch them
- When the baby birds matured, they abandoned the kore-bird – another proverb: birds of a feather flock together

- The kore-bird lost his adopted brood and all his efforts turned out for naught
- The same is true for the man who gained money by violating the laws of the Torah
 - + By desecrating the Sabbath
 - + Stealing
 - + Lending with interest
 - + Taking away another's source of income
- Though he accumulates wealth quickly, in the end it will abandon him, exposing him as a fool
- The Hebrew can be interpreted to mean that the unjust wealth will abandon him, or he will abandon it
 - + It will abandon him when his fraud is exposed
 - + He will abandon it when he dies: Others will enjoy his wealth while he stands penniless and guilty before the court of YHVH

The Glorious Throne

Jeremiah 17:12 – A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

- Jeremiah is explaining the “place of our sanctuary,” the Temple in heaven was in place from the beginning
- Targum Yonatan explains:
 - + "The One whose Shechinah is upon the throne of glory in the heavens on high, higher than the beginning' corresponding to the place of the house of our sanctuary."
- This is also explained in Hebrews:
 - + **Hebrews 9:11** – But Messiah having appeared as a High Priest of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,
- YHVH's throne pre-existed the creation of the world, He preordained the building of the Temple on earth
- He rewards the righteous by bringing them to the Temple in Jerusalem, the earthly replica of His heavenly abode

Mikvah of Israel

Jeremiah 17:13 – O YAHWEH, the Hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed. Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken YAHWEH, the Fountain of living waters.

- Hope = mikveh (hwqm)
- This alludes to a gathering of living water (mikvah, the feminine form of mikveh) used for ritual immersion
- One midrash states:
 - + "Hashem is the hope of Bnai Yisrael ... He is like a mikveh. He cleanses from sin those who [repent], just as a mikvah cleanses the impure."
- The Babylonian Talmud also explains that at the coming

of Messiah, YHVH will spiritually cleanse Israel from their sins:

+ Rabbi Akiba said, "Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is the one before whom you have been made clean? Who is it that makes you clean? It is your Father who is in heaven, as it is written [in Ezekiel 36:25]. 'Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean.'

It also says [in Jeremiah 17:13], 'O LORD, the *mikveh* (hope) of Israel.' Just as the mikvah cleanses the unclean, so does the Holy One, blessed be he, cleanse Israel."

- **Isaiah 4:3-4** — 3 And it shall be, he remaining in Zion, and he who is left in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, every one who is written among the living in Jerusalem; 4 When YAHWEH shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and the blood of Jerusalem shall have been rinsed away from its midst by a spirit of judgment, and by a spirit of burning.
- **Zechariah 3:9** — For, behold, I will bring forth My Servant, THE BRANCH. For behold, the stone which I have given before Joshua, on the one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave its engraving, says YAHWEH of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
- **Zechariah 13:1** — In that day a fountain shall be opened to the house of David and to those living in Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.
- **The apostolic community saw Yeshua as the fulfillment of the prophetic promises about spiritual cleansing and covenant renewal in the Messianic Era**
- **They taught that Yeshua's death and resurrection initiated the new covenant predicted by the prophets**
 - + **He cleansed the assembly of believers**
 - **Ephesians 5:26** — that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the washing of water and by the Word,
 - + **Titus 2:14** — who gave Himself on our behalf, "That He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify a special people for Himself, zealous of good works."
 - + **Acts 15:9** — And He made distinction in nothing between both us and them, having purified their hearts by faith.
 - + **Titus 3:5** — not by works in righteousness which we had done, but according to His mercy, He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,
 - + **1 Corinthians 6:11** — And some of you were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Master Yahshua, and in the Spirit of our Elohim.
 - + **Hebrews 10:22** — let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body having been washed in pure water;
 - + **2 Corinthians 7:1** — Then having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and of spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of Elohim.
 - + **1 John 1:7** — But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of His Son Yahshua Messiah cleanses us from all sin.

Written in the Dust

Jeremiah 17:13 — O YAHWEH, the Hope of Israel, all who forsake You shall be ashamed. Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken YAHWEH, the Fountain of living waters.

- **With the understanding that YHVH is the "mikvah of Israel" and the "fountain of living water," but the**

people of Jeremiah's days forsook the fountain of living water

- **Jeremiah 2:13** – For My people have done two evils: they have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters, to hew out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
- They turned away and worshipped idols
- Targum Yonatan: they are "destined to fall into Gehenna."
- Their names won't be written in the book of life
- YHVH will write their names in the earth where they will be washed and forgotten
- Midrash: "Let all who turn away ... be inscribed among those who sink to the depths of the earth, to Hell, for they have left the well of living waters."
- Example in the Apostolic Writings:
 - + **John 8:6-7** – 6 But they said this, tempting Him, that they may have reason to accuse Him. But bending down, Yahshua wrote with the finger in the earth, not appearing to hear. 7 But as they continued questioning Him, bending back up, He said to them, The one among you without that sin, let him cast the first stone at her.
- The Gospel of John does not tell us what Yeshua wrote in the earth
- According to Jeremiah, Yeshua was writing their names in the ground

Pleas for Salvation

Jeremiah 17:14 – Heal me, O YAHWEH, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved; for You are my praise.

- The haftarah ends with a plea for healing and salvation
- The prayer for healing does not refer to physical healing
- He is speaking of the sinful heart
 - + **Jeremiah 17:9** – The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is incurable; who can know it?
- From one of the daily prayers: "Heal us, a LORD our God, from the sickness of our hearts!"
- **Matthew 9:12** – But Yahshua hearing, He said to them, The healthy are not in need of a doctor, rather those that are sick.

Resources used:
[First Fruits of Zion, Torah Club Volume 3, Voice of the Prophets](#)