

שֹׁפְטִים

Shophtim

(Judges)

D'varim [Deuteronomy] 16:18-21:9

הפטרה שפטים

Haftarah Shophtim

Yeshayah [Isaiah] 51:12-52:12

Oppressors are Blasphemers

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 52:5

“Now therefore, what do I have here,” says YHWH, “seeing that My people have been taken away without cause? Those that rule over them howl,” says YHWH, “and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.”

There are many ways in which one person can oppress another person. This oppression can be in the form of financial, mental, emotional, physical or spiritual. The variation that these different forms of oppression may be manifested in, are as diverse as the oppressor himself. YHWH has much to say about how those who oppress another in any way will be dealt with by YHWH Himself.

Much of Torah is given to us to teach us how to live with one another without oppressing each other. It behooves us to learn His Torah commandments well so that we may not be the cause of any oppression towards another person. If a person is oppressed and he calls out to YHWH for deliverance, then YHWH promises us that He will hear and it will not be good for that one who is the oppressor.

In the verse above we see that YHWH tells us two things about those who oppress; 1) howl; and 2) blaspheme His name. It is actually the doing of the first that causes the second.

The English word “howl” comes from the Hebrew word הִלִּילוּ – “y’helilu,” which means “to howl” or “to wail,” but not in a good sense. This is what one does when in great distress or anguish; or when one is very angry or distraught at another. This word comes from the root word יָלַל – “yalal,” “to wail” or “to howl.”

This word is actually related to another Hebrew word הָלַל – “halal” which means “to radiate.” It is this root from which we get the word הִלְלוּ – “halellu” which means “to praise.” These two words stand at opposite ends of the spectrum of what can come out of our mouths. One can be loud in wailing or howling. Or, one can sing praises to YHWH our Elohim.

Often it is those being oppressed that are doing the wailing. The companion to this wailing by those oppressed is the howling of the oppressor. In this verse above, this is what is being spoken of, the howling of the oppressor. It is this howling that is blasphemous of His name. The Hebrew word is מִנְאָץ – “minno’atz” which means “to spurn,” “to be scorned.” The root word is נָאָץ – “na’atz” which means “to scorn impetuously, to reject as worthless.” So when His name is blasphemed, this simply means that His name is scorned or one causes His name to be scorned. This can happen in a variety of ways.

B’midbar (Numbers) 14:11

And YHWH said to Moshe, “How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?”

This verse is the first place that a form of this word occurs in the Torah. Please note that it is YHWH speaking and He puts forth the foundation of what it means to blaspheme His name. The basic principle of blasphemy is unbelief. It is unbelief resulting in wrongdoing, commonly referred to in Scripture as sin.

B’midbar (Numbers) 14:22-23

***22 “Because all those men that have seen My glory, and My signs, which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tested Me these ten times, and have not heard and obeyed My Voice;
23 surely they shall not see the land which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of them that spurned Me see it.”***

In the incident of the evil report by the ten spies in which they caused the nation to reject the name of YHWH, YHWH rejected them and would not allow them to enter into His land.

We learn a couple of chapters later that Korach and company also blasphemed His name by not fearing Him in a righteous manner.

YHWH also tells us that worshipping false gods is blaspheming His name as well.

D'varim (Deuteronomy) 31:20

“For when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.”

The basic idea here is that when a person or group of people act in such a way that they break the commandments of YHWH, then they are spurning or blaspheming His name. It is important to note that it is the actions of a person, not his words, that blaspheme the name of YHWH. In relation to the incident of the spies we see this truth expounded upon in the Brit.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 4:6

Seeing therefore it remains that some should enter it, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience.

These ten spies who according to Scripture were all considered as leaders in Israel led all the people astray. Instead of acting in humble obedience to the Voice of YHWH our Elohim, they engendered unbelief and disobedience provoking YHWH to wrath upon the nation.

Yochanan (John) 10:33-38

33 The Yehudim answered Him, “We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy; and because that you, being a man, make yourself Elohim.”

34 Yeshua answered them, “Is it not written in your Torah, ‘I said, you are elohim?’

35 If He called them elohim, to whom the word of Elohim came (and the scripture cannot be broken),

36 you say of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You blaspheme’; because I said, ‘I am the Son of Elohim?’

37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe me.

38 But if I do them, though you believe me not, believe the works; that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.”

Please note that Yeshua is accused of blasphemy at this point by the religious leaders for the words that He had spoken. But Yeshua contrasts what they are doing with what they should be doing, and that is believing in what He is doing more than what He is saying. This clearly teaches us that blasphemy is tied directly to one's actions, and only indirectly to one's words.

With this understanding in mind then, we can examine this next passage and see it in a new and revealing light.

Matithyah (Matthew) 12:31

“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.”

There have been written many things concerning what is actually the blasphemy to which Yeshua refers here in this passage. However, what man attempts to confuse in order to control others, Yeshua actually is quite clear on, in this matter.

Matithyah (Matthew) 12:32

“And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.”

Please take careful note of the occasion as to why Yeshua spoke these words. He had cast a demon out of a man so that He healed him. But the Pharisees being jealous claimed that this was not done by the Spirit of YHWH, but rather by the prince of the underworld, Ba'al Z'vuv. In essence what these men did was to declare that a work of the Spirit of YHWH was done by a demon. It is calling the clean set apart Spirit of YHWH unclean and demonic. Brothers and sisters, be very careful of what you call demonic just because you do not agree with it, nor understand it. Be sure of this one thing, you will answer for this every time that you do it. Please take note of verses 36 and 37 below.

Matithyah (Matthew) 12:33

33 “Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit.

34 You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good things; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 And I say to you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment.

37 For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

In the mindset of western culture words are tied to beliefs. However, this is not true in the eastern mindset of Scriptural culture. Often in the west men speak and talk but do nothing. The west is famous for conferences, meetings and committees, resulting in the multiplication of words. The majority of these words do not result in action. Furthermore, this idea is seen in the common attitude in Christianity in which what is the most important is what one believes, not what one does.

Ya'aqov (James) 2:18

18 Yea, a man will say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.”

19 You believe that Elohim is one; you do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

Speaking is an act. Speaking is something that one does as much as taking a walk is an act. In fact, the act of speaking perhaps is tied more directly to what is in the heart of man than any other action that he can do. Is it any wonder then why Mashiach Yeshua taught us that it is our words that will condemn or

justify us? It is not simply a matter of belief, it is a matter of action. What YHWH asks from His people is for us to obey His Voice. If one will not do this, then he will not have eternal life.

When a man sets to howling against his fellow man, attempting to manipulate and control him to get him to do as he desires, instead of helping him to do the will of our Father in heaven, then blasphemous action results. This is true simply because when one man attempts to force another (oppress) into service, then the oppressor is committing idolatry. The oppressor takes the position that he is better than his fellow man and attempts to force him into servitude. This YHWH is not pleased with! And just as YHWH destroyed Egypt who oppressed Israel in those days, so once again He will destroy all those who are oppressing His people.

ABBA YHWH, may You bring about Your deliverance of all Your people soon and in our day and it will be beautiful in our sight; in the name of Mashiach Yeshua. Amein.

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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