

## MATOT { מַטוֹת } (Tribes)

### A Messianic Jewish Commentary

By Hannah Neshner [www.voiceforisrael.net](http://www.voiceforisrael.net)

Numbers 30:1(2) – 32:42, Jeremiah 1:1-2:3, Philippians 3:7-21

Matot **מַטוֹת** is the Hebrew word for ‘Tribes’, as in the Tribes (Matot) of Israel. Our family has settled in the Land in an area called ‘Matteh Yehudah’, which is the ancient territory of the Tribe of Judah. I love living in this beautiful, mountainous region of Israel which belongs to my ancestors, including Yeshua, Lion of the tribe of Judah (Yehudah)!



Region of Matte Yehudah

In this parashah (portion of Scripture), Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes (matot) about the issue of vows. In Hebrew, the word is ‘neder’ **נדר** which denotes a solemn promise to consecrate something to God, or to do something in His service or honor.

### Keeping our Word - Vows

**“If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”**  
(Numbers 30:2)

Jacob (Yaacov) made such a vow to God when he promised to give back to God a tenth (tithe) of anything God gave to him in exchange for God’s provision and protection on his journey.  
(Genesis 28:20-22)

We have to be so careful about making promises because God expects us to keep our word. One night, my youngest daughter, Liat, wanted some time with me, so she asked if I would just sit in the air conditioned room with her and watch some of her favorite TV shows together. Realizing she needs this special mother-daughter time with me, and since I was supposed to be resting anyways after a car accident that had happened, I happily agreed. But Liat wanted a promise.

*“Do you promise??!!” she asked. “No, I won’t promise,” I replied, “but I hope we will do this tomorrow as we have planned.” I know all too well by now to heed my mother’s saying which is so true, “People plan and God laughs...”*

I would rather not promise than have to break my word. In the end, a mother in distress called and asked Liat to babysit her children since she had been up all night with a sick baby and needed a break. I'm so glad I didn't just lightly say, "*Sure, I promise.*" We can plan our way, but God directs our steps.<sup>1</sup>

Oftentimes we make a vow in times of distress or desperation in an attempt to secure Divine help or aid. The challenge is to remember and keep our vow when the trial has passed.

**"It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy and afterward to reconsider his vows."** (*nederim*) pl. (Proverbs 20:25)

We must be very careful before uttering a vow: **"Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God...When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed – better not to vow than to vow and not pay."** (Ecclesiastes 5:2, 4,5)

There are many things we can do that classify us as fools; one of them is not keeping our promises. How about keeping our word towards other people? How often do we pledge something and then not follow up? Do we pay what we have promised to pay? Do we do what we have promised to do?

We are instructed in the Bible to keep our word even when it hurts (when it is no longer convenient or pleasant). The person who does so is the one who may abide in God's tabernacle and dwell in His holy hill!

**"Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?  
He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness...  
He who swears (vows, promises) to his own hurt and does not change."** (Psalm 15:4b)

As believers we should have the best reputation for being people of integrity - people who can be trusted to keep our word. Yeshua said, '**Let your yes be yes and your no be no.**' (Matthew 5:37)

Moses also instructed the people of Israel in the matter of vows: **"He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."** (Numbers 30:2)

Of course, the reality is that there are times when we simply cannot keep a vow we have vowed, despite our best intentions. We discussed this in the example of Jephtah's vow to sacrifice the first thing that came out of the door of his house when he returned from battle. It turned out to be his one and only daughter! <sup>2</sup>

Rabbinic consensus is that it is better to break a foolish or dangerous vow than to persist in carrying it out. Interestingly, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) which is the holiest day of

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 16:9

<sup>2</sup> Judges 11:30-31 Haftarat Chukat [www.voiceforisrael.net/parashah](http://www.voiceforisrael.net/parashah)

the Biblical calendar, begins with a prayer, called Kol Nidre (All vows), to break any such vows made over the past year. This prayer began in the time of the Spanish Inquisition when Jews were forced to take on Christian vows against their will.

This shows us that God takes vows seriously and so should we; but we must also be aware and accept that there are exceptions when a wrong vow must unfortunately be broken. In understanding our humanity, God allows us the grace to do so, but this should be the exception rather than the rule.

Related to but slightly different than a vow (neder) is a bond, called an 'isur' . This is usually a negative vow – a self-imposed pledge to abstain from something normally permissible. An example of this is that of the Nazarite– a pledge to abstain from grape products such as wine. Shimshon (Samson), for instance, was a lifetime Nazirite, as was John the Baptist (Luke 1:15) – men chosen to be completely consecrated to the Lord from birth to death.

The Hebrew word for bond, { isur , אסר } is closely related to the word { asur אסור } which means 'forbidden'. These words also carry the connotation of being bound, chained, or imprisoned. A prisoner is an 'asir'. אסיר Therefore, we can see that we are bound by even our voluntary choice to make something permissible as 'asur' (forbidden).

There may be things in our lives that others would consider completely allowable but God may put it on our heart to abstain from it for some specific reason. Other things may be permissible but probably not for our greatest good if we want to be fully consecrated to the Lord, such as watching impure movies, playing violent video games, or reading questionable fiction. Our standard must be the word of God, not the world's opinion.

We see this in the life of Paul, where he voluntarily abstained from things permitted in order to avoid causing offense to those weaker in faith. Paul also joined four other men who had taken a vow (neder) to prove that he himself walked orderly according to the Jews and faithfully kept the Torah. (Acts 21:23-24)

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## Waging War with Wise Counsel

God then commanded Moses to wage war against the Midianites.

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Avenge the people of Israel on the Midianites. Afterwards you shall be gathered to your people.” So Moses spoke to the people, saying, “Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the LORD's vengeance on Midian. You shall send a thousand from each of the tribes of Israel to the war.” (Numbers 31:1-4)



Moses Ordering the Slaughter of the Midianites (1650 painting by [Claes Corneliszoon Moeyaert](#))

The Israelites slew Balaam with a sword in this war with Midian.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, Balaam had remained with King Balak and the Midianites as their advisor. It was the counsel of Balaam that caused Israel to sin.<sup>4</sup> Moses became angry with the commanders of Israel for sparing the Midianite women since they had enticed the men of Israel into sin. Therefore only the virgins were spared; but all the rest were killed.



The Women of Midian Led Captive by the Hebrews (watercolor by [James Tissot](#))

When making plans, or in the midst of some kind of battle, we so desperately need wise counsel. **“Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war.”** (Proverbs 20:18)

However, we must be very careful from whom we are taking advice. Before I became a believer in Yeshua, I took advice and sought for guidance with the problems in my life from secular counselors, some of whom probably had even worse problems than me in their lives! Also, like many people in the world today, I checked my Zodiac horoscope or went to psychics at times. However, after someone pointed out to me a Scripture from the Book of Psalms (Tehillim), I stopped taking counsel from the ungodly.

**“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...but his delight is in the Torah of Adonai, and in His Torah he meditates day and night.”** (Psalm 1:1-2)

Once I came to faith in Yeshua, I decided to have the Torah and Holy Spirit as my counselor and guide: **“For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”** (Psalm 48:14)

We have a promise that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. Of course we can receive wise counsel from godly people and there is “safety in a multitude of counselors”<sup>5</sup>, but we must first bring every issue to the Lord and ask for His wise counsel.

When battling to obtain our citizenship here in the Land, an intercessor from America phoned me with a strategy. She suggested we perform a prophetic act whereby we would literally plant copies of our documents in the Land itself next to a young fig tree in the back yard of a Zionist family. Each day, we would water it, quoting God’s promises in the Bible to bring us back to this Land.

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<sup>3</sup> Numbers 31:8

<sup>4</sup> Numbers 31:16

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 11:14



This wise counsel brought us to a place of victory in the warfare to possess a place in this Land. Halleluyah. Praise God for wise counsel from Spirit-filled people who hear from the Lord. However, the wrong advice can bring a person down quickly! Solomon, son of King David, unwisely listened to his peers rather than the elders – a decision which had disastrous consequences. Listening to wrong counsel ended up causing a civil war which split the Kingdom of Israel into two!

Balaam’s counsel also brought destruction upon all Israel. Who are we listening to? Some people claim to be loyal to the God of Israel but are they truly undivided in their heart or are they playing both sides of the fence like Balaam? We shall know them by their fruit.<sup>6</sup>

### Settling on the East Side of the Jordan

Chapter 32 of the book of Numbers deals with an issue concerning the tribes of Reuben (meaning ‘see – a son’) and Gad. These two tribes desired to settle on the East side of the Jordan.



Moses was sparked to anger, saying: **“*Shall your brethren go to war and you just sit here?!*”** (Numbers 32:6)

Reuben and Gad Ask for Land (engraving by [Arthur Boyd Houghton](#))

Perhaps the Jewish people who choose to remain in exile, could ask themselves the same question. We often hear about terrorist attacks and the threat of war against Israel. These are our brethren, precious Jewish men, women, and children who risk their lives on a daily basis to settle and defend this Land. And yes, there are problems living in Israel – serious ones!

Yes, there are giants in the Land, some from our very own people and leaders – but how can we sit in relative comfort, security, and luxury, while our Jewish brothers and sisters are risking their lives in a daily war with Islamic terrorists and Muslim suicide bombers? It is a question that I believe as fellow Israelites we need to seriously consider!

Moses compared these tribes’ request to the sin of the ten spies who were afraid to possess the Land and who caused all of Israel (except Joshua and Caleb) to lose heart. By their reluctance to enter the land, they brought the judgment of God upon all Israel.

But was this really the true intent of these two tribes of Reuben and Gad? Moses was jumping to conclusions; he was pre-judging their motives as being evil and fearing the worst.



Avi at age 6 with Israeli soldiers

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 7:16

Why? It seems to me that Reuven & Gad's request just pushed Moses' buttons – it sparked an emotional reaction based on a negative event that had caused Moses trauma in the past. We can do the same thing. Someone does something or says something that just reminds us of a past trauma or negative event and the association sparks a negative emotion – fear or anger; whereas what the person intended was in no way, shape or form the same thing at all.

Moses said (we can assume with a raised volume of voice tone), “*You're sinful men just like your fathers!*”<sup>7</sup> We need to watch out for these kinds of knee-jerk emotional reactions and give ourselves the time to hear someone out before automatically judging them. The leaders of these tribes cleared themselves by pledging to go over to war with the rest of the tribes and only to return to their inheritance east of the Jordan when the land has been conquered. (Numbers 32:19)

This pledge of Reuven and Gad teaches us an important lesson. They were not only concerned with their own interests, but cared equally about the welfare of the entire nation of Israel. As Believers, we are all different and distinct parts of one Body of which Yeshua is the head. If one part of the Body hurts or is suffering, the whole body feels the pain. So, too, should we care about the needs and well-being of the whole community of Believers, not just our own little group or family! **“Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interests of others.”** (Philippians 2:4)

## God Created us - Male and Female

Another thing I love about this story is how the men insisted on leaving their women and children on the East side of the Jordan, in relative comfort and safety while the men went out to war. They didn't hide behind their apron strings. I believe that by nature, God has made men to be warriors and women nurturers. While we each have distinctive personalities, generally, God has placed in the hearts of men a desire to conquer the enemy along with a desire to protect the weak and vulnerable, especially women and children.

How warped things have become when abusive men instead turn their warrior nature on the very women and children that they are meant to protect. How twisted the original plan of God when women desire to engage in warfare and choose to extinguish life through abortion rather than give birth to life.

One of the ways that we return to healing is just by allowing ourselves to be who God created us to be. If we are men, we can be fully masculine without apology; if women, fully feminine. We need not apologize for our gender characteristics – that's why we need each other.

There is a midrash (rabbinic commentary) on this incident, however, that does not cast the men of Reuven and Gad in such a glowing light. The Reubenites and Gadites were very rich in livestock. “Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock.” (Numbers 32:1) The rabbis believe that they loved their possessions so much that they were willing to separate themselves from the rest of Israel in order to give their cattle the best grazing land.

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<sup>7</sup> *paraphrase Numbers 32:14*

**“The country which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” Therefore they said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan.”** (Numbers 32:4-5)

It is believed that because of this decision, they were the first tribes to be taken away into exile, "Tillegath-pilneser king of Assyria ... carried ... away ... the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh." (1 Chronicles 5:26)

It is also, the rabbis believe, because they valued their property more than their families. They told Moses, "We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones." (Numbers 32:16)

This indicates that their priorities were wrong – that they were thinking of their cattle ahead of their own children. Therefore Moses answered them, "Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep." (Numbers 32:24)

By mentioning the children first, Moses was, in effect, saying, “Yes, you can do this but your priorities need to be put into right order. If we have greater love for our possessions than human souls, then there will be no blessing in it for us. Let us keep our priorities right, in order that we may inherit a blessing in our choices and decisions.



In this [satellite](#) image, the [Jordan River](#) appears near the center as a vertical line connecting the [Sea of Galilee](#) on the north with the [Dead Sea](#) on the south.

## God Created us – Unique

What this story also shows us is that we are all distinct and unique; we are not all carbon copies of one another – cast into one big anonymous mold. Even among the twelve tribes of Israel – here were two tribes that felt they didn’t belong on the West side of the Jordan. Even though criticized and misunderstood, they held their ground in the confidence of knowing what they wanted. They wanted to dwell on the East side of the Jordan.

Some of us are people like that. Everyone else is crossing over one way and we want to go the opposite direction. We seem to be salmon swimming perpetually upstream. Not everyone can be content to follow the crowd and that’s okay. Some people are just meant to live ‘East of Jordan’. We will never succeed until we accept who we are. We must be true to ourselves and to whom God created us to be.

Moses, after hearing them out, agreed to their request, but held them to their word, that they would ‘**do according to every word that proceeded from their mouth.**’ (Numbers 32:24)

Reuven and Gad promised to keep their word, acknowledging that to break a promise is a serious offense against God.

## HAFTARAT MATOT

Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

Matot is one of the three **haftorat of rebuke** preceding Tisha B'av, the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Av, usually occurring some time in August. This day is the memorial of the destruction of the first and second temples as well as many catastrophic events relating to the history of the Jewish people, even including contemporary times. The expulsion of the Israeli settlers from Gaza, for example, also began on Tisha B'av.

I will discuss this day in more detail in the next Torah studies, but this week is a time period of serious examination of our relationship with God. Traditionally, no simchas (occasions to rejoice such as a wedding or otherwise joyous celebration) are booked at this time. Neither are important decisions to be made until after Tisha B'av. Someone not familiar with Jewish history and culture may consider this foolish superstition; however a close examination of Tisha B'av gives cause to take this ominous day seriously.

This week's parashah and haftarah also deal with the issue of 'consecration' unto the Lord. In the parashah, Moses was instructed to teach the people about consecrating themselves to the Lord through vows and bonds. In the haftarah, Jeremiah is consecrated unto the Lord as a prophet. In searching for a connection between this week's parashah and haftarah (prophetic) portions, it seems that a common theme emerges - the need to be true to who God created us to be. God created Jeremiah to become a prophet of Israel.

God declared his purpose for Jeremiah the Prophet to have been sealed even before he was formed in the womb.

**“The word of the Lord יהוה came to Jeremiah saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. And before you emerged from the womb, I sanctified you, I appointed you a prophet for the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:4-5)**

The Hebrew word for 'knew' comes from the root yadah ידע. Besides its common meaning, this same word also connotes sexual intimacy in marriage :

**“Now Adam knew {yadah ידע } Eve (Chavah), his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain...” (Genesis 4:1)**



*Jeremiah, as depicted by [Michelangelo](#) from the [Sistine Chapel ceiling](#)*



God also used this word, used frequently in ‘covenant language’, to declare that He has known אָדָם Abraham.<sup>8</sup> People who practice lawlessness place themselves outside a secure covenant relationship with God.

Yeshua said that many would say to Him, “*Lord, Lord, ...*” These are people who have prophesied in Yeshua’s name, cast out demons in His name, and done many wonders in His name. And yet He will declare to them,

“**I never knew {yadah אָדָם} you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness** (who do not practice Torah).” (Matthew 7:21-23).

### Called from the Womb

God knew Jeremiah and pre-destined him to prophetic leadership among the Jewish people. At this time, leaders of the Jewish people were prophets ordained by God, in contrast to the self-selected spiritual leaders we have today.

Because of this system, we may miss out on a significant segment of people who would make important contributions to our nations and even the global community, because of their lack of confidence, self assurance and reluctance to ‘self promote’, just like the young Jeremiah.

Each of us, however, is created by God, known by Him, and sanctified by Him; therefore each person has intrinsic value and worth. We are made in the image of God, positioned in life to fulfill a special purpose and destiny.

Some called Jeremiah ‘The Weeping Prophet’ because of his terrible grief over the sins of Israel. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Jeremiah, he speaks of weeping day and night over his people: adulterers, idolaters and liars.

“**For they proceed from evil to evil, and *they do not know Me*...Through deceit *they refuse to know Me*, says the Lord יְהוָה.** (Jeremiah 9:3,6)

The highest glory we can experience is to understand and know the Infinite Divine Presence of God: “**But let him who glories glory in this, that *he understands and knows Me*.**” (Jeremiah 9:24)



Jeremiah lamenting destruction of Jerusalem 1630 Rembrandt

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 18:19

What a wonderful privilege to know God and be known by Him. Isn't this the deepest cry of our hearts – to be truly 'know and 'be known' by another? Amazingly, we can have this intimate relationship with the Almighty God, creator of the Heavens and the Earth when we come into covenant with Him through His son, Yeshua, consecrating ourselves to Him, striving to walk in truth, and to do His will.

Although Jeremiah was born into a priestly family around 650 B.C.E., God had already called him and set him apart for service as a prophet to the nations even before his development in his mother's womb! In Hebrew, the word for womb is Rechem רחם which is also the root for the word rachel, רחם meaning mercy, pity, or compassion. The Hebrew reveals that God created the woman's womb to be a place of mercy for the unborn child. Even while we are as yet unformed in our mother's womb, God loves and has compassion on us.

Jeremiah was a child of destiny; he didn't go looking for his calling – the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. To be set apart for special service to the Lord is the true meaning of the word, Kadosh, קדש which is usually translated as 'holy'.

God didn't look at Jeremiah's childhood or adolescence to see what kind of a track record he had to determine if he was fit to be a prophet or not. This was God's plan for Jeremiah before he was even born – a pre-natal destiny.

Although timid by nature, after his calling Jeremiah proclaimed the Divine message of repentance fearlessly to a nation that did not want to listen. Jeremiah lived a sacrificial, consecrated life – one man against a nation.

Usually when we think of destiny and calling, we are so eager to say, "*Here I am, Lord, send me*". We long to be used of God in a greater way; but we need to keep in mind that fulfilling our destiny may involve suffering. We can certainly see this in the lives of many that God called and set apart in the Bible.

Jeremiah's message to Israel always held out the promise of restoration after judgment. His message to us as well may be that although our circumstances may look utterly beyond hope, even in our darkest moments, even when we utterly despair of a future for our life, we may still turn to God in faith and trust, calling Him Abba Father, clinging to the promise of His eternal love for us, His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Excuses, Excuses....

Jeremiah responded to the call as did Moses – with shrinking self-distrust. "*Who am I to do anything for God?*" Jeremiah said, "*I can't speak for You, God, I am a youth.*" (Jeremiah 1:6)

We could each insert our own self-doubts and excuses for what it is that disqualifies us. Moses said, "*I'm not a good speaker.*" Jeremiah said, "*I'm too young.*" Gideon said, "*I'm too insignificant.*" We all have our pet excuse for why we can't possibly do that which God has destined for our life: "*I'm too old, too young, too shy; or I don't have the money, the time, the education, the connections, or the right background.*"

But God does not choose those who are perfectly strong and wise and have it all together. It is said that He doesn't choose the qualified; He qualifies the chosen. God often chooses the weak and the foolish of this world to confound the wise – so that He receives the glory; and that we may not boast in ourselves.<sup>9</sup>

I've heard it said, "Moses was a 'basket case'; David was a murderer – what's your excuse?"

Is there perhaps someone we know who is talented by God but who simply lacks the self assurance to express their gifting? Perhaps we can be the voice of God in their lives to encourage them to step out in faith - to fulfill their potential and complete their Divinely ordained mission.

God commanded Jeremiah to go wherever He sent him and to speak whatever He commanded him to speak. Then the Lord touched his mouth. Jeremiah's mouth was purified just as was Isaiah's when the angel touched his mouth with a burning coal. These prophets spoke not from themselves, but of Divine inspiration. The message they would bring would not be their own message, but God's: **"Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth,"** (Jeremiah 1:9)

The Lord then gives Jeremiah the vision of an almond tree. It is the very first tree that blooms here in Israel in the spring. When the almond tree starts to bloom we know spring is coming and we celebrate Tu Bishvat (Festival of Trees).



We totally miss the meaning of this vision unless we see it in the Hebrew. An almond tree in Hebrew is a 'shaked' שקד . To be watchful and awake is shoked שקד . Therefore God is using a clever word play in this vision, of an almond tree {shaked' שקד } saying, **"I watch {shoked שקד }over My word to perform it."** (Jeremiah 1:12).

God exhorted Jeremiah to guard against fear: **"Do not be afraid of them ...for I am with thee to deliver thee..."** (Jeremiah 1:8)

Over and over again in Scripture, God tells us, **"Fear not, for I am with you. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."** (Isaiah 41:10)

We need not be afraid, even when something (or someone) comes against us, for God promises to be with us to deliver us. The battle is the Lord's. We need only stand firm in faith.

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<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:27

One day, while running errands with my children, I said, “*Oh dear, I’m afraid we may be locked out.*” To which Avi-ad, my then five year old son, replied, “*Don’t be afraid, Mom, God is with us.*” A little later I heard him humming a little tune that God is with us always and so we don’t need to be afraid. Out of the mouths of babes!

Parenting can be a frustrating, exhausting, and at times totally overwhelming task, but precious moments like these make it all worthwhile – knowing that our children are learning to trust in God. We need not be afraid, even when something (or someone) comes against us, for God promises to be with us to deliver us. The battle is the Lord’s. We need only stand firm in faith.

Haftarat Matot ends with the words,

**“Israel is the Lord’s hallowed שקד portion, His first-fruits of the increase. All that devour him shall be held guilty, evil shall come upon them, says the Lord.”** (Jer. 2:3)

In Hebrew, Israel is *kadosh* שקד (holy, set apart) to the Lord. This is a word of warning to all the enemies of Israel: in the heavenly courts, they are pronounced guilty and they will be judged accordingly.

Christian or not, people cannot be anti-Semitic in any way, shape or form and still expect to see God’s full goodness upon their lives. For God has promised the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), “**I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.**” (Gen. 12:3)

All the nations are God’s harvest, but Israel is set apart for God, just as the first-fruits are set apart for the priest (cohen). In Exodus 4:21 Israel is called God’s firstborn son. All those who join the commonwealth of Israel through the Jewish Messiah are grafted into the olive tree and share an equal place in the covenants of promise with the God of Israel (Eph. 2:11-13)

The prophet Isaiah also warned the nations regarding their position towards Israel, “**For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined.**” (Isa. 60:12)

Just as we must accept ourselves and others as God created us, accepting God’s destiny for our lives, we must also accept the destiny of Israel as ‘*kadosh*’ – set apart for special service for the Lord.

**SHABBAT SHALOM!**  
**Love Hannah**



## Matot Study Questions

1. What is the difference between a vow and a bond? Have you ever made a pledge to the Lord to abstain from something? Were you able to keep your pledge?
2. Are you a person who keeps your word? Have you ever made a vow that you had to break? Why? How do you feel when someone doesn't keep their word to you? Share.
3. Who do you go to for 'wise counsel'? Do you have anyone in your life that you can receive good advice from? What do you think about going to a secular counselor?
4. Was there a time you can recall when someone just 'pushed your buttons' and triggered an emotional reaction which was not appropriate to the situation?
5. How can we be careful that we don't 'jump to false conclusions'?
6. Do you ever feel a bit different from others (like you fit better on the other side of the Jordan)? Do you feel that you are being true to yourself and how God created you?
7. Do you have a 'pet excuse' for not doing what you believe God has called you to do?
8. How can you overcome all the excuses and step out in faith to fulfill your calling?
9. What is the word play used about the almond tree? (shaked)
10. Why does God call Israel His 'holy portion'. What does this mean to the nations of the earth?

About the Author:

Hannah Neshar grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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