Parashah 48 Shoftim - שופטים
“Judges”

Torah: D’varim (Deuteronomy) 16:18-21:9
Aliyah 1 - 16:18-17:13 Appoint judges; sacrifices to be blemish-free; capital punishment for idolatry
Aliyah 2 - 17:14 - 20 Appointing a king; a kinsmen, not to acquire horses/wives; write/read Torah daily
Aliyah 3 - 18:1 - 5 Care for the priesthood from sacrifice and tithe; Adonai is their inheritance
Aliyah 4 - 18:6 - 13 Levi right to serve; occult practices prohibited; trust Adonai for the future!
Aliyah 5 - 18:14-19:13 He will send a prophet like unto Moshe; false prophets; cities of refuge; murder
Aliyah 6 - 19:14 - 20:9 Boundary stones; 2-3 witnesses; false witnesses; exclusion from battle service
Aliyah 7 - 20:10-21:9 Rules for warfare outside the land, and inside; unsolved murder cases

Haftarah: Yesha’yahu (Isaiah) 51:12-52:12
[Messianic adaptation: conclude the reading at 53:12]

1. The commissioning of judges was described previously in Deuteronomy 1:9-17. What is different about this appointment of Judges? To whom do the judgments of these appointees apply? Can you think of an instance where Yeshua speaks to this?

2. (17:14-20) What are the requirements for a King over the people of Israel? How does Yeshua fulfill these instructions to appoint a King of Adonai’s choosing? What happens when there is no King?

3. Why do the Cohanim not have an inheritance with their brothers? How long is the service of the Cohanim?

4. (18:10-11) What practices are outlawed in this portion? Who practices such things? Why were they forbidden?

5. In the book of Acts, both Kefa and Stephen quote 18:15. Who are they saying is the “prophet like me” (Moshe)? How are Moshe and Yeshua similar? How do we discern false prophets?

6. (19:16-20) What motivates people not to treat others maliciously by bringing false witness?
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7. (20:5-8) What are the four classes of men not to participate in battle?

8. (20:10) What is the difference between the towns that are to be offered peace, and those that are to be destroyed? How does this apply to us today?

Questions for reflection and application:

1. (16:18) We are required to make judgements every day. On what basis do you judge? (Deu 16:20, Joh 7:24, Mat 7:1-5, Mat 7:16-17, Isa 11:1-5)

2. (17:14) How do you handle the tension of not having what is promised... yet? (Mat 13:17, Luk 10:24, 1Pe 1:10-12, 1Co 13:12, Exo 33:17-23, Joh 14:8-11, Heb 1:1-3)

3. (18:1) All Levites- blemish free or not- were treated the same in regard to inheritance. Do you feel excluded from service in God’s Kingdom because of some “disability?” (Isa 55:1-7, Luk 12:27-30, Gal 2:7-10, Gal 3:29)

4. (18:6) Levitical service was a duty, but provision was made for service from desire. Is your service to the Lord a duty or a desire? Or both? (Psa 63:1-4, Psa 27:4-6, Psa 37:4, Joh 17:24)


6. (19:14) What are your boundaries? Do you respect the boundary markers of your neighbor(s)? (Col 2:16, Rom 14:3, 5, 10, 13, Jud 3, Mar 9:39-40, Hos 5:10, Pro 23:10-11, 1Co 8:11-13)

7. (20:12) We are in a battlefield today. Do we offer peace or war? (Rom 12:18, Eph 6:11-13, 2Co 10:3-5, Rev 3:10-11, Rev 14:12)