

DAF TSAFON

24 May 2025
26 Iyar 5785

Shabbat Mevarachim
Parashat Behar-Bechukotai
ArtScroll 696 Hertz 531



This week's Parasha contains within it the chilling prophecy known as the Tochacha, the Rebuke. Moses warns the Jewish people that if they do not follow the commandments of God they would suffer many disasters from illness to exile, death and destruction. The Ramban (1194-1270), in a very long commentary tries to show that all the terrible things in the Tochacha, predicted by the Torah, did indeed happen.

For instance, the Ramban writes that the verse, "God will return you to Egypt in boats", refers to the days of Titus when the Jews were loaded onto boats and shipped as slaves to Egypt. The Ramban brings many different examples ... "The King whom you will appoint over yourself..." refers to Agrippa. The verse hints at the fact that he was not worthy of being a king.

Finally, the Ramban says that the verse [26:32], "I will make desolate the Land, and your enemies who dwell upon it will be desolate" (V'shamemu aleha oyeveichem hayoshvim bah) is not a Curse, rather, it is a Blessing. It is 'good news' in the middle of the Tochacha. The verse tells us that our Holy Land will not accept our enemies upon it. This, says the Ramban, is great proof (of the Divine Hand) and Promise for us. "For there cannot be found throughout the world a land that had been so good and fertile (which now became so desolate and inhospitable)."

The Ramban is saying that if you want to be a Believer, you merely need to look at the land of Israel. Look what happened there for two thousand years, when it was occupied by Arabs, by Romans, by Turks and by the British. Previously, it had been most beautiful, but under foreign dominion it became the most desolate. The Torah assured us that from the day we left Israel, it would not accept any other nation or populace. They all tried to settle it, but none were successful.

This is what the Torah means when it says, "Your enemies will be desolate upon it." No nation will ever be successful in inhabiting the land of Israel, except the People of Israel.

Let us investigate this idea further. Imagine what would happen, if American Indians came to the United States government, saying, "You know, two hundred years ago we made a silly mistake. We sold you Manhattan Island at a rock bottom price - \$24.

We realize you're entitled to a profit; we'll give you \$48 for Manhattan, we'll give you 48 million dollars, we'll give you 48 billion dollars?" Guess what? No sale! What has happened to Manhattan Island in those two hundred years? For what it is worth now, there is no way the government would ever consider giving it back.

Imagine if the nations would have been successful in making the Land of Israel profitable. Imagine if in 1948, it was a beautiful and productive land. Would they have consented to returning it to the Jewish People? But, as the Ramban says, they were not successful. In 1948, when we came to ask, "Can we have the land back?" "You mean that strip of land, that's hard like iron, on which nothing grows?" "That worthless strip of land in the middle of the desert?" "Good Luck!" This is Divine Providence, as promised by the Torah in this week's Parasha.

When one looks in the Middle East - Saudi Arabia has oil, Qatar, Iraq, Yemen, every country has oil. Egypt even has oil. How is it, that from our Holy Land, the choicest of all lands we cannot squeeze a drop of oil (at least prior to recent discoveries)?

But what would have been in 1948, if the British were sitting on a Saudi Arabia? What if they had been sitting on a Kuwait? Obviously, they would not have been so eager to give up black gold. This is part of "Your enemies will be desolate upon it".

If ever there was a lesson in belief in God, and His miracles and wonders, this idea of the Ramban is clear proof. Read this as this verse. Study the history of the Land of Israel. If one's eyes are open and one is not blind, one will see the Hand of God upon the Land and upon the Jewish People.

Shabbat Shalom

Haftorah

ArtScroll 1179

Hertz 551

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

Jeremiah XVI, 19-XVII, 14

The prophet foresees that even the heathen nations will one day recognise the futility of their idols and acknowledge God's supremacy. Yet, the people of Judah remain steeped in idol worship and will be driven out of their land to become slaves on foreign soil. Doom awaits the man who relies entirely on human aid and turns away from God, whereas blessing will be the reward for him who trusts in Him. God alone, concludes the prophet, is Israel's Hope and Saviour.

מזל טוב

Wedding anniversaries

Geoff and Barbara Peretz
Jeremy and Jenna Ungar

מזל טוב

Bar Mitzvah anniversaries

Michael Green
Nathan Shelton
Jacob Weber

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Wednesday, 28 May – JewishCare Mosaic Connections -**
North Shore Monthly Jewish Seniors Discussion and Social Club
Guest Speaker - Julian Leaser
11:00am – 1:00pm
Register by 25 May.
- **Sunday, 1 June – Erev Shavuot Dinner + Tikkun Leil**
Guest Speaker – Antony Elhaj
6.00pm – Shul service
6.45pm Dinner, followed by evening of learning
Registration essential by 29 May.
- **Monday, 2 June – Shavuot Day 1**
9:15 am - Shacharit, followed by children's ice-cream party.
Please register for catering purposes.

**Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.**

חיים ארוכים

Nathan Bank	father of Leonard and Allan Bank
David Louis Blitz	husband of Marion Blitz
Tine De Boer	mother of Tina Vander Heyden
David Arnold Goodman	father-in-law of Jacob Levy
Rachel Israel	grandmother of Susan Marjoram
Berel Kabrun	father of Reinet Belnick
Leon Laib Milch	husband of Sharon Milch, father of Jodie Hoenig, grandfather of Jacob and Leora Hoenig
Frederick Robey	father of Eva Robey-Menzies
Sidney Rosenbaum	father of Geoffrey Rosenbaum, grandfather of Michael Rosenbaum
Stanley Schrieber	brother of Leslie Schrieber
Matine Singer	mother of Hilary-Anne Wolfsohn
Avril Skurnik	sister of Jefferson Beder
Harry Teichtahl	father of Zvi Teichtahl
Mervyn Ullman	father of Brett Ullman
Clifford Vituli	husband of Philippa Vituli
Herta Wantoch	mother of Diana Laufer