

5781 – Deuteronomy 21-25 - Ki Tetze (When You Go In)

Who Are You Fighting Today? 3 Steps to Victory¹

How many battles did you fight today?

None, you say? Think again.

Did you fight fatigue in order to pry your eyes open this morning? Did you fight the mad traffic jam to navigate to work? At the office, did you fight laziness to climb the stairs instead of riding the elevator? Did you fight lethargy to focus on the tasks at hand? Did you fight the clock to meet your deadline? Did you fight your cravings to avoid unhealthy snacks and choose nourishing food?

Every day, every hour, every minute, we wage countless battles.

KITetzei begins by telling us about our battles and clues us in on vital knowledge to win them.

When you go out to war on your enemies, the L-rd, your *G-d*, shall deliver them into your hands and you shall capture from them captives.—DEUTERONOMY 21:10

The Torah doesn't write, *if* you go out to war, but rather *when*. **Turbulence and struggle is inevitable.**

We fight real wars just as we fight moral ones. We fight character traits just as we struggle to use our time wisely and develop our talents fully. We battle to protect loved ones from the harsh realities of our world and to create a better reality.

Here are three important things to know about your wars.

1) Your battles don't define you.

The Hebrew phrase *al ovecha*, "on your enemies," literally means "on top of your enemies." Just because we are constantly engaged in struggle doesn't mean that we are defined by them. **We win and inevitably we lose.** Don't focus on your losses; **you are far more than your conflicts.** You have a divine soul that is perfect and untarnished in spite of your struggles. **So just get back up reenergized and begin anew.**

2) You are not fighting alone.

When your battles become oppressive, when your enemy gains the upper hand, you may need to take a step back and reevaluate. Affirm that there is no true existence other than G-d. This means that **nothing contrary to G-d's goodness and truth has any real power over**

you. Go to war with the optimistic confidence that "G-d shall deliver them into your hands," in order to succeed.

3) You can grow from your experience.

"You shall capture from them captives." Anything negative in man or in the world can be exploited for the good. You were exposed to your circumstances for a reason. "Capture captives" and find a lesson in every situation.

1. *The Torah doesn't write, if you go out to war, but rather when. Turbulence and struggle is inevitable.*

a. Matthew 6:2-18

²"So **when** you give to the needy ...

⁵"And **when** you pray ...

¹⁶"**When** you fast ...

b. Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For **our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, **you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.** ¹⁴Stand firm then, with **the belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with **the breastplate of righteousness** in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take **the helmet of salvation** and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. ¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

1) **6:10-17: The armor of God.** ² **10: Be strong in the Lord**, cf. Josh 1.6. **11. Armor of God**, see Isa 11.5; 59.17; Wis 5.17-20; 2Cor 6.7; 1Thess 5.8. *Wiles of the devil* (Gk "diabolos"), cf 4.27n. **12-13: Rulers ... authorities**, cf. 3.10. *Present darkness*, cf. 5.8-14. *Heavenly places*, cf. 1.3,20; 2.6; 3.10. *Evil day*, the final clash between

1 Chana Weisberg, *Shabbat deLights, Vayikra/Bamidbar/Devarim*, (chabad.org), pp. 265-267.

2 Amy Jill-Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, Eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, (Oxford University Press), p. 353.

God's forces and *the cosmic powers of this present darkness*. 14: *Belt of truth*, see Isa 11.5 15: Gospel, the "good news" of *peace*, cf. 1.13; 2.14-17; 3.6-7; 6.19. See also Isa 52.7. 16: Flaming arrows, Ps 76.4 (Heb v. 3); Prov 26:18. *Evil one*, see v. 11.

a) 10: *Be strong in the Lord*

Joshua 1:5-9

⁵No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. ⁶**Be strong and courageous**, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. ⁷**Be strong and very courageous**. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. **Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**"

b) 11: *Armor of God*

Isaiah 11:5

Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Isaiah 59:17

He put on **righteousness as his breastplate**, and **the helmet of salvation** on his head; he put on **the garments of vengeance** and **wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak**.

Wisdom of Solomon³ 5:17-20

¹⁷The Lord will take his **zeal as his whole armor**, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; ¹⁸he will put on **righteousness as a breastplate**, and wear **impartial justice as a helmet**; ¹⁹he will take **holiness as an invincible shield**, ²⁰and

sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against the madmen.

2Corinthians 6:7

¹As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain ... I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. ³We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: **in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger**; ⁶in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷**in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left**; ⁸through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹known, yet regarded as unknown; **dying**, and yet we live on; **beaten**, and yet not killed; ¹⁰**sorrowful**, yet always rejoicing; **poor**, yet making many rich; **having nothing**, and yet possessing everything.

1Thessalonians 5:8

⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on **faith and love as a breastplate**, and **the hope of salvation as a helmet**. ⁹For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

c) 11: *Wiles of the devil* (Gk "diabolos"), cf 4.27n.

4.27: *Devil*, a cosmic force of wickedness (cf., e.g., Mt 4.1-11; Lk 4.1-13; Jude 9). In the Septuagint this term translates the Heb "satan," as "adversary" who is in dialogue with God (Job 1.6); works as a bad influence among humans (1Chr 21.1), or serves as accuser of the people (Zech 3.1).⁴

d) 12-13: *Rulers ... authorities*, cf. 3.10. *Present darkness*, cf. 5.8-14. *Heavenly places*, cf. 1.3,20; 2.6; 3.10. *Evil day*, the final clash between God's forces and *the cosmic powers of this present darkness*.

12: In military strategy one must never underestimate the strength of the enemy. Paul is certainly not guilty of such fatal misjudgment but gives a realistic report of its potential. The "struggle" (literally, "wrestling," *palē*) is not merely against human foes but a war to the death against supernatural forces. "Flesh and blood" is actually "blood and flesh." The words appear in this order only here. Blood is perhaps mentioned first

³ *The Wisdom of Solomon* is part of the late wisdom tradition and is comparable to Sirach and parts of Proverbs. It was originally written in Greek and probably derives from Alexandria of the first century BCE. It warns the wicked, praises wisdom, provides examples of God's mighty acts in history, and ridicules idolatry. It also exhorts the Jewish people to remain faithful to its religious heritage, eschewing the enticements of paganism. At some points there are close parallels to Paul's thought. Bruce Metzger (*IA* 163) remarks that "there can be little doubt that the Apostle had at one time made a close study of the book of Wisdom" (Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies*, [Hendrickson Publishers], p. 14).

⁴ Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated—*, p. 351.

lest flesh be regarded as inherently evil, as those who anticipated the Gnostic⁵ heresy taught.⁶

Four aspects of corporate menace are presented here. The particular terms are in themselves morally neutral, though with Paul they invariably indicate sinister influences (Eph 1:21; 3:11). "Rulers (*archoi*) are "cosmic powers" (NEB). Until the end of the age these demonic forces, already defeated by (Messiah) on the cross (4:9), exercise a certain limited authority (*exousia*; here in the plural: *exousias*, "authorities") in temporarily opposing the purposes of God. The title *kosmokrator* (power, potentate) occurs frequently in classical and rabbinical literature. It denotes one who aspires to world control. It was attached to savior gods in the ethnic religions and identified with the sun. So Paul may have implied by "powers" (*kosmokratoroi*) that what purported to be a cult of light is in fact the very opposite.

12: Present Darkness

Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸For you were once **darkness**, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with **the fruitless deeds of darkness**, but rather expose them. ¹²It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you."

12: Heavenly Places

Ephesians 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, who has blessed us **in the heavenly realms** with every spiritual blessing in Messiah

5 Gnosticism (from Ancient Greek: "having knowledge") is a collection of ancient religious ideas and systems which originated in the first century (CE) (and influenced some early messianic communities). These various groups emphasised personal spiritual knowledge (*gnosis*) over orthodox teachings, traditions, and ecclesiastical authority. Gnostic cosmogony (i.e., the branch of science that deals with the origin of the universe) generally presents a distinction between a supreme, **hidden God and a malevolent lesser divinity responsible for creating the material universe**. Viewing this material existence as flawed or evil, Gnostics considered the principal element of salvation to be **direct knowledge of the supreme divinity in the form of mystical or esoteric insight**. Many **Gnostic texts deal not in concepts of sin and repentance, but with ... enlightenment**.

6 Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11*, (Regency Reference Library), p. 86

Ephesians 2:4-7

⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Messiah even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Messiah and seated us with him **in the heavenly realms** in Messiah Yeshua, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Messiah Yeshua.

Ephesians 3:10-13

¹⁰His intent was that now, through the *k'hilot*, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to **the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms**, ¹¹according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Messiah Yeshua our Lord. ¹²In him **and through faith in him (better; "through his faithfulness")** we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

e) 14: *Belt of truth*, see Isa 11.5.

Isaiah 11:5

⁵Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness **the sash around his waist**.

f) 15: *Gospel*, the "good news" of *peace*, cf. 1.13; 2.14-17; 3.6-7; 6.19. See also Isa 52.7.

Isaiah 52:7

⁷How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring **good news**, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, **who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"**

Luke 2:22-32

²²When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took (Yeshua) to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord" [Exo 13:2]), ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons" (Lev 12:8) ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. **He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him**. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Yeshua to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹"Sovereign Lord, as

you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰ For **my eyes have seen your salvation**, ³¹which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and **the glory of your people Israel.**"

g) **16: Flaming arrows**, Ps 76.4 (Heb v. 3); Prov 26:18. *Evil one.*

Psalm 76:1-4

¹For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. A song. God is renowned in Judah; in Israel his name is great. ²His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. ³There **he broke the flashing arrows**, the shields and the swords, the weapons of war. ⁴You are radiant with light, more majestic than mountains rich with game.

Proverbs 26:16-19

¹⁶A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who answer discreetly. ¹⁷Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears is someone who rushes into a quarrel not their own. ¹⁸Like a manic **shooting flaming arrows of death** ¹⁹is one who deceives their neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

16: Evil one

See above, v. 11, the "devil." In most cases in the Hebrew Bible, **HaSatan**, "the accuser" is used as a title, **not a personal name** (16 times, 12 verses). Without the definite article "the," it is used 5 times in 5 verses but **only once is it translated "satan."** In each of the other verses it is translated "adversary" and does *not* refer to "the devil."

1Kings 5:4

⁴But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no **adversary** or disaster.

1Kings 11:14

¹⁴Then the LORD raised up against Solomon an **adversary**, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom.

1Kings 11:23

²³And God raised up against Solomon another **adversary**, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah.

1Kings 11:25

²⁵Rezon was Israel's **adversary** as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

1Chronicles 21:1

¹**Satan** rose up against Israel and **incited David** to take a census of Israel.

In the Apostolic Writings, "Satan" is used 34 times in 32 verses—"the devil" is used 32 times in 31 verses.

Luke 11:14-20

¹⁴Yeshua was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. ¹⁵But some of them said, "By **Beelzebul, the prince of demons**, he is driving out demons"... ¹⁷Yeshua knew their thoughts and said to them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. ¹⁸If **Satan** is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by **Beelzebul**.

¹⁹Now if I drive out demons by **Beelzebul**, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁰But if I drive out demons by the finger of God (cf., Exo 8:19; 31:18), then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

—Beelzebul (or Beelzebub) is a name derived from the Philistine god, formerly worshipped in Ekron and means "Lord of the (heavenly) dwelling"—the aspiration of Satan.

—Isaiah 14:12-15

¹²How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! ¹³You said in your heart, "**I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.**" ¹⁴I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High.**" ¹⁵But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.

Acts 5:1-5

¹Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ²With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. ³Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that **Satan has so filled your heart** that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." ⁵When Ananias heard this, he

fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

Matthew 4:1

¹Then Yeshua was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by **the devil**.

James 4:7

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist **the devil**, and he will flee from you.

John 13:3-17

¹It was just before the Passover Feast. Yeshua knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. ²The evening meal was being served, and **the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot ...** to betray (him).

Revelation 12:9

⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called **the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray**. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

2. *Here are three important things to know about your wars.*

a. **Your battles don't define you.**

Just because we are constantly engaged in struggle doesn't mean that we are defined by them. **We win and inevitably we lose**. Don't focus on your losses; **you are far more than your conflicts**. You have a divine soul that is perfect and untarnished in spite of your struggles. **So just get back up reenergized and begin anew**.

1) Hosea 6:1-3

¹"Come, let us return to the LORD. **He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds**. ²After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence. ³Let us acknowledge the LORD; **let us press on** to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth."

2) Luke 13:31-33

³¹At that time some Pharisees came to Yeshua and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." ³²He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' ³³In any case, **I must press on to-**

day and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

3) Philippians 3:12-14

¹²Not that I have already ... arrived at my goal, **but I press on to take hold of that for which Messiah Yeshua took hold of me**.

¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴**I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Messiah Yeshua.

b. **You are not fighting alone.**

When your battles become oppressive, when your enemy gains the upper hand, you may need to take a step back and reevaluate. Affirm that there is no true existence other than G-d. This means that **nothing contrary to G-d's goodness and truth has any real power over you**. Go to war with the optimistic confidence that "G-d shall deliver them into your hands," in order to succeed.

1) Romans 8:31-39

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** ³²He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

³⁴Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Messiah Yeshua who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Messiah? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered" (Psa 44:2). ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God** that is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.

c. **You can grow from your experience.**

"You shall capture from them captives." Anything negative in man or in the world can be exploited for the good. You were exposed to your circumstances for a reason. "Capture captives" and find a lesson in every situation.

1) James 1:2-4

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that **the testing of your faith produces perseverance.** ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.