

**December 29, 2019 - Deut. 11:10 -12:19 - Latter and Former Rain**  
**Torah Reading: Deuteronomy 11:10 -12:19 - Latter and Former Rain**  
**Psalm 119:49-72**  
**Haftarah: 1 Kings 21:2-4, 7-8, 11-13, 17-18**

This reading includes the second portion of the Shema scriptures, **Deuteronomy 11:13–21**.

A description of the goodness of the land, and the conditions God placed on Israel to keep it.

**Deuteronomy 11:10** - "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

Rashi - "not as the land of Egypt" but better than it. Egypt was superior to all other lands, as is stated [of it], "like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" (Gen. 13:10) Even the land of Goshen and the land of Rameses in which you dwelt, and which is the best of the land of Egypt, as it is said, "in the best of the land, [in the land of Rameses]" (Gen. 47:11) - even that is not like the land of Israel.

**Deuteronomy 11:11-12** - "But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

The Nile flooded for about 100 days, bringing enriched soil and water. But the rest of the year Egyptians had to irrigate their fields ("with thy foot" often using water wheels worked by foot-power to bring water from the Nile up to higher levels).

Rashi - But this [land, namely Canaan] "absorbs water from the rains of heaven." While you sleep in your bed, the Holy One, blessed is He, waters both low and high areas, both areas that are exposed and those that are not, all at once [Sifrei].

Philo (De Confusione Ling p. 325.) explains that the Egyptians, to supply the want of rain, were wont to water their gardens by machines for drawing water, fixed upon the banks of the Nile; which machines were so contrived as to be turned with their feet. So the meaning is, that whereas Egypt was watered by human art, Canaan was watered by rain from heaven. But this method may have been brought in to Egypt at a later time than the Exodus.

The Targum explains "with thy foot" to mean simply "by thyself," i.e. with your own labor and effort.

In one sense, this is a contrast between the Nile, the Egyptian god that ran along in a channel on the earth, and the God of the heaven of heavens, who gives rain from

above. And looking down on the land, His "eyes are always upon it." It's also a contrast between self-reliance and grace.

**Deuteronomy 11:13-15** - "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full."

### **This begins the second portion of the Shema - Deuteronomy 11:13–21**

Rashi - "to love the Lord": You should not say: "I will learn in order to become rich," [or] "in order to be referred to as 'Rabbi,'" [or] "in order that I receive a reward." Rather, whatever you do, do out of love [for God], and ultimately, the honor will come.- [Sifrei]

"to serve Him with all your heart": i.e. with a service of the heart, and that is prayer...it states regarding David, "My prayer shall be established like incense before You" (Ps. 141:2). - [Sifrei]

"with all your heart and with all your soul": Earlier this was addressed to an individual (Deut. 6:5)... [while this is] an admonition to the community. — [Sifrei]

### **The Spiritual Meaning of First Rain and the Latter Rain**

The true blessings of God are at His discretion alone. Humans cannot force or induce God to water our "gardens." All other "spiritual power" or ecstatic practices depend on human effort or technology - drugs, rituals, music, etc. - to induce a state of "oneness" with the gods or spirits.

Rain from the heavens is a picture of this. Despite attempts at "cloud seeding," man is still at the mercy of the weather, unable to control it (unless it is to intensify its destructive power by pollution and global warming).

The fertility and fruitfulness of the land, and human survival, depended on the "water of the rain of heaven."

Going all the way back to Cain and Abel, effort expended does not equal blessing from God. Only Abel's blood sacrifice pointing to the Messiah's death on the cross caused God to accept his offering.

Israel's faith would determine the measure of blessings poured down on them by the Lord.

In the days of Messiah, the universal punishment on the nations for not coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate Tabernacles and worship the Lord is God's cutting off of the rain.

Egypt is the exception, because it doesn't depend on rain, so its punishment is a plague. (**Zechariah 14:18**) The Targum Jonathan even changes the phrase to read, "the Nile shall not ascend unto them." The Feast of Tabernacles was connected with the fall rains coming. "On the festival [of Sukkot the people] are judged in regard to water" (Mishnah, Rosh Hashanah 1:2).

The "former and the latter rain" spoken of in scripture are the fall and spring rainy seasons that water the crops for harvest.

Of course, Jesus said God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (**Matthew 5:45**). And this is certain because of his general maintenance of life in His creation. He even causes it to rain "on the earth where no man is" (**Job 38:26**).

But the specific promises about the Promised Land are conditioned on Israel's obedience, particularly concerning the "former and the latter rain," also called the early and late rain.

Rashi explains that the early rain falls just after the sowing season in autumn (October-November) "which thoroughly sates (מְרוֹה) the soil and the seeds." The latter rain falls in the spring (March-April) "just before the harvest time, to fill the grain on its stalks."

- **Jeremiah 5:24** - "Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season . . ."

Spiritually the rains are a type of the Lord Himself:

- **Hosea 6:1-3** - "Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

Rashi - "two days" - He will strengthen us from the two retributions which have passed over us from the two sanctuaries that were destroyed. "Third day" - With the construction of the third Temple, He will set us up.

This is the Messianic Temple, which Christians know as Jesus Himself - 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.' (**John 2:18-19**)

Targum: "He will quicken us in the days of consolation which are to come, and in the day of the resurrection of the dead he will raise us up" The days of consolation mean the days of the Messiah.

i.e. the promise here in Deuteronomy points directly to fulfillment in the coming of Jesus as Messiah to bring resurrection life to Israel.

- **1 Corinthians 15:4** - "He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..."  
What scriptures? Paul is referring to this scripture in Hosea.

### **This Has Further Fulfillment at Pentecost**

- **Joel 2:23** - "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month."

"the former rain moderately" = *mowreh tsēdaqah* - teacher of righteousness

First rain = *yowreh*, or *mowreh* - a sprinkling, to scatter drops of water; from a root that also includes to extend the hand, to point to, and therefore includes both "to teach or instruct" and "to lay a foundation."

- **Psalm 84:6** - "Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools."

An alternate translation, "As they pass through the Valley of Baca (tears), God provides a spring for them. The Teacher (*mowreh*) even covers them with blessings."

"latter rain" = *malqowsh* - spring rains, from a root to glean or gather; an eloquent discourse (**Job 29:22-23** - "... my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.")

This will be known by the flourishing of Israel as led by His teachings they "enter into the Rest" in the (spiritual) Promised Land, and then by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which Peter said was what Joel prophesied about:

- **Acts 2:16** - "...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel"

- **Joel 2:28** - "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

The first rain waters the newly sown seeds, laying the foundation for the harvest to come.

Christ's coming as the "Teacher of Righteousness" prepared the seeds for the harvest. His coming in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit preceded an ongoing harvest of souls.

- **John 12:24** - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

- **Matthew 9:37-38** - "...The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

Also **Luke 10:2; cf. Mark 4:29**

At the end of time, the harvest will be complete:

- **Revelation 14:15** - "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

### **The Good Harvest Results from Repentance**

In **Deuteronomy 11:12** - "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." - the word "beginning" = *re'shiyth* - is written defectively in the manuscript, without the letter aleph. So it could be derived from the root *rwsh*, poor - "one who hangs down the head," instead of *rosh* - "head, beginning."

So Rabbi Kahana interprets "from the beginning of the year" as "from the 'poverty' of the year," meaning God "afflicts it in the beginning, and he gives it a good end at the close." Israel comes before God in poorness of spirit and humility during the Ten Days of Awe between Rosh Hashanah (the beginning of the year) and Yom Kippur, and the blessing of the harvest comes from their repentance and humility - being "poor in spirit."

Further, the prefix "the" appears in the first mention of "year" in **verse 12**, but not in the second, meaning the repentance required at the beginning of the year is the focus, and is more important than the result at the end.

Rashi - At the beginning of the year [i.e., Rosh Hashanah], it is judged [by God] what will be at its conclusion (Rosh Hashanah 8a).

### **A Warning**

**Deuteronomy 11:16-17** - "Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you."

Rashi - Nobody rebels against the Holy One, blessed is He, except out of satiety, as it is said, "lest you eat and be sated... and your herds and your flocks multiply... What does he [Moses] say after this? "and your heart grows haughty, and you forget the Lord, your God" (Deut. 8:12-14).

"other gods" = elsewhere this is translated "strange gods."

Rashi - The worshipper cries out to it, but [the idol] does not answer him; consequently, it becomes to him as a stranger.

See **Deuteronomy 11:28** below: "...other gods, which ye have not known." The Lord

loves Israel and wants to be intimately loved, known by and involved with his people. Idols cannot actually be "known," because they can't speak or respond, and in fact don't exist.

**Deuteronomy 11:18-19** - "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Rashi - When the infant begins to talk, his father should speak to him in the Holy Tongue, and should teach him the Torah. If he does not do this, it is as though he buries him, as it is stated [here], "And you shall teach them to your sons to speak with them..." [in order that your days may increase, and the days of your children].

**Deuteronomy 11:20-21** - "And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

Rashi - "the land which the Lord swore to your forefathers to give them": it is not written here "to give you," but rather, "to give *them*." From this, we learn that [the tenet of] the resurrection of the dead has its basis from the Torah. — [Sifrei]

Spiritually, entering the Rest/The Promised Land means to participate in Christ's resurrection life.

### **A Promise of Victory**

**Deuteronomy 11:22-25** - "For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the LORD your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as he hath said unto you."

See **Micah 7:17** - "They [the nations, Israel's enemies] shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee."

Also **Isaiah 8:12-13** - "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

## A Blessing and a Curse

**Deuteronomy 11:26-28** - "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

Rashi - One who acknowledges [the divinity of] pagan deities is as though he denies the entire Torah. — [Sifrei]

The blessings and curses are detailed in Deuteronomy 28-30.

These are clarified for us by the apostle Paul, quoting **Deuteronomy 27:26**: "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them"

- **Galatians 3:10–14** - "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. ... Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

**Deuteronomy 11:29** - "And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal."

The Targum of Jonathan explains (**Deuteronomy 27:12,13**): "ye shall set six tribes on Mount Gerizim, and six tribes on Mount Ebal; blessing they shall turn their faces against Mount Gerizim, and cursing they shall turn their faces against Mount Ebal" with which agrees the account given in the Mishnah (Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5.): "Six tribes went to the top of Mount Gerizim, and six to the top of Mount Ebal; and the priests and the Levites, and the ark, stood below in the middle; the priests surrounded the ark, and the Levites the priests, and all Israel were on this and on that side of the ark, as in Joshua 8:33, then they turned their faces against Gerizim, they opened with the blessing, Blessed is he that maketh not any graven or molten image, and both answered "Amen"; then they turned their faces against Mount Ebal, and opened with the curse, Deuteronomy 27:15 and both answered Amen."

**Deuteronomy 11:31** - "For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein."

Rashi - The miracles [that will occur for you during your crossing] of the Jordan will be a sign in your hands that you will come and inherit the land [as promised]. — [Sifrei]

**Deuteronomy 12:5** - "But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of

all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:"

According to Rashi, this place was Shiloh, which means "rest, tranquility." Shiloh is also used in the Talmud as a personal name for the Messiah.

So the dwelling place fo God was first Shiloh, "tranquility" and finally Jerusalem - from Salem - shalom - peace.

Jacob's blessing - **Genesis 49:10** - "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh (tranquility) come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

The Qumron texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls translate this: "A ruler shall not depart from the tribe of Judah while Israel has dominion. There will not be cut off a king in it belonging to David. For the staff is the covenant of the kingship; the thousands of Israel are the feet, until the coming of the Messiah of Righteousness, the branch of David, for to him and his seed has been given the covenant of kingship over his people for everlasting generations"

- **Jeremiah 7:12** - "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."

The Tabernacle was probably set up in the main camp at Gilgal during the wars against the Canaanites. Once the land was completely claimed and occupied, the Tabernacle settled at Shiloh for about 300 years during the period of the Judges. According to Judges 20:26-28, the Ark, and thus possibly the tabernacle, was at Bethel while Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, was still alive. King Saul moved the tabernacle to Nob, near his home town of Gibeah, but after he massacred the priests there (1 Samuel 21-22), it was moved to Gibeon. Just prior to David's moving the ark to Jerusalem, the ark was located in Kiriath-Jearim. The Ark was eventually brought to Jerusalem, where it was placed "inside the tent David had pitched for it" (2 Samuel 6:17; 1 Chronicles 15:1), not in the tabernacle, which remained at Gibeon. Solomon finally brought the structure and its furnishings to Jerusalem to furnish and dedicate the Temple. (1 Kings 8:4)

**Deuteronomy 12:8** - "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes."

This is a specific prohibition, not a general statement.

Rashi - This refers back to [what is stated above], "For you are crossing the Jordan..." (Deut. 11:31), meaning: When you will cross the Jordan, you immediately are permitted to offer up [sacrifices] on a bamah [a temporary altar] during the entire fourteen years of conquering [the nations] and dividing [the land among the tribes], but on a bamah you may not sacrifice all that you sacrifice "here this day," in the Mishkan , which is with you and has been anointed and is [thus] fit to sacrifice therein sin-offerings

and guilt-offerings, vows and donations, whereas on a bamah , you may sacrifice only what is vowed or a donated. And that is the meaning of “every man [doing] what he deems fit” vows and donations that you donate because you deem fit to bring them, not because of any obligation [imposed upon you]; only these may you offer up on a bamah . — [Sifrei; Zev. 117b]

The Promised Land is called the 'Rest'

**Deuteronomy 12:9** - "For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you."

Defined in the next verse as "rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety"

Remember that even Joshua, who led them across the Jordan, failed to ultimately provide that rest. This was accomplished by Christ.

- **Hebrews 4:8-9** - "For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

**Deuteronomy 12:11** - "Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:"

Rashi - [At that time,] build for yourselves the Temple in Jerusalem. And so [Scripture] states concerning David, “And it was, when the king sat in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies surrounding him, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the Ark of God dwells within the curtain’” (II Sam. 7:1, 2) [i.e., the temporary Mishkan].

Above (verse 6), [the same expression] is stated referring to Shiloh, but here it is stated referring to Jerusalem. Accordingly, Scripture separates the two to permit [sacrificing on a bamah during the intermediate period] between the existence of] one [sanctuary] and the other. After Shiloh was destroyed, and they came to Nob [and erected the Mishkan there], and then again, when Nob was destroyed and they came to Gibeon, [sacrificing on] a bamah was permitted-until they [finally] arrived in Jerusalem. — [Zev. 119a]

There is a progression of understanding here - by the long suffering and grace of God we are allowed to give offerings to the Lord but on a "high place" in the way and manner we used to offer to our idols. Finally, our eyes are opened to "which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there" - the meaning of the New Jerusalem, and from then on, it is illegal to offer on high places.

**Deuteronomy 12:16** - “Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it upon the earth as water.”

The prohibition against drinking blood is in **Genesis 9:4** and **Leviticus 17:10-12** - "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."

The blood of any clean animal that is allowed for food should be drained and covered by soil. The earth, from which all animals came forth at their creation (**Genesis 1:24**), is to receive back again the principle of their life.

Christ's "soul" or life was given - through the shedding of His blood - for all other souls.

Therefore, no other blood/life should enter in to us except when we drink and eat the blood and body of Christ, expressed in the wine and unleavened bread of communion. The ritual pictures a spiritual truth: By drinking His "blood," His life enters into us symbolically, because "the life is in the blood."