

Stand Firm

¹⁴*Stand firm then... (Ephesians 6:14a, TLV)*

Moses' journey is over. The apostle Paul also spoke about his "finishing the fight" when he said: ⁶*For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. ⁸In the future there is reserved for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not to me only, but also to everyone who has longed for His appearing*" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). This week's Parasha is Nitzavim (Deut 29:9-30:20) which means, "You are standing" (TLV) or "All of you stand today before the Lord your God..." (KJV). Moses is ready to deliver his last message on the earth, and our people are all standing in front of him and the Jordan River as they listen. What will Moses say? Do you agree with me that Moses' last message is really important? What did he say? The Torah records it for us:

⁹*You are standing today, all of you, before Adonai your God—the heads of your tribes, your elders, your officials, all the men of Israel, ¹⁰your children, your wives, and the outsider within your camp (from your woodchopper to your water carrier). ¹¹Each of you is to cross over into the covenant of Adonai your God that He is cutting with you today, and into His oath. ¹²"This is in order to confirm you today as His people. So He will be your God, just as He promised you and just as He swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. ¹³Not with you alone am I cutting this covenant and this oath, ¹⁴but with whomever is standing here with us today before Adonai our God and with whomever is not here with us today... ¹Now when all these things come upon you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart in all the nations where Adonai your God has banished you, ²and you return to Adonai your God and listen to His voice according to all that I am commanding you today—you and your children—with all your heart and with all your soul, ³then Adonai your God will bring you back from captivity and have compassion on you, and He will return and gather you from all the peoples where Adonai your God has scattered you. ⁴Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the heavens, from there Adonai your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. ⁵Adonai your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, and you will possess it; and He will do you good and multiply you more than your fathers." (Deut. 29:9-14, 30:1-5 TLV)*

What always catches my attention is that Moses refers to a present audience and a future audience (me!) when he said "*whomever is standing here with us today before Adonai our God and with whomever is not here with us today.*" Moses proceeds to speak also to this future group: "*You will see Israel cross over the River Jordan go into the Promised Land (the land of Israel), and disobey the Lord. You will see them get cast out to all the nations. You will see them be re-gathered from the nations and brought back from captivity to the land. And then you will see God judge the whole world.*" Moses is speaking to the generation that sees the re-gathering of the Jewish people and not only with the generation about to cross over the Jordan. Evidently he was speaking to our generation! He adds: ²⁸*"The secret things belong to Adonai our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever—in order to do all the words of this Torah"* at the conclusion of Chapter 29.

In the not so distant future there will be a second (and greater) exodus. Everyone will be going to the land of Israel, to Jerusalem, the place where the Messiah returns. Thus, if you take the theme from the Book of the Exodus (the dominant story of the Torah) and you consider all other teachings that also come from Torah, they all form one story. And while the Torah is about the people that lived at that time, the last message of the Torah is also to another generation – the last generation, the Elijah Generation. It also states that everything that has been told in this Torah is to prepare you for what King Yeshua (with you) is getting ready to do. This is THE generation prepared to go onto the greater exodus.

And to be sure, there will be another Pharaoh, the anti-Messiah who will not remember the son Yosef (just as the original Exodus story says). And like in Exodus, God will deliver them by a mighty hand

with many judgments. Further, the pattern of the judgments in the Book of Exodus matches the pattern of the judgments in the Book of Revelation. Those that understand the ancient story will know what to anticipate for they will know this later generation is one that has to be willing to leave Egypt in order to go to the Promised Land. And they will also know that they are not going to get zapped from Egypt right to the Promised Land (no pre-trib. *rapture*) – they are going to have to go through the wilderness. And this is where it gets really interesting, because even the sages of Israel, while admitting that there is a generation that will understand certain passages in Scripture; do not understand the passages themselves.

The apostle Paul reminds us to stand firm in Ephesians 6: ¹²*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the worldly forces of this darkness, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.* ¹³*Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist when the times are evil, and after you have done everything, to stand firm.* ¹⁴*Stand firm then!* It is time to put on our battle gear and make war against the enemy of our souls, against Satan, the enemy of God and God's people. We battle the enemy when we submit to God and agree with Him that His Word, His *Torah*, and His Way are right and that we are and have been wrong. Then we are made strong though, in reality, we are weak human beings. But we are free moral beings, with the power to choose either life or death. *Parashat Nitzavim* ends with the following admonition:

¹¹*“For this mitzvah that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far off.* ¹²*It is not in the heavens, that you should say, ‘Who will go up for us to the heavens and get it for us, and have us hear it so we may do it?’* ¹³*Nor is it across the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross over for us to the other side of the sea and get it for us, and have us hear it so we may do it?’* ¹⁴*No, the word is very near to you—in your mouth and in your heart, to do it.* ¹⁵*“See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil.* ¹⁶*What I am commanding you today is to love Adonai your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His mitzvot, statutes and ordinances. Then you will live and multiply, and Adonai your God will bless you in the land you are going in to possess.* ¹⁷*But if your heart turns away and you do not listen, but are drawn away and bow down to other gods and worship them,* ¹⁸*I tell you today that you will certainly perish! You will not prolong your days on the land, where you are about to cross over the Jordan to go in to possess.* ¹⁹*“I call the heavens and the earth to witness about you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life so that you and your descendants may live,* ²⁰*by loving Adonai your God, listening to His voice, and clinging to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days, that you may dwell on the land that Adonai swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob—to give them.”* (Deut. 30:11-20, TLV)

Will you (we) choose life? There is time and we can still repent. We can *t'shuvah* (turn ourselves around.) How? We call on the name of Messiah *Yeshua*. We still can – we must. *Kol Simcha* is also standing today before יהוה. We must choose to obey Him or disobey Him, and if so, we choose to die.

¹³*It will also come about in that day, a great shofar will be blown. Those perishing in the land of Assyria and the exiles in the land of Egypt will come and worship יהוה on the holy mountain in Jerusalem”* (Is. 27:13)

(Play *Uvau Haovdim* sung by Rabbi Sh'lomo Carlebach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2sioksLAug>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDpFD6MIIGk>

as John plays the shofar)