

Tell a story

Parsha and Haftara Matot and Shoftim by Julie Zhuk on 2024-09-07

Parsha Shoftim

This week's Parsha, Moses suggested that the Jewish people have more judges in every city to go around. Moses also told the Jewish people that they needed to have law enforcement officers in every city. Moses made these suggestions because he was trying to get rid of the corruption and any kind of favoritism that people had with each other. Moses believed that having law enforcement and judges would reduce crimes in the cities where people were living.

Moses also told the Jewish people that whenever there were any crimes committed the Jews needed to present two witnesses. The witnesses were needed for a conviction and punishment. Moses said that with every generation there would be those who were entrusted with the job of taking on applying the laws of the Torah. This Parsha teaches Jews to stay away from idolatry and any kind of magic. There are rules about governing the appointment and behavior coming from a king.

The Parsha mentions rules about the creation of a city that is being used as a place of refuge for someone had accidentally killed someone. And their body is found in a field. The ending of the Parsha talks about a special procedure that occurs if someone is killed and they don't find out who did it.

This is called ***eglah arufah***, this underscores the responsibility of the Jewish community and their leaders for not preventing the ability to have stopped this person from being killed.

Haftara Shoftim

Last week's Haftara and this week's Haftara are very similar, with the Jewish people complaining that G-d has abandoned them. The Jewish people were unhappy with what Isaiah the prophet was saying to them, and how he was trying to console them.

What they wanted instead was just for G-d to console them. In this week's Haftara, G-d comes forward to the Jewish people and says He will for sure be the One to comfort them. G-d did for a short while reprimand the Jewish people because they always did mess up. Afterall, it was never in their nature to be perfect humans. G-d wanted the Jewish people to have fear of human and those who were going to oppose them.

Isaiah went onto describe the ways that the Jews would suffer and the tribulations that the Jews had undergone. The prophet told the Jewish people, now the time had finally come for the Jews to realize their suffering was OVER! The oppressors were going to drink the cup of suffering.

This was because the people who had once oppressed the Jewish people, the prophet was telling the Jews: "Awaken, awaken and put on your strength O Zion. Put on the clothing of your beauty Jerusalem, the Holy City. For it was no longer considered to be uncircumcised or unclean and the Jewish people could enter it now.

The prophet was saying to the Jewish people that they could shake themselves off from the dust, arise, and to sit down. He was calling them O Jerusalem free yourself from the bands of your neck, O captive daughter of Zion." Isaiah starts to encourage the beauty of the messenger to announce the good tidings about the Redemption that would happen soon. Isaiah suggests for him to burst out in song, gather the Jewish people together, and sing the song O' Ruins of Jerusalem for G-d has brought His people together.

Finally, G-d has redeemed His people. The Haftara comes to an end by highlighting a difference between the Egyptian exodus. This was referring to the time when the Jews hurried out of their exile and bondage and it was compared to their future Redemption. The last thing Isaiah tells the Jewish people is, for not with haste shall you go forth and not in a flurry shall you go. Because it is G-d will stand before you, on both the right and left, and behind you. He will guard you everywhere and all-around Israel.