

PART 5 16.18-21.9 SHEPHATIM(JUDGES)

"CONTEND FOR THE TRUTH"

Reading No.1 16.18-17.13- against syncretism
Reading No.2 17.14--20 against the world
Reading No.3 18.1-5 against avarice and materialism
Reading No.4 18.6-13 against all forms of Satanism
Reading No.5 18.14-19.13- against false prophecy
Reading No.6 19.14-20.9 against perjury and dissimulation
Reading No.7 20.10-21.6 against the cheapness of life
Summary 21.7-9 against sin through the blood of the cross

READING No.1 16.18-17.13

"CONTENDERS FOR THE RIGHT"

CONTENTION FOR THE RIGHT REFUSES SYNCRETISM

Provide yourselves "judges" and "writers"("elders" or magistrates) in all the city gates which the LORD your God gives you belonging to your tribes. They shall contend for the right in defending the people.

(1) Do not stretch out against right judgement as you would lengthen thread. i.e. delay and decline -cf Magna Carta-"Justice shall not be delayed"

(2) Do not "contemplate recognised or well-known faces" or conversely "alien" faces in judgment so as to care more for either.

(3) Do not take a bribe for the bribe casts dust in the eyes [*Hebrew YEAAWER*] of the wise and makes slippery or overturns [*Hebrew SALEPH*] righteous words

Follow rigorously or assiduously justice-justice itself that you may live and possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you. Do not fix like a planted tree any wooden Asherah joined [*Hebrew ETZEL*]"connected" -a directive against syncretistic religion which fuses truth and error] to the altar which you build to the LORD your God.

CHAPTER17

CONTENTION FOR RIGHT INVOLVES THOROUGH PREPARATION 1-7

Do not offer to the LORD your God an ox or sheep which has a blemish or any thing bad for it is detestable to the LORD your God. If a man or woman in one of the gates of your cities which the LORD you God is giving you is discovered doing evil -breaking His covenant -and has gone and served **other gods** and bowed to them-whether it be to the sun or moon or all the host of heaven which I have not commanded. When this has been explained to you both listen and search it out well and look into the truth and proof [*Hebrew KON*]"prepared"(as food) as a case or established as a fact]of this detestable thing done in Israel. Cause the man or woman who has done this evil deed to go to your (city) gate where the "contenders for the right" met and stone that one to death with stones and he will die. At the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall be put to death; he shall not die on account of one witness. The hand of the two witnesses shall be the first to cause him to die and after them the hand of the people and you shall purge [*Hebrew BAAR* "burn"] this evil from your midst.

RESPECT FOR THE LAW OF GOD 8-13

When a matter is extraordinarily difficult and beyond you in respect of judging between blood feuds or two people in contention or two who have wounded each other bring the matters in dispute up to the place where the LORD your God has chosen. Go to the Levite priests and the judge who will be there in those days and pursue the matter and they will explain to you the justice of the matter. You must act in accordance with the word they have caused you to understand at that place which the LORD will choose and see that you do all that they point out. According to the speech of the TORAH which they

show you and according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall act. You must not turn from word which **they explain** to the right or left. The man who acts insolently or proudly without obeying the priests who stands to minister there to the LORD your God or the judge -that man shall be put to death and that evil purged from the midst of Israel. All the people shall hear of it and see it and there will be no more contempt. *From this we get out concept of "contempt of court"*

READING No.2 17.14-20

CONTEND AGAINST THE WORLD AND ITS WAYS-idolatrous kings and horses

When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you and are in possession and settled in it and you say, "Let us set up a king over us like all the gentile nations around Set over you a king that the LORD your God chooses from the midst of your brothers. You are not permitted to place over you a man who is foreign who is not your brother. Certainly [*Hebrew RAQ "only" -from "thin" -so Moses is saying "watch the thin line which separates you from the world"*]there shall not be a building up of numerous horses and he shall not cause the people to return to Egypt in order to accumulate horses for the LORD said, "You shall not return that way again!"

It shall be when he rests on the throne or spends Sabbath time on the throne of the kingdom he also shall write this law of Moses in a book from copy belonging to the priests who are Levites. And it shall be with him all the days of his life in order that he may learn to fear or stand in awe of the LORD his God to keep all the verbal directives of this His law and to do the statutes of God. He shall not think more highly of himself than of his brethren and he shall not turn from the commandment to the right or left in order that his days and those of his son may be long over the kingdom.

READING No.3: 18 1-5

THE TRUTH OF CHRIST TO WHICH LEVITES TESTIFY AND CHRISTIANS CONFESS

There shall not be any lot or inheritance for the Levite priests; nor any division by lot or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the offerings of the LORD by fire-their inheritance. *This is prophetic TORAH speaking of the burnt offering -pointing to Christ crucified-who is the inheritance of the priests of God in all generations-the one through whom we have every good gift and heaven itself. What seems harsh is the best provision-one they did not have to earn or strive for. This is distinctly affirmed in the verse that follows.* So there shall be no inheritance [*that which comes from men or from "the fathers"*] for them in the midst of their brethren -the LORD is their inheritance **as He promised** [*Hebrew DABAR "to affirm in word"*] them. This is the judgment of the LORD concerning the priests; the people shall and the offerings they offer when it is an ox or sheep the foreleg [*Hebrew ZEROAH*] and the jaws and the innards shall be given to the priest. The first of your grain new wine and oil and the first shearing of wool shall be given him. For the LORD your God chose him and his sons to stand and minister in the name of the LORD all the days.

READING No.4: 18.6-12

SUPPORTING THE CALL OF GOD ON A LIFE

LEVITE FREEDOM TO MOVE HOUSE 6-8

And when a Levite comes from one of the gates of the cities from any part of Israel where he is a stranger and comes **with all the desire of his soul** to the place where the LORD chooses then he may minister as do all his brother Levites who stand there before the LORD'S face; he is to eat his portion with theirs though his patrimony has earned him money.

CONTENDING AGAINST WITCHCRAFT AND CONSULTING SPIRITS 9-13

CONTENDING FOR THE "WHOLENESS" OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you must not learn to do that which agrees with the detestable ways of the nations there.

- (a) Let there not be found among you any who causes his son or daughter to pass through the fire;
- (b) Who divines or receives reward for divinations; [*Hebrew KASAS*]

- (c) Who predicts by clouds [*Hebrew ANAN*]
- (d) Who foretells by serpent [*Hebrew NAHESH-called familiarly "enchantment"*]
- (e) Who practices spells [*Hebrew CASHAPH-"incantations of a magical nature"*]
- (f) Any who joins with incantation?
- (g) And asks petition of a spirit [*Hebrew AOB*]
- (h) Or a wizard [*Hebrew JIDAONI from the idea of "knowing spirits intimately"*]
- (i) Or one who visits and searches for the dead.

For all who do these things are abominable to the LORD and because of these circumstances [*Hebrew GALAL through the "rolling on" or "continuity and increase of"*] the LORD your God dispossessed those who were before you.

You shall be perfect with the LORD your God. The word "perfect" has a large TAU -the last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet-which means "a cross or gibbet" and this is a **prophetic TORAH** in itself of that perfection only found in Christ. In another sense the LORD desires us to be "the last word" in happy union with Him-completely committed-"made whole" spiritually. When Jesus said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He sought that "very good" result in our being that He knew was possible(cf Matt 9.22; Matt.12.13;15.28;Mk5.34; Jn5.6)

READING No.5 18.14-19.13

CONTENDING FOR REVELATION "IN CHRIST" NOT CLOUDS OR CUPS 14

For these nations which you have dispossessed are obedient [*Hebrew YISHMAU-"listen to"*] to those who divine by the sky (literally "clouds") and by diviners [*literally "(wine movement or dregs in) the cup"*] The LORD your God has not given you leave to do this.

CONTENDING FOR THE DIVINELY GIVEN PROOF OF THE ULTIMATE PROPHET 15-20

The LORD your God will raise up from your midst a prophet like unto you; listen to Him. This great statement is referred to by **Stephen before the Sanhedrin** (Acts 7.37) and previously by **Peter before 3000 gathered at the festival of first-fruits** in Acts 3.22. In the context of understanding the future and what should happen in our lives -the context of giving credit to diviners and soothsayers this stark contrast occurs of the revelation of the Son of God who has the answer to our needs and the future lies in His hands. This is one of the greatest **prophetic TORAHs** of Moses writing. The raising up was not simply a reference to the appearance of Jesus Christ but to his glorious Resurrection. When Peter heard the voice from "the excellent glory" calling him and James and John to obedience he was listening to the discussion of Christ's "Exodus"-matters concerning His death as the "Lamb of God" and his liberating his people in Resurrection from the evil ways of the world and ultimately from the presence of evil itself. This accords with all you asked when with the LORD your God at HOREB on the day of Assembly saying, "Do not continue to have us hear the voice of the LORD God and do not have us look upon this great fire any more and we shall not die. And the LORD God said to me, "What they have said is good". **I will raise up a prophet from the midst of their brothers like you and I will give my word of promise direction and command** [*Hebrew DABAR*] and He shall speak to you "all" that I command him. And it shall come to pass that whoever does not obey my promise or direction or command that **He speaks in the house of my name or as instrument of my name I Myself will require his blood along with Him** This divine statement clarifies the relationship of the One God would send. It tells us the LORD God would be "with him" in **judging as to bloodguilt** or on the matter of the rejection of the "Prophet" or "Divine Mouthpiece". The identification of the LORD with the **PROPHET** is historic and enters into eternal judgment. The matter at issue is "bloodguilt" not just "listening"-it is "obeying" the command of the Christ who shed His blood so that our lives should be saved. But where disobedience continues bloodguilt deriving from mans attitude to the Christ is confirmed by the LORD God Almighty. This "Prophet" has not just likeness to Moses but identification as **to name** and person and revelation and judgment or **purpose** with the LORD God. Definitely the prophet who causes himself to speak fiercely or passionately [*Hebrew ZOD "boiling over"*] and who

speaks in the name of "later gods" -**that prophet shall die**. *This statement assumes fierce latter day prophets who would speak wickedly or proudly in the name of gods afterwards invented. **Their end is "death" and they would not rise** like the Christ. The LORD God Almighty is declaring the "death" of false prophets whose end contrasts with the continued ministry of the "Prophet" He shall **raise**.*

CONTENDING FOR THE VALIDITY OF REVELATION 21-22

When you say in your hearts, "how shall we know that word which is not spoken by the LORD?" the prophet who speaks in the name of the LORD (though the word is not of the LORD) it will not happen. That is the word the LORD has not spoken!" That prophet has spoken in pride [*Hebrew ZOD-overcooked overheated flow*] Do not dwell on it in terror!

CHAPTER 19

CONTENDING FOR A COMMUNITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE (Hebrew AAHAB)

When the LORD your God has caused the nations whose land the LORD your God gave to you to be cut off and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and houses you shall set apart three cities in the midst of the land the LORD your God gave you to possess. Establish the main road for yourselves and divide the land the LORD your God gives you into three parts so that any manslayer may flee there. This is the word of direction for the manslayer that flees there and is still alive when he has killed his neighbour without awareness-the man who had no hatred for him in time before.

(a)When a man goes with his friend into the wood to hew wood and as he thrusts with his arm by the iron (axe) to cut the wood the iron is driven out of the wooden handle and finds his neighbour and he is killed. He may flee to one of these cities and live. Otherwise the kinsman avenger of blood will pursue the slayer when the heat of wrath invades his heart and overtake him when the road is long and smite him dead even though there is nothing for which he should be judged to die and he (the slayer) bore no malice against him beforetime. On this account I said to you, "separate three cities for yourselves." And if the LORD your God enlarges your borders as He swore to your fathers and gives you the whole land He promised to your fathers then watch all these commands to do what I have commanded you today - **to love the LORD your God and to walk in His ways all your days** then you shall add three cities more besides these three. Do this that innocent blood may not be shed in your land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and you shall have no blood guilt.

But when it shall be that a man hates his neighbour and ambushes him and rises up against him and smites his life and he dies and then flees to one of these cities the elders of his city shall send and take him from there and give him over to the kinsman avenger of blood and he shall die. Do not let your eyes be black [*Hebrew HOS cf Jonah 4.10*] with pity. Thus remove from Israel the blood of the innocent and it will be well with you. (As a nation)

READING No.6 19.11-20.9

THE ULTIMATE WITNESS TO AND CONTENDER FOR TRUTH IS THE TRIUNE GOD

Do not remove [*Hebrew NASAG-""turn back" or "take away"*] the boundary of your neighbour which the early inhabitants marked (by stone) in your inheritance which you inherited in the land which the LORD your God gave you to possess. The witness of one person against a man for any iniquity or rebellion or any sin against any sinner who has sinned against my mouth will not stand. A word of two or three witnesses shall stand **according to my mouth**. *This is a hidden prophetic TORAH relating to the most intimate feature of justice in the universe-the mouth of God. This legal model which the whole world follows originates in the Trinity. Jesus made substantive reference to this principle in John 5 he even on that occasion spoke of Moses as accuser of the Jews of his day-obviously alluding to this principle of witness of the Father and the Son against their rebellious hearts. When He as Son of God described the eternal divine witness he said,*

(a)Truly, truly the Son can do nothing of Himself but what he sees the Father do-for what He does the Father also does

(b)For as the Father raises and quickens the dead even so the Son quickens whom He will

(c)For the Father judges no man but has committed all judgment to the Son that all should honour the Son. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him. (Here see Reading 5)

(d)The hour is coming (and now is) when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live...for as the Father hath life in Himself so hath he given to the Son to have life in Himself and has given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of man

(e)If I bear witness of myself my witness is not true. There is ANOTHER that continues to bear witness of me; and I know that the witness that He witnesses of me is true. [Refer to John 1 32-33 "John bare record saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on Him. I knew him not {i.e John was not the permanent witness}but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said to me, 'Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is he who baptises with the Holy Ghost'(You sent to John and he bare witness to the truth)BUT I receive not testimony from man; but these things I say that you might be saved.(He-John-was a burning and a shining light; and you were willing for a season to rejoice in his light)BUT I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father Himself who sent me has borne witness of me...You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his shape...John 16.7ff "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when He is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of Judgment.

(a)Of sin because they do not believe on me:

(b)Of righteousness because I go to my Father, and you see me no more;

(c)Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged...when He the Spirit of truth, is come, He will be your way-maker in to all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He shall show you things to come(an indicator that the prophetic message is vibrant and sure within the New Testament and under the Spirit of Prophecy through the church era at the end of which He ceases to "hinder" the emergence of the final storm when Satan is unmasked when the scene is set for the judgment of the Prince of this world and the return of the King and Messiah of the Jewish people

This long exordium from the lips of Christ gives repeated testimony to the principle of "two and three" witnesses within the tri-unity of God to which our LORD referred as His court of appeal beyond His works or John's own commendation.

*When an injurious witness stands up against a man of wrong [Hebrew SARAH "violation of law] two witnesses who belong to the crime (scene) shall stand before the LORD and the priest who are in office who are the judges of those days. Then the judges shall pursue the right and detect the false witness of him who witnesses falsely against his brother. They shall do to him as he intended [Hebrew ZAMAM "devised" or "purposed"] and purge the evil from your midst with fire. The remainder of the nation will hear and see and not repeat further like evil legal action in your midst. The action proposed would spare the judiciary dealing with malicious cases. Let not your eye be dark with grief-it shall be life for a life; an eye for an eye, a hand for a hand, a leg for a leg. The **LEX TALIONIS** is quoted by our LORD Jesus Christ who adds, "But I say to you, "that you do not resist evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the left also. If a man sue you for your coat let him also take your cloak. Whoever will compel you to go a mile go with him two miles"(Matthew 5.38)*

CHAPTER 20 ENGAGING IN WAR

When you go to war against your enemies and see the horse and chariot (numbers) of the people are greater than yours do not fear them for the LORD your God is with you-the one who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be when you are close to the battle the Priest shall draw near and address the people. He shall say to them, "Hear, O Israel you are come near today to war against your enemies. Do not fear [Hebrew JARECH -"smite your thighs in distress"] Do not let fear grip your hearts. Do not flee in alarm [Hebrew HAPAZ] Do not be terrified from the appearance of your enemies for the LORD your God is going with you to fight with your enemies for you and to bring about your YESHUA salvation. And the commanders shall speak to the people saying, "Which man has built a new house and not consecrated it? He may go and return to his house lest he die in war and another man set it apart for his use. Again which man has planted a vineyard and not opened it? [Hebrew HALAL-literally "slain" vintage] let him return to his house lest he die in war and another enjoy his winepress. Again which man is engaged to a wife and has not yet married? Let him return from battle lest he die

and another betroth her. And the commanders shall add as they speak to the people, saying, "What man of you is fearful and timid of heart let him go and return to his home lest the heart of his brothers faints like his. And it shall be that in when the commanders have finished speaking to the people they shall appoint captains of the hosts at the head of the people

READING No.7:20.10-21.6

CONTENDING FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE UNBORN & THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

When you encounter a city to make war against it call to it to make peace and if they answer for peace and open the gates to you all the people you find within

(a) Shall go under tribute [*Hebrew KASAS -have "polled heads" or "be numbered for tribute"*] and serve you.

(b) When they do not accept peace terms but go to war with you shut the city up by siege. The LORD your God will give it into your hand and you shall smite every male before the sword.

(c) Certainly you may take as prey the women and young children and animals and all the plunder that there is in the city as booty and you may use or eat the plunder of your enemy which the LORD your God gives you. Thus you shall do to all the cities which are distant from you-that are not linked to cities of those nations nearby.

(d) Certainly from these fortified cities which the LORD your God gives you to inherit there shall not be a soul left alive. You shall devote to utter destruction the HITTITES, AMORITES, CANAANITES, PERIZZITES, HIVITES, JEBUSITES as the LORD your God commanded you. **This in order that they may not teach you to do all the detestable things which they do for their gods and you will sin against the LORD your God.** *The main purpose of this draconian "ban" is to end once and for all the abominable practice of putting children through fire and other idolatrous practices too shameful to speak of.*

(e) When you lay siege to a city for many days to capture it do not destroy the trees by thrusting the axe; do not cut them down because you will eat of them. The tree of the field is not a man that it should come against you in a siege.

(f) Certainly a tree you know you cannot eat you may destroy and cut it down to build siege works against the city which makes war with you until it falls. *The cutting down of timber in this case would hasten the fall of the city.*

CHAPTER 21

UNSOLVED MURDER

EVERY STEP IS TAKEN TO PURGE-BUT IT ALL FAILS

We read about a poor victim heifer and about elders washing their hands in sorrow and a public show of innocence which cannot be proven. We see the priests step up to the line to slay a victim that has no connection with the crime except it may have roamed in the valley feeding. Somewhere a man is hiding a burden of guilt. The water of the stream can wash away the blood of the heifer-but the blood of the victim remains. The problem of unsolved crime is that sin is un-atoned and guilt un-confessed. It must await the bench of God and the eternal judgement. If there is any hope for the felon it is in God himself-not man.

When a man is found wounded to death on the ground and fallen in a field which the LORD your God is giving you to possess and it is not known who struck him your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distance to the nearest surrounding cities to the victim. And the elders of the city that is nearest to the victim shall take a heifer which has not worked or been bound (to a yoke) and the elders of the city shall bring her down to a river valley which has not been worked or sown. In the stream they shall break the heifer's neck. And the priests the sons of Levi whom the LORD your God has chosen to minister and pronounce blessing in the LORD'S name and **shall step forward to offer sacrifice** [*Hebrew NAGASH*] and at their mouth every strife and every assault (shall be determined) And all the elders of the city nearest the victim **shall wash their hands** over the heifer whose neck was broken in the river. *This heifer takes us back in thought to the "red heifer" of Numbers 19.2. The scene is equally pitiful-a violent death is dealt to an animal which has had no other purpose-never having worked for*

man. The heifer's only living purpose was to "die" so that the felon's act of blood shed might be atoned for.

SUMMARY 21 7-9

WHEN ATONEMENT IS BEYOND MAN'S POWER ISRAEL SEEKS GOD TO CONTINUE CONTENDING FOR VICTORY OVER ALL SIN WHICH IS WITHOUT OTHER SOLUTION

And they shall testify and say, "Our hands did not shed this innocent blood and **our eyes did not see it shed.**" Continually The construction here is Piel -entailing "ongoing atonement" for a felon who lives on and a matter beyond man's power to right **atone for your people Israel whom You O LORD have redeemed** and **do not impute the blood guilt among your people Israel** and You Yourself effect atonement for the blood that is their responsibility. The grammatical construction used here I have not come across in the entire Torah. It is a "reflexive" and a "Hithpael" at the same time. And you WILL or SHALL purge the innocent blood from your midst for you have done what is just or righteous **in the eyes of the LORD**. The importance of the divine solution proposed to the priests must not be overlooked. The LORD is saying that He will undertake the "atonement" and the singular **prophetic TORAH** takes us straight to Calvary which holds an answer to the unsolved moral and spiritual issues of mankind-where they find their one and only solution. **The recognition of "innocent blood" is within this statement-as is also the claim to be without guilt because it was not witnessed-but this is not the basis of righteousness. That basis is further stated as arising from the undertaking of the guilt by the LORD himself and by consequence as the people do what is righteous not in their eyes but the eyes of God by acting to purge themselves or take an interest in the atonement provided by the LORD.**

The End of Part 5 "Contending for Truth"