



SEFER YIRMIYAHU

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Rabbi Reuven Travis

CHAPTER EIGHT

➤ Chapter 8 – A continuation thematically of the previous chapter contextualized

- Start with the powerful and disturbing imagery in verses 1 and 2.

(א) בָּעֵת הַהִיא נָאֵם יְיָ וַיֵּצֵאוּ [יֹאצִיאוּ] אֶת־עַצְמוֹת מַלְכֵי־הַיְהוּדָה וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת־שָׂרֵי וְאֶת־עַצְמוֹת הַפְּהָנִים וְאֶת ׀ עַצְמוֹת הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶת עַצְמוֹת יוֹשְׁבֵי־יְרוּשָׁלַם מִקְבְּרֵיהֶם: (ב) וַיִּשְׁטְחוּם לְשֵׁמֶשׁ וּלְיָרֵחַ וּלְכָל ׀ צָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה וְאֲשֶׁר עֲבָדוּם וְאֲשֶׁר הִלְכּוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר דָּרְשׂוּם וְאֲשֶׁר הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לָהֶם לֹא יֵאָסְפוּ וְלֹא יִקְבְּרוּ לְדָמֹן עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה יְהוּי:

- What are we to make of this same imagery in Ezekiel 37?
- Verse 3 is as grim as anything found in Eicha – “death shall be preferable to life for all that are left of this wicked folk”
- Verse 5 (per Rabbi Leibtag) portrays the people as akin to rebellious children with its use of the word שׁוֹבְבָה. Moreover, one can almost hear God’s frustration when He asks: “Why is this people—Jerusalem—rebellious with a persistent rebellion?” This is the type of rhetorical question one would expect from God the father, and not from God the King. Yet, it seems that the King is prepared to dole out harsh punishment!

➤ Verses 8 – 9: Continued lack of awareness on the part of the people

- Despite the prophet’s words and harsh warnings, the people continue to think they are doing fine, that they walk with God [תִּוְרַת יְיָ אֶתְנוּ]. How they can think this is a question we will return to time and time again.

➤ Verse 13: A familiar passage

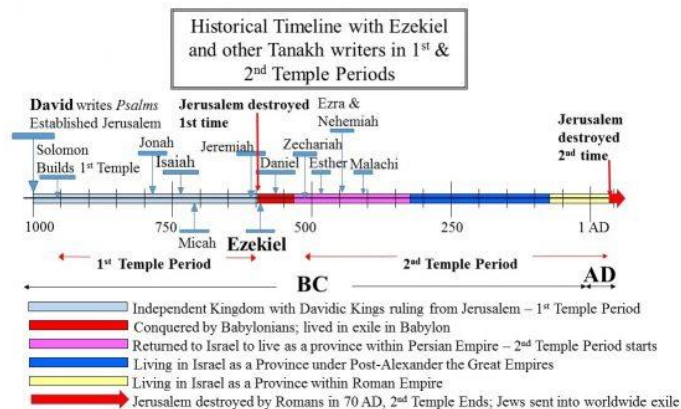
- Verse 13 begins the Haftorah we read on Tisha B’Av.
- Commenting on this verse, and seemingly in anticipation of our previous question, he offers one possible answer as to how the people can remain blissfully unaware of their impending doom: “Even if the prophet had not spoken, then the ripening grapes, the fig tree yielding its fruit, and the luxuriant abundance of smiling nature should have been eloquent expression of a willingness which works quietly but ceaselessly to fulfill God’s requirements and which is reflected in nature running its course in accordance with the laws of God. The vine has produced its fruit in vain; the fig tree has done what was expected of it, but its leaves have withered. Nature has accomplished its task, but the people have passed by with utter indifference. They are therefore ripe for destruction.”

➤ **Verse 14: A sense of remorse**

- A sense of remorse – “We have sinned against God!” – but too little, too late.

➤ **Verses 12 – 23: The prophet himself grieves**

- As Rav Hirsch notes: “Could anything be more heartrending than the weeping of a man cast down and shaken with sorrow?”



Ezekiel 37:1 – 14

הַיְתָה עָלַי יְדֵי-נְהַל וַיּוֹצֵאֵנִי בְרוּחַ יְ-יְהוָה וַיְנִיחֵנִי בְּתוֹךְ הַבְּקָעָה וְהִיא מְלֵאָה עֲצָמוֹת:

The hand of the LORD came upon me. He took me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the valley. It was full of bones.

וַהֲעִבְרֵנִי עֲלֵיהֶם סָבִיב וְהָיָה רַבּוֹת מְאֹד עַל-פְּנֵי הַבְּקָעָה וְהָיָה יְבֹשׁוֹת מְאֹד:

He led me all around them; there were very many of them spread over the valley, and they were very dry.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בְּוַאֲזָנָם הַתְּחַיֵּינָה הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה נְאֻמְךָ אֲדֹנָי יְ-יְהוָה אַתָּה יְדַעְתָּ:

He said to me, “O mortal, can these bones live again?” I replied, “O Lord GOD, only You know.”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הִנְבֵּא עַל-הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם הָעֲצָמוֹת הַיְבֹשׁוֹת שְׁמְעוּ דְבַר-יְהוָה:

And He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!

כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְ-יְהוָה לְעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הִנֵּה אֲנִי מְבִיא בְכֶם רוּחַ וְחַיִּיתֶם:

Thus said the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live again.

וְנָתַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם גְּזָיִם וְהַעֲלַתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם בָּשָׂר וְקָרַמְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם עוֹר וְנָתַתִּי בְכֶם רוּחַ וְחַיִּיתֶם וַיִּדְעַתֶּם כִּי-אֲנִי יְ-יְהוָה:

I will lay sinews upon you, and cover you with flesh, and form skin over you. And I will put breath into you, and you shall live again. And you shall know that I am the LORD!”

וַנְּבֹאֲתִי כַאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי וַיְהִי-קוֹל כַּהֲנַבְּאִי וְהָיָה-רֹעַשׁ וַתִּקְרְבוּ עֲצָמוֹת עֶצֶם אֶל-עֶצְמוֹ:

I prophesied as I had been commanded. And while I was prophesying, suddenly there was a sound of rattling, and the bones came together, bone to matching bone.

וּרְאִיתִי וְהִנֵּה-עֲלֵיהֶם גְּדִים וּבָשָׂר עָלָה וַיִּקְרָם עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹר מִלְּמַעַלָּה וְרוּחַ אֵין בָּהֶם:

I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had grown, and skin had formed over them; but there was no breath in them.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי הַנְּבֵא אֶל-הַרוּחַ הַנְּבֵא בְּ-אָדָם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-הַרוּחַ כֹּה-אָמַר | אֲדַגֵּי יְ-וָה מֵאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת בָּאֵי הַרוּחַ וּפְתִי בְהַרוּגִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּחְיוּ:

Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, O mortal! Say to the breath: Thus said the Lord GOD: Come, O breath, from the four winds, and breathe into these slain, that they may live again."

וְהַנְּבֵאתִי כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּנִי וַתְּבוֹא בָהֶם הַרוּחַ וַיִּחְיוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ עַל-רַגְלֵיהֶם תֵּל גָּדוֹל מְאֹד-מְאֹד: (ס)

I prophesied as He commanded me. The breath entered them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet, a vast multitude.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי בְּ-אָדָם הָעֲצָמוֹת הָאֵלֶּה כָּל-בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל הִמָּה הִמָּה הִנֵּה אֲמָרִים יִבָּשׂוּ עֲצָמוֹתֵינוּ וְאֶבְדָּה תְקִנְתָּנוּ וַנִּגְזַרְנוּ לָנוּ:

And He said to me, "O mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone; we are doomed.'

לְכֹן הַנְּבֵא וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה-אָמַר אֲדַגֵּי יְ-וָה הִנֵּה אֲנִי פֹתֵחַ אֶת-קְבָרוֹתֵיכֶם וְהַעֲלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם מִקְבְּרוֹתֵיכֶם עִמִּי וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ס)

Prophecy, therefore, and say to them: Thus said the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel.

וַיִּדְעַתֶּם כִּי-אֲנִי יְ-וָה בְּפִתְחִי אֶת-קְבָרוֹתֵיכֶם וּבְהַעֲלוֹתִי אֶתְכֶם מִקְבְּרוֹתֵיכֶם עִמִּי:

You shall know, O My people, that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves and lifted you out of your graves.

וְנִתַּתִּי רוּחִי בְּכֶם וְחִייתֶם וְהִנַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם עַל-אֶדְמַתְכֶם וַיִּדְעַתֶּם כִּי-אֲנִי יְ-וָה דִּבַּרְתִּי וַעֲשִׂיתִי נְאֻם-יְ-וָה: (פ)

I will put My breath into you and you shall live again, and I will set you upon your own soil. Then you shall know that I the LORD have spoken and have acted"—declares the LORD.

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