

TORAH TEACHINGS



Understanding YAH's Likes and dislikes

#48 Shoftim (שֹׁפְטִים)

— Hebrew word for “judges”



Torah: Deuteronomy 16:18 - 21:9
Haftarah: Isaiah 51:12-52:12

TOPICS IN THE PARSHA

THIS WEEKS TORAH PARASHAT

Moses instructs the people of Israel to appoint judges and law enforcement officers in every city. “Justice, justice shall you pursue,” he commands them, and you must administer it without corruption or favoritism. Crimes must be meticulously investigated and evidence thoroughly examined—a minimum of two credible witnesses is required for conviction and punishment.

TOPICS IN THE PARSHA

THIS WEEKS TORAH PARASHAT

In every generation, says Moses, there will be those entrusted with the task of interpreting and applying the laws of the Torah. “According to the law that they will teach you, and the judgment they will instruct you, you shall do; you shall not turn away from the thing that they say to you, to the right nor to the left.” We see a beautiful prophecy of the One who would come and speak God’s words and how all should listen to him - Deut. 18: 15-19 where God proclaims that He will send a “Prophet like unto Moshe” and we see the fulfillment of this in Yahoshua MiNazeret and we find that this Yahoshua fulfills this in over 30 different ways.

TOPICS IN THE PARSHA

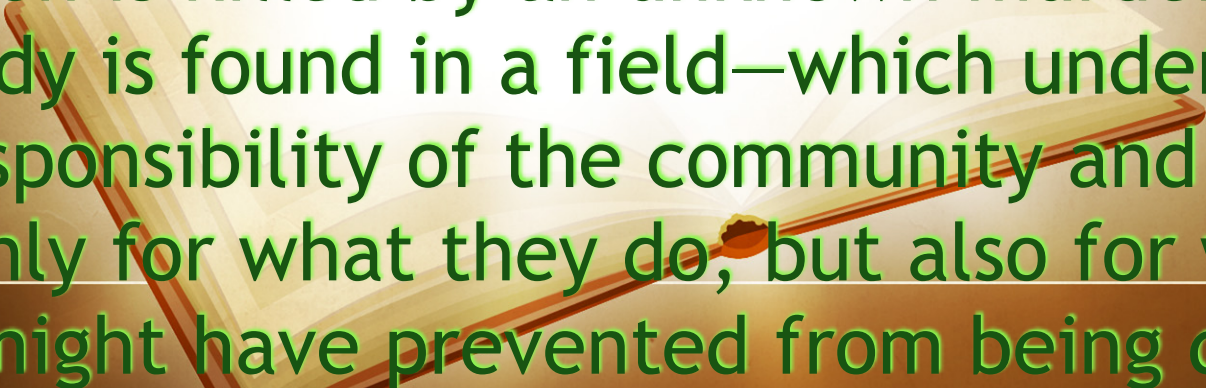
THIS WEEKS TORAH PARASHAT

Shoftim also includes the prohibitions against idolatry and sorcery; laws governing the appointment and behavior of a king; and guidelines for the creation of “cities of refuge” for the inadvertent murderer. Also set forth are many of the rules of war: the exemption from battle for one who has just built a home, planted a vineyard, married, or is “afraid and soft-hearted”; the requirement to offer terms of peace before attacking a city; and the prohibition against wanton destruction of something of value, exemplified by the law that forbids to cut down a fruit tree when laying siege (in this context the Torah makes the famous statement, “For man is a tree of the field”).

TOPICS IN THE PARSHA

THIS WEEKS TORAH PARASHAT

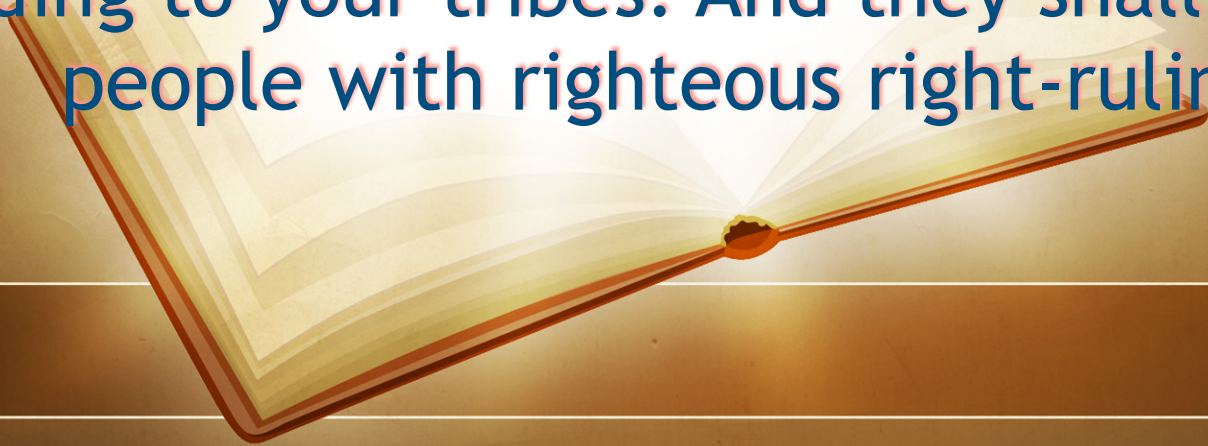
The Parashah concludes with the law of the eglah arufah—the special procedure to be followed when a person is killed by an unknown murderer and his body is found in a field—which underscores the responsibility of the community and its leaders not only for what they do, but also for what they might have prevented from being done.

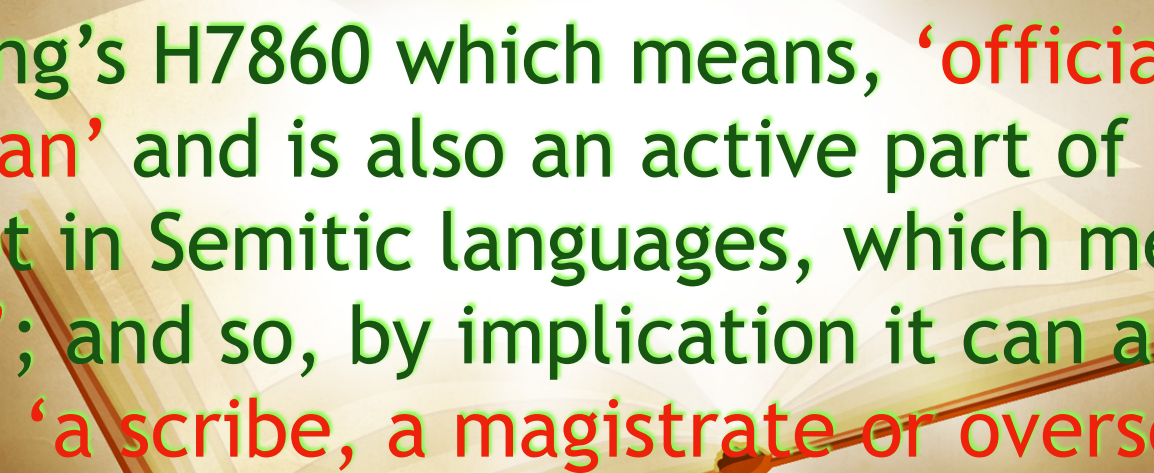


This week's Torah portion is called - שְׁפָטִים
Shophetim - which is the plural of the root word
שָׁפַט shaphat - Strong's H8199 which means,
'judge, to judge, to govern, rule, ruler, execute
judgement'.

Judges and officers, you are to appoint within all
your gates!

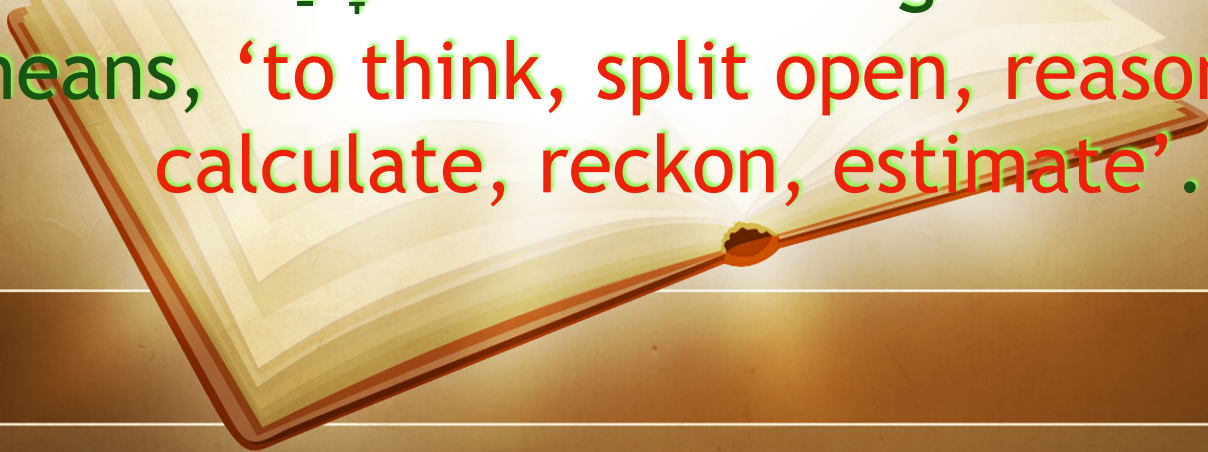
Deu 16:18 “Appoint judges and officers within all your gates, which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes. And they shall judge the people with righteous right-ruling.





The Hebrew word for 'officers' is שְׁטָרִים shoterim, which is the plural of the root word שֹׁטֵר shoter - Strong's H7860 which means, 'official, officer, foreman' and is also an active part of a participle root in Semitic languages, which means, 'to write'; and so, by implication it can also refer to 'a scribe, a magistrate or overseer'.

The Hebrew root word that is translated here as
‘gates’ is שַׁעַר sha’ar - Strong’s H8179 which
means, ‘gate, door, entrance’ and comes from the
root verb שָׂעַר sha’ar - Strong’s H8176 which
means, ‘to think, split open, reason out,
calculate, reckon, estimate’.



Therefore, we can see, and understand, how it is at the 'gates' of the city, where right-ruling and justice was proclaimed and carried out before all!

There was to be appointed judges in every city, which would ensure that the proper right-ruling of Elohim would be consistently administered in every city, within all the allotments of the tribes of Yisra'ěl!

As we consider how the commands of Elohim, are to be written on our doorposts, we recognise that, in our ability to come in and go out, we are to be constantly reminded of the clear need to guard His commands!

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'appoint' is root verb נתן nathan - Strong's H5414 which means, 'to give, put, set, appointed, delivered, given, placed'.

It is from this word, that we get the plural term נְתִינִים Nethinim which means, 'given ones'.

Those who were to be appointed as judges and officers, were those who would be capable of handling the truth without partiality, and would therefore, need to be those who had proven themselves, as being trustworthy and reliable, in exercising proper right-ruling and discernment, in judging matters correctly, according to the Torah.

The Greek word that is used in the LXX (Septuagint) for 'appoint' is καθίστημι kathistēmi - Strong's G2525 which means, 'to set in order, appoint, put ...in charge, appoint one to administer an office', and the reason for me mentioning this is that we see this word being used in:

Mattithyahu/Matthew 24:45-47 "Who then is a trustworthy and wise servant, whom his master set over his household, to give them food in season? 46 "Blessed is that servant whom his master, having come, shall find so doing. 47 "Truly, I say to you that he shall set him over all his possessions."

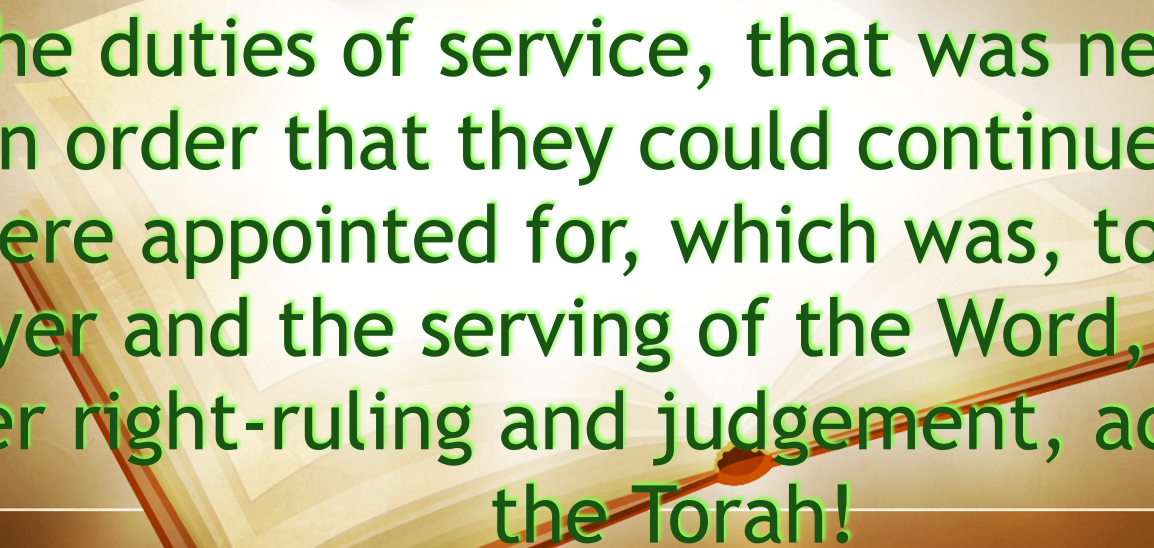
יהושע made it very clear to His taught ones, that we are to be trustworthy servants, here and now, as we have been 'set over' His House/Body, with the duties of diligently guarding His commands and keeping His House/Body clean; which can only be done, when the correct right-rulings and procedures of His Torah are followed and obeyed!

Those who are trustworthy in the guarding of the commands now, our Master will set over all His possessions, when He comes again, as it is the trustworthy servants that shall rule and reign with Him and be appointed to execute proper judgements and right-rulings according to His Torah, which will be the rule of the earth, in His Everlasting Reign!

In Ma'asei/Acts we are told that when the numbers of believers were growing, there arose some grumbling against the believers by the Hellenists (Greek speaking Yehudim), saying that the cares of widows were being overlooked.

Ma'asei/Acts 6:2-4 “So the twelve summoned the group of the taught ones and said, “It is not pleasing for us to leave the Word of Elohim and serve tables. 3 “Therefore, brothers, seek out from among you seven men who are known to be filled with the Set-apart Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint for this duty, 4 but we shall give ourselves continually to prayer and to serving the Word.”

The 12 talmidim (disciples/taught ones) of Messiah, made it clear that trustworthy men were to be sought out, so that they could appoint them over the duties of service, that was needed in the body, in order that they could continue doing what they were appointed for, which was, to continue in prayer and the serving of the Word, teaching proper right-ruling and judgement, according to the Torah!

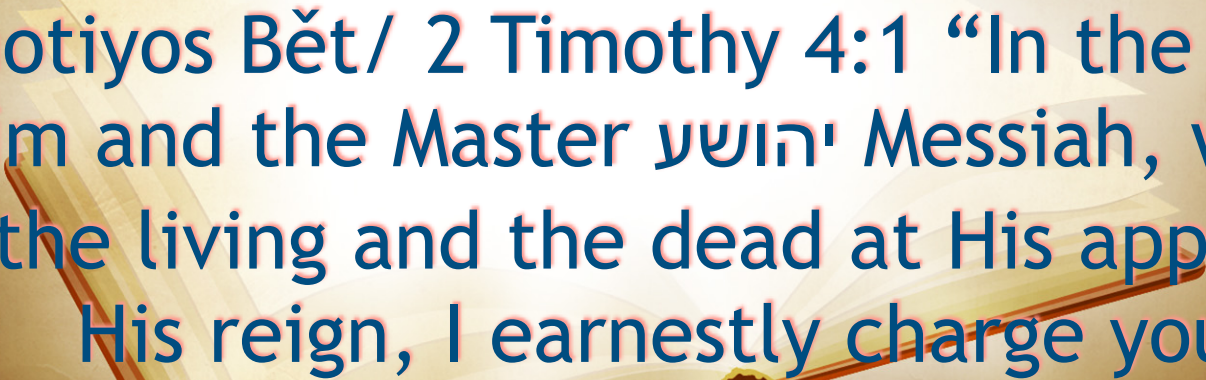


The Greek word that is used here, in Ma'asei/Acts 6:4, for 'serving' is διακονία diakonia - Strong's G1248 which means, 'service, ministry, mission, support, relief', which comes from the word διάκονος diakonos - Strong's G1249 which means, 'a servant, minister, deacon, waiter'.

The appointing of responsible leaders is vital in the Body of Messiah, for the body needs to be properly ruled without partiality or danger of bribery and corruption!

This portion, like all others, points us directly to יהושע who has been appointed judge and ruler over us:

Timotiyos Bět/ 2 Timothy 4:1 “In the sight of Elohim and the Master יהושע Messiah, who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His reign, I earnestly charge you”



Kěpha Aleph/ 1 Peter 4:1-5 “Therefore, since Messiah suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so that he no longer lives the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but according to the desire of Elohim. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the desire of the gentiles, having walked in indecencies, lusts, drunkenness, orgies, wild parties, and abominable idolatries, 4 in which they are surprised that you do not run with them in the same flood of loose behaviour, blaspheming, 5 who shall give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

The judges, or governors, were the decision makers, and were the ones who would make legal right-rulings, and the officers were the ones who were in charge of the record keeping and would be the ones who would make any search for precedents and regulations that pertained to specific situations etc.

In other words, they were the ones who were well versed in all aspects of the Torah and, together with the judges, would be able to make the correct right-rulings according to what has been written!

The gates of a city were more than just entrance and exit points - it was the place where the judges and officers would sit and rightly rule the people.

By appointing judges and officers at the gates of a city, was also a means to protect the city against the infiltration of any criminal activity, just like a shepherd would guard the entrance to the sheepfold and protect his sheep from any wolves or thieves from coming in.

The judges and officials were to be appointed from within the gates, meaning that they were to be appointed from among the people and were not to be foreigners!

The way that these judges and officers were to judge the people, was with righteous right-ruling, with no distortion or partiality!!!

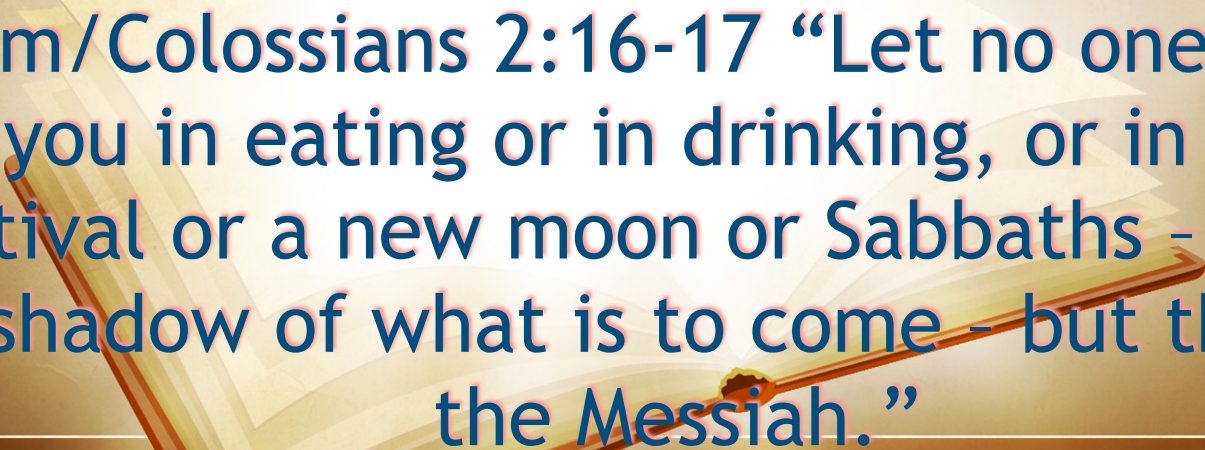
The manner in which they were to rule, was to be according to the Word of Elohim.

This is exactly how Messiah will rightly rule - according to the written Word and therefore, there is no excuse for any to not know - He will not make up rules as He goes along - He will rightly rule and show no partiality!


Debarim/Deuteronomy 1:17 “Do not show partiality in right-ruling, hear the small as well as the great. Do not be afraid of anyone’s face, for the right-ruling belongs to Elohim. And the case which is too hard for you, bring it to me, and I shall hear it.”

Today, we find that many claim the ‘do not judge’ clause, while they are clearly lacking in their understanding of the Torah, when, from Scripture, we see clearly that we are to ‘judge’ righteously!

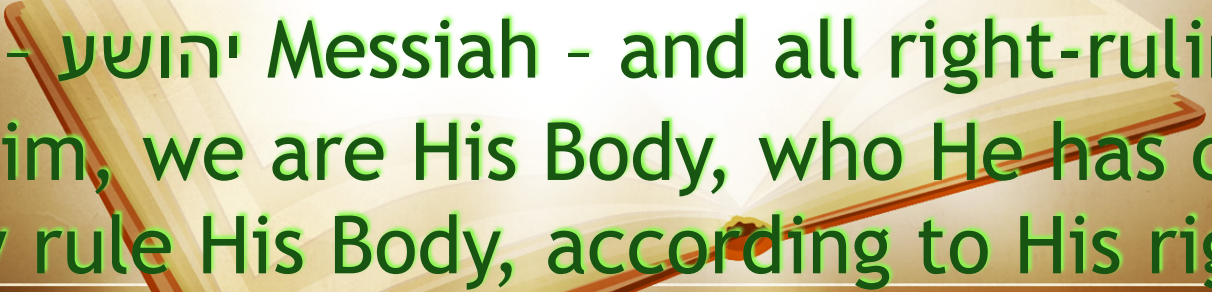
Qolasim/Colossians 2:16-17 “Let no one therefore judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths - 17 which are a shadow of what is to come - but the Body of the Messiah.”



This verse, which is often misinterpreted and misunderstood, by those who do not understand the Torah, is actually telling us, the Body of Messiah, to not let outsiders (those not walking in the Covenant) judge us, however, we are to judge each other in the Body, according to the righteous right-ruling and standards of the Torah and hold each other accountable, to uphold the righteous standards of righteous living!




While we hold each other accountable, we do this by showing each other our sins/lawlessness, so that we can realign our walk to be pure and righteous in Messiah, we certainly do not 'pass sentence' on each other, for while there is One Judge - יהושע Messiah - and all right-ruling belongs to Him, we are His Body, who He has called to rightly rule His Body, according to His right-ruling!



We are told to not be afraid of anyone's face - for it is Elohim's right-ruling!

So many today try to make a person feel guilty for simply 'judging righteously' and here, we are told clearly to not be afraid to 'judge righteously': according to His right-ruling - for it is His and not ours and when we simply obey and follow His right-ruling and standards, we need not be afraid of anyone's reactions to our diligent obedience at rightly ruling all matters.



This is something that needs to be restored within the body today, as far too many are 'doing their own thing' and when confronted, as a result of compromise, they use the feeble excuse that we have no right to judge, when clearly, we do - as long as it is according to the right-ruling of Elohim and that we show no partiality!

It is time for the body to take responsibility and keep each other accountable to walking according to the Truth.

If we are afraid to do so, we may just be dealt severely with by יהוה.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 1:17 “Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not break down before their faces, lest I break you before them.”

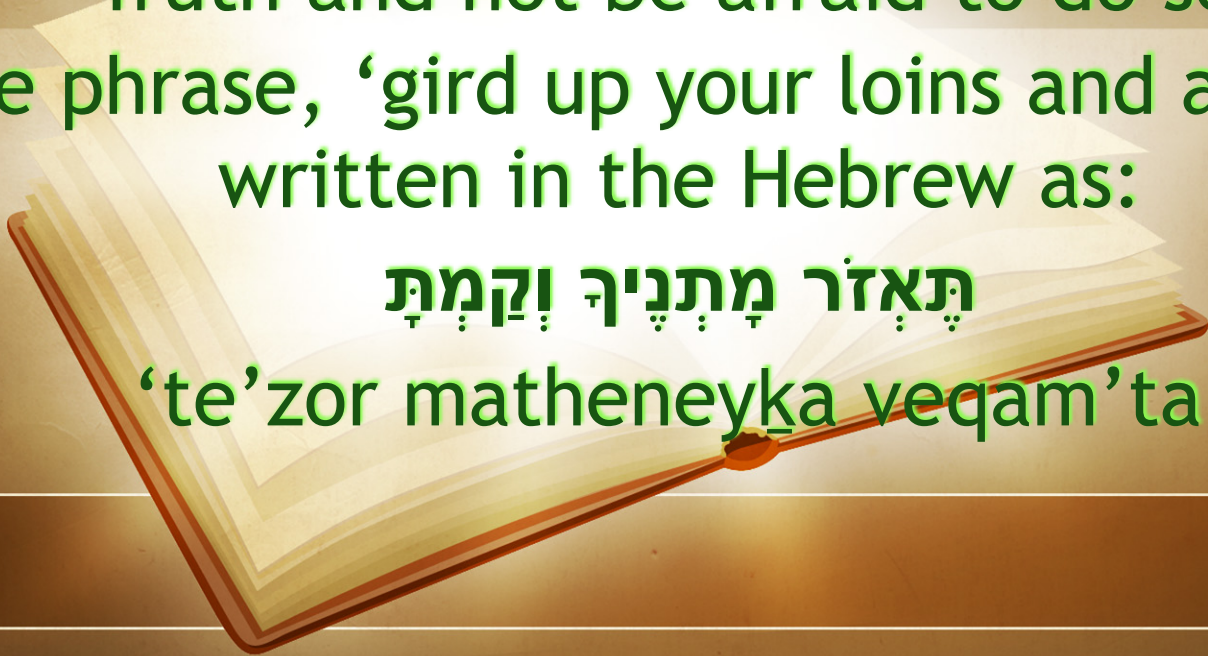
These were the words that יהוה spoke to a young Yirmeyahu and are words that are still alive and applicable to each and every one of us today; to us who are a called out and chosen people who are to be faithful ambassadors of the coming reign of our King!

In these darkened days, where depravity is on the increase, we are to gird up our loins and speak the Truth and not be afraid to do so!

The phrase, 'gird up your loins and arise' is written in the Hebrew as:

תֵּאָזֶר מַתְּנֶיךָ וְקָמְתָּ

'te'zor matheneyka veqam'ta'



This comes from the following root words:

1) אָזַר azar - Strong's H247 which means, 'to gird, encompass, equip, clothe' and is metaphorical of 'strength'!

2) מוֹתֵן mothen - Strong's H4975 which means, 'loins, back, body, heart, hips, waist'.

3) קוּם qum - Strong's H6965 meaning, 'to arise, stand up, stand', and in the tense this is written in, it can render the clear meaning, 'to rise, to become powerful, to stand firm, to be established, endure'.

This instruction given to Yirmeyahu to 'gird up his loins',
meant that he was to 'brace himself for action'!

He would not be able to stand up and be ready for action,
if he had not been properly equipped in the Word!

יהוה had equipped him with His Word and now, he was to
rise up, stand firm and endure, with his loins properly
girded with the Truth!

This call to stand up and be girded with the Truth, is one
we are all to hear and diligently respond to with great
faith and not get discouraged by circumstances that may
seem unbearable or unfavourable!

I want to encourage you all to hear these faith equipping words of our Master and Elohim and be bold ambassadors, who obey the instructions of Elohim and are not afraid to speak the Truth, boldly, in His Name!

As I consider this action, of girding up one's loins and standing up for the Truth, I am certainly reminded of the image of the Armour of Elohim that we are to be dressed in, in order for us to properly stand and continue to stand, having girded our waist with Truth!

Standing armed, with the belt of Truth, is a militaristic type picture of one being a faithful soldier of Messiah, being dressed in righteousness and guarding His commands spotlessly, and able to judge righteously!