



One new person

Parashat b'chuqotai (33) – According to My rules/statutes

Torah: Wayyiqra 26:3 to 27:28

Haftarah: Yirmeyahu 16:19 to 17:14

Apostolic Scriptures: Yohanan 14:15-21; 15:10-14

Last week we analysed two words that should be part of our way of life at all times: *`emunah* and *bitachon*. The first word, *`emunah*, is the absolute conviction that YAH exists, that He is the only Creator-Elohim. This is confirmed by one of Yeshua's most important ancestors:

Mizmor 9 ¹⁰And those who **know** Your Name **trust** in You, For You have not forsaken those who seek You, **יהוה**. [emphasis added]

The word *Dawid* uses here for 'trust' is **יִבְטַחְוּ** (*yiv-te-Chu*), a conjugation of the verb **בָּטַח** (*ba-Tach*), from which we get the noun *bitachon*. We can only put our trust in someone we know and here *Dawid* also uses a familiar word: **יֹדְעִי** (*yod-`Ei*). It is derived from the word **יָדַע** (*ya-Da*), to know. Note that this does not mean to know about someone, but to have an intimate, even physical, relationship. Although the word appears three times before in Scripture, we see it here in a similar context as we should have with YAH:

Berēshith 4 ¹And *Adam* knew **יָדַע** *Hawwah* his wife, and she conceived and bore *Qayin*, and said, "I have gained a man, **יהוה**."

Notice that *Adam* did not speak to *Hawwah*, much less did he only hold her hand or kiss her. He had a physical intimate relationship with her, similar to what YAH expects us to have with Him. Of course, there is no physical involvement between man and YAH, but it is about knowing who YAH is, what His likes and dislikes are, complete information on how to please Him in all things. When we know YAH on this level, through *`emunah* and studying and following all of His rules, we can apply the *bitachon* to know that He will take care of us in all things, just as the end of the verse teaches us: "For You have not forsaken those who seek You, O **יהוה**." This is the blessing that the prophet *Yirmeyahu* teaches us (cf. *Mizmor 1*; *Mattithyahu 5*, both in their entirety):

Yirmeyahu 17 ⁷"**Blessed** is the man who **trusts** **יִבְטַח** – *yivtach*] in **יהוה**, and whose trust **מִבְטַח** – *mivtach*] is **יהוה**. [emphasis added]

Both words are inflections of *batach* and indicate *bitachon*. The benefit that *bitachon* holds for everyone is **בָּרַךְ** (*ba-Ruch*), derived from **בָּרַךְ** (*ba-Rak*), which literally translates as "to bless", also "to kneel". So we see here that YAH by implication kneels before the man who trusts Him in everything; He pays attention to every person who places his full trust in Him (cf. *Debarim 11:27*; *28:2-8*; *Mizmor 133:3*)!

These are the types of blessings promised to the nation when they enter the promised land, provided they walk in YAH's rules and keep His commandments and do them. He confirms the promise we've just studied in *parashat b'har*, during every *sh'mitah* and *yovel*:

Wayyiqra 26⁵ 'And your threshing shall last till the time of the grape harvest, and the grape harvest shall last till the time of sowing. And you shall eat your bread until you have enough, and shall dwell in your land safely.

We are looking here about economic prosperity, something that each of us desires. Unfortunately, some people think that economic prosperity comes only through hard work, but that is not all there is to it. Economic prosperity does not come from giving our tithes, much less by trusting in YAH's promises by confessing them daily with our mouths, although that may be part of it. Nor does it come from giving charity to needy institutions, although these may produce other blessings. No, economic prosperity only follows obedience to YAH's rules, by hearing, listening, and doing every rule He has put in place, without exception.

The principles that YAH put in place for the promised land are still valid today and compare very well to the blessings that would apply in *gan `Eden* (cf. *Berēshith* 1:26, 28, 29; 2:8; 3:8). YAH intended that each year would be prosperous, with a harvest that would bring in enough produce to provide for the following years. The nation would be blessed spiritually, physically, and emotionally if they honoured YAH and followed His rules. Those rules included the *sh'mitah* and *yovel*. However, this was neglected by many and even in the present day it is not applied everywhere, and certainly not in the right way.

One of the most important aspects for the human body is to get enough rest during a 24-hour period, a good night's sleep. This can only happen in a time when peace prevails, when there is no worry of criminals breaking in, stealing and killing, and this is once again well stated by the best poet:

Mizmor 4 8 I lie down in peace altogether, and sleep; For You alone, O יהוה, make me dwell in safety.

In his letter to the Romans, *Paul* teaches us something similar:

Romiyim 8¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The promise that YAH gives the nation here is valid for any person who walks on the Way of Truth in full obedience. He instituted sleep so that organs have time to rest and perform their functions as originally intended, so that the morning can be tackled with zeal for the day's task ahead. Regardless of circumstances in our cities and even on farms, people can still go to sleep in peace when they live in the will of YAH and know that He already knows the end from the beginning. Even if the body is destroyed by evildoers, the soul of a *Torah*-obedient person will be resurrected to live forever in a glorified body.

Other promises we encounter here, some that we experience and see happening regularly, are prosperity and victory in warfare, as well as fruitfulness of both the nation and their crops. YAH brought the people out of *Mitsrayim* and gave them a new status. Instead of walking with bowed heads under the yoke of slavery, He set them free to walk with their heads held high; they moved from a state of contempt to a state of self-respect. The worst part of a slave is his mental state. A person with low self-esteem, low self-respect, will always be a slave to someone else, no matter what kind of freedom he may enjoy. The way YAH deals with the nation is to teach them to let go of that slave mentality and to teach them to see themselves in a different light. Lack of identity, even a false identity, is one of the biggest problems for unusual and illegal behaviour. YAH desires the same for each of us on the Way of Truth, therefore we learn from *Shelomoh*:

Mishlê 23 ⁷For as he reckons in his life, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, But his heart is not with you.

We therefore need to get rid of any form of self-blame, a poor self-image and to direct ourselves in every way as YAH wants us to live. We can only do this if we know His Character and Authority, follow His rules and forget what is behind us. *Dawid* confirms this:

Mizmor 24 ³Who does go up into the mountain of יהוה? And who does stand in His set-apart place?
⁴He who has innocent hands and a clean heart, Who did not bring his life to naught, And did not swear deceitfully.

As part of a chosen people, part of the priesthood according to the order of *Malkitsedeq* (cf. *Kěpha Aleph* 2:9-10) it is also our duty to inform our brother, who rejects *Yeshua*, about the truth of *Yeshua*'s first coming. While we can learn much from some of the ancient sages, it is also essential that we will not imitate our brother, *Yehudah*, in any way, but also to let our light shine so that we can be a living witness to him. The same goes for christianity, from which most of us were fortunate to escape.

We must never display any form of superiority or haughtiness towards our fellow believers or other groups. We must also never allow the limited knowledge we have to create the impression that we know everything or have the answers to everything. We know in part (cf. *Qorintiyim Aleph* 13:9; *Mattithyahu* 27:11) and will only be perfected after the return of *Yeshua*:

Qorintiyim Aleph 13 ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know, as I also have been known. [emphasis added]

Once again we see the word *yodeia*, to know, a declension of *yada*, in which there is a play on words. The first 'know' is the little we learn from *TaNaKh*, *Yeshua*'s ministry and through our spiritual growth. The second 'know' is how YAH knows us fully, where we will know Him פנים אל פנים, face to face, and be fully equipped. Until then, we must bid farewell to the slave mentality and serve YAH according to how we understand His rules and guidelines, as He teaches us:

Wayyiqra 26 ^{13c}And I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk upright.

Unfortunately, there are also five warnings to take note of should we not follow the rules:

- ☞ Sudden panic, wasting disease and fever that consumes the eyes and saps life; seed will be sown in vain, for the enemy will eat it; enemies will defeat them and those who hate them will rule over them; they will flee while no one pursues them.
- ☞ Resistance to YAH's rules brings an increased (sevenfold) punishment: no rain and barren land.
- ☞ Further resistance once again increases the punishments that follow: wild animals will steal children, exterminate livestock, and make roads deserted.
- ☞ Again the punishment is aggravated: plague among people and the enemy taking over everything; food and resources will be severely reduced, which also brings unemployment.
- ☞ Ultimately, people will eat their own children¹ (cf. *Melakim Aleph* 6:24-29; *Ėkah* 4:10); cities will become ruins, the land will be devastated and the people will be scattered among other nations.

It is ironic how the rest of nature obeys YAH while man acts extremely rebelliously:

Yirmeyahu 8 ⁷"Even a stork in the heavens knows her appointed times. And a turtledove, and a swallow, and a thrush guard the time of their coming. But My people do not know the right-ruling of יהוה.

1 Josephus, *WARS of the Jews*, book vii., chap. ii

History has taught us that many of these things have already fallen into place and the people of *Yisra'el* have been scattered, while the land has almost been destroyed. The prophet *Dani'el* teaches us that the house of *Yehudah* (*Y'hudim*) fulfilled their repentance and conversion when a portion returned from the exile in *Babel*. However, there is no evidence that the house of *Yisra'el* (*Ephrayim*) ever repented or returned, until now (cf. *Dani'el* 9 in its entirety).

However, we must also view these punishments on a spiritual level and understand that only *Torah* believers will undergo any form of discipline. *YAH* does not punish other nations, because they are not part of the covenant. He does use them to carry out His judgements. The whole world is in chaos and everything is caused by the fall of man. Man inherently has no desire to obey *YAH*, so He must sometimes apply strict measures when people profess to follow Him and do not keep the rules.

YAH's covenant remains in place and can never be nullified by the apostasy of the nation (cf. *Romiyim* 11:27; 29). The original people of *Yisra'el* are currently scattered throughout the earth. Very few of the original people live in the land that was given to them at that time and only a handful of these people live according to the rules that *YAH* has laid down. Some of those have also rejected the Messiah. Without knowledge of the principles of the Messiah, they are lost. They do not understand what salvation is about and what is needed to make the land flourish. The rules that *YAH* established for our ancestors remain in force; this also includes the right to return. Warnings that we referred to earlier are also still in place. As *Yeshua* fulfilled *Torah*, the ten Words given at *Sinai*, we have the opportunity to choose life. The assured expectation of *Yisra'el* rests entirely on everyone falling into *YAH's* plan of salvation and is mainly about the observance of *Shabbat*:

Wayyiqra 26⁴⁰ 'But if they confess their crookedness and the crookedness of their fathers, with their trespass in which they trespassed against Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,⁴¹ and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies – if their uncircumcised heart is then humbled, and they accept the punishment of their crookedness,⁴² then I shall remember My covenant with *Ya'aqob*, and also My covenant with *Yitshaq*, and also remember My covenant with *Abraham*, and remember the land.⁴³ 'For the land was abandoned by them, and enjoying its Sabbaths while lying waste without them, and they were paying for their crookedness, because they rejected My right-rulings and because their being loathed My laws.

Shabbat is the sign of the covenant that *YAH* gave to the nation of *Yisra'el* at *Sinai*. Just as the enemy will give a mark to his followers, perhaps already has (cf. *Hazon* 13:17), *YAH* has given the sign of His covenant to every *Torah* believer:

Shemoth 31¹³ "And you, speak to the children of *Yisra'el*, saying, 'My Sabbaths you are to guard, by all means, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, to know that I, *יהוה*, am setting you apart.

This sign should not only be revered, but it should be like frontlets between our eyes and as a sign on our hands (cf. *Debarim* 6:8 et al) so that everyone who encounters us will realise that we are set apart. It is for this reason that not only the weekly *Shabbat*, but also the *sh'mitah* and *yovel* must be recognised, honoured, and observed. *Yeshua* is the master of the *Shabbat* (cf. *Mattithyahu* 12:8; *Luqas* 6:5), so that we learn from his words:

Yohanan 14¹⁵ "If you love Me, you shall guard My commands.

We should not carry out *YAH's* commands to prove that we love Him and follow *Yeshua*; no, we carry out the commands precisely because we love *YAH* and follow *Yeshua* in everything. This is something that happens automatically, like the love that *YAH* places in our spirit towards our spouses, children, parents and

others. Therefore, the punishments we have just learned about are radical, because they are once again promises that *YAH* gives us, promises of blessings and curses.

To some extent, we can almost think of *YAH* as a parent, because of the scriptures we have just discussed. A parent has a special relationship with a child. There is a strong bond of love, but sometimes this love must be expressed in the form of restrictions or discipline (*cf. Mizmor 39:11; Mishlë 13:18; 15:10, 31; 23:13-14 et al*). The parent has good insight into helping the child through life to achieve happiness and success. A parent will do everything in the struggle to give the child the best education, even in the midst of differences with what the child may desire. This is where we see *YAH* as a loving parent, full of compassion and selfless love, while He allows events to happen in our lives that are best for us, with the sole purpose of directing us spiritually. However, as children who think we know better, we sometimes do not always experience it that way. When we now come to the last chapter of *Wayyiqra*, we can consider it as the promises we must make to *YAH*. These are by no means commands from *YAH*, but are derivable from our quote above from *Yochanan*; someone who really loves *YAH* wants to make promises to Him. However, we must be sure that it is within our capabilities and here we can learn how to fulfil our promises to *YAH*. We can almost ask ourselves the question: "What can I sacrifice to *YAH* for all the benefits I receive from Him?"

The soul of man cannot be bought for any money in the world. However, it was part of the rule that any person who made a vow, for any reason, offered himself or herself to *YAH*. Since human sacrifices were not acceptable, an amount had to be paid with which the tabernacle, later the temple, would be maintained. The value of a man's soul is and remains non-negotiable in any case²:

Mizmor 49 ⁷A brother does not redeem anyone at all, Neither give to *Elohim* a ransom for him; ⁸For the redemption of their lives is costly, And it shall cease forever;

Here we see a symbolic price that *Torah* places on the soul of a person, so that the monetary value will represent the soul of a person. The value determined here has nothing to do with the price for which a slave would be sold. This is something that is determined by *Torah* according to gender and age. We must also note that no person would be worth more or less, much less that a man is worth more than a woman; in *YAH's* eyes, everyone is equally valuable.

In order to determine the value of a soul, it is done in accordance with the ability to perform service and acquire material possessions. Those with more physical strength have greater abilities through physical, manual labour. Therefore, a man between 20 and 60 years old pays more than others. A woman of the same age does not necessarily have the same physical strength, therefore less is expected of her, so that she will not be inferior to the man. *Torah* accepts the offerings in accordance with the abilities of each person:

Qorintiyim Bët 8 ¹²For if the readiness is present, it is well received according to what one has, not according to what he does not have –

We also learn from this *aliyah* that a poor person is considered the same as a rich person. However, there is provision for someone who is truly too poor to contribute the full value (27:8), whereby it will be counted as the full contribution. We also learn from these contributions that every person who, of their own free will, sacrifices himself or herself for *YAH's* Kingdom, not only helps to maintain it here on earth, but also in heaven. We can refer here again to *Ruth* 4:7-11 where *Bo'az* acts as a redeemer in the place of the initial redeemer who was not willing to marry *Ruth*. Here *Bo'az* is the shadow image of *Yeshua*, our perfect redeemer. Ironically, the high priest at the time determined that *Yeshua's* life was worth only thirty pieces of silver, but did not place it in the treasury of the temple. The cost of our redemption and also of all humanity, is incalculable (*cf. Mattithyahu 26:15; 27:1-10; Yirmeyahu 32:6-9; Zeqaryah 11:12-13*).

2 In some translations these are vv. 8 and 9.

We notice another difference in the original text at v. 16 when we check it in the translations:

וְאִם מִשְׁנֵה אֲחֻזָּתוֹ יִקְדִּישׁ אִישׁ לַיהוָה וְהָיָה עֶרְכָּן לְפִי זֶרְעוֹ זֶרַע חֲמֵר שְׁעָרִים
בְּחֻמְשֵׁים שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף Wayyiqra 27¹⁶

The transliteration and translation of the highlighted text will read: *ve-im* [and if/when] *mi-se-Deh* [of land/land] *a-chu-za-To* [of his property] *yaq-Dish* [separate] *ish* [(a) man] *l'יהוה* [to יהוה]

Compare this with the translation:

Wayyiqra 27¹⁶ 'And if a man sets apart to יהוה a field he owns, then your evaluation shall be according to the seed for it – a homer of barley seed at fifty sheqels of silver.

We notice the word, *achuzah*, property/possession, which we briefly looked at in our previous study, but we also see the word *misedeh*, which is translated as “of [his] land.” Some translations have the words “part of [a field]” inserted by translators, for the simple reason that the land already belongs to YAH and that this person who wants to set something apart cannot set apart the entire field. He must at least have something on which he can sow and reap, or keep livestock. This teaches an unwritten rule that YAH will not allow the entire piece of land to be set apart³.

More important, however, is the relationship we note here between the *yovel* and the temple. The value of a set-apart plot of land is determined by the amount of barley seed that would be needed if it were to be sown. A *homer* of barley seed is about 246 liters and was worth 50 *sheqels*. The size of a plot of land to sow one *homer* works out to be about 75,000 square cubits, or about 1.77 hectares. The price of each *homer* depends on the number of years until the next *yovel*. The price of 50 *sheqels* would be payable on the first year of the countdown to the next *yovel*. Each year it would decrease by one *sheqel*. The maximum redemption price would therefore be 50 *sheqels* for each *homer* for the plot of land in question.

King *Dawid* acted wrongly by taking a census to determine the strength of his army and in order to avert a plague, YAH sent the seer, *Gad*, to tell *Dawid* to build an altar. *Dawid* negotiated with *Arawnah* to buy his threshing floor for the sum of 50 *sheqels* (cf. *Shemu'el Bêt* 24:18-25). This is the same amount as one *homer* of barley seed in relation to the *yovel*. The threshing floor is also the place where both temples would later be built and from there we get a connection between the temple and the *yovel*.

The amount of 50 *sheqels* is the ransom money for a man between 20 and 60, a piece of land, the temple, the *yovel* and also for a young girl or virgin (cf. *Debarim* 22:29). Everything points to *Yeshua*'s second coming, because he was between 20 and 60 when he completed his first task that YAH gave him. When he returns, the land will be restored, the temple will be built, the *yovel* will be celebrated and he will come for his bride!

In the following *aliyah* we share similar rules, but there is a clear command that nothing dedicated to YAH can be bought back or redeemed in any way:

Wayyiqra 27²⁸ 'However, whatever a man lays under ban for יהוה of all that he has, man and beast, or the field of his possession, is not sold or redeemed. Whatever is laid under ban is most set-apart to יהוה.

We see the word חֵרֵם (*Che-rem*) in several places in Scripture and it has different meanings, linked to the context in which it is used. In both vv. 21 and 28, as well as in *Bemidbar* 18:14 it should be understood as something dedicated or set apart to YAH. In *Debarim* 7:26 it is translated as “something that is banned”,

3 This opinion is supported by Bishop Patrick and Adam Clarke.

while in *Deḇarim* 13:17 we read it as “something that is cursed”. In two places, *Yehoshua* 6:17 and *Mal’aki* 4:6⁴ it indicates destruction, while in *Ezra* 10:8 it is seen as “something that is forfeited”, “something that is banned” and then we see it in *Yeḥezqēl* 44:29 as something dedicated to YAH.

In the text we are discussing, *cherem* means much more than just being dedicated or set apart. When we *cherem* something to YAH, it can and may never be bought back, not even exchanged for something of equal value. The word is derived from the root word **חָרַם** (*cha-Ram*), which translates as ‘banned’; it is even forbidden for any other use. This is where we must scour our homes for any objects that may not be to the honour of YAH, things like music, movies, magazines, pictures, jewelry, and anything else that is related to idolatry. All of that stuff should be thrown away or burned, it should not even be given to anyone else. Keep in mind what we teach (refer above):

Deḇarim 7²⁶ “And do not bring an abomination into your house, lest you be accursed like it. Utterly loathe it and utterly hate it, for it is accursed.

This set of rules that *Mosheh* receives at *Sinai* concludes with our tithes being dedicated to YAH, just as we saw at the beginning with the contributions brought for the construction of the *mishkan*. There is a difference between a tithe and any other offering. Some people tend to confuse the two, but that is not what YAH came to teach us. When we walk the Way of Truth, YAH provides for us to live in abundance in various ways. From that abundance, one tithe is dedicated to him and it is non-negotiable:

Wayyiqra 27³² “And the entire tithe of the herd and of the flock, all that passes under the rod, the tenth one is set-apart to יהוה.

We may not own cattle and sheep, but the salary or pension at the end of the month, the income earned by work performed for clients or from any other source, is only possible through the favour of YAH. *Shelomoh* was not only the smartest man on earth, but also one of the wealthiest and he teaches us:

Mishlē 3⁹ Esteem יהוה with your goods, And with the first-fruits of all your increase; ¹⁰ Then your storehouses shall be filled with plenty, And your vats overflow with new wine.

Some of us have a container of some kind in which we regularly, usually before the start of *Shabbat*, place financial contributions, our tithes and perhaps other offerings. In our household we speak of the *tzedakah* container, although **צִדְקָה** (*tze-da-Qah*) literally translates as ‘sincerity’ or ‘servitude’. These funds are also supplemented by people attending YAH’s set-apart festivals and *Shabbat* and are therefore used for that purpose as well. There are instances where those in need are helped and we allow Ruach to guide us on the correct use of these funds. In times of need we may even apply those funds to ourselves, i.e. borrow from them, but we must replace these funds with an extra 20% – one fifth:

Wayyiqra 27³¹ “If a man indeed redeems any of his tithes, he adds one-fifth to it.

While these funds were once given to the priests to maintain the tabernacle and the temple, we need to seriously consider how to use those funds today. The leadership of most churches and other groups is as corrupt as the government and cannot be trusted. We learn from Scripture that we should examine the fruit of teachers and find out what their real motives are (*cf. Wayyiqra* 1:10-11; *Yeḥezqēl* 44:23-24 *et al*). There are at least three fundamental principles according to which teachers must act:

- 🏆 They must proclaim YAH’s moral values and be able to distinguish between what is clean and unclean;
- 🏆 *Shabbat* must be respected and observed by the teachers;

4 This is *Mal’aki* 3:24 in some translations.

🥂 All set apart festivals must be observed and honoured, including the announcement of the new moon and special *Shabbatot*.

In short, today's teachers must teach exactly what *Mosheh* was taught at *Sinai* and passed on to the nation; they must do as *Yeshua* did, who literally fulfilled those words during his ministry on earth. Accused by the Pharisees of heresy, he rebuked them very firmly:

Yohanan 5 ⁴⁵“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: *Mosheh*, in whom you have set your expectation. ⁴⁶“For if you believed *Mosheh*, you would have believed Me, since he wrote about Me.

Just as we were warned to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (*cf. Mattithyahu* 16:6), we must be wary of practices and institutions that profess to preach *YAH's* Word, but are actually more of a circus than anything else. Draw near to *YAH* in spirit and truth so that He can teach you how to use your tithe to honour Him and help build the Kingdom. This only becomes possible when we fully walk in the footsteps of *Yeshua* and heed the words that *Sha'ul* also taught his congregation in *Ephesos*, that we can live as a new man to the honour of *YAH*:

Eph'siyim 2 ¹⁵having abolished in His flesh the enmity – the *torah* of the commands in dogma – so as to create in Himself one renewed man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and to completely restore to favour both of them unto *Elohim* in one body through the stake, having destroyed the enmity by it.

Shabbat shalom!

As is customary, at the end of a book from *Torah*, we all say the following word aloud in unison:

חֲזַק! חֲזַק! וְנִתְחַזֵּק!

This is in the original “*Chazak! Chazak! Venitchazek!*” and translates as: Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!

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Sources:

We prefer to not use the word ‘God’, because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by ‘*Elohim*’ or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009, unless indicated differently.⁵

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

⁵ <https://isr-messianic.org/>

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Faithlife Study Bible

Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

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