

Bible Readings and Commentaries

Book 4 of 6

**Fourth Half-Year of Triennial Torah Cycle
For Sabbath Service**

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Vayim Tzevach Shalamim Karbani / If a Feast Peace-Offering

Leviticus 3:1-17 Ezekiel 20:40-44, 41:10-11 Psalm 71 Revelation 8:1-13

Commentary Y2-26

Tishrei 1, 5763 / Sept 7, 2002

Elul 27, 5765 / Oct 1, 2005

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ 'Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before Yahweh. ² 'He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar. ³ 'From the sacrifice of the peace offerings he shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ⁵ 'Then Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the elevation offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁶ 'But if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh is from the flock, he shall offer it, male or female, without defect. ⁷ 'If he is going to offer a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before Yahweh, ⁸ and he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it before the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ⁹ 'From the sacrifice of peace offerings he shall bring as an offering by fire to Yahweh, its fat, the entire fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁰ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ¹¹ 'Then the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire to Yahweh.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹² 'Moreover, if his offering is a goat, then he shall offer it before Yahweh, ¹³ and he shall lay his hand on its head and slay it before the tent of meeting, and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ¹⁴ 'From it he shall present his offering as an offering by fire to Yahweh, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁵ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ¹⁶ 'The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire for a soothing aroma; all fat is Yahweh's. ¹⁷ 'It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.'"

Ezekiel 20:41

*Reader 4** Amen. ⁴⁰ "For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares Lord Yahweh, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. ⁴¹ "As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴² "And you will know that I am Yahweh, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. ⁴³ "There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done. ⁴⁴ "Then you will know that I am Yahweh when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares Lord Yahweh.'"

Ezekiel 44:10-11

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹⁰ "But the Levites who went far from Me when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. ¹¹ "Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the elevation offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them.

Psalm 71

(To be sung.) ¹ In You, O Yahweh, I have taken refuge; let me never be ashamed. ² In Your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline Your ear to me and save me. ³ Be to me a rock of habitation to which I may continually come; You have given commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress. ⁴ Rescue me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the grasp of the wrongdoer and ruthless man, ⁵ For You are my hope; O Lord Yahweh, You are my confidence from my youth. ⁶ By You I have been sustained from my birth; You are He who took me from my mother's womb; my praise is continually of You. ⁷ I have become a marvel to many, for You are my strong refuge. ⁸ My mouth is filled with Your praise and with Your glory all day long. ⁹ Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength fails. ¹⁰ For my enemies have spoken against me; and those who watch for my life have consulted together, ¹¹ Saying, "God has forsaken him; pursue and seize him, for there is no one to deliver." ¹² O God, do not be far from me; O my God, hasten to my help! ¹³ Let those who are adversaries of my soul be ashamed and consumed; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor, who seek to injure me. ¹⁴

But as for me, I will hope continually, and will praise You yet more and more. ¹⁵ My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness and of Your salvation all day long; for I do not know the sum of them. ¹⁶ I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Yahweh; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone. ¹⁷ O God, You have taught me from my youth, and I still declare Your wondrous deeds. ¹⁸ And even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come. ¹⁹ For Your righteousness, O God, reaches to the heavens, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You? ²⁰ You who have shown me many troubles and distresses will revive me again, and will bring me up again from the depths of the earth. ²¹ May You increase my greatness and turn to comfort me. ²² I will also praise You with a harp, even Your truth, O my God; to You I will sing praises with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel. ²³ My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to You; and my soul, which You have redeemed. ²⁴ My tongue also will utter Your righteousness all day long; for they are ashamed, for they are humiliated who seek my hurt.

Revelation 8:1-13

Reader 6* Amen. ¹ When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. ⁶ And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

Reader 7* Amen. ⁷ The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. ⁸ The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, ⁹ and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰ The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. ¹¹ The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. ¹² The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. ¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

The Future of Gaza:

Zephaniah 2: ¹ Gather yourselves together, yes, gather, O nation without shame, ² before the decree takes effect-- the day passes like the chaff-- before the burning anger of Yahweh comes upon you, before the day of Yahweh's anger comes upon you. ³ Seek Yahweh, all you humble of the earth who have carried out His ordinances; seek righteousness, seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden In the day of Yahweh's anger. ⁴ For Gaza will be abandoned and Ashkelon a desolation; Ashdod will be driven out at noon and Ekron will be uprooted. ⁵ Woe to the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of Yahweh is against you, O Canaan, land of the Philistines; and I will destroy you so that there will be no inhabitant. ⁶ So the seacoast will be pastures, With caves for shepherds and folds for flocks. ⁷ And the coast will be for the remnant of the house of Judah, they will pasture on it. In the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down at evening; For Yahweh their God will care for them and restore their fortune. ⁸ "I have heard the taunting of Moab and the revilings of the sons of Ammon, with which they have taunted My people and become arrogant against their territory. ⁹ "Therefore, as I live," declares Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, "Surely Moab will be like Sodom and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah-- a place possessed by nettles and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation. The remnant of My people will plunder them and the remainder of My nation will inherit them." ¹⁰ This they will have in return for their pride, because they have taunted and become arrogant against the people of Yahweh of hosts. ¹¹ Yahweh will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth; and all the coastlands of the nations will bow down to Him, everyone from his own place.

Commentary:

Peace offerings are brought to express one's love for God, as recognition of His goodness toward us. The very name, *Shelamim* (peace offering) means peace (*shalom*).

These are voluntary offerings, in contrast to required sin offerings of the next chapter.

(V.1) The first words, *zevach shelamim*, mean feast peace-offering. This is the only offering with which the word *zevach* / feast appears. It was a feast, because the owner would invite his family, friends, and acquaintances to eat it with him, whereupon he would praise God for His graciousness before them.

(V.2) The owner leans on the animal, not to confess sin, but to praise God.

(V.5) The first offering of the day was a lamb that was offered each morning (the continual elevation offering). The peace offering, a lamb or a goat, has its fat, kidneys, diaphragm, and liver placed on the altar beside the daily elevation offering, to be burned with the same fire. *“Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar beside the (daily) elevation offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh.”*

The various Festival offerings are appropriate to the symbolism of each one's Festival. The offering for *Hag Shavuot* / Pentecost – the betrothal feast – is a peace offering, to indicate love for the Groom.

From Ezekiel we learn that, at the future Millennial Temple, the Levites will again slaughter the elevation offerings for the people. God's people will serve Him, they will bring their choice gifts, and they will be accepted as a soothing aroma. They will loathe their past evil deeds, and praise Yahweh Who dealt with them in grace for His own Name's sake. That will be a glorious time!

David says (Psalm 70:15-17, 23), like at a feast peace-offering, *“My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness, and of Your salvation all day long; for I do not know the sum of them. I will come with the mighty deeds of Lord Yahweh; I will make mention of Your righteousness, Yours alone. O God, You have taught me from my youth; and I still declare Your wondrous deeds.”* *“My lips will shout for joy when I sing praises to You; and my soul, which You have redeemed.”*

Today's Apostolic reading is from *The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah*. This title does not mean a book of various revelations about the future, but rather it means that, by the things written therein, people might be able to see Yeshua unveiled – recognize Him for Who He is in the end times.

In chapters 5-8, we see a scroll in the right hand of the Holy, Almighty, Eternal One. This scroll has a page, written on both sides, rolled up and a seal holding it closed. Then a second page, written on both sides, is rolled on top of the first page, with a seal also holding it closed. Seven pages are finally rolled up, on top of another, each one having its own seal. But no one is found who is worthy to break the seals, to read the pages, except the Lamb that was slain (v.5:6-9) – Yeshua.

In today's reading (Ch.8), Yeshua broke the seventh seal, and we learn of the events of the last page.

An angel will approach the Altar with a golden censer having its smoke going up to God – representing the prayers of saints. The angel will then throw the fire from the censer to the earth. Thereupon, seven angels, who stand before God, will consecutively sound seven trumpets. Then we see a future likeness of the Egyptian Passover.

When the first angel sounds his trumpet (v.7), and there is fire and hail mixed with blood falling upon earth. A third of the vegetation will be burned up. Consider what a catastrophe this will be for those on earth! Remember, this is because of the praise and requests of the saints who desire righteousness on earth – and thus it relates to the offerings of Leviticus.

When the second angel sounds his trumpet (v.8), a third of the sea will turn to blood. Will our scientists try to copy this in their labs, like the Pharaoh's magicians did?

When the third angel sounded his trumpet (v.10) –

A little girl was drawing pictures of angels, and they all looked like little girls in dresses. When she was asked why she didn't draw any little boy angels, she said, “I have never seen any little boy angels!”

When he sounds his trumpet, a third of the waters will become bitter – “wormwood” – and many men will die because of the waters. Wormwood is the second most-bitter herb known to man; it is toxic in large doses, and is

used in insecticides. Deuteronomy 29:18 speaks of those who do not turn away from Yahweh to idols, that *“there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood.”*

Interestingly, “Wormwood” in Russian is “Chernoble” – the name of the city where a Russian nuclear reactor that melted down, and is poisoning aquifers over great distances.

When the fourth angel sounded his trumpet (v.12), a third of the sun, moon, and stars were darkened. While the meaning is not clear, it may mean that for a third of the day and a third of the night these will not shine.

Then we hear *“Woe, woe, woe!”* because of the three angels who are about to sound their trumpets.

This tribulation will come upon earth, preceding the Millennial Temple (Ezekiel 40-48) where we will offer peace offerings.

For the Sabbath preceding Yom HaKippurim / the Day of the Atonements.

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘**When a soul sins unintentionally** in any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, ³ **if the anointed priest** sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to Yahweh a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed. ⁴ He shall bring the bull to the doorway of the tent of meeting before Yahweh, and he shall lay his hand on the head of the bull and slay the bull before Yahweh. ⁵ Then the anointed priest is to take some of the blood of the bull and bring it to the tent of meeting, ⁶ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before Yahweh, in front of the veil of the sanctuary. ⁷ The priest shall also put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense which is before Yahweh in the tent of meeting; and all the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁸ He shall remove from it all the fat of the bull of the sin offering: the fat that covers the entrails, and all the fat which is on the entrails, ⁹ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys ¹⁰ (just as it is removed from the ox of the sacrifice of peace offerings), and the priest is to offer them up in smoke on the altar of burnt offering. ¹¹ But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, ¹² that is, all the rest of the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹³ Now **if the whole congregation** of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty; ¹⁴ when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a bull of the herd for a sin offering and bring it before the tent of meeting. ¹⁵ Then the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before Yahweh, and the bull shall be slain before Yahweh. ¹⁶ Then the anointed priest is to bring some of the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting; ¹⁷ and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before Yahweh, in front of the veil.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁸ He shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar which is before Yahweh in the tent of meeting; and all the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering which is at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ¹⁹ He shall remove all its fat from it and offer it up in smoke on the altar. ²⁰ He shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven. ²¹ Then he is to bring out the bull to a place outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull; it is the sin offering for the assembly.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²² **When a leader sins and unintentionally** does any one of all the things which Yahweh his God has commanded not to be done, and he becomes guilty, ²³ if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a male without defect. ²⁴ He shall lay his hand on the head of the male goat and slay it in the place where they slay the burnt offering before Yahweh; it is a sin offering. ²⁵ Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering. ²⁶ All its fat he shall offer up in smoke on the altar as in the case of the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin, and he will be forgiven.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁷ Now **if anyone of the common people sins unintentionally** in doing any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, and becomes guilty, ²⁸ if his sin which he has committed is made known to him, then he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without defect, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹ He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. ³⁰ The priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering; and all the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. ³¹ Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat was removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar for a soothing aroma to Yahweh. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

*Reader 7** Amen. ³² But if he brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering, he shall bring it, a female without defect. ³³ He shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slay it for a sin offering in the place where they slay the burnt offering. ³⁴ The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and all the rest of its blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar. ³⁵ Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offerings, and the priest

shall offer them up in smoke on the altar, on the offerings by fire to Yahweh. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him in regard to his sin which he has committed, and he will be forgiven.' ”

Ezekiel 18:4-17

*Reader 8** Amen. ⁴ "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. **The soul who sins will die.** ⁵ "But if a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness, ⁶ and does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period-- ⁷ if a man does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, ⁸ if he does not lend money on interest or take increase, if he keeps his hand from iniquity and executes true justice between man and man, ⁹ if he walks in My statutes and My ordinances so as to deal faithfully-- he is righteous and will surely live," declares Lord Yahweh.

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹⁰ "Then he may have a violent son who sheds blood and who does any of these things to a brother ¹¹ (though he himself did not do any of these things), that is, he even eats at the mountain shrines, and defiles his neighbor's wife, ¹² oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore a pledge, but lifts up his eyes to the idols and commits abomination, ¹³ he lends money on interest and takes increase; will he live? He will not live! He has committed all these abominations, he will surely be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹⁴ "Now behold, he has a son who has observed all his father's sins which he committed, and observing does not do likewise. ¹⁵ "He does not eat at the mountain shrines or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, or defile his neighbor's wife, ¹⁶ or oppress anyone, or retain a pledge, or commit robbery, but he gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing, ¹⁷ he keeps his hand from the poor, does not take interest or increase, but executes My ordinances, and walks in My statutes; he will not die for his father's iniquity, he will surely live.

Psalm 72 *(To be sung.) A Psalm for Solomon.*

¹ Give the king Your judgments, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's son. ² May he judge Your people with righteousness and Your afflicted with justice. ³ Let the mountains bring peace to the people, and the hills, in righteousness. ⁴ May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, save the children of the needy and crush the oppressor. ⁵ Let them fear You while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. ⁶ May he come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. ⁷ In his days may the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon is no more. ⁸ May he also rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ⁹ Let the nomads of the desert bow before him, and his enemies lick the dust. ¹⁰ Let the kings of Tarshish and of the islands bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. ¹¹ And let all kings bow down before him, all nations serve him. ¹² For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, the afflicted also, and him who has no helper. ¹³ He will have compassion on the poor and needy, and the lives of the needy he will save. ¹⁴ He will rescue their life from oppression and violence, and their blood will be precious in his sight; ¹⁵ So may he live, and may the gold of Sheba be given to him; and let them pray for him continually; let them bless him all day long. ¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in the earth on top of the mountains; its fruit will wave like the cedars of Lebanon; and may those from the city flourish like vegetation of the earth. ¹⁷ May his name endure forever; may his name increase as long as the sun shines; and let men bless themselves by him; let all nations call him blessed. ¹⁸ Blessed be Yahweh God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. ¹⁹ And blessed be His glorious name forever; and may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen. ²⁰ The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

This is the end of the Second Book of Psalms.

2 Peter 3

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹ This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you in which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ² that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles. ³ Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, ⁴ and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶ through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷ But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

*Reader 12** Amen. ⁸ But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

*Reader 13** Amen. ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Commentary: Grow in grace and knowledge of Yeshua!

Children's Lesson

Sin means doing things that are not loving toward God or not loving toward other people. Sin is also failing to do things that we should to show love for God or love toward other people. When we disobey God's instructions to us, we are not showing love for Him or for other people.

When someone else wants us to do something against God's instructions, we should not do that – doing such things is not really showing love for the other person; rather, it is helping their sin, which will bring God's judgment upon everyone who takes part in it.

Parents and government rulers are given to us by God to teach us God's rules. We should obey them, unless we know that they are telling us to go against what God tells us to do.

Sometimes we do wrong things even though we are trying our best to do what is right. We should try to learn through these mistakes so that we don't do them again.

Sometimes we do wrong things because we are not being as careful as we should. It may be fair for our parents to take away some privilege, to help us remember to be more careful next time. When adults made careless mistakes, God required them to bring an expensive animal to the Temple to help them remember to be more careful.

Sometimes we do things intentionally that we know are wrong, just because we feel like it. There is no excuse for this, and we deserve punishment. We should ask forgiveness for doing such things, and make up our minds to change our ways before we get into bigger troubles.

According to Ezekiel, a child will not be judged by God for the sins of his parents – only for his own sin. This is not contradictory to the statement, "visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the

third and fourth generation” (Exodus 34:7), which refers to generations of children following in the ways of their fathers.

One set of my uncles and aunts just celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Their daughter, who is one of my 21 younger cousins, gave this inspiring talk exemplifying how to love your parents.

“Hello. When planning this event, I began to think of the many things parents do for their children. They provide love, care and support and most of all teach us. So I want to share with you some things my parents have taught me.

Things my father taught me:

How to clean a fish
How to catch a football
More importantly, how to unplug and fix a toilet

Dad has shared his love of crossword puzzles and word games with me. You will still find him every morning doing the puzzle in the Vancouver Sun.

Dad always has always had a poem or limerick to quote. He has been known to lie away at night memorizing poetry; Robert Service, Marriott Edgar’s Albert and the Lion and some of you here have had the honor of being roasted in one of his original epics. I carry with me many of his quips and quotes and am passing them on to my kids.

But when thinking about what I was to say today, I guess one of the most important things my Father taught me is that life is not stagnant or black and white. We can always be learning and doing. I appreciate that he has shown me that as individuals, we never stop growing.

Things my mother taught me:

How to make a good pot of soup.
How to make a pie (which was a pre-requisite for her before she and dad married)
And the proper method to catch the fish that Dad then taught me to clean
(Did you know that you need to kiss the worm?)

As many of you know, my mom loves games of all kinds, but especially card games. She has been very patient in teaching me the art of Spades, Hearts and Rummy. We have spent many evenings at home and camping, laughing and sharing a game.

Mom has also taught me much about gardening, even though my plants never turn out as big and beautiful as hers. Nobody grows tomatoes like she does.

But Mom has taught me more than anything else to enjoy life and live it to the fullest. She has always promoted the belief that if you put your mind to it, you can do anything.

Together, as a couple, my parents have taught me the value of a Christ centered marriage. They have modeled what it means to truly love each other and the willingness to put each others needs first. I count myself extremely blessed to have parents like them and hope that in turn I can model this type of life to my kids.

Dad, Mom, thank you. You have been and continue to be wonderful teachers and parents. Congratulations on 50 years and I pray God’s blessings on you for the years to come.”

Let us consider here three levels of sin: (1) sin committed intentionally, (2) sin committed through carelessness, and (3) sin committed in spite of our efforts to do otherwise. Disobeying traffic laws is often intentional sin, though sometimes done in carelessness – such as when distracted by talking on a cell phone, and sometimes done in spite of our best efforts. If we were to run red lights purposely, we would be in need of repentance – a change of direction in life: causing a collision could subject us to a severe penalty – up to murder. If we were to run red lights through carelessness, we should reconsider our priorities and motivations: causing a collision could subject us to a severe penalty – up to manslaughter. If we were to run a red light to avoid a collision, or because we were pushed from behind, we should not be subject to any penalty.

The offerings of this chapter are for breaking negative commandments, such as violating “no servile work on the Sabbath.”

These offerings are not for sins that are committed intentionally. For a sin committed willfully, there is no offering: the sinner must repent – have a change in attitude, and ask God’s mercy. For example, a willful violation of Sabbath prohibitions is a capital offense (Exodus 31:14); repentance is required, and only God can grant forgiveness.

A trespass committed with full intent, but for a right motive that overrides the commandment, requires neither offering nor forgiveness.

These offerings are not for sins committed accidentally while intending otherwise – something done in spite of our best efforts.

These offerings are for sins committed in carelessness, where, if the sinners had acted with proper care and respect, they would not have occurred. They are required offerings. An example would be violating God’s Sabbath because one was careless about noting the day of the week or watching time on Friday afternoon. A sin committed in carelessness requires an offering, so that the sinner will be motivated to care about what God says.

The soul is in view here, because carelessness involves our motivations – the desires of our soul. The conditions are limited: it must be the performance of an act that violates a negative commandment; it must be a sin for which *karet*, spiritual excision of the soul (punishment by heaven without warning), would be the penalty if the sin were committed intentionally;

For the anointed (high) priest: the offering is a bull.

For the whole assembly: a bull. Funds for the offering must come from a tax upon all the people.

For both of the above, the bull must be brought to the front of the sanctuary, where all can see.

For a ruler (king): a male goat, symbolic of his position of power.

For a commoner: a female goat.

The haftarah portion, Ezekiel 18:4, says, “*The soul that sins will die.*” This is called “*the law of sin and death*” – Romans 8:2. To be freed from this law, our sin must be imputed to Yeshua, and His righteousness to us – as pictured by the atonement offerings above. Note that this reading is for the Sabbath preceding the Day of the Atonements.

Psalm 72 says, “*Give the king Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness to the king's son. May he judge Thy people with righteousness.*” This relates to the high priest or king, and the offerings required when they cause the people to err.

However, the total of this Psalm also clearly prophesies of Yeshua: He is the one who will rule to the ends of the earth, and the one whom all nations shall serve, and whose name shall endure forever (v. 8, 10, & 19).

2 Peter 3:9 says, “*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*” This is written to believers (see 1 Peter 1:1), saying that God is patiently waiting for us to come to repentance.

We are nearing the end of forty days (including the ten Days of Awe) that are specifically for repentance. We are approaching Yom haKippurim, a day for us to formally consider all of the ways we need to repent, in order to be pure for the coming of the Bridegroom – Yeshua.

(V.17-18) *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but **grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah.** To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

V'nephesh Ki-techeta / Then if a soul sins

Leviticus 5:1 – 6:7 Zechariah 5:1 – 6:15 [No Psalm] Revelation 5:1 – 6:17
Heb. Bibles – 5:1-26

Commentary Y2-28

Tishrei 15, 5763 / Sept 21, 2002
Tishrei 12, 5766 / Oct 15, 2005

Preceding or beginning Hag Sukkot / the Feast of Tabernacles.

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ 'Now if a person sins after he hears a public adjuration to testify when he is a witness, whether he has seen or otherwise known, if he does not tell it, then he will bear his guilt. ² 'Or if a person touches any unclean thing, whether a carcass of an unclean beast or the carcass of unclean cattle or a carcass of unclean swarming things, though it is hidden from him and he is unclean, then he will be guilty. ³ 'Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort his uncleanness may be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty. ⁴ 'Or if a person swears thoughtlessly with his lips to do evil or to do good, in whatever matter a man may speak thoughtlessly with an oath, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty in one of these.

Reader 2 Amen. ⁵ 'So it shall be when he becomes guilty in one of these, that he shall confess that in which he has sinned. ⁶ 'He shall also bring his guilt offering to Yahweh for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin. ⁷ 'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to Yahweh his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

Reader 3 Amen. ⁸ 'He shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer first that which is for the sin offering and shall nip its head at the front of its neck, but he shall not sever it. ⁹ 'He shall also sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar: it is a sin offering. ¹⁰ 'The second he shall then prepare as a burnt offering according to the ordinance. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it will be forgiven him.

Reader 4 Amen. ¹¹ 'But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then for his offering for that which he has sinned, he shall bring the tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put oil on it or place incense on it, for it is a sin offering. ¹² 'He shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it as its memorial portion and offer it up in smoke on the altar, with the offerings of Yahweh by fire: it is a sin offering. ¹³ 'So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin which he has committed from one of these, and it will be forgiven him; then the rest shall become the priest's, like the grain offering."

Reader 5 Amen. ¹⁴ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁵ "If a person acts unfaithfully and sins unintentionally against Yahweh'S holy things, then he shall bring his guilt offering to Yahweh: a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation in silver by shekels, in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. ¹⁶ "He shall make restitution for that which he has sinned against the holy thing, and shall add to it a fifth part of it and give it to the priest. The priest shall then make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and it will be forgiven him.

Reader 6 Amen. ¹⁷ "Now if a person sins and does any of the things which Yahweh has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment. ¹⁸ "He is then to bring to the priest a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his error in which he sinned unintentionally and did not know it, and it will be forgiven him. ¹⁹ "It is a guilt offering; he was certainly guilty before Yahweh."

Reader 7 Amen. ^{6:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against Yahweh, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, ³ or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do; ⁴ then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, ⁵ or anything about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering. ⁶ "Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to Yahweh, a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, ⁷ and the priest shall make atonement for him before Yahweh, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt."

No Psalm

Zechariah 5:1 – 6:15

Reader 8 Amen. ¹ Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll. ² And he said to me, "What do you see?" And I answered, "I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." ³

Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side." ⁴ "I will make it go forth," declares Yahweh of hosts, "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within that house and consume it with its timber and stones."

Reader 9 Amen. ⁵ Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, "Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth." ⁶ I said, "What is it?" And he said, "This is the ephah going forth." Again he said, "This is their appearance in all the land ⁷ (and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah." ⁸ Then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. ⁹ Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens. ¹⁰ I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" ¹¹ Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal."

Reader 10 Amen. ^{6:1} Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. ² With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, ³ with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. ⁴ Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵ The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before Yahweh of all the earth, ⁶ with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country. ⁷ "When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth." And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. ⁸ Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north."

Reader 11 Amen. ⁹ The word of Yahweh also came to me, saying, ¹⁰ "Take an offering from the exiles, from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah; and you go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, where they have arrived from Babylon. ¹¹ "Take silver and gold, make an ornate crown and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. ¹² "Then say to him, "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of Yahweh. ¹³ "Yes, it is He who will build the temple of Yahweh, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices." ¹⁴ "Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of Yahweh to Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen the son of Zephaniah. ¹⁵ "Those who are far off will come and build the temple of Yahweh." Then you will know that Yahweh of hosts has sent me to you. And it will take place if you completely obey Yahweh your God.

Revelation 5:1 – 6:17

Reader 12 Amen. ¹ I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. ⁴ Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; ⁵ and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." ⁶ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. ⁸ When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Reader 13 Amen. ¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." ¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." ¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Reader 14 Amen. ^{6:1} Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, "Come." ² I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. ³ When He broke the second seal,

I heard the second living creature saying, "Come."⁴ And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.⁵ When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.⁶ And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."⁷ When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come."⁸ I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.

Reader 15 Amen.⁹ When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;¹⁰ and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.¹² I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind.¹⁴ The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.¹⁵ Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;¹⁶ and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;¹⁷ for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Commentary:

Today's portion introduces the "variable offering," or "sin offering." It concerns offerings that vary according to the wealth of the sinner, offerings that are to help us rectify some things that we should be careful about. It specifies required offerings for (v.1) failing to testify when one has witnessed a sin or crime, and (v.4) failing to fulfill a careless promise.

Then we are introduced to the "guilt offering" – an offering for having committed an error. Careless sins against "Yahweh's holy things" (v.14) include misappropriation of a tithe for personal use: besides an animal offering, we must add one-fifth to the restitution. Carelessness can leave us uncertain whether we have committed a sin (v.17), which necessitates a greater offering, to teach us not to be careless.

For thefts (v.6:1), even such as taking someone's property with intent of replacing it, an offering is required, and restitution with an added fifth, both to be performed on the same day.

In Zachariah, we see the kinds of sin spoken of in the Leviticus portion. God sends an angel to take an offering from the exiles, to appease the His wrath. With the offering, he is to make a silver and gold crown for the high priest. (V.12-14) *"Then say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of Yahweh. Yes, it is He who will build the temple of Yahweh, and He who will bear the honor and sit and rule on His throne. Thus, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two offices.' Now the crown will become a reminder in the temple of Yahweh.'"*

The name "Revelation" does not mean a book "revealing" various future events. The full name is given in the first verse of the book: "The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah." The meaning of the word "Revelation" is "Unveiling." This is the book that shows how Yeshua will be "unveiled" to the world.

In Revelation 5 (as well as Zechariah 5), a scroll is seen. Its first page, written on both sides, is rolled up, and a seal placed on it. Then a second page, written on both sides, is rolled around the first one, and sealed. Five more pages, written on both sides, are each rolled around the previous one, with each being sealed in order. So, this scroll has seven pages, and seven seals. But no one is worthy to even break the first seal, to start the progressive unveiling of Yeshua.

When the unveiling starts, the wrath of the Lamb begins to be seen. The rider of a white horse, having a bow and a crown, goes forth to conquer.

During this week of Sukkot, the offering of seventy bulls represents the downfall of the seventy nations. By the "Eighth Day," the offering becomes one bull: the seventy kingdoms of this world are conquered, and become the kingdom of Messiah.

About two weeks ago we rehearsed for the resurrection of the righteous dead and the return of Yeshua for His Bride. Earlier this week we rehearsed for the purification of the Bride – which seems to correspond to Revelation 2 & 3. Now, we prepare to celebrate the wedding feast. But the rest of the world will begin to see the unveiling of Yeshua – and they begin to be judged for their treatment of the Bride.

Sukkot is also called the "Feast of Ingathering" (Exodus 23:16). It celebrates the final harvest of tree fruit and nuts. It also represents the final harvest of the earth: (Revelation 14:14-19) *"And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe.' And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped."*

"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe.' And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God."

No one of the world will be able to stand in the day of the wrath of the Lamb (v.6:17). But through Yeshua, we have a glorious future awaiting us. We are being given time to build on our eternal castles: this is the time for us to "bring our offerings," to repent and learn to walk in His way. This is the only time we have to get our priorities straight.

This is the time for us to "bring our offerings", to repent and learn to walk in His way.

Readings for Sukkot

Numbers 29:12-16

12 'Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall observe a feast to Yahweh for seven days. 13 'And you shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to Yahweh: thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old, which are without defect, 14 and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, 15 and a tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; 16 and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its libation.

Leviticus 22:26 – 23:44

26 Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted as a sacrifice of an offering by fire to Yahweh. 28 "But, whether it is an ox or a sheep, you shall not kill both it and its young in one day. 29 "And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Yahweh, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. 30 "It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning: I am Yahweh. 31 "So you shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am Yahweh. 32 "And you shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel: I am Yahweh who sanctifies you, 33 who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am Yahweh." 23:1 Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations-- My appointed times are these: 3 'For six days work may be done; but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings. 4 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. 5 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is Yahweh's Passover. 6 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. 7 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. 8 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'" 9 Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 'And he shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 'Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to Yahweh. 13 'Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to Yahweh for a soothing aroma, with its libation, a fourth of a hin of wine. 14 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 15 'You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete sabbaths. 16 'You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to Yahweh. 17 'You shall bring in from your dwelling places two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an ephah; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to Yahweh. 18 'Along with the bread, you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd, and two rams; they are to be a burnt offering to Yahweh, with their grain offering and their libations, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh. 19 'You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. 20 'The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before Yahweh; they are to be holy to Yahweh for the priest. 21 'On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. 22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am Yahweh your God.'" 23 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month, you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 'You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh.'" 26 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 27 "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to Yahweh. 28 "Neither shall you do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before Yahweh your God. 29 "If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. 30 "As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 "You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 32 "It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to

you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath." 33 Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to Yahweh.

35 'On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. 36 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to Yahweh; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. 37 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to Yahweh-- burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and libations, each day's matter on its own day-- 38 besides those of the sabbaths of Yahweh, and besides your gifts, and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to Yahweh. 39 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 40 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days. 41 'You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, 43 so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.'" 44 So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of Yahweh.

Exodus 33:12 – 34:26

12 Then Moses said to Yahweh, "See, Thou dost say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But Thou Thyself hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Moreover, Thou hast said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' 13 "Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found favor in Thy sight, let me know Thy ways, that I may know Thee, so that I may find favor in Thy sight. Consider too, that this nation is Thy people." 14 And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 Then he said to Him, "If Thy presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here. 16 "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Thy sight, I and Thy people? Is it not by Thy going with us, so that we, I and Thy people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" 17 And Yahweh said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight, and I have known you by name." 18 Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!" 19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" 21 Then Yahweh said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

34:1 Now Yahweh said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered. 2 "So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain. 3 "And no man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain." 4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as Yahweh had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand. 5 And Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of Yahweh. 6 Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." 8 And Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. 9 And he said, "If now I have found favor in Thy sight, O Lord, I pray, let Yahweh go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate; and do Thou pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Thine own possession." 10 Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth, nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of Yahweh, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you. 11 "Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. 12 "Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst. 13 "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim 14 -- for you shall not worship any other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God-- 15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they play the harlot with their gods, and sacrifice to their gods, and someone invite

you to eat of his sacrifice; 16 and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods, and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods. 17 "You shall make for yourself no molten gods. 18 "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt. 19 "The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep. 20 "And you shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the first-born of your sons. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. 21 "You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest. 22 "And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. 23 "Three times a year all your males are to appear before Yahweh God, the God of Israel. 24 "For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before Yahweh your God. 25 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning. 26 "You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of Yahweh your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

Zechariah 14:1-21

1 Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then Yahweh will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. 5 And you will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of 6 And it will come about in that day that there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle. 7 For it will be a unique day which is known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. 8 And it will come about in that day that living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. 9 And Yahweh will be king over all the earth; in that day Yahweh will be the only one, and His name the only one. 10 All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. 11 And people will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security. 12 Now this will be the plague with which Yahweh will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13 And it will come about in that day that a great panic from Yahweh will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. 14 And Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15 So also like this plague, will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey, and all the cattle that will be in those camps. 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 17 And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, there will be no rain on them. 18 And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which Yahweh smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. 20 In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO YAHWEH." And the cooking pots in Yahweh's house will be like the bowls before the altar. 21 And every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to Yahweh of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts in that day.

Tzav / Command

Leviticus 6:8-18 Jeremiah 7:21-27 Psalm 73 Mark 12:28-34
Heb. Bibles – 6:1-11

Commentary Y2-29

Tishrei 22, 5763 / Sept 28, 2002
Tishrei 19, 5766 / Oct 22, 2005

*Reader 1** Amen. ⁸ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁹ "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the law for the elevation offering: the burnt offering itself shall remain on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. ¹⁰ The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. ¹¹ Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. ¹² The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not go out, but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay out the elevation offering on it, and offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it. ¹³ Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out. *Reader 2** Amen. ¹⁴ 'Now this is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall present it before Yahweh in front of the altar. ¹⁵ Then one of them shall lift up from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and all the incense that is on the grain offering, and he shall offer it up in smoke on the altar, a soothing aroma, as its memorial offering to Yahweh. ¹⁶ What is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; they are to eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. ¹⁷ It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their share from My offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. ¹⁸ Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations, from the offerings by fire to Yahweh. Whoever touches them will become consecrated.'"

Additional for Sabbath Day during Tabernacles:

Exodus 34:22-23

*Reader ** Amen. ²² "You shall celebrate . . . the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. ²³ Three times a year all your males are to appear before Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel."

Additional for Fifth Day of Tabernacles:

Numbers 29:26-28

*Reader ** Amen. ²⁶ 'Then on the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; ²⁷ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; ²⁸ and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual elevation offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.

Jeremiah 7:21-27

*Reader 3** Amen. ²¹ Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, "Add your elevation offerings to your sacrifices and eat flesh. ²² For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning elevation offerings and sacrifices. ²³ But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' ²⁴ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward. ²⁵ Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them. ²⁶ Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers. ²⁷ You shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you; and you shall call to them, but they will not answer you."

Psalm 73 (To be sung.) A Psalm of Asaph.

¹ Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! ² But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, my steps had almost slipped. ³ For I was envious of the arrogant as I saw the prosperity of the wicked. ⁴ For there are no pains in their death, and their body is fat. ⁵ They are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind. ⁶ Therefore pride is their necklace; the garment of violence covers them. ⁷ Their eye bulges from fatness; the imaginations of their heart run riot. ⁸ They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; they speak from on high. ⁹ They have set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue parades through the earth. ¹⁰ Therefore his people return to this place, and waters of abundance are drunk by them. ¹¹ They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" ¹² Behold, these are the wicked; and always at ease, they have increased in wealth. ¹³ Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence; ¹⁴ For I have been stricken all day long and chastened every morning. ¹⁵ If I had said, "I will speak thus," behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. ¹⁶ When I pondered to understand this, it was troublesome in my sight ¹⁷ Until I came into the

sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end. ¹⁸ Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. ¹⁹ How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! ²⁰ Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. ²¹ When my heart was embittered and I was pierced within, ²² then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. ²³ Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. ²⁴ **With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.** ²⁵ Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. ²⁷ For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You. ²⁸ But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made Lord Yahweh my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.

Mark 12:28-34

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁸ One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" ²⁹ Yeshua answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! Yahweh our God is One; ³⁰ and you shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' ³¹ 'The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³² The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that He is One, and there is no one else besides Him; ³³ and to love Him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴ When Yeshua saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

Commentary:

Fifth Day of Feast of Tabernacles ordinances will be included in today's service:

Reading of Exodus 33:12 – 34:26 (abbreviated) and Numbers 29:26-28

Water Drawing Service

Waving of the Lulav

Singing Hallel

Abel, Noah, and Abraham made elevation offerings that were a pleasing aroma to Yahweh – long before written instruction was given through Moses from Mt. Sinai.

During Tabernacle and Temple times, three fires burned continually on the large Brazen Altar in the courtyard. They were the large fire where the offerings were burned, the small fire for incense from which coals were taken into the sanctuary for the incense service, and the wood fire from which burning wood was added to the large fire as necessary. These fires burned continually for 116 years in the Tabernacle courtyard, before the Temple was built.

During most of the fourth millennium, at the Holy Temple, every morning and evening there was an elevation offering of one lamb - the "continual" offering on the altar. On every Sabbath an additional two lambs were offered, between the morning and evening offering.

This is the order for the Temple activities:

(V.10) First in the morning, the High Priest must go into the mikvah and then put on his four required garments. He would then take a scoop of ashes from the previous day's offering off the altar using a special golden shovel, placing the ashes by east side of the ramp to the Altar.

(V.11) Then He must remove his priestly garments and remove all of the excess ashes accumulated on the altar.

The daily morning offering (one lamb) and the Sabbath offerings (two lambs) preceded any Festival offerings.

On this fifth day of Hag Sukkot, there were additional Festival elevation offerings: nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs, all without defect, each accompanied by a specific bread offering and wine offering.

These animal offerings are entirely burned upon the altar (that is, the meat), sending up a pleasing aroma to God.

(V.14)

With the two daily and two Sabbath offerings, each of the lambs was accompanied by bread made from one omer (3 quarts) of fine wheat flour mixed with ¼ hin of pure olive oil, salted, with frankincense added after baking (Numbers 15:3-5).

For this Festival day, with each of the nine bullocks, the bread offering was made from 3 omers (2 gallons) of fine wheat flour mixed with ½ hin (1/2 gallon) of pure olive oil, salted, with frankincense added after baking (Numbers 15:8-9).

With each of the two rams, the bread was made from 2 omers of flour mixed with 1/3 hin of oil (Numbers 15:6-7), and with each of the fourteen lambs, the same as the daily and Sabbath offerings.

This is all besides the sin offering, which was a goat. These were all communal offerings. There were no personal offerings on Sabbaths or Festivals.

Jeremiah mentions that God did not instruct Israel about sacrifices on the day that they left Egypt (though offerings began long before) – that instruction to them came later, to apply when the Tabernacle was built. But, God did instruct them to obey His voice, saying that He would then be their God and they would be “His people.” Here we can see God’s priority for us: obey! We can ask questions later.

Psalm 73

The offerings are ordinances to teach us spiritual truths; they are part of the counsel of God. David said, “*With Your counsel You will guide me, and afterward receive me to glory.*” The offerings help show us the way to glory.

Mark 12

Yeshua said that the greatest commandment of all was to love God with all our heart . . . , and our neighbor as ourself. Again, this has to do with obedience, not just lovey-dovey feelings. The commandments were given to show us how to love God and neighbor.

The entire community of God’s people was to contribute for the elevation offerings. They represent God’s people being spiritually elevated toward God, through a substitutionary offering – picturing Yeshua. The picture is just as valid after the crucifixion as it was before, and thus it will be in the future Temple.

[Discussion centered around the picture of Yeshua’s crucifixion as portrayed by the offerings on the Temple Altar, and the meanings of past and future offerings.]

Karban Aharon / Offering of Aaron

Leviticus 6:19 – 7:38 Malachi 3:7-12 Psalm 74 Matthew 23:1-39
Heb. Bibles – 6:12-7:38

Commentary Y2-30

Tishrei 29, 5763 / Oct 5, 2002
Tishrei 26, 5766 / Oct 29, 2005

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹⁹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁰ "This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to Yahweh on the day when he is anointed; the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. ²¹ It shall be prepared with oil on a griddle. When it is well stirred, you shall bring it. You shall present the grain offering in baked pieces as a soothing aroma to Yahweh. ²² The anointed priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to Yahweh. ²³ "So every grain offering of the priest shall be burned entirely. It shall not be eaten."

*Reader 2** Amen. ²⁴ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁵ "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the elevation offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before Yahweh; it is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. ²⁷ Anyone who touches its flesh will become consecrated; and when any of its blood splashes on a garment, in a holy place you shall wash what was splashed on. ²⁸ Also the earthenware vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken; and if it was boiled in a bronze vessel, then it shall be scoured and rinsed in water. ²⁹ Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. ³⁰ But no sin offering of which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burned with fire.

*Reader 3** Amen. ^{7:1} Now this is the law of the guilt offering; it is most holy. ² In the place where they slay the elevation offering they are to slay the guilt offering, and he shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ³ Then he shall offer from it all its fat: the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe on the liver he shall remove with the kidneys. ⁵ The priest shall offer them up in smoke on the altar as an offering by fire to Yahweh; it is a guilt offering. ⁶ Every male among the priests may eat of it. It shall be eaten in a holy place; it is most holy. ⁷ The guilt offering is like the sin offering, there is one law for them; the priest who makes atonement with it shall have it. ⁸ Also the priest who presents any man's elevation offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has presented. ⁹ Likewise, every grain offering that is baked in the oven and everything prepared in a pan or on a griddle shall belong to the priest who presents it. ¹⁰ Every grain offering, mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to all alike.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹¹ Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to Yahweh. ¹² If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil. ¹³ With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. ¹⁴ Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to Yahweh; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. ¹⁵ Now as for the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. ¹⁶ But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; ¹⁷ but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. ¹⁸ So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should ever be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, and it will not be reckoned to his benefit. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his own iniquity.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹⁹ Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for other flesh, anyone who is clean may eat such flesh. ²⁰ But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to Yahweh, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. ²¹ When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to Yahweh, that person shall be cut off from his people." ²² Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall not eat any fat from an ox, a sheep or a goat. ²⁴ Also the fat of an animal which dies and the fat of an animal torn by beasts may be put to any other use, but you must certainly not eat it. ²⁵ For whoever eats the fat of the animal from which an offering by fire is offered to Yahweh, even the person who eats shall be cut off from his people. ²⁶ You are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings. ²⁷ Any person who eats any blood, even that person shall be cut off from his people.'"

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁸ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁹ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offerings to Yahweh shall bring his offering to Yahweh from the sacrifice of his peace offerings. ³⁰ His own hands are to bring offerings by fire to Yahweh. He shall bring the fat with the breast, that the breast may be presented as a wave offering before Yahweh. ³¹ The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar,

but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons.³² You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings.³³ The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as his portion.³⁴ For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the sons of Israel.

*Reader 7** Amen.³⁵ "This is that which is consecrated to Aaron and that which is consecrated to his sons from the offerings by fire to Yahweh, in that day when he presented them to serve as priests to Yahweh.³⁶ These Yahweh had commanded to be given them from the sons of Israel in the day that He anointed them. It is their due forever throughout their generations."³⁷ This is the law of the elevation offering, the grain offering and the sin offering and the guilt offering and the ordination offering and the sacrifice of peace offerings,³⁸ which Yahweh commanded Moses at Mount Sinai in the day that He commanded the sons of Israel to present their offerings to Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai.

Malachi 3:7-12

*Reader 8** Amen.⁷ "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says Yahweh of hosts. "But you say, 'How shall we return?'"⁸ Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says Yahweh of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.¹¹ Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says Yahweh of hosts.¹² "All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says Yahweh of hosts.

Psalm 74 *(To be sung.) A Maskil of Asaph.*

¹ O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?² Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance; and this Mount Zion, where You have dwelt.³ Turn Your footsteps toward the perpetual ruins; the enemy has damaged everything within the sanctuary.⁴ Your adversaries have roared in the midst of Your meeting place; they have set up their own standards for signs.⁵ It seems as if one had lifted up His axe in a forest of trees.⁶ And now all its carved work they smash with hatchet and hammers.⁷ They have burned Your sanctuary to the ground; they have defiled the dwelling place of Your name.⁸ They said in their heart, "Let us completely subdue them." They have burned all the meeting places of God in the land.⁹ We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, nor is there any among us who knows how long.¹⁰ How long, O God, will the adversary revile, and the enemy spurn Your name forever?¹¹ Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand? From within Your bosom, destroy them!¹² Yet God is my king from of old, Who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of the earth.¹³ You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea monsters in the waters.¹⁴ You crushed the heads of Leviathan; You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.¹⁵ You broke open springs and torrents; You dried up ever-flowing streams.¹⁶ Yours is the day, Yours also is the night; You have prepared the light and the sun.¹⁷ You have established all the boundaries of the earth; You have made summer and winter.¹⁸ Remember this, O Yahweh, that the enemy has reviled, and a foolish people has spurned Your name.¹⁹ Do not deliver the soul of Your turtle dove to the wild beast; do not forget the life of Your afflicted forever.²⁰ Consider the covenant; for the dark places of the land are full of the habitations of violence.²¹ Let not the oppressed return dishonored; let the afflicted and needy praise Your name.²² Arise, O God, and plead Your own cause; remember how the foolish man reproaches You all day long.²³ Do not forget the voice of Your adversaries, the uproar of those who rise against You which ascends continually.

Matthew 23:1-39

*Reader 9** Amen.¹ Then Yeshua spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,² saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses;³ therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them.⁴ They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.⁵ But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.⁶ They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,⁷ and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.⁸ But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.¹⁰ Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Messiah.¹¹ But the greatest among you shall be your servant.¹² Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹³ But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ¹⁴ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation. ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. ¹⁶ Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' ¹⁷ You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? ¹⁸ And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' ¹⁹ You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? ²⁰ Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. ²¹ And whoever swears by the Temple, swears both by the Temple and by Him who dwells within it. ²² And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it. ²³ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. *Reader 11** Amen. ²⁴ You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! ²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. ²⁷ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. ²⁸ So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. ²⁹ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. *Reader 12** Amen. ³² Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? ³⁴ Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶ Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. ³⁷ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹ "For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Commentary:

(Leviticus 6:19 / 6:12) The priestly meal-offering is for three occasions: every priest the first time he performs the Temple service, the High Priest upon assuming office, and every day thereafter. An *omer* of fine wheat flour is made into twelve loaves, then consecutively boiled, baked, and fried. It is to be entirely burned upon the altar, half in the morning and half in the afternoon. This is in contrast to offerings of the people, where only a memorial portion is burned.

The priests performed the Temple services to bring the people closer to God. They led the worship, and were responsible for the spiritual well-being of the nation. They were held to a higher standard of accountability, because of their affect on many people.

(V.24 / 17) The sin-offering

(V.7:1) The guilt-offering

(V.11) The sages teach that after Messiah comes and the world is perfected, there will be no need for atonements, but there will always be thanksgiving offerings. These offerings symbolize a major teaching of our congregation.* The thanksgiving-offering is to express gratitude to God, for such recognized miracles as being saved from potential serious illness, injury, or imprisonment. It is eaten for a day and night, with none left by morning. It is accompanied by forty loaves: half of the flour is made into ten unleavened cakes of flour mixed with oil and baked, ten unleavened wafers of flour spread with oil, ten loaves of unleavened flour mixed with oil and scalded; the other half of the flour is made into ten leavened loaves (none of which are placed on the altar, where leaven is forbidden). The unleavened loaves with oil represent food and well-being, two essentials of life. The leavened loaves represent

emergence from danger to unrestricted life. *This all is a recognition that sustenance and safety are from God, and represents a renewed dedication to Him, as we are created and sustained for His service.

Background to Matthew: (Exodus 18:13, 25-26) *Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. And they judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.* This was halachic judgment: showing the people how to be Torah observant, and also resolving disputes, and meting out civil and criminal penalties – all according to Torah principles.

(Matthew 23:2-3) *“The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the seat of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things, and do not do them.”* (V.23, 25, 27, 29) *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”*

Note that the Sadducees are not mentioned here – they did not accept the prophets, nor did they believe in spirits or resurrection. We are not instructed to follow their teachings.

We are told to practice what we preach – in contrast to the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. Hypocrisy does not represent false doctrine – but rather practice that is inconsistent with one’s doctrine.

We are instructed to practice what the Torah teachers – the scribes and Pharisees – teach us. This means that what they teach us on how to honor our parents, we do without making excuses like the Pharisees: they claimed that whatever they possessed that could be used to support their parents, was instead pledged to the Temple. It means that we should learn to pray as they taught, but discreetly, not to show-off our spirituality like they did. It means that we should to love serve in the synagogue, but not to clamor for position. It means that we should teach and serve various needs, but not carry distinguishing titles such as Rabbi or Reverend. It means that we all wear *tallitot* (prayer shawls), as brethren: one does not wear a *tallit* as a symbol of pastoral position. It means that we should support the poor and weak, in secret through the synagogue as they taught from Torah, not publicly as they practiced. It means that we should recognize what we are in God’s eyes, and purify our hearts, and then our outward acts will also be pure; trying to appear outwardly righteous, while our motivation is self-exaltation, is likened to white-washing tombs. We are to be servants of all, in humility, not masters in exalted positions.

We hear people say that they will not attend church because there are too many hypocrites there. But that is perhaps greater hypocrisy: they are too good to go where others are trying to learn to better themselves? So we all have our areas of hypocrisy, but we need to learn what holiness means, and then practice what we learn.

We do this by first trusting Yeshua for salvation from sin, then in love for Him learning what He desires of us. Note that the name Yeshua means salvation from sin, not just salvation from hell. And Torah defines sin and holiness. (Sin is the transgression of Torah – and therefore contrary to faith, which is the righteousness of Torah.)

(1 John 3:2-5) *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. **And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; for sin is transgression of Torah. And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins.***

(1 Peter 2:21-25) *For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and **He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness**; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*

(Hebrews 11:24-25) *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to **enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.***

(Romans 14:23) *Whatever is not from faith is sin.*

Psalm 74

“⁴ Your adversaries have roared in the midst of Your meeting place; they have set up their own standards for signs.”

In places that are designated churches of our God, false standards for righteousness are being proclaimed.

“⁹ We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet, nor is there any among us who knows how long.”

It is difficult to find any who proclaim God’s message, because most are exalting themselves or their dogma. No one even knows how long this will go on before God brings it to an end.

“¹² Yet God is my king from of old, Who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of the earth. ¹³ You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea monsters in the waters. ¹⁴ You crushed the heads of Leviathan; You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. ¹⁵ You broke open springs and torrents; You dried up ever-flowing streams. ¹⁶ Yours is the day, Yours also is the night; You have prepared the light and the sun. ¹⁷ You have established all the boundaries of the earth; You have made summer and winter.” But our God is still on the throne, ruling over all of the affairs of men. He Who created all things by His Word has established a time for everything. In His time, He will keep His promise to deliver His people.

Matthew 23

“³² Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. ³³ You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? ³⁴ Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, ³⁵ so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.”

I can only find two reasons for God to be letting the wicked continue. Either they are yet going to be brought to repentance before God, or they are filling up their cup of wrath for the day of judgment.

Yeshua left this world bodily, and will not see Him again until that Holy Day which is called “the day of which no man knows the day or the hour” (Mark 13:32) – the Festival season which Paul described as known (1 Thessalonians 5). On that Day of Trumpeting, when we will sing “*Baruch haba* – Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of Yahweh,” the archangel will shout “Tekia Gedolah,” and the last trump of the day will be heard from heaven. Then Yeshua will return in the same manner as He left (Acts 1:11), and the righteous dead will be raised (1 Corinthians 15:52).

More commentary on Matthew 23 at [Y1-04](#), [Y2-13](#), and [Y3-15](#) .

Qach et-Aharon / Take Aaron

Leviticus 8:1-36 Ezekiel 43:27 Psalm 75 Revelation 20:1-15

Commentary Y2-31

Heshvan 6, 5763 / Oct 12, 2002

Heshvan 3, 5766 / Nov 5, 2005

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread, ³ and assemble all the congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting." ⁴ So Moses did just as Yahweh commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, ⁵ Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded to do."

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁶ Then Moses had Aaron and his sons come near and **washed them with water.** ⁷ He put the tunic on him and girded him with the sash, and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the artistic band of the ephod, with which he tied it to him. ⁸ He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. ⁹ He also placed the turban on his head, and on the turban, at its front, he placed the golden plate, the holy crown, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ¹⁰ Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. ¹¹ He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. ¹² Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹³ Next Moses had Aaron's sons come near and clothed them with tunics, and girded them with sashes and bound caps on them, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ¹⁴ Then he brought the **bull of the sin offering**, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. ¹⁵ Next Moses slaughtered it and took the blood and with his finger put some of it around on the horns of the altar, and purified the altar. Then he poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. ¹⁶ He also took all the fat that was on the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat; and Moses offered it up in smoke on the altar. ¹⁷ But the bull and its hide and its flesh and its refuse he burned in the fire outside the camp, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁸ Then he presented the **ram of the elevation offering**, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ¹⁹ Moses slaughtered it and sprinkled the blood around on the altar. ²⁰ When he had cut the ram into its pieces, Moses offered up the head and the pieces and the suet in smoke. ²¹ After he had washed the entrails and the legs with water, Moses offered up the whole ram in smoke on the altar. It was an elevation offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to Yahweh, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²² Then he presented the second ram, the **ram of ordination**, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. ²³ Moses slaughtered it and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁴ He also had Aaron's sons come near; and Moses put some of the blood on the lobe of their right ear, and on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. Moses then sprinkled the rest of the blood around on the altar. ²⁵ He took the fat, and the fat tail, and all the fat that was on the entrails, and the lobe of the liver and the two kidneys and their fat and the right thigh.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁶ From the **basket of unleavened bread** that was before Yahweh, he took one unleavened cake and one cake of bread mixed with oil and one wafer, and placed them on the portions of fat and on the right thigh. ²⁷ He then put all these on the hands of Aaron and on the hands of his sons and presented them as a wave offering before Yahweh. ²⁸ Then Moses took them from their hands and offered them up in smoke on the altar with the elevation offering. They were an ordination offering for a soothing aroma; it was an offering by fire to Yahweh. ²⁹ Moses also took the breast and presented it for a wave offering before Yahweh; it was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

*Reader 7** Amen. ³⁰ So Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, and his sons, and the garments of his sons with him. ³¹ Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons, "Boil the flesh at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and eat it there together with the bread which is in the basket of the ordination offering, just as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.'" ³² "The remainder of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn in the fire." ³³ "You shall not go outside the doorway of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the day that the period of your ordination is fulfilled; for he will ordain you through seven days." ³⁴ "Yahweh has commanded to do as has been done this day, to make atonement on your behalf." ³⁵ "At the doorway of the tent of meeting, moreover, **you shall remain day and night for seven days** and keep the charge of Yahweh, so that you will not die, for so I have been commanded." ³⁶ Thus Aaron and his sons did all the things which Yahweh had commanded through Moses.

Ezekiel 43:27

*Reader 8** Amen. ²⁷ “And when they have completed the days, it shall be that on the eighth day and onward, the priests shall offer your elevation offerings on the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you,” declares Yahweh God.

Psalm 75 *(To be sung.) For the choir director; set to Al-tashcheit. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.*

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks, for Your name is near; men declare Your wondrous works. ² “**When I select an appointed time, it is I who judge with equity.**” ³ The earth and all who dwell in it melt; it is I who have firmly set its pillars. Selah. ⁴ I said to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’ and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up the horn;’ ⁵ do not lift up your horn on high, do not speak with insolent pride.” ⁶ For not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert comes exaltation; ⁷ but God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another. ⁸ For a cup is in the hand of Yahweh, and the wine foams; it is well mixed, and He pours out of this; surely all the wicked of the earth must drain and drink down its dregs. ⁹ But as for me, I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. ¹⁰ And all the horns of the wicked He will cut off, but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.

Revelation 20:1-15

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. ⁴ Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Yeshua and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

*Reader 10** Amen. ⁷ When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. ⁹ And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰ And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Commentary:

On recent Sabbaths, we have studied God’s instructions for building the Tabernacle, considered their spiritual implications for us, and then read of the actual construction according to those instructions. We have studied God’s instructions for the priesthood and offerings, considered their spiritual implications for us, and today we read of the beginnings of the Levitical priestly service.

(V.1) Aaron and his sons must enter a *mikvah* (baptistry), don the priestly garments. This signifies being born again, being one of several situations in a man’s life that can be so called. In other words, it means dying to a previous life and entering in to a new one, in this case dedicated to God’s service.

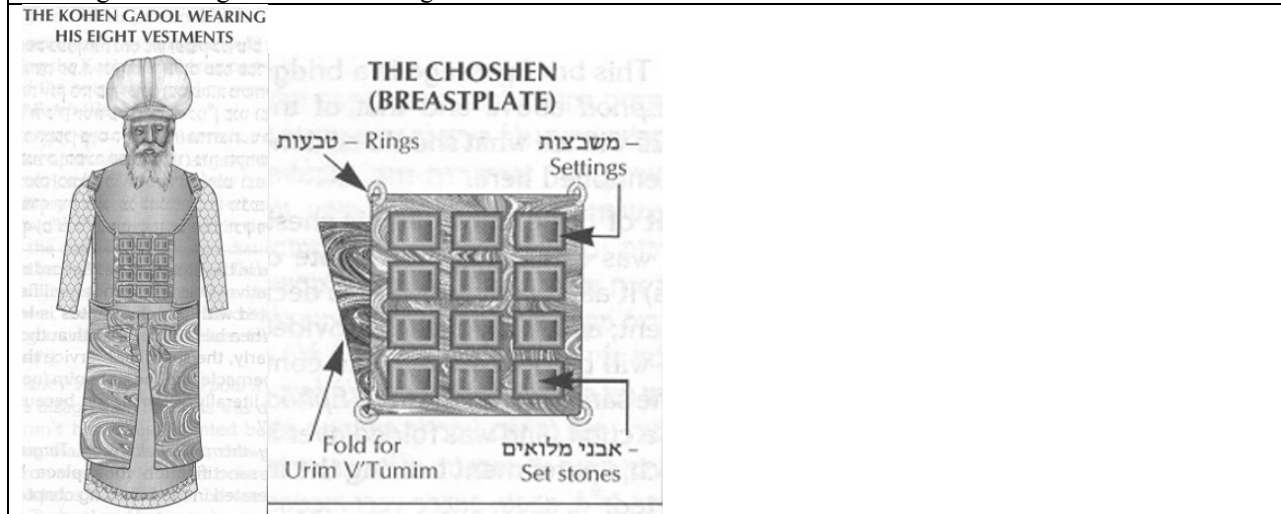
They and be anointed with the special oil. This signifies that they are to be yielded to the Spirit of God.

They must offer a bull for a sin offering and a ram for an elevation offering. The priests’ sins must be laid upon Yeshua, and Yeshua’s righteousness imputed to the priests, before they can be God’s representatives to the people.

A ram of ordination must then be offered: the priests must be consecrated to God in their hearing (blood applied to the ear), their actions (blood applied to the thumb), and their goings (blood applied to the toe). From the forty loaves that were made (last week's lesson), the three kinds of unleavened loaves must be waved before Yahweh, then offered up as smoke from being burnt upon the altar.

(Slide 1)

The High Priest's garments containing the Urim and Tummim.



The *Urim v'Tummim* / Urim and Tummim (*oo-REEM and toom-MEEM*) was placed in the fold of the Breastplate, and used to consult God for answers to major questions. It was called Urim / Lights, because it would cause letters on the breastplate stones to light up, and it was called Tummim / Completeness, because the letters would spell answers to the answers of national importance that the High Priest would ask of God.

(Slide 2)

Leviticus 9:1 & Ezekiel 43:27 – Hebrew lesson

Bayom hashmini
B'ha-Yom ha-Shemini
In the day, the eighth.

Bayom hashmini – In the Eighth Day.

Ezekiel 43:27 – In the Eighth Day, God will accept us: we will offer elevation offerings and peace offerings – thanksgiving offerings, not sin offerings.

(Slide 3)

These are the Appointed Times.

YAHWEH'S APPOINTED TIMES

Leviticus 23

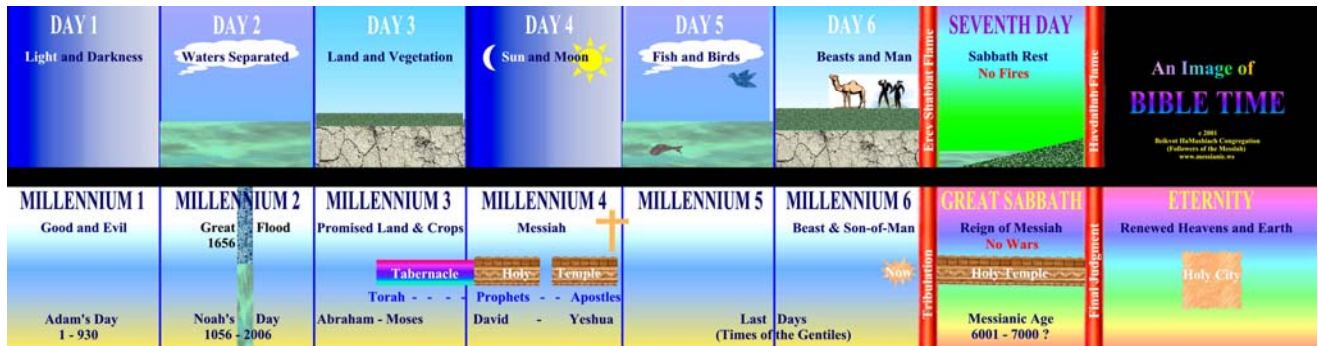
Holy Sabbath	–	from Adam to the Millennial Sabbath
Preparation of Passover	–	Crucifixion / Redeeming the Church
Feast of Unleavened Bread	–	7 day Redemption Feast
Feast of Firstfruits (Pentecost)	–	Betrothal Feast
Day of Trumpeting	–	Returning for Church
Day of the Atonements	–	Purifying the Church
Feast of Tabernacles	–	7 day Marriage Feast of the Lamb
<u>Eighth Day Assembly</u>	–	Judgment / Final Abode of the Righteous

The greatest commandment, Loving Yahweh with all our heart, includes keeping our appointments with God – Yahweh’s appointed times, which He declared to be eternal (observed as prophetic and/or memorial).

Lev 23:2 “Yahweh’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy assemblies – My appointed times are these:” the Seventh Day Sabbath, Preparation of the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks of Firstfruits (Pentecost), (v.24) Day of Trumpeting, Day of the Atonements, Feast of Tabernacles, and the Eighth Day Assembly. (V.44) “So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of Yahweh.”

(Slide 4)

This shows the “Eighth Day” Appointed Time.



Psalm 75 title: “Al-tashcheit” – Do not destroy.

Psalm 75:2 – “When I select an appointed time, it is I who judge with equity.”

God has selected the appointed time for final judgment of sinners. For seven millennial days atonements must be made. Then is the appointed time for judgment: the judgment of the righteous for rewards will be 1000 years prior; this is the judgment of the condemned; there is no “judgment” to determine who is or is not saved.

Moses is the representative of Yeshua. We all (believers) are priests. We have seven millennial days when salvation is available, then there will be judgment for sin at the beginning of the eternal eighth day.

Hebrews 13:11-12 *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Yeshua also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.*

Hebrews 4:14-5:6 *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Yeshua the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. 5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. So also Messiah did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee"; just as He says also in another passage, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*

So, Yeshua had no need to offer sin sacrifices for Himself. But we need to keep this continually in mind: He is sympathetic toward our weaknesses, and stands daily to aid us in overcoming sin. We need continual exercise to growing in love for God and neighbor.

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Now it came about **in the eighth day** that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; ² and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for an elevation offering, both without defect, and offer them before Yahweh. ³ Then to the sons of Israel you shall speak, saying, "Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both one year old, without defect, for an elevation offering, ⁴ and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before Yahweh, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today Yahweh will appear to you." ⁵ So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole congregation came near and stood before Yahweh. ⁶ Moses said, "**This is the thing which Yahweh has commanded you to do, that the glory of Yahweh may appear to you.**" ⁷ Moses then said to Aaron, "Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your elevation offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people; then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as Yahweh has commanded." ⁸ So Aaron came near to the altar and slaughtered the calf of the sin offering which was for himself. ⁹ Aaron's sons presented the blood to him; and he dipped his finger in the blood and put some on the horns of the altar, and poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ¹⁰ The fat and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver of the sin offering, he then offered up in smoke on the altar just as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ¹¹ The flesh and the skin, however, he burned with fire outside the camp.

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹² Then he slaughtered the elevation offering; and Aaron's sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. ¹³ They handed the elevation offering to him in pieces, with the head, and he offered them up in smoke on the altar. ¹⁴ He also washed the entrails and the legs, and offered them up in smoke with the burnt offering on the altar. ¹⁵ Then he presented the people's offering, and took the goat of the sin offering which was for the people, and slaughtered it and offered it for sin, like the first. ¹⁶ He also presented the elevation offering, and offered it according to the ordinance. ¹⁷ Next he presented the grain offering, and filled his hand with some of it and offered it up in smoke on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning. ¹⁸ Then he slaughtered the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings which was for the people; and Aaron's sons handed the blood to him and he sprinkled it around on the altar. ¹⁹ As for the portions of fat from the ox and from the ram, the fat tail, and the fat covering, and the kidneys and the lobe of the liver, ²⁰ they now placed the portions of fat on the breasts; and he offered them up in smoke on the altar. ²¹ But the breasts and the right thigh Aaron presented as a wave offering before Yahweh, just as Moses had commanded. ²² Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. ²³ Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, **the glory of Yahweh appeared to all the people.** ²⁴ Then **fire came out from before Yahweh** and consumed the elevation offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

*Reader 3** Amen. ^{10:1} Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered **strange fire** before Yahweh, which He had not commanded them. ² And fire came out from the presence of Yahweh and consumed them, and they died before Yahweh. ³ Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what Yahweh spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. ⁴ Moses called also to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come forward, carry your relatives away from the front of the sanctuary to the outside of the camp." ⁵ So they came forward and carried them still in their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had said. ⁶ Then Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, so that you will not die and that He will not become wrathful against all the congregation. But your kinsmen, the whole house of Israel, shall bewail the burning which Yahweh has brought about. ⁷ You shall not even go out from the doorway of the tent of meeting, or you will die; for Yahweh'S anointing oil is upon you." So they did according to the word of Moses. ⁸ Yahweh then spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹ "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you will not die-- it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations-- ¹⁰ and so as **to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean,** ¹¹ and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which Yahweh has spoken to them through Moses."

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹² Then Moses spoke to Aaron, and to his surviving sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering that is left over from Yahweh's offerings by fire and eat it unleavened beside the altar, for it is most holy. ¹³ You shall eat it, moreover, in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due out of Yahweh's offerings by fire; for thus I have been commanded. ¹⁴ "The breast of the wave offering, however, and the thigh of the offering you may eat in a clean place, you and your sons and your daughters with you; for they have been given as your due and your sons' due out of the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the sons of Israel. ¹⁵ The thigh offered by lifting up

and the breast offered by waving they shall bring along with the offerings by fire of the portions of fat, to present as a wave offering before Yahweh; so it shall be a thing perpetually due you and your sons with you, just as Yahweh has commanded." ¹⁶ But Moses searched carefully for the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it had been burned up! So he was angry with Aaron's surviving sons Eleazar and Ithamar, saying, ¹⁷ "Why did you not eat the sin offering at the holy place? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear away the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before Yahweh. ¹⁸ "Behold, since its blood had not been brought inside, into the sanctuary, you should certainly have eaten it in the sanctuary, just as I commanded." ¹⁹ But Aaron spoke to Moses, "Behold, this very day they presented their sin offering and their elevation offering before Yahweh. When things like these happened to me, if I had eaten a sin offering today, would it have been good in the sight of Yahweh?" ²⁰ When Moses heard that, it seemed good in his sight.

*Reader 5** Amen. ^{11:1} Yahweh spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth. ³ Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. ⁴ Nevertheless, you are not to eat of these, among those which chew the cud, or among those which divide the hoof: the camel, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you. ⁵ Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; ⁶ the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; ⁷ and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. ⁸ You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you. ⁹ These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. ¹⁰ But whatever is in the seas and in the rivers that does not have fins and scales among all the teeming life of the water, and among all the living creatures that are in the water, they are detestable things to you, ¹¹ and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. ¹² Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you. ¹³ These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, ¹⁴ and the kite and the falcon in its kind, ¹⁵ every raven in its kind, ¹⁶ and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, ¹⁷ and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, ¹⁸ and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, ¹⁹ and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁰ 'All the winged insects that walk on all fours are detestable to you. ²¹ Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on all fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth. ²² These of them you may eat: the locust in its kinds, and the devastating locust in its kinds, and the cricket in its kinds, and the grasshopper in its kinds. ²³ But all other winged insects which are four-footed are detestable to you. ²⁴ By these, moreover, you will be made unclean: whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, ²⁵ and whoever picks up any of their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. ²⁶ Concerning all the animals which divide the hoof but do not make a split hoof, or which do not chew cud, they are unclean to you: whoever touches them becomes unclean. ²⁷ Also whatever walks on its paws, among all the creatures that walk on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcasses becomes unclean until evening, ²⁸ and the one who picks up their carcasses shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; they are unclean to you. ²⁹ Now these are to you the unclean among the swarming things which swarm on the earth: the mole, and the mouse, and the great lizard in its kinds, ³⁰ and the gecko, and the crocodile, and the lizard, and the sand reptile, and the chameleon. ³¹ These are to you the unclean among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead becomes unclean until evening. ³² Also anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead becomes unclean, including any wooden article, or clothing, or a skin, or a sack-- any article of which use is made-- it shall be put in the water and be unclean until evening, then it becomes clean. ³³ As for any earthenware vessel into which one of them may fall, whatever is in it becomes unclean and you shall break the vessel. ³⁴ Any of the food which may be eaten, on which water comes, shall become unclean, and any liquid which may be drunk in every vessel shall become unclean. ³⁵ Everything, moreover, on which part of their carcass may fall becomes unclean; an oven or a stove shall be smashed; they are unclean and shall continue as unclean to you.

*Reader 7** Amen. ³⁶ 'Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, though the one who touches their carcass shall be unclean. ³⁷ If a part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing which is to be sown, it is clean. ³⁸ Though if water is put on the seed and a part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you. ³⁹ Also if one of the animals dies which you have for food, the one who touches its carcass becomes unclean until evening. ⁴⁰ He too, who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening, and the one who picks up its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. ⁴¹ Now every swarming thing that swarms on the earth is detestable, not to be eaten. ⁴² Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on all fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable. ⁴³ Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean. ⁴⁴ **For I am Yahweh your God. Consecrate yourselves**

therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. ⁴⁵ For I am Yahweh who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy." ⁴⁶ This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, ⁴⁷ to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten.

1 Kings 8:56-61

*Reader 8** Amen. ⁵⁵ And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: ⁵⁶ "Blessed be Yahweh, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant. ⁵⁷ "May Yahweh our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us, ⁵⁸ that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, which He commanded our fathers. ⁵⁹ "And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before Yahweh, be near to Yahweh our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day requires, ⁶⁰ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh is God; there is no one else. ⁶¹ "Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to Yahweh our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day."

2 Samuel 6:1-7

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ² And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of Yahweh of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim. ³ They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. ⁴ So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. ⁵ Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before Yahweh with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals. ⁶ But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. ⁷ And the anger of Yahweh burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

Psalm 76 (To be sung.) For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph, a Song.

¹ God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. ² His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion. ³ There He broke the flaming arrows, the shield and the sword and the weapons of war. Selah. ⁴ You are resplendent, more majestic than the mountains of prey. ⁵ The stouthearted were plundered, they sank into sleep; and none of the warriors could use his hands. ⁶ At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both rider and horse were cast into a dead sleep. ⁷ You, even You, are to be feared; and who may stand in Your presence when once You are angry? ⁸ You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still ⁹ When God arose to judgment, To save all the humble of the earth. Selah. ¹⁰ For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself. ¹¹ Make vows to Yahweh your God and fulfill them; Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him who is to be feared. ¹² He will cut off the spirit of princes; He is feared by the kings of the earth.

Mark 7:1-23

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹ The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, ² and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. ³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; ⁴ and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) ⁵ The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" ⁶ And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. ⁷ but in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' ⁸ Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." ⁹ He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death'; ¹¹ but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is *korban* (that is to say, given to God), ¹² you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; ¹³ thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹⁴ After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. ¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear." ¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. ¹⁸ And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ because it does not go into his heart, **but into his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purging all foods?"** ²⁰ And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³ All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Commentary:

Leviticus 9-10 is about God's requirement that His priests respectfully represent Him as holy before the people. We are warned to worship Yahweh in the specific way in which He instructs: consider the end of those who thought their way was just as good (v.10:1-3)!

(V.7) The Talmud, *Bava Metzia 107b*, says: "One cannot atone for others unless he himself is free from sin"! What a picture of Yeshua!

(V.10) There was no permanent fire on the altar until the fire came down from heaven and consumed the offerings: Aaron placed the parts on the pyre in anticipation. Picture fire coming out from between the cherubim above the ark, where the glory of God rested

(V.22-24) Aaron raised his hands and gave the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-27) for the first time.

(V.10:1) Two sons of Aaron presented offerings that did not qualify by God's instruction. The fire itself may have been from a foreign source – not from the altar as required. This time the fire from between the cherubim struck and killed the two sons. Note that it did not consume their bodies or clothing, for they were carried away.

This should be cause for grave concern with anyone who undertakes to perform God's required worship services according to one's own design. God designed His appointed-times solemn-assembly services.

"In the eighth day" – just after the seventh millennial day, fire will come down from God and kill the enemies surrounding Jerusalem! – Revelation 20:9.

(V.9) Intoxicants are forbidden to those performing God's service: "A priest who enters the Temple is deficient if he fails to find gladness in his service" – *R' Burnam of P'shis'cha*. The placement of this command may indicate that Aaron's sons' sins were the result of intoxication.

Leviticus 11 concerns God's people being holy – not doing as the rest of the world does, being dedicated to His purpose. *Tumah* refers to spiritual contamination, and usually that which can be transmitted to other people, even through things. Let us consider where this subject fits into the big picture of God's commandments, which are Biblically divided into three categories.

God's judgments (*mishpatim*) are obvious to most people. We recognize that we should not murder, steal, etc., though lying has become "acceptable" in our corrupt society.

God's ordinances (*edot*) were given to us to portray spiritual truths. We rehearse the Day of Trumpeting to understand about Yeshua's return and resurrection of the dead. Religious organizations have mostly abandoned or corrupted the Festivals, such as in changing the Holy Sabbath to a free Sunday, or reducing the Passover seder to "the Lord's supper" – as commonly interpreted (it is actually a translation of "Yahweh's Feast"). *Mikvaot* (baptisms or washings) are also ordinances: these include the required washings of people and objects Leviticus 9-11, and were rabbinically extended to the washing of hands of Mark 7.

God's statutes (*hukim*) are standards for holiness for His people, with a basis not obvious. They are often ridiculed by the world. *Kashrut* (which defines God-given food) falls in the category of statutes.

(Mark 7)

(V.3-4) *(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)* This is not a statement of condemnation, but one of giving social background to non-Jews. "The traditions of the elders" are often directly from the Torah, and the phrase does not imply extra-Biblical man-made rules, though this is sometimes the case.

(V.18-19) *And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purging all foods?"* The last clause is often mistranslated "Thus He declared all foods clean". That would be inconsistent with the subject of the passage. It would also be contradictory to Torah; Yeshua did not come to contradict Torah – Matthew 5:17, and Peter did not know about this 'change' after spending years with Yeshua – Acts 10:14.

The problem here was not that some Pharisees were insisting on *kashrut* laws that Yeshua had abolished. The problem was that some Pharisees sought to publicly find fault with Yeshua, by putting minor stricter-than-Biblical standards ahead of major Biblical judgments. While hand washing is good, making it a requirement above providing necessary food was simply looking for an excuse to condemn Yeshua – which falls under the category of murder.

Peter's vision (Acts 10) No food was present here, and Peter ate nothing. Peter, having spent years with Yeshua, still knew of no change in *kashrut* laws. Jews generally saw gentiles as unclean like pigs. God presented a vision to tell Peter not to avoid gentiles whom He had cleansed.

(Acts 10:28-29) *"You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. "That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for.*

Paul's instruction (1 Corinthians 10:25-31)

25 Eat anything that is sold in the meat market, without asking questions for conscience ' sake; 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. 27 If one of the unbelievers invites you, and you wish to go, eat anything that is set before you, without asking questions for conscience ' sake. 28 But if anyone should say to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for conscience ' sake; 29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other man's; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? 31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Paul is not requiring gentile Corinthians to eat only rabbinic certified kosher food: he says to eat what is sold in the markets, but he is referring that which God defined as food. Even having been offered to idols does not change the permissibility of the food (food offered to idols was commonly sold later in the markets), but we must not partake of food in such a way that we would appear to be worshipping idols.

The bottom line is this: do we speak and eat according to our own feelings, or grow in learning and practicing what God says about how we should speak and what we should eat? Do we perform worship services according to our feelings, or learn what God designed?

*Reader 1** Amen. ^{12:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. ³ 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. ⁴ 'Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁵ 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of her purification for sixty-six days. ⁶ 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. ⁷ 'Then he shall offer it before Yahweh and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female. ⁸ 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for an elevation offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

*Reader 3** Amen. ^{13:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling or a scab or a bright spot, and it becomes an infection of *tzaraat* on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. ³ "The priest shall look at the mark on the skin of the body, and if the hair in the infection has turned white and the infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is an infection of *tzaraat*; when the priest has looked at him, he shall pronounce him unclean. ⁴ "But if the bright spot is white on the skin of his body, and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate him who has the infection for seven days. ⁵ "The priest shall look at him on the seventh day, and if in his eyes the infection has not changed and the infection has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him for seven more days.

*Reader 4** Amen. ⁶ "The priest shall look at him again on the seventh day, and if the infection has faded and the mark has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is only a scab. And he shall wash his clothes and be clean. ⁷ "But if the scab spreads farther on the skin after he has shown himself to the priest for his cleansing, he shall appear again to the priest. ⁸ "The priest shall look, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is *tzaraat*. ⁹ "When the infection of *tzaraat* is on a man, then he shall be brought to the priest. ¹⁰ "The priest shall then look, and if there is a white swelling in the skin, and it has turned the hair white, and there is quick raw flesh in the swelling, ¹¹ it is a chronic *tzaraat* on the skin of his body, and the priest shall pronounce him unclean; he shall not isolate him, for he is unclean.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹² "If the *tzaraat* breaks out farther on the skin, and the *tzaraat* covers all the skin of him who has the infection from his head even to his feet, as far as the priest can see, ¹³ then the priest shall look, and behold, if the *tzaraat* has covered all his body, he shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; it has all turned white and he is clean. ¹⁴ "But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. ¹⁵ "The priest shall look at the raw flesh, and he shall pronounce him unclean; the raw flesh is unclean, it is *tzaraat*. ¹⁶ "Or if the raw flesh turns again and is changed to white, then he shall come to the priest, ¹⁷ and the priest shall look at him, and behold, if the infection has turned to white, then the priest shall pronounce clean him who has the infection; he is clean.

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹⁸ "When the body has a boil on its skin and it is healed, ¹⁹ and in the place of the boil there is a white swelling or a reddish-white, bright spot, then it shall be shown to the priest; ²⁰ and the priest shall look, and behold, if it appears to be lower than the skin, and the hair on it has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is the infection of *tzaraat*, it has broken out in the boil. ²¹ "But if the priest looks at it, and behold, there are no white hairs in it and it is not lower than the skin and is faded, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; ²² and if it spreads farther on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection. ²³ "But if the bright spot remains in its place and does not spread, it is only the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²⁴ "Or if the body sustains in its skin a burn by fire, and the raw flesh of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white, or white, ²⁵ then the priest shall look at it. And if the hair in the bright spot has turned white and it appears to be deeper than the skin, it is *tzaraat*; it has broken out in the burn. Therefore, the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is an infection of *tzaraat*. ²⁶ "But if the priest looks at it, and indeed, there is no white hair in the bright spot and it is no deeper than the skin, but is dim, then the priest shall isolate him for seven days; ²⁷ and the priest shall look at him on the seventh day. If it spreads farther in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him

unclean; it is an infection of *tzaraat*.²⁸ "But if the bright spot remains in its place and has not spread in the skin, but is dim, it is the swelling from the burn; and the priest shall pronounce him clean, for it is only the scar of the burn.

II Kings 4:42 - 5:19

*Reader 8** Amen.⁴² Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat."⁴³ His attendant said, "What, will I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says Yahweh, 'They shall eat and have some left over.'"⁴⁴ So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of Yahweh.

^{5:1} Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him Yahweh had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a *metzora*.² Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife.³ She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his *tzaraat*."⁴ Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel."⁵ Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes.

*Reader 9** Amen.⁶ He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his *tzaraat*."⁷ When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his *tzaraat*? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me."⁸ It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha.¹⁰ Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean."¹¹ But Naaman was furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of Yahweh his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the *metzora*.'¹² "Are not Abanah and Parpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

*Reader 10** Amen.¹³ Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?'"¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean.¹⁵ When he returned to the man of God with all his company, and came and stood before him, he said, "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now."¹⁶ But he said, "As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand, I will take nothing." And he urged him to take it, but he refused.¹⁷ Naaman said, "If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules' load of earth; for your servant will no longer offer elevation offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to Yahweh."¹⁸ "In this matter may Yahweh pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, Yahweh pardon your servant in this matter."¹⁹ He said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him some distance.

Isaiah 66:7

*Reader 11** Amen.⁷ "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy.

Psalm 77 *(To be sung.) For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.*

¹ My voice rises to God, and I will cry aloud; my voice rises to God, and He will hear me.² In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; in the night my hand was stretched out without weariness; my soul refused to be comforted.³ When I remember God, then I am disturbed; when I sigh, then my spirit grows faint. Selah.⁴ You have held my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.⁵ I have considered the days of old, the years of long ago.⁶ I will remember my song in the night; I will meditate with my heart, and my spirit ponders:⁷ Will the Lord reject forever? And will He never be favorable again?⁸ Has His lovingkindness ceased forever? Has His promise come to an end forever?⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious, or has He in anger withdrawn His compassion? Selah.

¹⁰ Then I said, "It is my grief, that the right hand of the Most High has changed."¹¹ I shall remember the deeds of Yahweh; surely I will remember Your wonders of old.¹² I will meditate on all Your work and muse on Your deeds.¹³ Your way, O God, is holy; what god is great like our God?¹⁴ You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.¹⁵ You have by Your power redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.¹⁶ The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were in anguish; the deeps also

trembled. ¹⁷ The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth a sound; Your arrows flashed here and there. ¹⁸ The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook. ¹⁹ Your way was in the sea and Your paths in the mighty waters, and Your footprints may not be known. ²⁰ You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Matthew 1:18-24

*Reader 12** Amen. 18 Now the birth of Yeshua the Messiah was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." 22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by Yahweh through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us." 24 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of Yahweh commanded him, and took her as his wife,

Luke 2:21-24

*Reader 13** Amen. ²¹ And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called Holy to Yahweh"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Commentary:

Yeshua was a Torah-observant Jew (*Yahudi*), and the apostles were all Hebrews, including Matthew and Luke (whose name is common for a Hellenized Jew). Constantine and King James were anti-Semites. Today, we are considering Torah-observance and some of God's ancient disciplinary methods.

Tumah (toom-ah, impurity) refers to spiritual contamination, usually that which can be transmitted to other people, even through things. Following the laws of *tumah* from dead animals (previous chapter 11), we have the laws of *tumah* from childbirth (chapter 12), and then the laws of *tumah* from slander (chapter 13). A person who is impure is called a *metzora*. A *metzora* who is quarantined / separated is called a *niddah*.

(Ezra 6:21-22) And the sons of Israel who returned from exile and all those who had separated themselves from the (tumah) impurity of the nations of the land to join them, to seek Yahweh God of Israel, ate the Passover. And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Breads seven days with joy, for Yahweh had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

While *tumah* is a result of the fall, it is not the same as sin: we are often required to become impure, though that would make us unfit to enter the Holy Temple until cleansing. *Tumah* relates to death – the result of the fall.

In chapter 11, it is from touching dead animals or people – and we are required to bury our dead relatives, though not while on duty performing the Temple service.

In chapter 12, it is from childbirth – and since Adam's fall, all are born "spiritually dead". Spiritual contamination is transmitted.

In chapter 13, it is from slander and anger – which fall under the commandment category of murder (slander is destroying another's name). Isaiah 32:7 describes one who "*devises wicked schemes to destroy the afflicted with slander.*" Slander and anger can spiritually contaminate – spreading like fire.

Leviticus 12

At the birth of Yeshua, no spiritual contamination was transmitted: Mary's conception was "pure" (Matt 1:20); Yeshua was sinless because He had no sinful earthly father. So, why did Mary wait the required times and bring the required offerings for childbirth? Similarly, why did Yeshua wash in the mikvah (Jordan baptistery)? John asked that, and Yeshua answered: "It is proper to us to fulfill all of the Torah (all righteousness)" – Matthew 3:15.

The total period of two levels of impurity, after childbirth, are forty days for a boy and eighty days for a girl child. We see this as likely relating to the curse from the time of Eve, not from any individual sin of a mother related to childbirth, as some commentators suggest. All explanations in both our Christian and Jewish commentaries seem totally inadequate to show a reason for this difference.

Leviticus 13

Tzaraat (tza-ra-at) is commonly translated "leprosy."

Leprosy is Hansen's Disease. It is a popular mistaken idea that, with this disease, people's fingers and toes rot and fall off. Actually, this is a disease of the nervous system, where people lose feeling. As a result of being unable to feel, people unknowingly sustain burns, animal bites, and other injuries. In poor southeast Asian countries and South Pacific islands, where this disease is prevalent, rats may bite off fingers or toes while one sleeps.

The quarantine for *tzaraat* is not consistent with disease prevention methods. One stricken with *tzaraat* is not considered unclean when the malady covers the entire body, but is unclean when the body begins to heal (v.13:13). When a house is stricken (v.14:26), the items inside are not quarantined. If a newlywed is stricken during a Festival, he is not quarantined until the Festival is over!

The word *tzora* (singular form of *tzaraat*) is a contraction of *tozia ra*, one who spreads slander (*Arachin 15b*). *Tzaraat* was a physical manifestation of a spiritual problem, a disciplinary punishment. Until the slanderer learned to overcome slandering, he was quarantined from society, having to shout "Unclean!" to anyone coming within hearing range. One stricken with *tzaraat* is called a *metzora*.

Biblical cases of *tzaraat* indicate slander and anger preceding the malady.

Numbers 12:¹ *Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman);*² *and they said, "Has Yahweh indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And Yahweh heard it.*³ *(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)*⁴ *Suddenly Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out.*⁵ *Then Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward,*⁶ *He said, "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, Yahweh, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream."*⁷ *"Not so, with My servant Moses, he is faithful in all My household;*⁸ *with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of Yahweh. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?"*⁹ *So the anger of Yahweh burned against them and He departed.*¹⁰ *But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she was a metzora.*¹¹ *Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned."*¹² *Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!"*¹³ *Moses cried out to Yahweh, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!"*¹⁴ *But Yahweh said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again."*¹⁵ *So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.*

2 Chronicles 26:¹⁶ *But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to Yahweh his God, for he entered the temple of Yahweh to burn incense on the altar of incense.*¹⁷ *Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of Yahweh, valiant men.*¹⁸ *They opposed Uzziah the king and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to*

Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful and will have no honor from Yahweh God." ¹⁹ *But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the tzaraat broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of Yahweh, beside the altar of incense.* ²⁰ *Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because Yahweh had smitten him.* ²¹ *King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of Yahweh. And Jotham his son was over the king's house judging the people of the land.*

Psalm 15:¹ *A Psalm of David. O Yahweh, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?* ² *He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart.* ³ *He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;*

And today's Psalm (77:13) says, "Your way, O God, is holy; what god is great like our God?"

*Reader 1** Amen. ²⁹ "Now if a man or woman has an infection on the head or on the beard, ³⁰ then the priest shall look at the infection, and if it appears to be deeper than the skin and there is thin yellowish hair in it, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it is a scale, it is *tzaraat* of the head or of the beard. ³¹ "But if the priest looks at the infection of the scale, and indeed, it appears to be no deeper than the skin and there is no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate the person with the scaly infection for seven days. ³² "On the seventh day the priest shall look at the infection, and if the scale has not spread and no yellowish hair has grown in it, and the appearance of the scale is no deeper than the skin, ³³ then he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the scale; and the priest shall isolate the person with the scale seven more days.

*Reader 2** Amen. ³⁴ "Then on the seventh day the priest shall look at the scale, and if the scale has not spread in the skin and it appears to be no deeper than the skin, the priest shall pronounce him clean; and he shall wash his clothes and be clean. ³⁵ "But if the scale spreads farther in the skin after his cleansing, ³⁶ then the priest shall look at him, and if the scale has spread in the skin, the priest need not seek for the yellowish hair; he is unclean. ³⁷ "If in his sight the scale has remained, however, and black hair has grown in it, the scale has healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

*Reader 3** Amen. ³⁸ "When a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, even white bright spots, ³⁹ then the priest shall look, and if the bright spots on the skin of their bodies are a faint white, it is eczema that has broken out on the skin; he is clean. ⁴⁰ "Now if a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald; he is clean. ⁴¹ "If his head becomes bald at the front and sides, he is bald on the forehead; he is clean.

*Reader 4** Amen. ⁴² "But if on the bald head or the bald forehead, there occurs a reddish-white infection, it is *tzaraat* breaking out on his bald head or on his bald forehead. ⁴³ "Then the priest shall look at him; and if the swelling of the infection is reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, like the appearance of *tzaraat* in the skin of the body, ⁴⁴ he is a *metzora*, he is unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him unclean; his infection is on his head. ⁴⁵ "As for the *metzora* who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' ⁴⁶ "He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

*Reader 5** Amen. ⁴⁷ "When a garment has *tzaraat* in it, whether it is a wool garment or a linen garment, ⁴⁸ whether in warp or woof, of linen or of wool, whether in leather or in any article made of leather, ⁴⁹ if the mark is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, or in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is *tzaraat* and shall be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰ "Then the priest shall look at the mark and shall quarantine the article with the mark for seven days. ⁵¹ "He shall then look at the mark on the seventh day; if the mark has spread in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in the leather, whatever the purpose for which the leather is used, the mark is *tzaraat*, it is unclean. ⁵² "So he shall burn the garment, whether the warp or the woof, in wool or in linen, or any article of leather in which the mark occurs, for it is *tzaraat*; it shall be burned in the fire.

*Reader 6** Amen. ⁵³ "But if the priest shall look, and indeed the mark has not spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, ⁵⁴ then the priest shall order them to wash the thing in which the mark occurs and he shall quarantine it for seven more days. ⁵⁵ "After the article with the mark has been washed, the priest shall again look, and if the mark has not changed its appearance, even though the mark has not spread, it is unclean; you shall burn it in the fire, whether an eating away has produced bareness on the top or on the front of it.

*Reader 7** Amen. ⁵⁶ "Then if the priest looks, and if the mark has faded after it has been washed, then he shall tear it out of the garment or out of the leather, whether from the warp or from the woof; ⁵⁷ and if it appears again in the garment, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, it is an outbreak; the article with the mark shall be burned in the fire. ⁵⁸ "The garment, whether the warp or the woof, or any article of leather from which the mark has departed when you washed it, it shall then be washed a second time and will be clean." ⁵⁹ This is the law for *tzaraat* in a garment of wool or linen, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in any article of leather, for pronouncing it clean or unclean.

Psalm 78 (To be sung.) A Maskil of Asaph.

¹ Listen, O my people, to my instruction (*Torah*); incline your ears to the words of my mouth. ² I will open my mouth in a parable (*maskil*); I will utter dark sayings of old, ³ which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. ⁴ We will not conceal them from their children, but tell to the generation to come the praises of Yahweh, and His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. ⁵ For He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should teach them to their children, ⁶ that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, that they may arise and tell them to their children, ⁷ that they should put their confidence in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments, ⁸ and not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not prepare its heart and whose spirit was not faithful to God. ⁹ The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows, yet they turned back in the day of battle. ¹⁰ They did not keep the covenant of God and refused to walk in His law; ¹¹ They forgot His deeds and His miracles that He had shown them. ¹² He wrought wonders before their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. ¹³ He divided the sea and caused them to pass through, and He made the waters stand up like a heap. ¹⁴ Then He led them with the cloud by day and all the night with a light of fire. ¹⁵ He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them abundant drink like the ocean depths. ¹⁶ He brought forth streams also from the rock and caused waters to run down like rivers. ¹⁷ Yet they still continued to sin against Him, to rebel against the Most High in the desert. ¹⁸ And in their heart they put God to the test by asking food according to their desire. ¹⁹ Then they spoke against God; they said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?" ²⁰ "Behold, He struck the rock so that waters gushed out, and streams were overflowing; can He give bread also? Will He provide meat for His people?" ²¹ Therefore **Yahweh heard and was full of wrath**; and a fire was kindled against Jacob and anger also mounted against Israel, ²² because they did not believe in God and **did not trust in His salvation**. ²³ Yet He commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven; ²⁴ He rained down manna upon them to eat and gave them food from heaven. ²⁵ Man did eat the bread of angels; He sent them food in abundance. ²⁶ He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens and by His power He directed the south wind. ²⁷ When He rained meat upon them like the dust, even winged fowl like the sand of the seas, ²⁸ then He let them fall in the midst of their camp, round about their dwellings. ²⁹ So they ate and were well filled, and their desire He gave to them. ³⁰ Before they had satisfied their desire, while their food was in their mouths, ³¹ the anger of God rose against them and killed some of their stoutest ones, and subdued the choice men of Israel. ³² In spite of all this they still sinned and did not believe in His wonderful works. ³³ So He brought their days to an end in futility and their years in sudden terror. ³⁴ When He killed them, then they sought Him, and returned and searched diligently for God; ³⁵ and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer. ³⁶ But they deceived Him with their mouth and lied to Him with their tongue. ³⁷ For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant. ³⁸ But He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not destroy them; and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath. ³⁹ Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and does not return. ⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert! ⁴¹ Again and again they tempted God, and pained the Holy One of Israel. ⁴² They did not remember His power, the day when He redeemed them from the adversary, ⁴³ When He performed His signs in Egypt and His marvels in the field of Zoan, ⁴⁴ and turned their rivers to blood, and their streams, they could not drink. ⁴⁵ He sent among them swarms of flies which devoured them, and frogs which destroyed them. ⁴⁶ He gave also their crops to the grasshopper and the product of their labor to the locust. ⁴⁷ He destroyed their vines with hailstones and their sycamore trees with frost. ⁴⁸ He gave over their cattle also to the hailstones and their herds to bolts of lightning. ⁴⁹ He sent upon them His burning anger, fury and indignation and trouble, a band of destroying angels. ⁵⁰ He leveled a path for His anger; He did not spare their soul from death, but gave over their life to the plague, ⁵¹ and smote all the firstborn in Egypt, the first issue of their virility in the tents of Ham. ⁵² But He led forth His own people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock; ⁵³ He led them safely, so that they did not fear; but the sea engulfed their enemies. ⁵⁴ So He brought them to His holy land, to this hill country which His right hand had gained. ⁵⁵ He also drove out the nations before them and apportioned them for an inheritance by measurement, and made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents. ⁵⁶ Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God and did not keep His testimonies, ⁵⁷ but turned back and acted treacherously like their fathers; they turned aside like a treacherous bow. ⁵⁸ For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images. ⁵⁹ When God heard, He was filled with wrath and greatly abhorred Israel; ⁶⁰ so that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, the tent which He had pitched among men, ⁶¹ and gave up His strength to captivity and His glory into the hand of the adversary. ⁶² He also delivered His people to the sword, and was filled with wrath at His inheritance. ⁶³ Fire devoured His young men, and His virgins had no wedding songs. ⁶⁴ His priests fell by the sword, and His widows could not weep. ⁶⁵ Then Yahweh awoke as if from sleep, like a warrior overcome by wine. ⁶⁶ He drove His adversaries backward; He put on them an everlasting reproach. ⁶⁷ He also rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, ⁶⁸ But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion

which He loved. ⁶⁹ And He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has founded forever. ⁷⁰ He also chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; ⁷¹ from the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him to shepherd Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance. ⁷² So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them with his skillful hands.

Luke 5:12-15

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹² While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with *tzaraat*; and when he saw Yeshua, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." ¹³ And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the *tzaraat* left him. ¹⁴ And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ¹⁵ But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.

Commentary:

Continuing from last week's lesson on *tzaraat* for slander and anger:

We are taught that "*the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God*" – James 1:20. We are also instructed to "*put aside anger and wrath*" – Colossians 3:8. We are to "*let all bitterness, wrath, and anger . . . be put away*" – Ephesians 4:31. These Scriptures seem very clear.

People often talk about "righteous anger", but the word "righteous" never Biblically precedes the word (Gr. *orgizo*) anger. The verse, "*Be angry and sin not, do not let the sun go down upon your irritation*" – Ephesians 4:26, should not be interpreted in contradiction, giving license for anger.

We often show anger most readily toward those closest to us – our family. We ought to be overcoming anger toward those we claim to love, especially our mates and children. There is really no excuse for such.

And we are taught: "*Do not provoke your children to anger*" – Ephesians 6:4. We ought to treat them as we would be treated. As they grow, they need to be given increasing freedom to make their own decisions; our purpose is to teach them good decision-making abilities, not to keep them under our control.

God said, "*By a nation without understanding, I will anger you*" – Deuteronomy 32:21, Romans 10:19. That is God's prerogative, not our right.

Slander is destroying someone else's reputation or name. Slander includes making negative statements, whether true or false. It includes name-calling, calling someone a derogatory name – saying that he is bad, dishonest, mean, or such like.

We should not so treat our spouse, our children, or our neighbor.

There are specific circumstances where we may, or are required, to denigrate another's name. The purpose is always to help the individual overcome sin, or to protect society from the sin. If we see someone overtaken in a fault, we are to first deal directly with that individual, and then if necessary, take along another witness to the fault (not a non-witness just to back us up). "*Tell it to the church*" (Matthew 18:17) means take it to the judges, not the public. If we see someone commit certain kinds of sin, we are required to testify to the proper authorities: this is not optional.

We may confront someone concerning specific actions. We may warn others of specific dangers.

Luke 5:14

I have long wondered why Yeshua ordered the healed man to "*tell no one*". Last week's lesson seems to explain it. He was being disciplined, by the disease of *tzaraat*, for slander: if anyone came within hearing range, he was required to shout, "Unclean!" Only after being certified "clean" by the priest could he be free to talk to others. So, again, we see that Yeshua was being Torah observant. And that leads us to today's message of Psalm 78.

Psalm 78

Paul told gentile Christians (long after Yeshua's ascension) to "teach one another with Psalms" (Colossians 3:16 – Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs are the titles of the five divisions of the 150 Psalms). This Psalm is about eternal teachings: it is entitled "enlightenment". Even since Yeshua's ascension – even as gentile Christians – we are to learn from the Psalms to be Torah observant.

Maskil = wisdom, enlightenment.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-11 (The wisdom of Solomon) *That which has been is that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. So, there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which one might say, "See this, it is new"? Already it has existed for ages which were before us. There is no remembrance of earlier things; and also of the later things which will occur, there will be for them no remembrance among those who will come later still.* (In other words: we do not learn from history the results of ignoring Torah, so we ignore it again, and our descendents will not learn from our results.)

(V.1-3) *"Listen, O my people, to my Torah (instruction); incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in enlightenment; I will pour-forth intriguing sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."*

The subject is the supremacy of the Torah, enshrined in the Holy Temple. The examples in this Psalm span 400 years – from Egypt to King David. The Tabernacle had been in Shiloh, of Ephraim (head of the 10 seceding tribes), for 369 years. But God chose Mt. Zion, of Judah, as the permanent dwelling place for the Torah. He chose Jerusalem as His base for prophets to instruct the world, as His place of presence toward which we should worship, and as the place from which He would one day rule as King over all the earth.

Sabbath

God did not wait for Moses at Sinai to reestablish the blessing of Sabbath observance instituted with Adam. The Sabbath was created on Adam's first full day on earth (Genesis 1:26 - 2:3); the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2:27); so, for what man was the Sabbath made – just "Jews" who came on the scene thousands of years later? People of the seventy nations left Egypt for the Promised Land, and observed Sabbath before the Mt. Sinai event (Exodus 16:29). The Fourth Commandment is "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy": it is to remember what already existed, and was already proclaimed holy at creation.

Sabbath is a memorial of the culmination of creation's seven days. Sabbath is a prophetic shadow (Colossians 2:16-17) of the culminating seventh millennium when Messiah will reign on earth. Sabbath is a rehearsal (*miqra* - Leviticus 23:3) of past and future. The Sabbath was made for man, to teach us God's eternal plan.

Baptism

If we want to know what baptism was about 1900 years ago, we need to go back to the Torah of 3300 years ago (and even back to creation) and see what God said, because nothing in the Bible indicates that it changed! John's preaching of "baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3), would have been well understood by the Jews of his day – not something new.

Church

Concerning the eternal Qahal / Church of the eternal Torah:

The priesthood functions in relationship to the congregation. The priesthood of the firstborn began with Adam. The qahal / church was so called from wilderness* (Acts 7:38). Yeshua said that He would build-up His church – which implies that it already existed – and that it would never die out (Matthew 16:18).

* Leviticus 4:14 refers to the sin offering for the church (*qahal*). Numbers 19:20 says that a man who will not purify himself from uncleanness shall be cut off from the church (*qahal*).

Salvation

Psalm 78:21-22: *Therefore Yahweh heard and was full of wrath, and a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also mounted against Israel; because they did not believe in God, and did not trust in His salvation.* The Hebrew word here translated "His salvation" is Yeshua. Since none of us fulfill Torah, we can be saved only by trusting Yeshua – the Salvation of Yahweh. And the fact, that Yeshua had to pay for our transgressions of Torah, implies

that we should be observing Torah; otherwise, what is sin, from which anyone need be saved? *Sin is (present tense) the transgression of the Torah* (1 John 3:4).

If we don't believe in God's eternal instruction, if we don't trust His salvation – Yeshua, then His anger will be against us!

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "This shall be the law of the *metzora* in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, ³ and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the plague of *tzaraat* has been healed, ⁴ then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. ⁵ The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. ⁶ As for the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. ⁷ He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the *tzaraat* and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. ⁸ The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. ⁹ It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean.

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹⁰ Now on the eighth day he is to take two male lambs without defect, and a yearling ewe lamb without defect, and three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil; ¹¹ and the priest who pronounces him clean shall present the man to be cleansed and the aforesaid before Yahweh at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ¹² Then the priest shall take the one male lamb and bring it for a guilt offering, with the log of oil, and present them as a wave offering before Yahweh. ¹³ Next he shall slaughter the male lamb in the place where they slaughter the sin offering and the elevation offering, at the place of the sanctuary-- for the guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest; it is most holy. ¹⁴ The priest shall then take some of the blood of the guilt offering, and the priest shall put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ¹⁵ The priest shall also take some of the log of oil, and pour it into his left palm; ¹⁶ the priest shall then dip his right-hand finger into the oil that is in his left palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of the oil seven times before Yahweh.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁷ Of the remaining oil which is in his palm, the priest shall put some on the right ear lobe of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the guilt offering; ¹⁸ while the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm, he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before Yahweh. ¹⁹ The priest shall next offer the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Then afterward, he shall slaughter the elevation offering.

²⁰ The priest shall offer up the elevation offering and the grain offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be clean. ²¹ But if he is poor and his means are insufficient, then he is to take one male lamb for a guilt offering as a wave offering to make atonement for him, and one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and a log of oil, ²² and two turtledoves or two young pigeons which are within his means, the one shall be a sin offering and the other an elevation offering. ²³ Then the eighth day he shall bring them for his cleansing to the priest, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, before Yahweh. ²⁴ The priest shall take the lamb of the guilt offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall offer them for a wave offering before Yahweh.

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁵ Next he shall slaughter the lamb of the guilt offering; and the priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. ²⁶ The priest shall also pour some of the oil into his left palm; ²⁷ and with his right-hand finger the priest shall sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before Yahweh. ²⁸

The priest shall then put some of the oil that is in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the guilt offering. ²⁹ Moreover, the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement on his behalf before Yahweh. ³⁰ He shall then offer one of the turtledoves or young pigeons, which are within his means. ³¹ He shall offer what he can afford, the one for a sin offering and the other for an elevation offering, together with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement before Yahweh on behalf of the one to be cleansed. ³² This is the law for him in whom there is an infection of *tzaraat*, whose means are limited for his cleansing."

*Reader 5** Amen. ³³ Yahweh further spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying: ³⁴ "When you enter the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and I put a mark of *tzaraat* on a house in the land of your possession, ³⁵ then the one who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, 'Something like a mark of *tzaraat* has become visible to me in the house.' ³⁶ The priest shall then command that they empty the house before the priest goes in to look at the mark, so that everything in the house need not become unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to look at the house. ³⁷ So he shall look at the mark, and if the mark on the walls of the house has greenish or reddish depressions

and appears deeper than the surface,³⁸ then the priest shall come out of the house, to the doorway, and quarantine the house for seven days.³⁹ The priest shall return on the seventh day and make an inspection. If the mark has indeed spread in the walls of the house,⁴⁰ then the priest shall order them to tear out the stones with the mark in them and throw them away at an unclean place outside the city.⁴¹ He shall have the house scraped all around inside, and they shall dump the plaster that they scrape off at an unclean place outside the city.

*Reader 6** Amen.⁴² Then they shall take other stones and replace those stones, and he shall take other plaster and replaster the house.⁴³ If, however, the mark breaks out again in the house after he has torn out the stones and scraped the house, and after it has been replastered,⁴⁴ then the priest shall come in and make an inspection. If he sees that the mark has indeed spread in the house, it is a malignant mark in the house; it is unclean.⁴⁵ He shall therefore tear down the house, its stones, and its timbers, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall take them outside the city to an unclean place.⁴⁶ Moreover, whoever goes into the house during the time that he has quarantined it, becomes unclean until evening.⁴⁷ Likewise, whoever lies down in the house shall wash his clothes, and whoever eats in the house shall wash his clothes.⁴⁸ If, on the other hand, the priest comes in and makes an inspection and the mark has not indeed spread in the house after the house has been replastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean because the mark has not reappeared.

*Reader 7** Amen.⁴⁹ To cleanse the house then, he shall take two birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop,⁵⁰ and he shall slaughter the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water.⁵¹ Then he shall take the cedar wood and the hyssop and the scarlet string, with the live bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird as well as in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times.⁵² He shall thus cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the running water, along with the live bird and with the cedar wood and with the hyssop and with the scarlet string.⁵³ However, he shall let the live bird go free outside the city into the open field. So he shall make atonement for the house, and it will be clean."⁵⁴ This is the law for any mark of *tzaraat* -- even for a scale,⁵⁵ and for the *tzaraat* in a garment or house,⁵⁶ and for a swelling, and for a scab, and for a bright spot--⁵⁷ to teach when they are unclean and when they are clean. This is the torah of *tzaraat*.

2 Kings 7:1-16

*Reader 8** Amen.¹ Then Elisha said, "Listen to the word of Yahweh; thus says Yahweh, 'Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.'"² The royal officer on whose hand the king was leaning answered the man of God and said, "Behold, if Yahweh should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" Then he said, "Behold, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat of it."

³ Now there were four men with *tzaraat* at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why do we sit here until we die?"⁴ "If we say, 'We will enter the city,' then the famine is in the city and we will die there; and if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we will live; and if they kill us, we will but die."

*Reader 9** Amen.⁵ They arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Arameans; when they came to the outskirts of the camp of the Arameans, behold, there was no one there.⁶ For the Lord had caused the army of the Arameans to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us."⁷ Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life.⁸ When these men with *tzaraat* came to the outskirts of the camp, they entered one tent and ate and drank, and carried from there silver and gold and clothes, and went and hid them; and they returned and entered another tent and carried from there also, and went and hid them.⁹ Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent; if we wait until morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household."

*Reader 10** Amen.¹⁰ So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and they told them, saying, "We came to the camp of the Arameans, and behold, there was no one there, nor the voice of man, only the horses tied and the donkeys tied, and the tents just as they were."¹¹ The gatekeepers called and told it within the king's household.¹² Then the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "I will now tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know that we are hungry; therefore they have gone from the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we will capture them alive and get into the city.'"¹³ One of his servants said, "Please, let some men take five of the horses which remain, which are left in the city. Behold, they will be in any case like all the multitude of Israel who are left in it; behold, they will be in any case like all the multitude of Israel who have already perished, so let us send and see."¹⁴ They took therefore two chariots with horses, and the king sent after the army of the Arameans, saying, "Go and see."¹⁵ They went after them to the Jordan, and behold, all the way was full of clothes and equipment which the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. Then the messengers

returned and told the king. ¹⁶ So the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. Then a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of Yahweh.

Psalm 79 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of Asaph.*

O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance; **they have defiled Your Holy Temple**; they have laid Jerusalem in ruins. ² They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth. ³ They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; and there was no one to bury them. ⁴ We have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and derision to those around us. ⁵ How long, O Yahweh? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? ⁶ Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, and upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name. ⁷ For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation. ⁸ Do not remember the iniquities of our forefathers against us; let Your compassion come quickly to meet us, for we are brought very low. ⁹ **Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake.** ¹⁰ **Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"** Let there be known among the nations in our sight, vengeance for the blood of Your servants which has been shed. ¹¹ Let the groaning of the prisoner come before You; according to the greatness of Your power preserve those who are doomed to die. ¹² And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom the reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord. ¹³ So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture will give thanks to You forever; to all generations we will tell of Your praise.

Ephesians 4:1-32

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹ Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Messiah's gift. ⁸ Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men." ⁹ (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) ¹¹ And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹² for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Messiah; ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Messiah.

*Reader 12** Amen. ¹⁴ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. ¹⁷ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹ and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.

*Reader 13** Amen. ²⁰ But you did not learn Messiah in this way, ²¹ if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Yeshua, ²² that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. ²⁵ Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶ Being angry, do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not give the devil an opportunity. ²⁸ He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. ²⁹ Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Messiah also has forgiven you.

Commentary:

In an ancient Talmudic story (from memory), a certain man came to his priest, asking how he could rectify his having made evil statements about another person. The priest told the man to go home and bring his pillow, which he did. Then the priest told him to open it and shake all the feathers to the wind, which he did. Then the priest told him to go and gather all the feathers back; the man complained that it was impossible. The priest said that such was the situation with the evil words he had spoken.

A slanderer whom God has under the discipline of the disease *tzaraat* is called a *metzora* (both words being from the root *tzara* – one who spreads slander). *Tzaraat* is a state of spiritual impurity (*tumah*), with physical manifestations: no other impurity takes effect upon the declaration of a priest, and no other impurity can be temporarily ignored as a matter of convenience, such as for a wedding or festival. Only a *metzora* is excluded from the entire camp, and contaminates everything in a building he enters. (Note that *tozia ra* (slander) includes truth and lies.)

Leviticus 13 is concerned with the diagnosis and discipline of the *metzora* – the one who is stricken for slander. Leviticus 14 deals with the healing and return of the *niddah* – the quarantined slanderer, who repents.

When God heals him, he must go through an eight-day two-stage process of purification. A priest who is himself a *niddah* – one who is quarantined as a *metzora* – is not eligible to rule on a healing, since the Torah requires that the priest who rules must go out of the camp to rule.

The root cause of the sinner's gossip or slander is haughtiness – contempt for others. His purification therefore symbolically displays his repentance, going from haughtiness to humility.

The first stage of involves a ritual with two birds, performed outside the camp, after which he could enter the camp. Because the punishment came for gossip and slander, twittering, chirping birds are used in the ritual as symbols. The slaughter is not a *karban* – offering. The birds must be of a *kosher* kind, but not of those species that may be used for offerings.

The tall, wide cedar tree symbolizes haughtiness. Crimson dye comes from a small creature whose identity is uncertain, showing lowliness; likewise, thyme (often translated hyssop) is a lowly plant.

As the gossip / slanderer has “slain” his victims, with his words of life-destruction running far and wide, so now the better of two birds must be slain, its life-blood being spread with water.

A sprig of the small thyme plant is tied with a scarlet thread to a large cedar board. {Sample presented} They are dipped into the bloody water. The live bird is also dipped into the blood, and then thrown to freedom over the open field: the death-cry of the blood is carried far. The slaughtered bird is buried after the ritual.

The healed *metzora* is sprinkled seven times with the blood, and then must go to a *mikvah* (baptistry) and put on clean clothes. He is afterward allowed into the camp, but may not go into his house (he may not cohabit with his wife) until his cleansing is completed seven days later.

The final stage of his purification, on the eighth day, requires an unusual three atonements: two male lambs, plus a ewe lamb. The third offering, a guilt offering, is brought by someone who has used something dedicated to God – stolen from the Temple; the implication is that the slanderer has taken something from God.

Loaves made from three *omers* (about 5 pounds per each of three animals) of fine flour and olive oil, plus one *log* (about 1 pint) of olive oil, are also offered.

Acting out today's portion:

A person, who spoke in a manner defaming another's character, has been quarantined from society, and is now repentant. His *tzaraat* has been healed. A priest must go outside the camp to meet him.

The priest would send for two kosher (but not sacrificial type) birds, a bowl, a cedar plank, a scarlet thread, and a sprig of thyme / hyssop.

Look at these two (*stuffed imitation*) birds, whose chirping represents the slander or gossip that was spread by the

penitent. The better of these birds will be slaughtered in the bowl, its (*red dye*) life-blood being spread by running water, like the life of the slander victim. The live bird is dipped in the blood, and then released to fly away (*stuffed bird carried by the presenter*), the death-cry of the victim's blood going afar.

This (*fence board*) plank from a great proud cedar tree has a thin red thread around its lower end, to which an insignificant sprig of thyme is tied. This symbol of haughtiness to humility is dipped in the bloody water. The penitent is sprinkled seven times with the blood.

The penitent must now immerse in a mikvah, and put on clean clothes. Afterward, he may enter the camp, and seven days later may enter his house.

It was the year 5608 (1848). The city of Vilna was in the grips of a terrible epidemic. The killer cholera was sweeping through the city and the surrounding countryside and the Jewish community was in turmoil. As in all times of trouble, Jews gathered to pray to *Yahweh*. Their leaders exhorted them to search their hearts and repent, each one for his particular sins. People were urged to give charity and be especially kind to one another.

Most people genuinely repented and improved. There were some, however, who instead of examining their own faults and sins, eagerly examined those of their neighbors.

One such Jew came to R' Yisrael Salanter during this time. He had something to confess. He whispered in the rabbi's ear of some sin he saw in a fellow Jew.

"Rabbi, who knows if it is not that very sin which is causing our plague? Something must be done about that person," he said.

As usual, R' Yisrael listened patiently and when his visitor fell silent, he said, "As you know, the Torah instructs us to send the *metzora* from all three camps (of the kohanim, leviim, and the rest of the people, Yisrael). Our sages tell us that *tzaraat* is the punishment sent upon a tale-bearer, the *baal lashon hara* (lit. – possessor of evil speech). Some people think that this sin only applies to lies one says about another. That is not so. A person who searches out other people's faults and sins is certainly considered a *baal lashon hara*, too. We tell him, 'If you think that you are expert at discovering sins, go out of the camp. There, where you will be isolated for many days, you won't be able to uncover another's sins. But you will certainly be able to discover and see your own. From "*Tales of Tzaddikim - Vayikra*" (*Artscroll Youth Series*)

A house with *tzaraat*:

A man carries some responsibility for what goes on in his house – that is: what his family does (see Job 1:5, 1 Timothy 2:4, 12). When a house becomes contaminated with apparent *tzaraat* on its walls, there is a seven-day period for taking care of the problem in the family. If the contamination is still spreading – because of slander still going on – then the affected stones must be removed and replaced. If the contamination returns, the house must be torn down.

Gossip and slander will destroy one's house – that is his family. God requires repentance. That is the purpose of discipline – to bring repentance.

We all meet people who look for double meanings of statements made in general conversation: when we are speaking of something entirely different, they will seek to twist it to have a sexual meaning, to make a joke of our statement.

The sages teach us to speak with double meanings of another kind, as well as to look for double meanings in what we hear. We should always have our minds upon God. When we speak of our worldly needs, our words should be chosen to instill devotion to God. When we hear others speak, we should understand the words as if they were holy – to find God's message to us. ("*Jewish Spiritual Practices*" by *Yitzhak Buxbaum*)

Everything that happens to us, including everything we hear, should be considered as a message to us from God for that particular time. *All things work together for good for those who love God – those who are called for His purpose* (Romans 8:28).

R' Mordechai of Pinchov did not have two pennies to rub together. Small wonder, then, that his wife would beg him, whenever he went to his Rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin, to speak of their sorry plight and ask for advice and a blessing. But as soon as he entered the Rebbe's room, the world of here and now vanished. He forgot all about his wife's pleas and had only eyes and ears for the Rebbe. They would spend hours in exploring the intricacies of the Torah, the Talmud, and Chasidus. All worldly things were as mere shadows compared to their eternal wisdom.

And so R' Mordechai returned to Pinchov each time invigorated in spirit. He glowed. But when he entered the house and his wife greeted him with the question, "Well, did you speak to the Rebbe about *parnasah* this time?" R' Mordechai would strike his forehead. He had completely forgotten again!

When they had sold everything they possibly could and were down to their last crust, she again came crying to R' Mordechai, "You must go to the Chozeh again. You must beg him to pray for us. This time, however, I want to make sure that you do not forget. I will accompany you!"

And indeed, the next time he visited Lublin, he entered the Rebbe's study and blurted out the words immediately, before they could slip his mind, "Rebbe! I can bear it no longer." He went on to describe the squalor and poverty in his home, begging the Rebbe to pray for him.

"I did not realize that things were so bad. Why did you never mention this to me before!" he said in a note of complaint. "You should not have allowed things to reach such a terrible state!"

R' Mordechai hung his head in shame. "I felt it was not right to bother the Rebbe with such material matters. Besides," he added, lowering his voice, "I always thought that, in His divine intuition, the Rebbe would know of my condition."

The Chozeh smiled and said, "The Torah differentiates between *tzaraat* upon a person and *tzaraat* that afflicts a house. With regard to a person it says, 'And if a man has on his skin a *tzaraat* lesion . . . and the priest shall see the spots (Leviticus 13:2-3).' This implies that a person need not tell the priest what happened. It is enough to come to the priest. He will see it without your telling him and know what to do.

In contrast, with regard to plague spots on the wall of a house, the Torah states, 'And the owner of the house shall come and tell the priest thus: such a spot did I see in my house.' The Torah explicitly states that in connection with things that concern the house one must tell the priest exactly what is wrong with the house, before he can begin to treat it." *From "Tales of Tzaddikim - Vayikra" (Artscroll Youth Series)*

So we see how the specific rules of Leviticus 14 are applied to broader situations. (Until reading this story, I had not picked up the difference in the situations of a plagued man and a plagued house: how one is seen but the other must be told. Also, we see here that "house" symbolizes the family (the family was poor).

Ephesians 4:

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another" – v.25.

If we have found faith in Yeshua, we have a new life, and should walk accordingly. We should be repentant of our former ways of defaming others, and practice speaking truth and acting in love. We are to seek redemption for the faithless and for help other believers to grow in grace and overcome sin.

"²⁹ Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Messiah also has forgiven you" – v.29-32.

Ish Ish Chai / When Any Man

Leviticus 15:1-33 [No Prophet] Psalm 80 Philippians 3:1-21

Commentary Y2-36

Kislev 11, 5763 / Nov 16, 2002
Kislev 9, 5766 / Dec 10, 2005

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Yahweh also spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge is unclean. ³ 'This, moreover, shall be his uncleanness in his discharge: it is his uncleanness whether his body allows its discharge to flow or whether his body obstructs its discharge. ⁴ 'Every bed on which the person with the discharge lies becomes unclean, and everything on which he sits becomes unclean. ⁵ 'Anyone, moreover, who touches his bed shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening; ⁶ and whoever sits on the thing on which the man with the discharge has been sitting, shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁷ 'Also whoever touches the person with the discharge shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ⁸ 'Or if the man with the discharge spits on one who is clean, he too shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ⁹ 'Every saddle on which the person with the discharge rides becomes unclean. ¹⁰ 'Whoever then touches any of the things which were under him shall be unclean until evening, and he who carries them shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ¹¹ 'Likewise, whomever the one with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in water shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ¹² 'However, an earthenware vessel which the person with the discharge touches shall be broken, and **every wooden vessel shall be rinsed in water**.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹³ 'Now when the man with the discharge becomes cleansed from his discharge, then he shall count off for himself seven days for his cleansing; he shall then **wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water** and will become clean. ¹⁴ 'Then on the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before Yahweh to the doorway of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest; ¹⁵ and the priest shall offer them, one for a sin offering and the other for an elevation offering. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before Yahweh because of his discharge. ¹⁶ 'Now if a man has a seminal emission, he shall **bathe all his body in water** and be unclean until evening. ¹⁷ 'As for any **garment** or any leather on which there is seminal emission, it shall be **washed with water** and be unclean until evening. ¹⁸ 'If a man lies with a woman so that there is a seminal emission, they shall **both bathe in water** and be unclean until evening.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁹ 'When a woman has a discharge, if her discharge in her body is blood, she shall continue in her menstrual impurity for seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. ²⁰ 'Everything also on which she lies during her menstrual impurity shall be unclean, and everything on which she sits shall be unclean. ²¹ 'Anyone who touches her bed shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ²² 'Whoever touches any thing on which she sits shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening. ²³ 'Whether it be on the bed or on the thing on which she is sitting, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. ²⁴ 'If a man actually lies with her so that her menstrual impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²⁵ 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. ²⁶ 'Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. ²⁷ 'Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall **wash his clothes and bathe in water** and be unclean until evening.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁸ 'When she becomes clean from her discharge, she shall count off for herself seven days; and afterward she will be clean. ²⁹ 'Then on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them in to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. ³⁰ 'The priest shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for an elevation offering. So the priest shall make atonement on her behalf before Yahweh because of her impure discharge.'

*Reader 7** Amen. ³¹ "Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, so that they will not die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them." ³² This is the law for the one with a discharge, and for the man who has a seminal emission so that he is unclean by it, ³³ and for the woman who is ill because of menstrual impurity, and for the one who has a discharge, whether a male or a female, or a man who lies with an unclean woman.

Psalm 80 *(To be sung.) For the choir director; set to El Shoshannim; Eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.*

¹ Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth! ² Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up Your power and come to save us! ³ O God, restore us and cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. ⁴ O Yahweh God of hosts, how long will You be angry with the prayer of Your people? ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears, and You have made them to drink tears in large measure. ⁶ You make us an object of contention to our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. ⁷ O God of hosts, restore us and cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved. ⁸ You removed a vine from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. ⁹ You cleared the ground before it, and it took deep root and filled the land. ¹⁰ The mountains were covered with its shadow, and the cedars of God with its boughs. ¹¹ It was sending out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. ¹² Why have You broken down its hedges, so that all who pass that way pick its fruit? ¹³ A boar from the forest eats it away and whatever moves in the field feeds on it. ¹⁴ O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; look down from heaven and see, and take care of this vine, ¹⁵ even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, and on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. ¹⁶ It is burned with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. ¹⁷ Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. ¹⁸ Then we shall not turn back from You; revive us, and we will call upon Your name. ¹⁹ O Yahweh God of hosts, restore us; cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.

Philippians 3:1-21

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹ Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. ² Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; ³ for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Messiah Yeshua and put no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. ⁷ But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Messiah. ⁸ More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Messiah Yeshua my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Messiah, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Messiah, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹² Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Messiah Yeshua. ¹³ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; ¹⁶ however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. ¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Messiah, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also **we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah;** ²¹ **who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory,** by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Commentary: {robins}

“Be ye holy, for I am holy” – Leviticus 11:44 & 1 Peter 1:16.

In Genesis, we started with Adam in the Garden of Eden / Paradise, and God walked there with him – Genesis 3:8-10. Adam lost Paradise through sin. But later, God established the Tabernacle in the Wilderness as the place where He would meet with man; this would subsequently become the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. These were prophetic types of God’s heavenly dwelling place with man, which will come to Paradise on the renewed earth – Hebrews 8:5 & Revelation 2:7.

As we must be holy to enter that future Paradise on earth, so we must indicate our quest for holiness through symbols of holiness to enter the Tabernacle / Temple of this present earth.

The general subject of the past several chapters has been distinguishing between clean and unclean. (Leviticus 9:10) *“To make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean”*. We have studied purification for ordination to the priesthood, *kashrut* – what is clean for food, and *tzaraat* – uncleanness for slander,

The subject today is . . . purification represented by immersion in a mikvah (baptism). This immersion is a non-public act of going into a stream or pool of water, without any clothing, jewelry, hair ties, etc. Another person may accompany the one being immersed for purposes of safety and verification of total immersion. Immersions may be performed as groups of men or groups of women.

In preparation for entering the *mikvah*, one states his purpose (such as: to certify purification from a certain *tumah* / impurity). John the baptizer preached *“the baptism of repentance for remission of sins”* – Mark 1:4 & Luke 3:3: this was properly to be performed every year during the forty days preceding *Yom haKippurim* / the Day of the Atonements.

Upon ascending from the *mikvah*, one must put on clean clothes. (Leviticus 15:5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 21, 22, 27) *“Shall wash his clothes and bathe in water”*. *“In like figure (a symbolic representation of purification) even baptism does now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the response of a pure conscience toward God)”* – 1 Peter 3:21.

Of the three categories of commandments (judgments, ordinances, and statutes), baptism is one of the ordinances – acts we perform to portray spiritual truths. Paul told gentiles at Corinth to *“keep the ordinances”* – 1 Corinthians 11:2.

More was lost with Paradise than we begin to understand. Common elements of eating and reproducing became involved with death: animals and man kill to eat, and the reproductive processes bring about more death than life. Some of the male and female “emissions” referred to in this chapter are the results of unfulfilled new life, and others result from sickness: both categories have their origins in the sin of Adam. Thus their stains are not allowed in God’s presence. (Leviticus 15:31) *“Thus you shall keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by their defiling My tabernacle that is among them.”*

Adam and Eve, who were presumably the most beautiful people ever, and were healthy enough to live more than 900 years – they had three sons in 130 years. On the basis of present conditions, they could have been expected to have a child about once a year. Did they have 127 daughters in that time? (Can you imagine Adam, with a wife and 127 daughters, living more than 900 years? :) The conclusion is that we lost, in the fall, more than we understand.

This should be a clue for us, concerning the holiness of God: not only sin itself, but even the results in us of the fall, must be cured before we can enter His presence. *“Who may ascend into the hill of Yahweh? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from Yahweh, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Thy face — even Jacob. Selah”* – Psalm 24:3-6 (In the triennial Torah reading cycle used during Second Temple times, Psalm 24 is sung on the Sabbath preceding *Yom haKippurim*).

(Psalm 80:19) *“O Yahweh God of hosts, restore us; cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.”*

(Philippians 3:20-21) *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory”.*

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also – John 14:3.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God – Revelation 21:1-3.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of its street, and on each side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him – Revelation 22:1-3.

Leviticus 15 is arranged as a chiasmus (parallel statements, inverted order): they ascend from abnormal to marital, then descend to abnormal.

Introduction: discharge is unclean (v.1-2)

Abnormal male discharge (v.3-15)

Normal male discharge (v.16-17)

Marital relations (v.18)

Normal female discharge (v.19-24)

Abnormal female discharge (v.25-30)

Conclusion: keep separate from uncleanness (v.31-33)

Purification time:

After 7 days, evening after *mikvah*

evening after *mikvah*

evening after *mikvah*

evening after 7th day *mikvah*

After 7 days, evening after *mikvah*

Seven days after an abnormal discharge is healed, and following immersion in a mikvah, bird offerings must be taken to the priest. In the case of a *metzarah*, the penitent's sin was public, and the animal offering was public; it is commendable for a person to display repentance. In the cases in view here, the uncleanness was private, and the bird offerings are performed by a priest, not making the giver public.

[Any female discharge beyond seven days is considered abnormal, and the Biblical rules for abnormal would apply. Because the Talmud (Niddah 66a) states that it is often difficult to determine when a woman is *niddah* (due to normal discharge) and when she is *zavah* (due to abnormal discharge), Orthodox Jewry applies the much more stringent *zavah* time rules to both.]

Many people like to perceive these commandments as applicable only to a people of a distant past: if so, if it is ridiculous for us, why would it have been sensible for anyone? These are ordinances – from the category of commandments to perform acts to show spiritual truths. They are part of His unchanging Torah – instruction to His creation.

“The priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” - Ezekiel 22:26.

These instructions will not be accepted by those who think they are “saved” (from what?) by “I believe”, and feel free to live like the rest of the world. They are for those of us who wish to show sorrow for having fallen into sin, and desire to go back to Eden – the promised Paradise. They represent holiness.

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Now Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of Yahweh and died. ² Yahweh said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. ³ "Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for an elevation offering. ⁴ "He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁵ "He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for an elevation offering. ⁶ "Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. ⁷ "He shall take the two goats and present them before Yahweh at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁸ "Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for Yahweh and the other lot for the scapegoat. ⁹ "Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for Yahweh fell, and make it a sin offering. ¹⁰ "But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before Yahweh, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹¹ "Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. ¹² "He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before Yahweh and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil. ¹³ "He shall put the incense on the fire before Yahweh, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, otherwise he will die. ¹⁴ "Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. ¹⁵ "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁶ "He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. ¹⁷ "When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. ¹⁸ "Then he shall go out to the altar that is before Yahweh and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. ¹⁹ "With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²⁰ "When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. ²¹ "Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. ²² "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness. ²³ "Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. ²⁴ "He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵ "Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁶ "The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp. ²⁷ "But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. ²⁸ "Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²⁹ "This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; ³⁰ for it is on this day that atonements shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before Yahweh. ³¹ "It is to be a Sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. ³² "So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonements: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, ³³ and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonements for the priests and for all the

people of the assembly. ³⁴ "Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year." And just as Yahweh had commanded Moses, so he did.

Ezekiel 22:1-16

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ² "And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations. ³ "You shall say, "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "A city shedding blood in her midst, so that her time will come, and that makes idols, contrary to her interest, for defilement! ⁴ You have become guilty by the blood which you have shed, and defiled by your idols which you have made. Thus you have brought your day near and have come to your years; therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations and a mocking to all the lands. ⁵ Those who are near and those who are far from you will mock you, you of ill repute, full of turmoil.

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁶ Behold, the rulers of Israel, each according to his power, have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood. ⁷ They have treated father and mother lightly within you. The alien they have oppressed in your midst; the fatherless and the widow they have wronged in you. ⁸ You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. ⁹ Slanderous men have been in you for the purpose of shedding blood, and in you they have eaten at the mountain shrines. In your midst they have committed acts of lewdness. ¹⁰ In you they have uncovered their fathers' nakedness; in you they have humbled her who was unclean in her menstrual impurity. ¹¹ One has committed abomination with his neighbor's wife and another has lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law. And another in you has humbled his sister, his father's daughter. ¹² In you they have taken bribes to shed blood; you have taken interest and profits, and you have injured your neighbors for gain by oppression, and you have forgotten Me," declares Lord Yahweh.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹³ "Behold, then, I smite My hand at your dishonest gain which you have acquired and at the bloodshed which is among you. ¹⁴ Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the days that I will deal with you? I, Yahweh, have spoken and will act. ¹⁵ I will scatter you among the nations and I will disperse you through the lands, and I will consume your uncleanness from you. ¹⁶ "You will profane yourself in the sight of the nations, and you will know that I am Yahweh.""

Psalm 81 *(To be sung.) For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.*

¹ Sing for joy to God our strength; shout joyfully to the God of Jacob. ² Raise a song, strike the timbrel, the sweet sounding lyre with the harp. ³ Blow the trumpet at the new moon, when the moon is covered, on our feast day. ⁴ For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. ⁵ He established it for a testimony in Joseph when he went throughout the land of Egypt. I heard a language that I did not know: ⁶ "I relieved his shoulder of the burden, his hands were freed from the basket. ⁷ You called in trouble and I rescued you; I answered you in the hiding place of thunder; I proved you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. ⁸ "Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you; O Israel, if you would listen to Me! ⁹ Let there be no strange god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god. ¹⁰ I, Yahweh, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide and I will fill it. ¹¹ But My people did not listen to My voice, and Israel did not obey Me. ¹² So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart, to walk in their own devices. ¹³ Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! ¹⁴ I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn My hand against their adversaries. ¹⁵ Those who hate Yahweh would pretend obedience to Him, and their time of punishment would be forever. ¹⁶ But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

Jude 1:6-21

*Reader 11** Amen. ⁶ And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. ⁸ Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties. ⁹ But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" ¹⁰ But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

*Reader 12** Amen. ¹² These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; ¹³ wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴ It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam,

prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones,¹⁵ to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."¹⁶ These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage.¹⁷ But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah,¹⁸ that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."¹⁹ These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.²⁰ But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to eternal life.

Commentary:

For this lesson preceding Hanukkah / the Feast of Dedication of the Holy Temple, Leviticus 16:19 concerns consecrating the Holy Place.

This chapter details the service of Yom haKippurim / the Day of the Atonements. Last week concerned baptism, which is especially prescribed for the 40 days of repentance preceding this observance.

Tishrei 10 (Yom haKippurim) is the date that Moses returned with the second tablets of stone, after seeking forgiveness from God for the people who worshipped the golden calf.

Sivan 2	First ascent of Moses up Mt. Sinai
Sivan 3	Second ascent
Sivan 4	Third ascent
Sivan 6	Fourth ascent (Shavuot)
Sivan 7	Fifth ascent
	40 days
Tammuz 17	Moses returns, sees golden calf
Tammuz 18	Sixth ascent
	40 days
Av 29	Moses returns
Av 30	Seventh ascent
	40 days (40 days of repentance)
Tishrei 10	Moses returns (Yom haKippurim)

(From Exodus 19-32; see *The Sequence of Events in the Old Testament* by Eliezer Shulman.)

Ezekiel 44 speaks of sins requiring national atonements. (V.2) *"And you, son of man, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then cause her to know all her abominations."* We see here that judgment is connected with the Day of the Atonements. Ezekiel 22:26 explains a failure of judgment: *"Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them."*

On this annual occasion, we consider, and confess, all kinds of sin: sins of omission and sins of commission; sins of attitude and sins of speech; sins of intent and sins of deed; willful sins and sins committed in ignorance. 1 John 1:9 reads, concerning believers, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

We start this reading with the reminder that Aaron's two sons died for entering the Holy of Holies at the wrong time and with the wrong offerings. God warned: if Aaron entered the Holy of Holies at a wrong time, or in an impure state, he would die.

The incense service could be performed only once a year, and only by the High Priest. Aaron's sons made an inappropriate incense offering, and died. Now we find that Aaron must make an incense offering in order to live, when entering the Holy of Holies. He must take a shovel full of fiery coals from the Brazen Altar in the courtyard, and his hands full of finely ground incense spices placed into a ladle. This was taken into the Holy of Holies, where

the ladle of incense was poured onto the shovel of coals. The incense would make a cloud over the Ark cover. (See *Yoma 4-5 for further detail.*)

Aaron must offer a goat for himself and the purification of the Tabernacle. He must also go into the *mikvah* (baptistry) and put on certain garments. Only then could he represent the one without sin – Yeshua, who only could qualify to make real atonement for others. Yeshua needed no such offering for Himself.

Heb 7:26-27 – *“For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”*

The fact that Yeshua made atonements for us, once for all time, does not abolish the ordinances detailed herein. Yeshua said that He came, not to abolish, but to fulfill: fulfill therefore cannot be interpreted as abolish. The ordinances of offerings were prophetic pictures, and after Yeshua’s fulfillment of them, they become memorial pictures. All are not yet fulfilled, and none are abolished.

Aaron was required to offer two goats for atonements.

Firstly, the goat on which the lot fell for Yahweh, must be slain.

Secondly, the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel (the scapegoat), must be presented. Aaron must lay both hands upon the live goat’s head, confessing the sins of the people over it. Then it must be led into the wilderness, symbolic of Yeshua, taking our sins too far away to return.

In Temple times, this goat was led due east out of the Eastern Gate of the Temple grounds, to the top of the Mount of Olives. Then it was led to the top of nine more mountains, the tenth being Mount Azazel. [Show rock from Mt. Azazel.] Each mountain was a Sabbath day’s journey from the previous, so a young man of priestly descent waited at the top of each one, to take the goat to the next mountain (*Yom haKippurim* being a Holy Day, like a Sabbath). The goat was then cast backwards, over the steep side of Mount Azazel, into the Dead Sea. Each year at this season, oil or gasses came up from under the Dead Sea, and burned on the surface: it was called the Lake of Fire.

Thirdly, the goat on which the lot fell for Yahweh, the one that was slain, must be burned upon the altar. Its sweet aroma going up to God represents Yeshua’s righteousness, imputed to us, as a sweet aroma to God.

We must have our sins imputed to Yeshua, and His righteousness imputed to us – two atonements – to be qualified for the Kingdom of God. When, through faith, we have obtained this salvation, then we are led of the Holy Spirit to desire righteousness. We learn through observing the ordinances, such as *Yom haKippurim*. We grow by practicing God’s judgments – moral laws. We sanctify ourselves by observing God’s statutes: in other words, we learn to differentiate between the holy and the profane; we become separated for His service by walking in His ways, in contrast to the natural ways of the world.

God says, in Psalm 81:13-16, *“Oh that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways! I would quickly subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their adversaries. Those who hate Yahweh would pretend obedience to Him; and their time of punishment would be forever. But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat; and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”*

Jude says (v.20-25), *“But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to eternal life. And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

We serve a great God who judges, and is gracious. We too are to learn proper judgment, and learn to be gracious.

[2002] *The first day of Hanukkah.*

[2005] *The Sabbath before Hanukkah – the dedication of the Holy Temple.*

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'This is what Yahweh has commanded, saying, ³ "Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, ⁴ and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to Yahweh before the tabernacle of Yahweh, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁵ "The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to Yahweh, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to Yahweh. ⁶ The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of Yahweh at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to Yahweh. ⁷ They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.'" ⁸ Then you shall say to them, 'Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, ⁹ and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to Yahweh, that man also shall be cut off from his people.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁰ 'And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' ¹² Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.'

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹³ "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. ¹⁴ For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.' ¹⁵ When any person eats an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

Psalm 82 *(To be sung) A Psalm of Asaph.*

¹ God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers. ² How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah. ³ Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. ⁴ Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. ⁵ They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. ⁶ I said, "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. ⁷ Nevertheless you will die like men and fall like any one of the princes." ⁸ Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You who possesses all the nations.

1 John 5:1-21

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹ After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem. ² Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. ³ In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters; ⁴ for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted. ⁵ A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Yeshua saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, "Do you wish to get well?"

*Reader 6** Amen. ⁷ The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." ⁸ Yeshua said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." ⁹ Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. ¹⁰ So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet." ¹¹ But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" ¹² They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?" ¹³ But

the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Yeshua had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place.

*Reader 7** Amen. ¹⁴ Afterward Yeshua found him in the Temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." ¹⁵ The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Yeshua who had made him well. ¹⁶ For this reason the Jews were persecuting Yeshua, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷ But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." ¹⁸ For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. ¹⁹ Therefore Yeshua answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes."

Commentary:

Leviticus 17 – Who slaughters

(V. 1-4) Previous to the Tabernacle, offerings were permitted in various places. With the establishment of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, they were permitted be slaughtered only at the Tabernacle, or its successor – the Temple. It makes no difference how far away one might be from the Temple. Genesis 9:3 allows man to kill animals for food; but, slaughtering for an offering outside of the Temple brings bloodguiltiness.

Prior chapters dealt with *tumah* (spiritual impurity) from contaminated objects. This chapter deals with *tumah* from service to alien spirits and demons. (V.7) *Sher* (demon) comes from the word *sh'arah* (storm), because they cause turbulence and fear.

The Torah here says, "*That ish (man) shall be karat (cut off)*", meaning he shall die prematurely. When the Torah says, "*That nephesh (soul) shall be karat (cut off)*" (as in Genesis 17:14), it means excision from the life to come; but the wording here means a lesser penalty. Genesis 9:11 says "*all basar (flesh) shall never again be karat (cut off) by the water of the flood.*" For the most serious offenses, the Torah prescribes a *karat* that means the sinner dies prematurely, his children die prematurely, and he is denied the world to come.

(V.5) Peace offerings are mentioned because they are eaten by the owner, in the company of others, in a festive manner: these must not be offered at other places.

(V.10-14) Atonement is based upon one life being offered for another – Yeshua's life for ours. Since life is dependent upon blood, an animal's life-blood on the Altar is representative of the ultimate atonement. It is a symbol of knowledge and faith in Messiah.

Since Noah's day, God allows animals to be eaten as food. However, life is to be respected, and the life-blood is to be poured out and covered. One who slaughters to drink blood – which represents consuming life – brings upon himself God's special attention to shorten his earthly life.

(V.15) Dead animals convey *tumah* by being touched, but dead birds of a kosher kind convey *tumah* only by being eaten (excepting kosher animals and birds killed for eating or offering).

The *tumah* (spiritual impurity) spoken of in this chapter is cleansed through repentance, which is shown by immersion in a *mikvah* – indicating that one is rising to a new, pure life.

Psalm 82 – God takes His stand

(V.1) *God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers.* God's congregation is to become the judge of the whole earth: "*Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?*" – 1 Corinthians 6:2.

(V.6) "*I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High'.*" Righteous judges are referred to as *elohim*, because they perform God's work. When certain Jews, doubtlessly from among the judges, sought to judge Yeshua,

taking up stones to stone Him, He answered them, (John 10:34) “*Has it not been written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods?’*”

(V.2-4) How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? Selah. Vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. We need righteous judges in our land. We need righteous judgment in the congregation. We need to learn righteous personal judgment by learning God’s Word.

1 John – Sin unto death

1 John 16-17 says, “*If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.*” This may refer to *karat* of the soul: examples are Judas who betrayed Yeshua, and Korah who slandered Moses and God. They lost all opportunity for repentance that would allow them a part in the world to come. Or, it may refer to capital offenses, such as murder and Sabbath desecration, where an earthly court judgment of death is an absolute requirement.

The Torah portion is about offerings to Yahweh and offerings to idols, and the Psalm is about judges of God and judges that are idolatrous – such as those who put money ahead of justice. 1 John ends with “*Guard yourselves from idols*”, or, as the NLT reads, “*Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts.*”

A we come to this Hanukkah, may God grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may display His righteousness as the light of the pure oil of the menorah.

[2002] The eighth day of Hanukkah [2005] The sixth day of Hanukkah

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'I am Yahweh your God. ³ 'You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ 'You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am Yahweh your God. ⁵ 'So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am Yahweh.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁶ 'None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover nakedness; I am Yahweh. ⁷ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness. ⁸ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

*Reader 3** Amen. ⁹ 'The nakedness of your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their nakedness you shall not uncover. ¹⁰ 'The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for their nakedness is yours. ¹¹ 'The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nakedness.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹² 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's blood relative. ¹³ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's blood relative. ¹⁴ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt. ¹⁵ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹⁶ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. ¹⁷ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness. ¹⁸ 'And you shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her nakedness.

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹⁹ 'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness during her menstrual impurity. ²⁰ 'And you shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her. ²¹ 'Neither shall you give any of your offspring to offer them to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God; I am Yahweh. ²² 'You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. ²³ 'Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²⁴ 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. ²⁵ 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have visited its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. ²⁶ 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you ²⁷ (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); ²⁸ so that the land may not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you. ²⁹ 'For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰ 'Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am Yahweh your God.'"

Jeremiah 10:2-21

*Reader 8** Amen. ² Thus says Yahweh, "Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens although the nations are terrified by them; ³ For the customs of the peoples are delusion; because it is wood cut from the forest, the work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. ⁴ "They decorate it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers so that it will not totter. ⁵ "Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot walk! Do not fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good." ⁶ There is none like You, O Yahweh; You are great, and great is Your name in might. ⁷ Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due! For among all the wise men of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You.

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁸ But they are altogether stupid and foolish in their discipline of delusion-- their idol is wood! ⁹ Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of a craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith; violet and purple are their clothing; they are all the work of skilled men. ¹⁰ But Yahweh is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, and the nations cannot endure His indignation. ¹¹ Thus you shall say to them, "The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens." ¹² It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens. ¹³ When He utters His voice, there is a

tumult of waters in the heavens, and He causes the clouds to ascend from the end of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain, and brings out the wind from His storehouses. ¹⁴ Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge; every goldsmith is put to shame by his idols; for his molten images are deceitful, and there is no breath in them. ¹⁵ They are worthless, a work of mockery; in the time of their punishment they will perish.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹⁶ The portion of Jacob is not like these; for the Maker of all is He, and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; Yahweh of hosts is His name. ¹⁷ Pick up your bundle from the ground, you who dwell under siege! ¹⁸ For thus says Yahweh, "Behold, I am slinging out the inhabitants of the land at this time, and will cause them distress, that they may be found." ¹⁹ Woe is me, because of my injury! My wound is incurable. But I said, "Truly this is a sickness, and I must bear it." ²⁰ My tent is destroyed, and all my ropes are broken; my sons have gone from me and are no more. There is no one to stretch out my tent again or to set up my curtains. ²¹ For the shepherds have become stupid and have not sought Yahweh; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered.

Psalm 83 *(To be sung.) A Song, a Psalm of Asaph.*

¹ O God, do not remain quiet; do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. ² For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, and those who hate You have exalted themselves. ³ They make shrewd plans against Your people, and conspire together against Your treasured ones. ⁴ They have said, "Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, that the name of Israel be remembered no more." ⁵ For they have conspired together with one mind; against You they make a covenant: ⁶ The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagrites; ⁷ Gebal and Ammon and Amalek, Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; ⁸ Assyria also has joined with them; they have become a help to the children of Lot. Selah. ⁹ Deal with them as with Midian, as with Sisera and Jabin at the torrent of Kishon, ¹⁰ Who were destroyed at En-dor, who became as dung for the ground. ¹¹ Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb and all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna, ¹² Who said, "Let us possess for ourselves the pastures of God." ¹³ O my God, make them like the whirling dust, like chaff before the wind. ¹⁴ Like fire that burns the forest and like a flame that sets the mountains on fire, ¹⁵ So pursue them with Your tempest and terrify them with Your storm. ¹⁶ Fill their faces with dishonor, that they may seek Your name, O Yahweh. ¹⁷ Let them be ashamed and dismayed forever, and let them be humiliated and perish, ¹⁸ That they may know that You alone, whose name is Yahweh, are the Most High over all the earth.

1 Corinthians 5:1 – 6:10

*Reader 11** Amen. ^{5:1} It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. ² You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. ³ For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. ⁴ In the name of our Lord Yeshua, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Yeshua, ⁵ I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Yeshua.

*Reader 12** Amen. ⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Messiah our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; ¹⁰ I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. ¹¹ But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? ¹³ But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

*Reader 13** Amen. ^{6:1} Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? ² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? ⁴ So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, ⁶ but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷ Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸ On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren. ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Commentary:

We are leaving the subject of Tabernacle / Temple regulations. This is the first chapter of Torah that deals with forbidden sexual relationships.

The beginning of this chapter is similar to the giving of the Ten Commandments. Moses, emanating the glow from being with God, speaks in the Name of God, saying, *“I am Yahweh your God. . . You are to perform My (mishpatim) judgments and keep My (huqqot) statutes, to live in accord with them”*.

This is a prophetic picture of the manner of “that prophet” to follow who must be heard – Yeshua, who came in the Name of Yahweh.

“¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. ¹⁹ It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.” – Deuteronomy 18:18-19.

Egypt, from where Israel was leaving, and Canaan, where they were going, were among the most decadent places in the world. God promised the land of Canaan to Israel, and would destroy the current inhabitants because of their sin. Israel was forbidden to follow either the practices of the Egyptians or the current Canaanites. God was commanding the establishment of a Holy People in a Holy Land. It was even forbidden (v.3) to make oneself look like the other people or follow their promiscuous practices. This includes that we are not to adopt any practices that are based upon other religions. (Other religions have many practices that are copies or corruptions of God’s regulations, so we must be careful not to think all similarities are based upon these other religions.)

V.4 *“Keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am Yahweh your God”*. Statutes are the commandments of which the reasons are beyond our understanding. They include *kashrut* (food laws) and ritual defilement. We are taught here that it is not for us to make personal decisions on such matters – which would make us our own gods. The Hebrew word *huqqot* (statutes) comes from the root *huq*, to engrave: many commentators have noted that this means God’s statutes are permanently engraved, as in stone.

God will ultimately establish a Holy People in a Holy Land. It will be through Yeshua. It will be by writing His law on their hearts, to be kept perfectly and whole heartedly. All sinners will be destroyed.

In the world today, evolution is the favorite replacement for God. If we just evolved, then let us eat, drink, and be merry. Let us seek all the pleasure we can find, for that is all there is to life, and then we die. We go back to the primordial soup, and perhaps in a few billion years we will evolve into something greater.

Unplanned children that complicate our pleasure, and the handicapped, and the elderly, can be disposed of, because there is no quality of life for them, and that is all that matters. (That is really an excuse, because most of them would like to live: but to hedonists, they are a bother.)

Long ago, God said (in effect) to a world of such people, “OK, you like primordial soup, I’ll give you soup,” and he opened up the hot-springs of the earth, along with the clouds above, and made them soup. Now, for those who will not learn from their lesson, there awaits a roasting in fire.

A much-talked-about subject today is, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” What good people? There has only been one good person to whom bad things happened, and we all know why. Our normal life span has been changed from eternal, to a thousand years, to seventy years – not because we are good people. Now, aren’t you joyful that you came out to hear how bad you are?

So, what is the point? Paul makes the point: God has included all as disobedient, that He might show His mercy (Romans 11:32); *“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit”* – Titus 3:5.

(Jeremiah 10:2-3) *“Thus says Yahweh, ‘Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens although the nations are terrified by them; for the customs of the peoples are delusion.’ ”*

(V.21) *“The shepherds have become stupid and have not sought Yahweh; therefore they have not prospered, and all their flock is scattered.”*

(Psalm 83:1) *“O God, do not remain quiet; do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. 2 For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; and those who hate Thee have exalted themselves.”*

These are the forbidden relationships enumerated in today’s Torah portion: (Verse 6 indicates (by the plural) that it applies to both men and women.)

mother or step-mother (even after death of father),
sister or half-sister,
aunt (even if half-sister of father, or uncle’s wife, even after death of uncle),
daughter-in-law,
sister-in-law,
wife’s sister – while your wife is alive (even if divorced from her),
and a neighbor’s wife.

Also forbidden are homosexuality and bestiality, and offering one’s children to false gods.

(1 Corinthians 5:1-2) *“It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst.”*

(V.9-11) *“Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, and in the Spirit of our God.”*

Today it is popular to accept all religions as equal – all are falsely said to worship the same god. Laws and customs are being changed to accept fornication and homosexuality – we exalt open practitioners to highest offices. Dishonesty is largely accepted and even expected – the love of power and money rules.

But, if we are washed and made holy instruments for God, led of His Spirit, then we walk a different path, growing in understanding of God’s instruction. In times past we were Gentiles who walked according to the desires of the flesh; now we walk in the light, if so be that we are redeemed.

(1 John 2:4-6) *“The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.’ ”*

The member of the congregation who is blatantly defying God’s instruction is to be excommunicated. The purposes are to bring repentance, and to show others the seriousness of such actions. This action is not to be taken by the authority of an individual who carries some title, but by a duly chosen bench of judges, after entertaining proper witness.

Leviticus 18:7 states that the nakedness of one’s father refers to one’s mother.

“You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, that is, the nakedness of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her nakedness.”

This is taken to explain Genesis 9:22.

Ham came out of a society so corrupt that God destroyed the earth with a flood. Afterwards, he occasioned upon his father and mother, in their tent, in a drunken, unclothed state. He took advantage of the situation to commit incest with his mother. For this he and his descendants were condemned to servitude.

Like calling all religions equal, we try to call other groupings equal, such as racial and gender groups. Various groups do not commit crimes in the same percentages, nor do they major in the same types of offenses. Inequality should not be equated with superiority / inferiority, and just treatment does not always mean equal treatment.

We are to learn just judgment. We are to learn to love our neighbor, who is created in the image of God. We are to seek the welfare and prosperity of others, not our prosperity at their expense.

And, we are to be holy, as God is holy: we are to be set apart for His service, to be a light to the world. We are to seek to bring others up to God's standard of holiness. We are not to accept the world's standards. Our young people do not need to dress like the world, as advertisements for sex. Money should not be our major goal in life, as it is for much of our world. We have good reason to be 'different'.

Yeshua came to be our Priest, making atonements for our sins. He came to be our Prophet, the light of the world, to teach us Torah ways. He is coming to be our King, if we have accepted His rule in our lives.

Leviticus 19:1 – 20:27

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: ² "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I Yahweh your God am holy. ³ 'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am Yahweh your God. ⁴ 'Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am Yahweh your God. ⁵ 'Now when you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. ⁶ 'It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and the next day; but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire. ⁷ 'So if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an offense; it will not be accepted. ⁸ 'Everyone who eats it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned the holy thing of Yahweh; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁹ 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am Yahweh your God. ¹¹ 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. ¹² 'You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am Yahweh. ¹³ 'You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning. ¹⁴ 'You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am Yahweh. ¹⁵ 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. ¹⁶ 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am Yahweh. ¹⁷ 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁹ 'You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together. ²⁰ 'Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for another man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, however, be put to death, because she was not free. ²¹ 'He shall bring his guilt offering to Yahweh to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. ²² 'The priest shall also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before Yahweh for his sin which he has committed, and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him. ²³ 'When you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it shall not be eaten. ²⁴ 'But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to Yahweh. ²⁵ 'In the fifth year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am Yahweh your God.

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁶ 'You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying. ²⁷ 'You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard. ²⁸ 'You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves; I am Yahweh. ²⁹ 'Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and the land become full of lewdness. ³⁰ 'You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary; I am Yahweh. ³¹ 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am Yahweh your God. ³² 'You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am Yahweh. ³³ 'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴ 'The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God. ³⁵ 'You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. ³⁶ 'You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. ³⁷ 'You shall thus observe all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am Yahweh.'"

*Reader 5** Amen. ^{20:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "You shall also say to the sons of Israel: 'Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones. ³ 'I will also set My face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given some of his offspring to Molech, so as to defile My sanctuary and to profane My holy name. ⁴ 'If the people of the land, however, should ever disregard that man when he gives any of his offspring to Molech, so as not to put him to death, ⁵ then I Myself will set My face against that man and against his family, and I will cut off from among their people both him and all those who play the harlot after him, by playing the harlot after Molech. ⁶ 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. ⁷ 'You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am Yahweh your God. ⁸ 'You shall keep My statutes and practice

them; I am Yahweh who sanctifies you. ⁹ 'If there is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him.

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹⁰ 'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. ¹¹ 'If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. ¹² 'If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them. ¹³ 'If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. ¹⁴ 'If there is a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst. ¹⁵ 'If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal. ¹⁶ 'If there is a woman who approaches any animal to mate with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. ¹⁷ 'If there is a man who takes his sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, so that he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the sons of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he bears his guilt.

*Reader 7** Amen. ¹⁸ 'If there is a man who lies with a menstruous woman and uncovers her nakedness, he has laid bare her flow, and she has exposed the flow of her blood; thus both of them shall be cut off from among their people. ¹⁹ 'You shall also not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for such a one has made naked his blood relative; they will bear their guilt. ²⁰ 'If there is a man who lies with his uncle's wife he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they will bear their sin. They will die childless. ²¹ 'If there is a man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They will be childless. ²² 'You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. ²³ 'Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. ²⁴ 'Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am Yahweh your God, who has separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ 'You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. ²⁶ 'Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I Yahweh am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine. ²⁷ 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.'"

Amos 9:7-15

*Reader 8** Amen. ⁷ "Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?" declares Yahweh. "Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?" ⁸ Behold, the eyes of Lord Yahweh are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob," Declares Yahweh. ⁹ "For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground. ¹⁰ All the sinners of My people will die by the sword, those who say, 'The calamity will not overtake or confront us.' ¹¹ In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old; ¹² that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name," declares Yahweh who does this. ¹³ "Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "when the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine and all the hills will be dissolved. ¹⁴ Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them; they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. ¹⁵ I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," Says Yahweh your God.

Ezekiel 20:1-49

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ Now in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth of the month, certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of Yahweh, and sat before me. ² And the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ³ "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Do you come to inquire of Me? As I live," declares Lord Yahweh, "I will not be inquired of by you.'"⁴ Will you judge them, will you judge them, son of man? Make them know the abominations of their fathers; ⁵ and say to them, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "On the day when I chose Israel and swore to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, I am Yahweh your God, ⁶ on that day I swore to them, to bring them out from the land of Egypt into a land that I had selected for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all

lands. ⁷ I said to them, 'Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.' ⁸ But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁹ But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made Myself known to them by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ So I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. ¹¹ I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live. ¹² Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies them. ¹³ But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My Sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them. ¹⁴ But I acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, before whose sight I had brought them out. ¹⁵ Also I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands, ¹⁶ because they rejected My ordinances, and as for My statutes, they did not walk in them; they even profaned My Sabbaths, for their heart continually went after their idols. ¹⁷ Yet My eye spared them rather than destroying them, and I did not cause their annihilation in the wilderness.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹⁸ I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers or keep their ordinances or defile yourselves with their idols. ¹⁹ I am Yahweh your God; walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and observe them. ²⁰ Sanctify My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am Yahweh your God.' ²¹ But the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, nor were they careful to observe My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; they profaned My Sabbaths. So I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness. ²² But I withdrew My hand and acted for the sake of My name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. ²³ Also I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the lands, ²⁴ because they had not observed My ordinances, but had rejected My statutes and had profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were on the idols of their fathers. ²⁵ I also gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live; ²⁶ and I pronounced them unclean because of their gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through the fire so that I might make them desolate, in order that they might know that I am Yahweh.'"

Reader 12 Amen.* ²⁷ Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Yet in this your fathers have blasphemed Me by acting treacherously against Me. ²⁸ When I had brought them into the land which I swore to give to them, then they saw every high hill and every leafy tree, and they offered there their sacrifices and there they presented the provocation of their offering. There also they made their soothing aroma and there they poured out their drink offerings. ²⁹ Then I said to them, 'What is the high place to which you go?' So its name is called Bamah to this day.'" ³⁰ "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and play the harlot after their detestable things? ³¹ When you offer your gifts, when you cause your sons to pass through the fire, you are defiling yourselves with all your idols to this day. And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," declares Lord Yahweh, "I will not be inquired of by you. ³² What comes into your mind will not come about, when you say: 'We will be like the nations, like the tribes of the lands, serving wood and stone.' ³³ As I live," declares Lord Yahweh, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. ³⁴ I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; ³⁵ and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. ³⁶ As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares Lord Yahweh. ³⁷ "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; ³⁸ and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am Yahweh.

Reader 13 Amen.* ³⁹ As for you, O house of Israel," thus says Lord Yahweh, "Go, serve everyone his idols; but later you will surely listen to Me, and My holy name you will profane no longer with your gifts and with your idols. ⁴⁰ For on My holy mountain, on the high mountain of Israel," declares Lord Yahweh, "there the whole house of Israel, all of them, will serve Me in the land; there I will accept them and there I will seek your contributions and the choicest of your gifts, with all your holy things. ⁴¹ As a soothing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered; and I will prove Myself holy among you in the sight of the nations. ⁴² And you will know that I am Yahweh, when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. ⁴³ There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you

have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done.⁴⁴ Then you will know that I am Yahweh when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel," declares Lord Yahweh."⁴⁵ Now the word of Yahweh came to me, saying,⁴⁶ "Son of man, set your face toward Teman, and speak out against the south and prophesy against the forest land of the Negev,⁴⁷ and say to the forest of the Negev, 'Hear the word of Yahweh: thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I am about to kindle a fire in you, and it will consume every green tree in you, as well as every dry tree; the blazing flame will not be quenched and the whole surface from south to north will be burned by it."⁴⁸ All flesh will see that I, Yahweh, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched."⁴⁹ Then I said, "Ah Lord Yahweh! They are saying of me, 'Is he not just speaking parables?'"

Isaiah 4:2-6

*Reader 14** Amen.² In that day the Branch of Yahweh will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.³ It will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-- everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem.⁴ When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning,⁵ then Yahweh will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy.⁶ There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain.

Psalm 84 *(To be sung.) For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

¹ How lovely are Your dwelling places, O Yahweh of hosts! ² My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of Yahweh; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. ³ The bird also has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Yahweh of hosts, my King and my God. ⁴ How blessed are those who dwell in Your house! They are ever praising You. Selah. ⁵ How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! ⁶ Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a spring; the early rain also covers it with blessings. ⁷ They go from strength to strength, every one of them appears before God in Zion. ⁸ O Yahweh God of hosts, hear my prayer; Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah. ⁹ Behold our shield, O God, and look upon the face of Your anointed. ¹⁰ For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside. I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. ¹¹ For Yahweh God is a sun and shield; Yahweh gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. ¹² O Yahweh of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Matthew 18:1-35

*Reader 15** Amen. ¹ At that time the disciples came to Yeshua and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, ³ and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷ Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! ⁸ If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal fire. ⁹ If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell. ¹⁰ See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

*Reader 16** Amen. ¹² What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? ¹³ If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. ¹⁴ So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish. ¹⁵ If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

*Reader 17** Amen. ²¹ Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²² Yeshua said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' ²⁷ And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' ³⁰ But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. ³¹ So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. ³² Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Commentary:

This portion, on holiness, opens up deeper meanings of the Ten Commandments. For example, we are instructed not only to remember the seventh-day Sabbath, but to observe all Sabbaths (including Sabbatical years) in a respectful manner. Also, we are instructed not only against worshipping idols, but to give them no credence whatsoever.

Chapter 20 establishes penalties for violations of instructions from last week's portion. It also instructs us to make a distinction between the clean and the unclean: we are to be holy.

First Commandment [*I am Yahweh your God*]

(Lev 19:2) "*You shall be holy; for I, Yahweh your God, am holy.*" We are in the midst of several lessons detailing this subject. Our God is not like the gods of other peoples, and we are not to be like other peoples. We are to separate ourselves from the world's ways, by refraining from not only what is expressly forbidden, but from overindulgence in what is permitted. Our lives are to be dedicated to the service of Yahweh – service according to His instruction (Torah). We were created and redeemed to fulfill His design and purposes.

Second Commandment [*Have no other gods*]

Lev 20:2-5) The penalty is death by stoning for sacrificing children to false gods (abortion for hedonistic convenience?). If the judges do not act against the offender, then God says He will cut off both the offender and his family.

Third Commandment [*Don't take Name in vain*]

(Lev 19:11-12) We are to be honest in our speech, and especially never use God's name to affirm a falsehood. This forbids some very common errors among professing Christians: presumptuous statements that God has shown us some answer or some hidden actions of others, and attributing our intuition to the Holy Spirit – believing what seems right.

Fourth Commandment [*Keep Sabbath holy*]

(Lev 19:3b) "*And you shall keep My Sabbaths; I am Yahweh your God.*" We should all learn the Scriptures that explain the Fourth Commandment, how to keep the Sabbath holy.

1. *The day.* It is, specifically, the seventh day of the week, from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset (*Lev 23:32*). We are to "distinguish" (*Eze 20:20*) this day from other days. By marking out the beginning and end of the day, we do not dishonor God by sliding past the starting time, or by being lax about when we resume our usual activities. This "distinguishing" is traditionally done by lighting candles before (*Erev Shabbat*) and after Sabbath (*Havdallah*), because lighting fires is specifically prohibited on the Sabbath (*Ex 35:3*). This day, with its distinguishing acts, is an historic memorial of creation (*Ex 20:11*), and a prophetic symbol of the world to come (*Isa 66:23*).

2. *The negative.* "Rest" means to put aside our normal work (*Deu 5:14*). We are not to even speak our own words (*Isa 58:13-14*). We are not to travel (*Ex 16:29*), transport items (*Jer 17:21-22*), or buy and sell (*Neh 10:31, 13:15-18*). Thus, it is not a day for performing duties of one's occupation (*Ex 16:26*), for sports or play, or for going

on vacation trips. "Rest" does not mean catching up on sleep lost to over busyness of other days: that is robbing God, and robbing oneself of spiritual blessing.

3. *The positive.* It is a day to set aside for the worship of our creator and redeemer. This does not mean going to the beach to enjoy God's creation. We are to have a public assembly for worship (*Lev 23:3*), and God established an order for its conduct. We should visit the sick and incarcerated to bring them spiritual uplift. We should provide for the immediate needs of the poor and infirm: longer term needs should be taken care of on another day.

We should fulfill commandments that take precedence. One may travel "a Sabbath Day's journey" – to the local house of worship. One may perform duties of his occupation if that is serving in the worship service (such as priestly duties), caring for children, the aged, or the infirm, or serving in emergency occupations such as fire, police, and military. Rest is not meant to stop children from play – harshness is not the spirit of the day.

Fifth Commandment [*Honor parents*]

(*Lev 19:3a*) "Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father". As we understand that each of the Ten Commandments is detailed by several other instructions, this Fifth Commandment calls up the group of instructions on respecting authority under God. Cursing father or mother is a capital offense (*Lev 20:9*). Servants are to be respectful of their masters (*1 Pet 2:18*). We are not to speak evil of those whom God has appointed to make *halachic* rulings – "rulers" (*Exodus 22:28 & Acts 23:5*). We are to be in subjection to our government (*Rom 13:1-8*).

Seventh Commandment [*No adultery*]

(*Lev 20:10-21*) Adultery, homosexual acts, and bestiality are all capital offenses.

Eighth Commandment [*No stealing*]

(*Lev 19:13*) We are to pay our debts in a timely manner. We should not sign for credit charges when we haven't the ability to promptly pay the debt. We may not delay payment of wages to a hired worker.

(*Lev 19:35-36*) We are to be just in our dealings, using honest and fair measurements and prices in trade.

Ninth Commandment [*No false witness*]

(*Lev 19:14*) We must be respectful of others, even when they wouldn't know the difference. We are not free to curse a deaf person, feigning innocence because he can't hear us. We may not put an obstacle in the path of a blind person, feigning innocence because he cannot see us. This, obviously, is loving our neighbor as ourselves.

(*Lev 19:17-18*) We are required to reprove our neighbor when we see him sin, but we may not hate him, or slander him (this includes defaming true statements), or take vengeance, or even bear a grudge. Going beyond the reproof makes us sinners, except, against certain types of sin, we are required to take testimony before judges.

(*Matthew 18:15-17*) "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the (judges of the) church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile (idolater) and a tax-gatherer."

(*Matthew 18:32-35*) We are to forgive, as we are forgiven.

"Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?' And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Amos 9:

God gave His instruction to Israel. Because they profaned Him, he vowed to destroy them, but not completely eradicate them. God will save a remnant that will enjoy the fulfillment of a restored earth. The harvests will be so bountiful that the grapes will be ready for making into juice before anyone has planted.

Ezekiel 20:

When we arrive there, "Then you will know that I am Yahweh when I have dealt with you for My name's sake, not according to your evil ways or according to your corrupt deeds."

Isaiah 4:

(V.2-3) *"In that day the Branch of Yahweh will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel. And it will come about that he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy-- everyone who is recorded for life in Jerusalem."*

Psalm 84:

(V.1-2, 11-12) *How lovely are Thy dwelling places, O Yahweh of hosts! My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of Yahweh; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God. . . . Yahweh gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Yahweh of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in Thee!*

Matthew 18:

(V.12-14) *"What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish."*

Sabbath Verses (Lesson Y2-40)

Lev 23:32 "It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest to you, . . . from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath."

Eze 20:20 'And sanctify (separate from other days) My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am Yahweh your God.'

Ex 35:3 "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Ex 20:11 "For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Isa 66:23 "And from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me," says Yahweh.

Deu 5:13-14 'Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.'

Isa 58:13-14 "If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of Yahweh honorable, and shall honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure, and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken."

Ex 16:29 "See, Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."

Jer 17:21-22 'Thus says Yahweh, "Take heed for yourselves, and do not carry any load on the Sabbath day or bring anything in through the gates of Jerusalem. And you shall not bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day nor do any work, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers.'

Neh 10:31 As for the peoples of the land who bring wares or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or a holy day; and we will forego the crops the seventh year and the exaction of every debt.

13:15-18 In those days I saw in Judah some who were treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sacks of grain and loading them on donkeys, as well as wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of loads, and they brought them into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I admonished them on the day they sold food. Also men of Tyre were living there who imported fish and all kinds of merchandise, and sold them to the sons of Judah on the Sabbath, even in Jerusalem. Then I reprimanded the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing you are doing, by profaning the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers do the same so that our God brought on us, and on this city, all this trouble? Yet you are adding to the wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

Ex 16:26 "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

Leviticus 21:1-24

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'No one shall defile himself for a dead person among his people, ² except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother and his father and his son and his daughter and his brother, ³ also for his virgin sister, who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁴ 'He shall not defile himself as a relative by marriage among his people, and so profane himself. ⁵ 'They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh. ⁶ 'They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to Yahweh, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

*Reader 3** Amen. ⁷ 'They shall not take a woman who is profaned by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God. ⁸ 'You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I Yahweh, who sanctifies you, am holy. ⁹ 'Also the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by harlotry, she profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁰ 'The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes; ¹¹ nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself even for his father or his mother; ¹² nor shall he go out of the sanctuary nor profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him; I am Yahweh.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹³ 'He shall take a wife in her virginity. ¹⁴ 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people, ¹⁵ so that he will not profane his offspring among his people; for I am Yahweh who sanctifies him.'"

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹⁶ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁷ "Speak to Aaron, saying, 'No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to offer the food of his God. ¹⁸ 'For no one who has a defect shall approach: a blind man, or a lame man, or he who has a disfigured face, or any deformed limb, ¹⁹ or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, ²⁰ or a hunchback or a dwarf, or one who has a defect in his eye or eczema or scabs or crushed testicles.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²¹ 'No man among the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to offer Yahweh's offerings by fire; since he has a defect, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God. ²² 'He may eat the food of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy, ²³ only he shall not go in to the veil or come near the altar because he has a defect, so that he will not profane My sanctuaries. For I am Yahweh who sanctifies them.'"²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel.

Ezekiel 44:15-31

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹⁵ "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares Lord Yahweh. ¹⁶ "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge. ¹⁷ It shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house. ¹⁸ Linen turbans shall be on their heads and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat. ¹⁹ When they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments so that they will not transmit holiness to the people with their garments. ²⁰ Also they shall not shave their heads, yet they shall not let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads. ²¹ Nor shall any of the priests drink wine when they enter the inner court. ²² And they shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but shall take virgins from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest.

*Reader 9** Amen. ²³ Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. ²⁴ In a dispute they shall take their stand to judge; they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts and sanctify My Sabbaths. ²⁵ They shall not go to a dead person to defile themselves; however, for father, for mother, for son, for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has not had a husband, they may defile themselves. ²⁶ After he is cleansed, seven days shall elapse for him. ²⁷ On the day that he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering," declares Lord Yahweh. ²⁸ "And it shall be with

regard to an inheritance for them, that I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel-- I am their possession. ²⁹ They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. ³⁰ The first of all the first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the priests; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house. ³¹ The priests shall not eat any bird or beast that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces.”

Psalm 85 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

¹ O Yahweh, You showed favor to Your land; You restored the captivity of Jacob. ² You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin. Selah. ³ You withdrew all Your fury; You turned away from Your burning anger. ⁴ Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your indignation toward us to cease. ⁵ Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations? ⁶ Will You not Yourself revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? ⁷ Show us Your lovingkindness, O Yahweh, and grant us Your salvation. ⁸ I will hear what the God Yahweh will say; for He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones; but let them not turn back to folly. ⁹ Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land. ¹⁰ Lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. ¹¹ Truth springs from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven. ¹² Indeed, Yahweh will give what is good, and our land will yield its produce. ¹³ Righteousness will go before Him and will make His footsteps into a way.

1 Timothy 3

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹ It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

*Reader 11** Amen. ⁸ Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, ⁹ but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. ¹¹ Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. ¹² Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. ¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Messiah Yeshua. ¹⁴ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long; ¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth. ¹⁶ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Commentary:

Previous chapters of **Leviticus** dealt with requirements that the people be holy. This chapter deals with requirements for the priests: a higher standard of holiness applied to them.

(V.10) During the time of the First Temple, the high priest was consecrated to the priesthood by being anointed with the special oil; during Second Temple times, the holy anointing oil was not available, and the high priest was consecrated by donning the eight vestments.

(V.17) The Torah requires that the Temple be beautiful, that the offerings be perfect, and that those who perform the service be unblemished.

In **1 Timothy**, Paul expresses similar standards concerning those officiating in the synagogue/church. The synagogue is an extension of the Temple of the Holy One.

“Overseer” is from the Hebrew *Sheliach Tzibbur* – Messenger of the Congregation, or LXX and NT Greek *Angeloi tas Ekklesias* – Angel of the Church. This is one of ten offices of the synagogue. An overseer oversees the reading of the Torah: he stands next to each reader, and corrects, on the spot, any mistakes in the readings. He first brings the message from God (the Torah portion from the Temple) each week and chooses seven men to read it. This is why God told John, in Revelation, to give His messages to the “angels of the churches”: the messengers, “angels,” would choose readers to give the messages to the congregations, and they would “oversee” the readings.

The Talmudic qualifications for an overseer are:

mastery of Hebrew language and Torah cantillation (*trup*), hence called a Cantor (*Hazzan*);

mastery of Hebrew blessings (required for readings), hence called Master of Prayer (*Baal Tefilah*);

and other qualifications found in *Shulhan Arukh* and 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

Paul tells us that one desiring to oversee must meet standards of holiness. He needs to have attained a level of maturity in the faith (not a new convert), having his household in order (marriage and children), being respected in his community (hospitable, not contentious), and knowledgeable of God’s Word enough to teach. He must not be a seeker of financial gain, nor be conceited. And he must be tried – not a novice. This, of course, means there must be practice.

Likewise deacons and deaconesses must be faithful, temperate, not seekers of financial gain, not given to gossip or slander. These are selected in groups of three in each synagogue, to collect alms, and make a professional determination of who is really needy, and distribute accordingly.

Ezekiel 44

The priests “shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My Sabbaths.”
“You shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house.”

Psalm 85 was apparently written concerning the then current return of Israel from Babylonian captivity to rebuild the Holy Temple. But it is also seen as prophetic of the final redemption.

A sign of God’s favor is rain and abundant crops from the land.

(V.2) Yahweh favored His land with the return of the exiles, but His ultimate favoring of His land is yet to be seen, when Yeshua reigns over the earth from Jerusalem. He “returned the captivity of Jacob”, but the previous return was temporary, whereas the future return will be permanent. “Jacob” is used here (instead of “Israel”), because the nation was not in its position of glory.

(V.3-4) Yahweh forgave His nation their iniquity, and atoned for their sin. He withheld the entirety of His wrath, and retreated from His anger. But it would return for their continued sin, and the Temple would again be destroyed. Not until the final redemption will atonement be complete, and wrath totally ended.

(V.9) For then He will speak peace to His nation, and to His devout ones, and they will not return to folly!

(V.11) Then it may be said, “Kindness and truth have met”: when Israel is redeemed, and delights in truth, being the light to the nations, then Yahweh’s kindness will be fully shown upon them. “*The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall deceitful language be found in their mouth*” – Zephaniah 3:13. “Righteousness and peace have kissed”: when Israel is made righteous, the Prince of Peace will reign. Yom haKippurim represents the time when the ancient church, called Israel, will be purified to dwell with Messiah.

(V.12-13) Then, “Truth will sprout from the earth,” and “Our land will yield its produce.”

Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers): Torah Study vs. Earning a Livelihood

“In many places in Jewish Literature, the Sages extol the virtues of supporting oneself. We learned above, ‘Love work and despise high position’ (1:10). We will also learn below, ‘If there is no flour (read, dough), there is no Torah; if there is no Torah, there is no flour’ (3:17). King David wrote in Psalms (128:2), ‘When you eat the fruits of your labors, you are fortunate and it will be good for you.’ The Talmud (Berachos 8a) adds, ‘you are fortunate’ - in this world, ‘and it will be good for you’ - in the World to Come. The Talmud (Pesachim 113a) tells us further, ‘One should flay carcasses in the marketplace and earn a living. He should not say I am a Priest, I am a great man and such work is beneath me.’ Finally, the Sages obligate a father to teach his son a trade (Talmud Kiddushin 29a). The Sages also forbid earning money *from* one’s Torah knowledge. We will learn below ‘Do not make the Torah a crown to aggrandize yourself or a spade to dig with (4:5).’ The Torah is ours to study and acquire, but not ours to market. Maimonides (Mishne Torah Hil’ Talmud Torah 3:10) does not pull his punches: ‘Whoever thinks he will study Torah and not work and will be supported from charity, profanes God’s Name, shames the Torah, darkens the light of knowledge, causes harm to himself, and takes his life from this world, for it is forbidden to derive benefit from the Torah in this world.’ ”

The following Scriptures do not contradict what is stated above. There is a distinction between a flock giving honor, and a worker requiring wages. In the latter case, an extreme may be seen where a “pastor” or “rabbi” goes where he can negotiate the highest salary; this is using the Bible both to aggrandize oneself (with a title), and as a spade (to make monetary gain).

1 Timothy 5:17-18

¹⁷ *The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.* ¹⁸ *For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” and “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”*

1 Corinthians 9:6-18

⁶ *Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?* ⁷ *Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?* ⁸ *I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things?* ⁹ *For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.” God is not concerned about oxen, is He?* ¹⁰ *Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops.* ¹¹ *If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?* ¹² *If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ.* ¹³ *Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the food of the temple, and those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar?* ¹⁴ *So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.* ¹⁵ *But I have used none of these things. And I am not writing these things so that it will be done so in my case; for it would be better for me to die than have any man make my boast an empty one.* ¹⁶ *For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.* ¹⁷ *For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.* ¹⁸ *What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may offer the gospel without charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.*

Leviticus 22-23

Reader 1* Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Tell Aaron and his sons to be careful with the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they dedicate to Me, so as not to profane My holy name; I am Yahweh. ³ "Say to them, 'If any man among all your descendants throughout your generations approaches the holy gifts which the sons of Israel dedicate to Yahweh, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from before Me; I am Yahweh. ⁴ 'No man of the descendants of Aaron, who is a *tzara* or who has a discharge, may eat of the holy gifts until he is clean. And if one touches anything made unclean by a corpse or if a man has a seminal emission, ⁵ or if a man touches any teeming things by which he is made unclean, or any man by whom he is made unclean, whatever his uncleanness; ⁶ a person who touches any such shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat of the holy gifts unless he has bathed his body in water. ⁷ 'But when the sun sets, he will be clean, and afterward he shall eat of the holy gifts, for it is his food. ⁸ 'He shall not eat an animal which dies or is torn by beasts, becoming unclean by it; I am Yahweh. ⁹ 'They shall therefore keep My charge, so that they will not bear sin because of it and die thereby because they profane it; I am Yahweh who sanctifies them.

Reader 2* Amen. ¹⁰ 'No layman, however, is to eat the holy gift; a sojourner with the priest or a hired man shall not eat of the holy gift. ¹¹ 'But if a priest buys a slave as his property with his money, that one may eat of it, and those who are born in his house may eat of his food. ¹² 'If a priest's daughter is married to a layman, she shall not eat of the offering of the gifts. ¹³ 'But if a priest's daughter becomes a widow or divorced, and has no child and returns to her father's house as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's food; but no layman shall eat of it. ¹⁴ 'But if a man eats a holy gift unintentionally, then he shall add to it a fifth of it and shall give the holy gift to the priest. ¹⁵ 'They shall not profane the holy gifts of the sons of Israel which they offer to Yahweh, ¹⁶ and so cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy gifts; for I am Yahweh who sanctifies them."

Reader 3* Amen. ¹⁷ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ "Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, 'Any man of the house of Israel or of the aliens in Israel who presents his offering, whether it is any of their votive or any of their freewill offerings, which they present to Yahweh for an elevation offering-- ¹⁹ for you to be accepted-- it must be a male without defect from the cattle, the sheep, or the goats. ²⁰ 'Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it will not be accepted for you. ²¹ 'When a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh to fulfill a special vow or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. ²² 'Those that are blind or fractured or maimed or having a running sore or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to Yahweh, nor make of them an offering by fire on the altar to Yahweh. ²³ 'In respect to an ox or a lamb which has an overgrown or stunted member, you may present it for a freewill offering, but for a vow it will not be accepted. ²⁴ 'Also anything with its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut, you shall not offer to Yahweh, or sacrifice in your land, ²⁵ nor shall you accept any such from the hand of a foreigner for offering as the food of your God; for their corruption is in them, they have a defect, they shall not be accepted for you."

Reader 4* Amen. ²⁶ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ "When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be accepted as a sacrifice of an offering by fire to Yahweh. ²⁸ "But, whether it is an ox or a sheep, you shall not kill both it and its young in one day. ²⁹ "When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Yahweh, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. ³⁰ "It shall be eaten on the same day, you shall leave none of it until morning; I am Yahweh. ³¹ "So you shall keep My commandments, and do them; I am Yahweh. ³² "You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am Yahweh who sanctifies you, ³³ who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God; I am Yahweh."

Reader 5* Amen. ¹ Yahweh spoke again to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, '**Yahweh's appointed times which you shall proclaim** as sacred assemblies – My appointed times are these: ³ 'For six days work may be done, but on the **seventh day** there is a Sabbath of complete rest, a sacred assembly. You shall not do any work; it is a Sabbath to Yahweh in all your dwellings. ⁴ 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh, sacred assemblies which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. ⁵ 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is Yahweh's *Passover offering*. ⁶ 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Breads to Yahweh; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ 'On **the first day** you shall have a sacred assembly; you shall not do any laborious work. ⁸ 'But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On **the seventh day** is a sacred assembly; you shall not do any laborious work.'" ⁹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. ¹¹ 'He shall wave the *omer (mixture)* before Yahweh for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

¹² 'Now on the day when you wave the *omer*, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for an elevation offering to Yahweh. ¹³ 'Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to Yahweh for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. ¹⁴ 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ¹⁵ 'You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete *weeks*. ¹⁶ 'You shall **count fifty days** to the day after the seventh *week*; then you shall present a new grain offering to Yahweh. ¹⁷ 'You shall bring in from your dwelling places two loaves of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths of an ephah; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to Yahweh. ¹⁸ 'Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be an elevation offering to Yahweh, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh. ¹⁹ 'You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. ²⁰ 'The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the *first fruits* for a wave offering with two lambs before Yahweh; they are to be holy to Yahweh for the priest. ²¹ 'On **this same day** you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a sacred assembly. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. ²² 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am Yahweh your God.'" *Reader 6** Amen. ²³ Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by **blowing of trumpets**, a sacred assembly. ²⁵ 'You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh.'" ²⁶ Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ "On exactly *the tenth day* of this seventh month is the **day of the atonements**; it shall be a sacred assembly for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to Yahweh. ²⁸ "You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonements, to make *atonements* on your behalf before Yahweh your God. ²⁹ "If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ "As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ "You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³² "It is to be a *Sabbath* of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath." ³³ Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to Yahweh. ³⁵ 'On **the first day** is a sacred assembly; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. ³⁶ 'For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to Yahweh. On **the eighth day** you shall have a sacred assembly and present an offering by fire to Yahweh; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. *Reader 7** Amen. ³⁷ 'These are the appointed times of Yahweh which you shall proclaim as sacred assemblies, to present offerings by fire to Yahweh-- elevation offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day's matter on its own day-- ³⁸ besides those of the Sabbaths of Yahweh, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to Yahweh. ³⁹ 'On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of Yahweh for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. ⁴⁰ 'Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of *beautiful trees*, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days. ⁴¹ 'You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² 'You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, ⁴³ so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.'" ⁴⁴ So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of Yahweh.

(No Prophet)

Psalm 86 (To be sung.) *A Prayer of David.*

¹ Incline Your ear, O Yahweh, and answer me; for I am afflicted and needy. ² Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. ³ Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. ⁴ Make glad the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. ⁵ For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You. ⁶ Give ear, O Yahweh, to my prayer; and give heed to the voice of my supplications! ⁷ In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, for You will answer me. ⁸ There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours. ⁹ All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify Your name. ¹⁰ For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. ¹¹ Teach me Your way, O Yahweh; I will walk in Your truth; unite my

heart to fear Your name. ¹² I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever. ¹³ For Your lovingkindness toward me is great, and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. ¹⁴ O God, arrogant men have risen up against me, and a band of violent men have sought my life, and they have not set You before them. ¹⁵ But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. ¹⁶ Turn to me, and be gracious to me; oh grant Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid. ¹⁷ Show me a sign for good, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, because You, O Yahweh, have helped me and comforted me.

Colossians 2:1 – 3:6

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Messiah Himself, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. ⁵ For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Messiah. ⁶ Therefore as you have received Messiah Yeshua the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Messiah.

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah; ¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹⁶ Therefore let no one condemn you in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- ¹⁷ things which are a shadow of what is to come, the body being Messiah. ¹⁸ Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. ²⁰ If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" ²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? ²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

*Reader 11** Amen. ^{3:1} Therefore if you have been raised up with Messiah, keep seeking the things above, where Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Messiah in God. ⁴ When Messiah, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. ⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶ For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

Commentary:

(*God's memorial Name is used 57 times in these two chapters.*)

Vocabulary:

A *moed* (pronounced moe-ed) is an appointment time and/or place.

A *Yom Tov* (pronounced yoam tove) is a Holy Day – a full day set apart for worship.

A *hag* (pronounced hawg) is a feast – a great meal of special foods (no ham in this hag).

A *seder* (pronounced say-der) is an order of service – an arrangement of worship activities designed by God.

Mussaf is a festival offering, distinct from daily and personal offerings.

Leviticus 23

This chapter lists all of the *moedim of Yahweh*, the “**appointments with Yahweh**”. These appointments are for our spiritual elevation. They are memorials of past acts of God, and prophetic of future acts.

They are *Yom Tovim*, days to refrain from usual activities in order to worship God. They are times for symbolic festive food and drink, clean clothing, and thanksgiving and prayer.

Their observance is commanded, not suggested. Under God's economy, the penalty for failure to observe the weekly Sabbath was death (Exodus 31:14-15), and the penalty for failure to observe the Day of the Atonements was being cut off from God's people (Leviticus 23:29-32). This should prompt us to take the observances seriously, though not above all other commandments.

(V.3-4) First is the weekly *Yom Tov*, the Holy Sabbath, of which there are fifty to fifty-five per Biblical year. Then there are seven annual Holy Days, with accompanying preparation days, feasts, offerings, and various other ordinances. So, we have about sixty appointments per year. There are three “Feasts of Yahweh” (Exodus 23:14), relating to the seven annual Holy Days.

The Holy Sabbath . . .

(See **SABBATH is MESSIANIC**, and **COMMENTARY Y2-40** on Leviticus 19, two weeks back).

(V.5) The term *Pesach* (Passover), in Torah, is used exclusively for the (*mussaf*) offering – the lamb: it is not used as the name of a festival. This is an area of great confusion, concerning the date of the Feast. Remember: the Passover is a lamb, not a day. [John 18:28 is referring to the day that the Passover is eaten.]

Prior to the first annual Holy Day, on the fourteenth day of Nisan, the Passover Lamb must be offered. Between noon and sunset (v.5 – “between the evenings” – between the beginning and end of the going-down-of-the-sun), it must be slain and cooked. This is the preparation day for the Passover lamb (Num. 9:2 – “*You shall prepare the Passover*”; John 19:14 – “*It was the day of preparation of the Passover*”). This preparation includes other foods for the seven-day Feast. Note that this is a commandment for families to make preparations for a feast; it is not fulfilled by having a catered a dinner.

The **Feast of Unleavened Breads** (*Hag haMatzot*) begins that evening (the beginning of Nisan 15), with the seder where the Passover Lamb is eaten with unleavened breads and bitter herbs. This Feast is the first of the three “Feasts of Yahweh”. (Today's common term “Lord's Supper” is a misused translation of “Yahweh's Feast”.) The first day of the Feast is the first of seven Holy Days of the Festival Year.

This Feast is now celebrated as a memorial of our redemption by the antitype Passover lamb – Yeshua.

(V.8) The seventh day of the Feast of Unleavened Breads, Nisan 21, is the second of the seven annual Holy Days.

(V.9-14) Going back, on the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Breads (Nisan 16), the day after the first Holy Day (a Sabbath*), a lamb is to be waved, along with a firstfruit one-*omer* unleavened barley loaf (the *omer* being about two liters, of fine barley flour). Barley is the first of five bread-grain crops to ripen; none of the new barley may be eaten until the first loaf is waved on this day.

Omer is sometimes mistranslated “sheaf”: no sheaf of grain is ever to be waved as an offering. This day is not (as is often erroneously taught) the “Feast of Firstfruits”: it is part of the Feast of Unleavened Breads. The term “firstfruits” does not refer to this day. We can find no basis for associating this day with (1 Corinthians 15:20 – Christ the firstfruits) the resurrection of Yeshua, which was late on Nisan 17, a weekly Sabbath.

(V.15-16) The day, when the lamb and *omer* barley loaf are waved, is the first day of counting the omer. We are commanded to count each day, for fifty days – not just to recognize the first and fiftieth days, but to count each day. We are also commanded to count, in parallel, seven weeks – until the day after the seventh week.* As the first loaf from the new barley crop is waved on day one, so the first loaves from the new wheat crop are waved on day fifty. Wheat is the last of the five bread-grain crops to ripen, and none may be eaten until the firstfruits are waved before Yahweh.

We count down the days from our redemption to our betrothal.

Day fifty (which could fall on Sivan 5, 6, or 7 in Temple times) is called *Yom haBikkurim* – the **Day of the Firstfruits**. It is the third of the seven annual Holy Days. On this day, two lambs are waved along with two leavened loaves, each made of two *omers* (about four liters) of fine wheat flour – the firstfruits of the best and final bread-grain harvest. [The loaves were about three feet long and nine inches wide.]

This day is also called *Hag Shavuot* – **Feast of Weeks**, and Pentecost (fiftieth day); it is the second of the three “Feasts of Yahweh”. It celebrates the betrothal of the Bride to Messiah. It is the date of the division of seventy nations into different languages at Babel, the date of receiving the Torah in the various languages 3300 years ago, and the date of receiving the Gospel in the various languages over 1900 years ago.

* Note that annual Holy Days are sometimes referred to as Sabbaths: see v. 27 & 32, where the tenth day of Tishrei is called *Shabbat*. Also, *Shabbat* is a term used in both Torah and Talmud for week: see v. 15-16, and the Psalm for the *n*th day of the week is in Talmud called the Psalm for the *n*th day of *Shabbat*.

(V.23-25) Then, on the first day of the seventh month (Tishrei 1), we are to have a “rehearsal of blowing” the *shofar* (ram’s horn trumpet). Two biblical names, for this fourth of seven Holy Days, are *Rosh haShannah* (New Year) and *Yom Teruah* (**Day of Blowing the shofar**). While secular Judaism majors on a New Year celebration, we rehearse hearing the shout of the archangel, and Last Trump, when Messiah will return and the righteous dead will be raised.

(V.27-32) On the tenth day of the same month is *Yom haKippurim* – the **Day of the Atonements**. It is always plural – atonements: there must be two, which are represented by the two (*mussaf*) offerings, two goats. The goat for Azazel (commonly called the scapegoat) represents Yeshua taking our sins away. The goat for Yahweh, an elevation offering (burned), represents Yeshua’s righteousness being imputed to us, the sweet aroma ascending up to God. This pictures the purification of the Bride of Messiah. This is the fifth of the seven annual Holy Days, and all feasting must be completed beforehand, as this is a fast day, the only Biblically mandated one.

(V.33-36) From the fifteenth through the twenty-first day of the same month is *Hag Sukkot* – the seven-day **Feast of Tabernacles**. This is the last of the three “Feasts of Yahweh”. It is the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The first day of the Feast is the sixth of the seven annual Holy Days.

The day after the Feast, Tishrei 22, is the seventh and final annual Holy Day. It is *Shimini Atzeret* – the **Eighth Day Assembly** (so called because it is the day after the seven day Feast). It represents the final dwelling of Messiah and Bride.

By looking at the feast foods, the (*mussaf*) offerings, and the Psalms and Torah portions for each Holy Day, we can see the details of what God wants us to know about our savior, Yeshua the Messiah. And, we can learn how to become what God designed for us to be.

Going back to the Feast of Tabernacles:

Four species are to be waved. The *etrog* has both pleasant taste and aroma: it represents the person who knows Torah and practices good deeds. The *lulav*, branches of date palm, whose dates have good taste but no aroma, symbolize the person who knows Torah, but is deficient in deeds. The myrtle, which has no taste, but good aroma, is likened to the person who lacks knowledge of Torah, but practices good deeds. The willow, which has neither, symbolizes the person without knowledge or deeds.

The *etrog*, a citrus fruit, in appearance like a lemon, is identified by *peri etz* – a tree that tastes similar to its fruit, and *hadar* – fruit that dwells. The *etrog* tree is an evergreen. It is entirely edible, all having similar taste. The fruit does not fall, but “dwells” on the tree from year to year. It does not ripen until the second year, and becomes harder to pick year after year. It does not rot after picking, whether or not it is refrigerated: after many years, it disappears, seeming to gradually evaporate. [I am growing a potted *etrog* tree in my dining room - *ddd*.]

Colossians 2

We know, from previous Sabbath studies, that the Holy Sabbath is for all creation, and is both memorial and prophetic of Yeshua. It is Messianic, and is for all, for eternity. [See “Sabbath is Messianic”.] We know from Zechariah 14:17-19, that observing the Feast of Tabernacles will be a requirement upon all nations, under great penalty for non-observance. We know how the gentile Corinthian church was instructed to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread (1 Corinthians 5:8). So, let us look at the general applicability of Holy Days to gentile believers.

(V.2-4) Paul wants us to attain “*to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Messiah Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument.*”

(V.16-17) “*Therefore let no one condemn you, for what you eat or drink, or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day – these things being a shadow of what is to come, Messiah being the body (casting the shadow).*”

The Apostle Paul is telling gentiles, to let neither Jew nor gentile condemn them (both would condemn us today). This verse is not about “judging” which thing to do: it is about being condemned by others for what one is doing (the word *krino*, often herein translated “judge”, means condemn). It is not about freedom to do whatever one desires; it is about being resolute in observing Biblical Sabbaths and festivals and new moons. It is not about observing “mere” shadows (as one popular translation reads), but learning about Messiah by an all-wise God’s eternal shadow pictures! In other words, we should not succumb to the pressure of outsiders (be they family or friends), rather we should recognize the greatness of our blessing – to be partakers in God’s beautiful, educational, worship plan!

(V.23) Paul ends this portion by warning against putting the commandments of men before the ordinances of God, saying that that man’s ways do not help us to become overcomers. Today we struggle with those who call God’s appointed times outmoded, with perverted teaching that these are the ways of men that Paul is warning against!

See commentary on Colossians 2 at end of **MESSIANIC PERSPECTIVE**.

Leviticus 24

Reader 1* Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Command the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually. ³ "Outside the veil of testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Yahweh continually; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations. ⁴ "He shall keep the lamps in order on the pure gold lampstand before Yahweh continually.

Reader 2* Amen. ⁵ "Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. ⁶ "You shall set them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table before Yahweh. ⁷ "You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, even an offering by fire to Yahweh.

Reader 3* Amen. ⁸ "Every Sabbath day he shall set it in order before Yahweh continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. ⁹ "It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from Yahweh'S offerings by fire, his portion forever."

Reader 4* Amen. ¹⁰ Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp. ¹¹ The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) ¹² They put him in custody so that the command of Yahweh might be made clear to them.

Reader 5* Amen. ¹³ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ "Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵ "You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin. ¹⁶ "Moreover, the one who blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

Reader 6* Amen. ¹⁷ "If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸ "The one who takes the life of an animal shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ "If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.

Reader 7* Amen. ²¹ "Thus the one who kills an animal shall make it good, but the one who kills a man shall be put to death. ²² "There shall be one standard for you; it shall be for the stranger as well as the native, for I am Yahweh your God." ²³ Then Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, and they brought the one who had cursed outside the camp and stoned him with stones. Thus the sons of Israel did, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Psalm 87 (To be sung.) *A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song.*

¹ His foundation is in the holy mountains. ² Yahweh loves the gates of Zion More than all the other dwelling places of Jacob. ³ Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah. ⁴ "I shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me; Behold, Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.'" ⁵ But of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; And the Most High Himself will establish her. ⁶ Yahweh will count when He registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Selah. ⁷ Then those who sing as well as those who play the flutes shall say, "All my springs of joy are in you."

John 7

Reader 8* Amen. ¹ After these things Yeshua was walking in Galilee, for He was unwilling to walk in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him. ² Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Tabernacles, was near. ³ Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ "For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him. ⁶ So Yeshua said to them, "My time is not yet here, but your time is always opportune. ⁷ "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil. ⁸ "Go up to the feast yourselves; I do not go up to this feast because My time has not yet fully come." ⁹ Having said these things to them, He stayed in Galilee. ¹⁰ But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not publicly, but as if, in secret.

Reader 9* Amen. ¹¹ So the Jews were seeking Him at the feast and were saying, "Where is He?" ¹² There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him; some were saying, "He is a good man"; others were saying, "No, on the contrary, He leads the people astray." ¹³ Yet no one was speaking openly of Him for fear of the Jews. ¹⁴ But

when it was now the midst of the feast Yeshua went up into the temple, and began to teach. ¹⁵ The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?" ¹⁶ So Yeshua answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷ "If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself. ¹⁸ "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. ¹⁹ "Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law? Why do you seek to kill Me?" ²⁰ The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who seeks to kill You?"

*Reader 10** Amen. ²¹ Yeshua answered them, "I did one deed, and you all marvel. ²² "For this reason Moses has given you circumcision (not because it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a man. ²³ "If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the Law of Moses will not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? ²⁴ "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." ²⁵ So some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man whom they are seeking to kill?" ²⁶ "Look, He is speaking publicly, and they are saying nothing to Him. The rulers do not really know that this is the Messiah, do they? ²⁷ "However, we know where this man is from; but whenever the Messiah may come, no one knows where He is from." ²⁸ Then Yeshua cried out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹ "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."

*Reader 11** Amen. ³⁰ So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. ³¹ But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Messiah comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" ³² The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him. ³³ Therefore Yeshua said, "For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. ³⁴ "You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come." ³⁵ The Jews then said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find Him? He is not intending to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks, is He? ³⁶ "What is this statement that He said, 'You will seek Me, and will not find Me; and where I am, you cannot come'?" ³⁷ Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Yeshua was not yet glorified.

*Reader 12** Amen. ⁴⁰ Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, "This certainly is the Prophet." ⁴¹ Others were saying, "This is the Messiah." Still others were saying, "Surely the Messiah is not going to come from Galilee, is He? ⁴² "Has not the Scripture said that the Messiah comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" ⁴³ So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. ⁴⁵ The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." ⁴⁷ The Pharisees then answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? ⁴⁸ "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? ⁴⁹ "But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed." ⁵⁰ Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹ "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" ⁵² They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee." ⁵³ Everyone went to his home.

Commentary:

(V.1) In the previous chapter, we saw the “appointments with Yahweh”, the Holy Days, from Unleavened Breads to Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day Assembly. In this chapter, we start with the menorah, with its olive-oil burning lamps, at the dedication (*hanukkah*) of the Holy Place.

Today, we still celebrate Hanukkah following all the Holy Days. Though we do so in remembrance of the rededications of the Holy Temple, the origins are with the beginning of the Tabernacle. It is this menorah that plays a significant role in *Hanukkah* – the Hebrew word meaning dedication.

This menorah is the light of the Holy Place. Its center* lamp is called the *shamish* – the servant: as its fire is used to light the other lamps, it represents Yeshua, the Light of the World (John 8:12), who gives us light to illuminate the world. John tells us (Revelation 1:12-18) that the center lamp is Yeshua: “*in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man*”.

* The Talmud says the western lamp miraculously stayed lit. Except, after the crucifixion of Yeshua, this is one of the miracles that stopped.

From this original Tabernacle in the Wilderness, Moses brought God’s words and judgments to the people. Moses sought the glory of Yahweh, not his own glory. Thus Moses represented Yeshua: “*Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you, from your countrymen: you shall listen to Him*” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

In fulfillment, Yeshua came to glorify Yahweh. Jewish leaders sought to put Yeshua to death, but the people marveled at His teaching. Yeshua answered the people how they should judge whether His words were from God: (John 7:18-19) “*He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*”

“*Did not Moses give you the Torah*” . . . in seeking God’s glory, “*and yet none of you carries out the Torah?*” because they sought their own glory – power and position and recognition.

Clear olive oil is the first from lightly pressed olives, before they are crushed and the oil contains sediment. “Continual” means that the lamps would be lit every day, not that they never went out; this is like the “continual elevation offering”, one being burned every morning and evening.

The previous chapter concerned the Holy Days, which represented various high points in God’s caring for His people. This chapter deals with the menorah and show bread, which represent God’s daily caring for His people.

The show bread was twelve large unleavened loaves, baked each Friday and placed on the Sabbath. Each loaf was baked from two omers (more than a gallon) of fine wheat flour, and shaped like a rectangle with the corners turned up. They were placed in two stacks of six, the lower two resting on the flat table top, and each higher loaf being supported by golden rods of a rack which was the upper part of the golden table. A bowl of frankincense was placed on top of each stack.

The frankincense was the only part of this offering that was burned on the altar. The loaves were divided among the priests on the following Sabbath: like the Sabbath, the loaves were called an eternal covenant, and were the only offering described this way. It is recorded that the loaves were always as fresh baked loaves at the end of their week.

As the Sabbath provides for the rest of the week, so the loaves symbolized God’s provision for His people for their millennial week on this earth. We are taught to not be anxious about our provision here.

“*Do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little*”

faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matthew 6:25-34).

So, our concern here should be to seek God's glory, and then (and only then) we can trust Him to provide our every need. We should seek to spread His word, not our own thoughts. We need to continually seek correction, of our thoughts and ways, from God's word.

Then, from v.13, following the instructions concerning God's symbols of His care for our spiritual and physical well-being, we find instructions to the judges for dealing with us. These verses concern judgments that are under the authority of the judges to make. Included are punishments for blasphemy and murder, relating to the two main categories of commandments – loving Yahweh our God and loving our neighbor. These are capital crimes. For lesser crimes involving injury to our neighbor or his property, equitable restitution must be ordered by judges.

Concerning “an eye for an eye . . .”, this is not referring to personal retribution. In Exodus 21:1 this is classified under “judgments” (Heb. *mishpatim*), and again in Deuteronomy 19:18-21 we see that it means for the judges to make equitable judgments, granting the value of an eye for a lost eye.

God said that He gave His Holy Spirit to the original judges of the Sanhedrin (Numbers 11:17), in order for them to make righteous judgments for the people. These judgments included both settlements of disputes and criminal matters, and *halachic* judgments (how the people were to walk to fulfill Torah).

It seems interesting to note that God instructed the “sons of Israel” to bring pure olive oil to Moses for Aaron to fill the menorah (v.1-4). God instructs us to be “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), to walk in His light and be loving one to another.

Leviticus 25

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Yahweh then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to Yahweh. ³ 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, ⁴ but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to Yahweh; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ⁵ 'Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁶ 'All of you shall have the sabbath products of the land for food; yourself, and your male and female slaves, and your hired man and your foreign resident, those who live as aliens with you. ⁷ 'Even your cattle and the animals that are in your land shall have all its crops to eat. ⁸ 'You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. ⁹ 'You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. ¹⁰ 'You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹¹ 'You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines. ¹² 'For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field. ¹³ 'On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property. ¹⁴ 'If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another. ¹⁵ 'Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. ¹⁶ 'In proportion to the extent of the years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to the fewness of the years you shall diminish its price, for it is a number of crops he is selling to you.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁷ 'So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am Yahweh your God. ¹⁸ 'You shall thus observe My statutes and keep My judgments, so as to carry them out, that you may live securely on the land. ¹⁹ 'Then the land will yield its produce, so that you can eat your fill and live securely on it. ²⁰ 'But if you say, "What are we going to eat on the seventh year if we do not sow or gather in our crops?" ²¹ then I will so order My blessing for you in the sixth year that it will bring forth the crop for three years. ²² 'When you are sowing the eighth year, you can still eat old things from the crop, eating the old until the ninth year when its crop comes in.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²³ 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me. ²⁴ 'Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. ²⁵ 'If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold. ²⁶ 'Or in case a man has no kinsman, but so recovers his means as to find sufficient for its redemption, ²⁷ then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property. ²⁸ 'But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of jubilee; but at the jubilee it shall revert, that he may return to his property.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁹ 'Likewise, if a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, then his redemption right remains valid until a full year from its sale; his right of redemption lasts a full year. ³⁰ 'But if it is not bought back for him within the space of a full year, then the house that is in the walled city passes permanently to its purchaser throughout his generations; it does not revert in the jubilee. ³¹ 'The houses of the villages, however, which have no surrounding wall shall be considered as open fields; they have redemption rights and revert in the jubilee. ³² 'As for cities of the Levites, the Levites have a permanent right of redemption for the houses of the cities which are their possession. ³³ 'What, therefore, belongs to the Levites may be redeemed and a house sale in the city of this possession reverts in the jubilee, for the houses of the cities of the Levites are their possession among the sons of Israel. ³⁴ 'But pasture fields of their cities shall not be sold, for that is their perpetual possession.

*Reader 7** Amen. ³⁵ 'Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. ³⁶ 'Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. ³⁷ 'You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain. ³⁸ 'I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

Jeremiah 36:6

*Reader 8** Amen. ⁶ "So you go and read from the scroll which you have written at my dictation the words of Yahweh to the people in Yahweh's house on a fast day. And also you shall read them to all the people of Judah who come from their cities.

Jeremiah 32:6-27

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁶ And Jeremiah said, "The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ⁷ 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you, saying, "Buy for yourself my field which is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption to buy it.'" ⁸ "Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the guard according to the word of Yahweh and said to me, 'Buy my field, please, that is at Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for you have the right of possession and the redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of Yahweh. ⁹ "I bought the field which was at Anathoth from Hanamel my uncle's son, and I weighed out the silver for him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ "I signed and sealed the deed, and called in witnesses, and weighed out the silver on the scales. ¹¹ "Then I took the deeds of purchase, both the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions and the open copy; ¹² and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel my uncle's son and in the sight of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹³ "And I commanded Baruch in their presence, saying, ¹⁴ 'Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, "Take these deeds, this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last a long time." ¹⁵ "For thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, "Houses and fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.'" ¹⁶ "After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, then I prayed to Yahweh, saying, ¹⁷ 'Ah Lord Yahweh! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You, ¹⁸ who shows lovingkindness to thousands, but repays the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. Yahweh of hosts is His name; ¹⁹ great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds; ²⁰ who has set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and even to this day both in Israel and among mankind; and You have made a name for Yourself, as at this day. ²¹ You brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders, and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror; ²² and gave them this land, which You swore to their forefathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. ²³ They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey Your voice or walk in Your law; they have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have made all this calamity come upon them. ²⁴ Behold, the siege ramps have reached the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of the sword, the famine and the pestilence; and what You have spoken has come to pass; and behold, You see it. ²⁵ You have said to me, O Lord Yahweh, "Buy for yourself the field with money and call in witnesses" -- although the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.'" ²⁶ Then the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁷ "Behold, I am Yahweh, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Ezekiel 34:1-31

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹ Then the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ² "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock?" ³ "You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock. ⁴ "Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. ⁵ "They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. ⁶ "My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.'" ⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh: ⁸ "As I live," declares Lord Yahweh, "surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of Yahweh: ¹⁰ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so that they will not be food for them.'" "

*Reader 12** Amen. ¹¹ For thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² "As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. ¹³ "I will bring them

out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. ¹⁴ "I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ "I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares Lord Yahweh. ¹⁶ "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment. ¹⁷ "As for you, My flock, thus says Lord Yahweh, 'Behold, I will judge between one sheep and another, between the rams and the male goats. ¹⁸ 'Is it too slight a thing for you that you should feed in the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pastures? Or that you should drink of the clear waters, that you must foul the rest with your feet?' ¹⁹ 'As for My flock, they must eat what you tread down with your feet and drink what you foul with your feet!'" ²⁰ Therefore, thus says Lord Yahweh to them, "Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ²¹ "Because you push with side and with shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns until you have scattered them abroad, ²² therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another. *Reader 12** Amen. ²³ "Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. ²⁴ "And I, Yahweh, will be their God, and My servant David will be prince among them; I Yahweh have spoken. ²⁵ "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. ²⁶ "I will make them and the places around My hill a blessing. And I will cause showers to come down in their season; they will be showers of blessing. ²⁷ "Also the tree of the field will yield its fruit and the earth will yield its increase, and they will be secure on their land. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, when I have broken the bars of their yoke and have delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them. ²⁸ "They will no longer be a prey to the nations, and the beasts of the earth will not devour them; but they will live securely, and no one will make them afraid. ²⁹ "I will establish for them a renowned planting place, and they will not again be victims of famine in the land, and they will not endure the insults of the nations anymore. ³⁰ "Then they will know that I, Yahweh their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people," declares Lord Yahweh. ³¹ "As for you, My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, you are men, and I am your God," declares Lord Yahweh.

Psalm 88 *(To be sung.) A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

For the choir director; according to Mahalath Leannoth. A Maskil of Heman the Ezrahite.

¹ O Yahweh, the God of my salvation, I have cried out by day and in the night before You. ² Let my prayer come before You; Incline Your ear to my cry! ³ For my soul has had enough troubles, And my life has drawn near to Sheol. ⁴ I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, ⁵ Forsaken among the dead, Like the slain who lie in the grave, Whom You remember no more, And they are cut off from Your hand. ⁶ You have put me in the lowest pit, In dark places, in the depths. ⁷ Your wrath has rested upon me, And You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah. ⁸ You have removed my acquaintances far from me; You have made me an object of loathing to them; I am shut up and cannot go out. ⁹ My eye has wasted away because of affliction; I have called upon You every day, O Yahweh; I have spread out my hands to You. ¹⁰ Will You perform wonders for the dead? Will the departed spirits rise and praise You? Selah. ¹¹ Will Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave, Your faithfulness in Abaddon? ¹² Will Your wonders be made known in the darkness? And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? ¹³ But I, O Yahweh, have cried out to You for help, And in the morning my prayer comes before You. ¹⁴ O Yahweh, why do You reject my soul? Why do You hide Your face from me? ¹⁵ I was afflicted and about to die from my youth on; I suffer Your terrors; I am overcome. ¹⁶ Your burning anger has passed over me; Your terrors have destroyed me. ¹⁷ They have surrounded me like water all day long; They have encompassed me altogether. ¹⁸ You have removed lover and friend far from me; My acquaintances are in darkness.

John 10:1-33

*Reader 13** Amen. ¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³ "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ "When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ "A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which He had been saying to them. ⁷ So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf

coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ "He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep.

*Reader 14** Amen. ¹⁴ "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷ "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸ "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." ¹⁹ A division occurred again among the Jews because of these words. ²⁰ Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is insane. Why do you listen to Him?" ²¹ Others were saying, "These are not the sayings of one demon-possessed. A demon cannot open the eyes of the blind, can he?" ²² At that time the Feast of the Dedication took place at Jerusalem; ²³ it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon. ²⁴ The Jews then gathered around Him, and were saying to Him, "How long will You keep us in suspense? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. ²⁶ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. ²⁷ "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ "I and the Father are one." ³¹ The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him. ³² Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" ³³ The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Commentary:

The *Sh'mittah* – the Sabbatical Year.

A history: The commandments were all given to Moses at Mt. Sinai. But we see many of them detailed to the people later, in a logical progression. Moses gave the instructions for the building of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, which the people joyfully followed. Then Moses gave the instructions for offerings and purification, which were needed upon completion of the meetingplace for appointments with God. After those instructions, we now see the laws given for *sh'mittah* and other things that applied after reaching the Promised Land.

Last week we considered how that God gave annual appointments showing His occasional acts of greatness toward us – such as redemption and resurrection; and also how He gave the Menorah and Show bread indicating His continual caring for us. This week we are looking forward to an eternal home.

(V.2) "*When you come to the land that I give you*". With the Tabernacle being a functional reality, the people are now to look forward to the Promised Land". "*That I give you*" is in the present tense – not like a give-and-forget gift, but rather as God continually keeping His promises to His people.

God provided for His original creation, and will provide for His renewed creation.

Genesis 2:4-15 "*This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh God made earth and heaven. Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for Yahweh God had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. Then Yahweh God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. And Yahweh God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. **And out of the ground Yahweh God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. **Then Yahweh God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*****"

(V.2) "*Then the land shall have a Sabbath to Yahweh*". The Sabbatical year is related to the weekly Sabbath: its basic purpose is not for the earth to replenish itself, but to worship God, showing faith. Israel may have never trusted God enough to forgo sowing and reaping – and that is a lesson to us in how we should trust. Israel experienced

expulsion from the Promised Land because of this lack of faith. Sabbatical years, like Sabbath days, are not times for idleness or worldly pleasure, but times for worship and spiritual growth. (V.3) “*Six years you shall sow . . .*”, as in “*Six days shall you labor*” (Exodus 20:9). The seventh year, like the seventh day, is dedicated to God.

In the Sabbath Millennium, the seventh-thousand years when Yeshua reigns, “*the day when all will be Sabbath*”, God will provide for all of our needs. Then, when the earth is restored, He will provide for us from the Garden of Eden – also called Paradise. By comparing Genesis and Revelation, we can see the details of this restored Garden.

So we see three parts to our faith: We are to trust Yahweh for our salvation from sin (that is the meaning of the name Yeshua), we are to trust God to provide all things for us to fulfill His work that we are here to do, and we are to trust Him for a future eternal glorious home. We show our faith in three corresponding ways: repentance and observing His appointed Holy Days, setting aside the weekly Sabbath for worship and spiritual growth, and resting in a sure hope of future glory that is not dependant upon our worldly efforts such as sowing and reaping to build wealth.

The *Yovel* – the Jubilee Year.

(V.8) “*You shall count for yourself*”. After the Passover seder, we are commanded to count each day, and each of seven weeks, until the fiftieth day – Pentecost. Likewise, the Sanhedrin (the commandment is singular) is commanded to count each year, and each of seven Sabbaticals, until the fiftieth year, and then proclaim the Jubilee. This year does not begin on the Festival New Year (Nisan 1), but on *Yom Teruah* / the Day of Trumpeting (Tishrei 1), which is also called *Rosh haShannah* / Head of the Year (Ezekiel 40:1). The land may not be worked that year – beginning with Rosh haShannah, but slaves are not fully free until the tenth day – *Yom haKippurim* / the Day of the Atonements.

This would seem to relate to our final redemption (Romans 8:23, Ephesians 1:14). At the Last Trump on *Yom Teruah*, Yeshua will return and the righteous dead will be raised. But *Yom haKippurim*, ten days later, represents the purification of the redeemed.

Today’s Psalm is one of those that are obviously messianic. We can hear Yeshua, from the tomb, saying (v.6-7), “*Thou hast put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths. Thy wrath has rested upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves. Selah.*” We can hear Him, from the cross, saying (v.14), “*Why dost Thou hide Thy face from me?*”

But, in another sense of this Psalm, Israel may be heard, crying, as a result of punishment for faithlessness – faithlessness shown by planting and harvesting and selling on the Sabbatical Years and Jubilee.

Jeremiah tells the result of this faithlessness (v.32:17-24): “*Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee, who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God. Yahweh of hosts is His name; great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men, giving to everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds; who hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and even to this day both in Israel and among mankind; and Thou hast made a name for Thyself, as at this day. And Thou didst bring Thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and with wonders, and with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror; and gavest them this land, which Thou didst swear to their forefathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. And they came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey Thy voice or walk in Thy law; they have done nothing of all that Thou commandedst them to do; therefore Thou hast made all this calamity come upon them. 'Behold, the siege mounds have reached the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans'.*”

In John 10 we learn that the redemption and provision and future world apply to “His sheep”. If we are of His sheep, we will hear Yeshua’s voice. He gave His life for us willingly, He came to give us abundant life, and He will not let anything take us away from Him. This is the Word in which we can trust, and be of faith concerning our destiny.

Leviticus 25

*Reader 1** Amen. ³⁹ 'If a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to you that he sells himself to you, you shall not subject him to a slave's service. ⁴⁰ 'He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. ⁴¹ 'He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁴² 'For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale. ⁴³ 'You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God. ⁴⁴ 'As for your male and female slaves whom you may have-- you may acquire male and female slaves from the pagan nations that are around you.

*Reader 3** Amen. ⁴⁵ 'Then, too, it is out of the sons of the sojourners who live as aliens among you that you may gain acquisition, and out of their families who are with you, whom they will have produced in your land; they also may become your possession. ⁴⁶ 'You may even bequeath them to your sons after you, to receive as a possession; you can use them as permanent slaves. But in respect to your countrymen, the sons of Israel, you shall not rule with severity over one another.

*Reader 4** Amen. ⁴⁷ 'Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger's family, ⁴⁸ then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, ⁴⁹ or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself.

*Reader 5** Amen. ⁵⁰ 'He then with his purchaser shall calculate from the year when he sold himself to him up to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall correspond to the number of years. It is like the days of a hired man that he shall be with him. ⁵¹ 'If there are still many years, he shall refund part of his purchase price in proportion to them for his own redemption; ⁵² and if few years remain until the year of jubilee, he shall so calculate with him. In proportion to his years he is to refund the amount for his redemption.

*Reader 6** Amen. ⁵³ 'Like a man hired year by year he shall be with him; he shall not rule over him with severity in your sight. ⁵⁴ 'Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of jubilee, he and his sons with him. ⁵⁵ 'For the sons of Israel are My servants; they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

*Reader 7** Amen. ^{26:1} 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am Yahweh your God. ² 'You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am Yahweh.

Isaiah 24:2

*Reader 8** Amen. ² And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor.

Psalm 89 (To be sung.) A Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

¹ I will sing of the lovingkindness of Yahweh forever; to all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth. ² For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness." ³ "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, ⁴ I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations." Selah. ⁵ The heavens will praise Your wonders, O Yahweh; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones. ⁶ For who in the skies is comparable to Yahweh? Who among the sons of the mighty is like Yahweh, ⁷ a God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all those who are around Him? ⁸ O Yahweh God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty Yahweh? Your faithfulness also surrounds You. ⁹ You rule the swelling of the sea; when its waves rise, You still them. ¹⁰ You Yourself crushed Rahab like one who is slain; You scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. ¹¹ The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; the world and all it contains, You have founded them. ¹² The north and the south, You have created them; Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name. ¹³ You have a strong arm; Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is exalted. ¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; lovingkindness and truth go before You. ¹⁵ **How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!** O Yahweh, they walk in the light of Your countenance. ¹⁶ In Your name they rejoice all the day, and by Your righteousness they are exalted. ¹⁷ For You are the glory of their strength, and by Your favor our horn is exalted. ¹⁸ For our shield belongs to Yahweh, and our king to the Holy One of Israel. ¹⁹ Once You spoke in vision to Your godly ones, and said, "I have given help to one who is mighty; I have exalted one chosen from the people. ²⁰ "I have found David My servant; with My holy

oil I have anointed him,²¹ with whom My hand will be established; My arm also will strengthen him.²² "The enemy will not deceive him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him.²³ "But I shall crush his adversaries before him, and strike those who hate him.²⁴ "My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him, and in My name his horn will be exalted.²⁵ "I shall also set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.²⁶ "He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father, My God, and the rock of my salvation.'²⁷ "I also shall make him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.²⁸ "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him.²⁹ "So I will establish his descendants forever and his throne as the days of heaven.³⁰ "If his sons forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments,³¹ if they violate My statutes and do not keep My commandments,³² then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes.³³ "But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.³⁴ "My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.³⁵ "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David.³⁶ "His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before Me.³⁷ "It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful." Selah.³⁸ But You have cast off and rejected, You have been full of wrath against Your anointed.³⁹ You have spurned the covenant of Your servant; You have profaned his crown in the dust.⁴⁰ You have broken down all his walls; You have brought his strongholds to ruin.⁴¹ All who pass along the way plunder him; He has become a reproach to his neighbors.⁴² You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries; You have made all his enemies rejoice.⁴³ You also turn back the edge of his sword and have not made him stand in battle.⁴⁴ You have made his splendor to cease and cast his throne to the ground.⁴⁵ You have shortened the days of his youth; You have covered him with shame. Selah.⁴⁶ How long, O Yahweh? Will You hide Yourself forever? Will Your wrath burn like fire?⁴⁷ Remember what my span of life is; for what vanity You have created all the sons of men!⁴⁸ What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah.⁴⁹ Where are Your former lovingkindnesses, O Lord, Which You swore to David in Your faithfulness?⁵⁰ Remember, O Lord, the reproach of Your servants; how I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples,⁵¹ with which Your enemies have reproached, O Yahweh, with which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.⁵² Blessed be Yahweh forever! Amen and Amen.

Galatians 4:1 - 5:1

*Reader 9** Amen.¹ Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything,² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.³ So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.⁸ However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.

*Reader 10** Amen.⁹ But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?¹⁰ You observe days and months and seasons and years.¹¹ I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.¹² I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong;¹³ but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time;¹⁴ and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Messiah Yeshua Himself.¹⁵ Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me.¹⁶ So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?¹⁷ They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them.

*Reader 11** Amen.¹⁸ But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you.¹⁹ My children, with whom I am again in labor until Messiah is formed in you--²⁰ but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.²¹ Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?²² For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.²³ But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.²⁴ This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.²⁵ Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.²⁷ For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; for more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband."²⁸ And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.²⁹ But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.³⁰ But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman."³¹ So then, brethren,

we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman. ^{5:1} It was for freedom that Messiah set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

Commentary:

(Galatians) Paul is speaking of slavery and freedom; but, what slavery and what freedom?

If we come to the Scriptures with a preconceived doctrine that “Law” is slavery and “lawlessness” is freedom, then we can interpret this passage to bolster our doctrine. Many translators, having this doctrine, have accordingly slanted some of the most popular versions of the Bible. This makes such an interpretation much easier, and harder to correct.

Firstly, I would like everyone to be aware that nowhere in Galatians (or anywhere else) did Paul use any word that could reasonably be translated “Judaizers”, though such a term is often attributed to him in sermons condemning Torah observance.

Secondly, I would like everyone to see that the word “lawlessness” is correctly and frequently used, and always condemned. The Greek word is *anomia*, meaning (a) no - (*nomos*) law - (*ia*) ness.

Yeshua said, “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness’ ” (Matthew 7:23).

Paul said, “I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification” (Romans 6:19).

Paul taught, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

God said, concerning Yeshua, “You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your companions” (Hebrews 1:9).

John taught, “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; for sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4).

Thirdly, I would like to remind everyone that Yeshua said He did not come to abolish the *Torah* / Law (Matthew 5:17). But, Paul taught that Yeshua set us free from *the Law of sin and death* (Romans 8:2). *The Law of sin and death* is “*The soul who sins will die*” (Ezekiel 18:4).

So, Yeshua did not set us free to practice things that are against Torah - lawlessness. He set us free from the sting of death, our just punishment, so that we could be free to serve Him lawfully, not continuing to serve sin.

Through Torah obedience, we learn to serve God, and overcome sin.

Now, there were certain false religious promoters in Judaism, as there are today in Christendom, who insisted that salvation was based upon ones own merits. By fearfully abstaining from certain acts and carefully performing others, one might hope to obtain eternal life; the alternative would be death for sin. (V.17) “*They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out, in order that you may seek them.*” (V.21) “*Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?*” Being “*under the law*” here means being a slave to it under penalty of death. Some, who themselves do not possess the kind of faith taught in Torah, wish to hold others to their kind of works for salvation. But, as Paul is saying, this is really contrary to what Torah is about: “*do you not listen to the law?*”

Abraham had a son, Isaac, by the fulfillment of God’s promise. We are sons of God by the fulfillment of God’s promise. God sent forth His Son to redeem us. Through His Spirit we long to worship Him, rather than the worship the base things of this world. His Torah is our instruction (*Torah* means instruction), carried by prophets and teachers, to bring us to maturity (Ephesians 4:13).

And, Abraham had a son, Ishmael, “after the flesh”. This son was without faith, fully enraptured with the natural world. Therefore, he came under the condemnation of “the soul who sins will die”. The commandments, which are to show the way of a fulfilled life to the faithful, became his judge of death.

(V.5:1) Messiah set us free from the penalty of death for sin, if so be that we have the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9). Therefore, we should not let anyone convince us to seek salvation by our own works, which would lead to a death penalty for failure. But, on the other hand, if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, we will not follow “lawlessness”, but Torah instruction to grow in righteousness.

Leviticus 25 speaks of how we are to treat someone who has become impoverished. We are not to deal with him in severity, but we are to revere God. We are to seek his welfare, and his restoration to independence.

In Isaiah 24, God speaks of the time when men have polluted the earth, by grossly breaking His laws (v.5). There will be no difference between a commoner and a priest, between a slave and a master, between a borrower and a lender (v.2): all will be gathered like prisoners in a dungeon (for 1000 years), and later punished (v.22). Yahweh of hosts (armies) will reign on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (v.23). The stated reason is . . . lawlessness!

[Isaiah says “Yahweh of Hosts” will reign on earth; John so describes the Sabbath millennium (Revelation 11:15-17 and 20:6).]

We sing, from Psalm 89, *I will sing of the lovingkindness of Yahweh forever; to all generations I will make known Thy faithfulness with my mouth. For I have said, “Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness – I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever, and build up your throne to all generations.’ Selah.”*

(V.30) *“If his sons forsake My law, and do not walk in My judgments, if they violate My statutes, and do not keep My commandments, then I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, nor deal falsely in My faithfulness. My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me. It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful.” Selah* (Meditate on that).

Incidentally, Psalm 89:15 says, *“How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O Yahweh, they walk in the light of Thy countenance.”* The “joyful sound” is a translation of the Hebrew *teruah*: how blessed are the people who walk in His light, rehearsing on *Yom Teruah* / the Day of Trumpeting, knowing the sound of the last trump! They shall recognize the announcement of Messiah return!

Last portion of Leviticus

*Reader 1** Amen. ³ **If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,** ⁴ then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. ⁵ 'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. ⁶ 'I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. ⁷ 'But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; ⁸ five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. ⁹ 'So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. ¹⁰ 'You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. ¹¹ 'Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. ¹² 'I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. ¹³ 'I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹⁴ 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, ¹⁵ **if, instead, you reject My statutes,** and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, ¹⁶ I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. ¹⁷ 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. ¹⁸ 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹ 'I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. ²⁰ 'Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. ²¹ 'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. ²² 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted. ²³ 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, ²⁴ then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. ²⁵ 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. ²⁶ 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.

*Reader 3** Amen. ²⁷ **'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me,** ²⁸ then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. ²⁹ 'Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. ³⁰ 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. ³¹ 'I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. ³² 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. ³³ 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. ³⁴ 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵ 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. ³⁶ 'As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall. ³⁷ 'They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies. ³⁸ 'But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. ³⁹ 'So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.

*Reader 4** Amen. ⁴⁰ **'If they confess** their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me-- ⁴¹ I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies-- or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, ⁴² then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ 'For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its Sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes.

⁴⁴ 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am Yahweh their God. ⁴⁵ 'But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Yahweh.'" ⁴⁶ These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which Yahweh established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

*Reader 5** Amen. ^{27:1} Again, Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, '**When a man makes a difficult vow**, he shall be valued according to your valuation of persons belonging to Yahweh. ³ 'If your valuation is of the male from twenty years even to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary. ⁴ 'Or if it is a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels. ⁵ 'If it be from five years even to twenty years old then your valuation for the male shall be twenty shekels and for the female ten shekels. ⁶ 'But if they are from a month even up to five years old, then your valuation shall be five shekels of silver for the male, and for the female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver. ⁷ 'If they are from sixty years old and upward, if it is a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels. ⁸ 'But if he is poorer than your valuation, then he shall be placed before the priest and the priest shall value him; according to the means of the one who vowed, the priest shall value him.

*Reader 6** Amen. ⁹ 'Now if it is an animal of the kind which men can present as an offering to Yahweh, any such that one gives to Yahweh shall be holy. ¹⁰ 'He shall not replace it or exchange it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good; or if he does exchange animal for animal, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. ¹¹ 'If, however, it is any unclean animal of the kind which men do not present as an offering to Yahweh, then he shall place the animal before the priest. ¹² 'The priest shall value it as either good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. ¹³ 'But if he should ever wish to redeem it, then he shall add one-fifth of it to your valuation. ¹⁴ 'Now if a man consecrates his house as holy to Yahweh, then the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. ¹⁵ 'Yet if the one who consecrates it should wish to redeem his house, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may be his. ¹⁶ 'Again, if a man consecrates to Yahweh part of the fields of his own property, then your valuation shall be proportionate to the seed needed for it: a homer of barley seed at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷ 'If he consecrates his field as of the year of jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. ¹⁸ 'If he consecrates his field after the jubilee, however, then the priest shall calculate the price for him proportionate to the years that are left until the year of jubilee; and it shall be deducted from your valuation. ¹⁹ 'If the one who consecrates it should ever wish to redeem the field, then he shall add one-fifth of your valuation price to it, so that it may pass to him. ²⁰ 'Yet if he will not redeem the field, but has sold the field to another man, it may no longer be redeemed; ²¹ and when it reverts in the jubilee, the field shall be holy to Yahweh, like a field set apart; it shall be for the priest as his property. ²² 'Or if he consecrates to Yahweh a field which he has bought, which is not a part of the field of his own property, ²³ then the priest shall calculate for him the amount of your valuation up to the year of jubilee; and he shall on that day give your valuation as holy to Yahweh. ²⁴ 'In the year of jubilee the field shall return to the one from whom he bought it, to whom the possession of the land belongs.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²⁵ 'Every valuation of yours, moreover, shall be after the shekel of the sanctuary. The shekel shall be twenty gerahs. ²⁶ 'However, a firstborn among animals, which as a firstborn belongs to Yahweh, no man may consecrate it; whether ox or sheep, it is Yahweh'S. ²⁷ 'But if it is among the unclean animals, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation and add to it one-fifth of it; and if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation. ²⁸ 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to Yahweh out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most holy to Yahweh. ²⁹ 'No one who may have been set apart among men shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death. ³⁰ 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is Yahweh'S; it is holy to Yahweh. ³¹ 'If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. ³² 'For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to Yahweh. ³³ 'He is not to be concerned whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; or if he does exchange it, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. It shall not be redeemed.'" ³⁴ These are the commandments which Yahweh commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.

Jeremiah 16:19

*Reader 7** Amen. ¹⁹ "O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of distress, to You the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, futility and things of no profit."

Ezekiel 12:20

²⁰ "The inhabited cities will be laid waste and the land will be a desolation. So you will know that I am Yahweh."

Isaiah 1:19

¹⁹ "If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; . . ."

Psalm 90 (To be sung.) A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

¹ Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. ² Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God. ³ You turn man back into dust and say, "Return, O children of men." ⁴ For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by, or as a watch in the night. ⁵ You have swept them away like a flood, they fall asleep; in the morning they are like grass which sprouts anew. ⁶ In the morning it flourishes and sprouts anew; toward evening it fades and withers away. ⁷ For we have been consumed by Your anger and by Your wrath we have been dismayed. ⁸ You have placed our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence. ⁹ For all our days have declined in Your fury; we have finished our years like a sigh. ¹⁰ As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away. ¹¹ Who understands the power of Your anger and Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? ¹² So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom. ¹³ Do return, O Yahweh; how long will it be? And be sorry for Your servants. ¹⁴ O satisfy us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days. ¹⁵ Make us glad according to the days You have afflicted us, and the years we have seen evil. ¹⁶ Let Your work appear to Your servants and Your majesty to their children. ¹⁷ Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us; and confirm for us the work of our hands; Yes, confirm the work of our hands.

John 15:1-27

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, that you love one another.

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹⁸ If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' ²⁶ When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."

Commentary:

In this last portion of the Book of Leviticus, we see the various states of the hearers. God's Word is received in some good ground, where various states of growth are achieved; it is also received in some thorny or rocky ground, as Yeshua stated in parable (Matthew 13).

Today's readings concern this present life. We will look at the present state of those who are God's chosen – those who are redeemed. We will see the great distinction between living by faith (in truth, not blindly), and living by our own feelings.

If we are redeemed, we will be disciplined until we learn obedience. We can live a prosperous life by walking with God, or we can live under increasing difficulties by fighting for our own rights. A prosperous life means that, in serving God, He will provide every need for His work. There is great satisfaction and peace in serving God. A difficult life means that, in serving self, He will provide increasing penalties to turn us around. It is greatly to our advantage to submit quickly.

All of these things were written for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11).

(V.3) This is God's Word to His people who are obedient.

Yahweh said, *"If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you . . ."* – Leviticus 26:3-4.

Isaiah says: *"If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; . . ."* – Isaiah 1:19.

Yeshua said, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full"* – John 15:10-11.

(V.14) This is God's Word to His people when they are disobedient.

"But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, if, instead, you reject My statutes and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, I, in turn, will do this to you: . . ." – Leviticus 26:14-15.

God will send terrorism, disease, and poverty. All of the consequences have both physical and spiritual counterparts: the physical enemies and diseases and poverty are symptoms of spiritual enemies, evil rulers, doctrinal error and lack of knowledge of God's word and ways.

The Psalmist asks God to teach us quickly, because our days on this earth are short. We may all wish for God to teach us gently, rather than show his great fury in our lives. If we have a heart to learn and comply, we may experience God's peace and joy for more of our lives.

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(V.27) This is God's Word to those who reject His discipline.

"Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me,²⁸ then I will act with wrathful hostility against you" – Leviticus 26:27-28.

All of the above will become more severe, with great fear, unanswered prayer, and starvation.

The Psalmist says, *"Who understands the power of Your anger and Your fury, according to the fear that is due You? So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom"* – Psalm 90:11-12.

Ezekiel says: *"And the inhabited cities will be laid waste, and the land will be a desolation. So you will know that I am Yahweh"* – Ezekiel 12:20.

(V.40) This is God's Word to the penitent.

"If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me . . . then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land" – Leviticus 26:40-42.

(v.44) *"I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them .*

Jeremiah says: *"O Yahweh, my strength and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of distress, to Thee the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, 'Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, futility and things of no profit'"* – Jeremiah 16:19.

We need to constantly consider our position before an holy God, and make daily confessions of our erroneous ways and wrong attitudes. God has promised to fill us with His Spirit, and righteousness, if we ask. This is the path for answered prayer, and a fulfilled life, and full joy, and a greater future life.

Yeshua said, *"And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"* – Luke 11:9-13.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" – Matthew 5:6.

We must go into today's reading with the following understandings: Our redemption and eternal destiny is a matter of grace, the evidence being a faith that produces fruit – good works. This life is a process of sanctification – growing in faith and knowledge through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. We will have discipline in this life if we are His: we also will have trials of our faith that are not disciplinary.

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you" – John 15:16.

Ultimately, we live in Yeshua, the true vine, and bear fruit. Or, we can live by the world's ideas, and get clipped. That relates to our eternal state – whether we are or are not of the redeemed.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit."

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" – John 15:2, 6.

Leviticus 27 ends the Book of Leviticus. It teaches of redemption valuations for people, animals, crops, and property, offered to God.

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses **in the wilderness** of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, ² "Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head ³ from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to go out to war* in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies. ⁴ "With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father's household.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁵ "These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; ⁶ of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; ⁷ of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; ⁸ of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; ⁹ of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; ¹⁰ of the sons of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; ¹¹ of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; ¹² of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; ¹³ of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran; ¹⁴ of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; ¹⁵ of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan. ¹⁶ "These are they who were called of the congregation, the leaders of their fathers' tribes; they were the heads of divisions of Israel."

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁷ So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, ¹⁸ and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head, ¹⁹ just as Yahweh had commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁰ Now the sons of **Reuben**, Israel's firstborn, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ²¹ their numbered men of the tribe of Reuben *were* 46,500. ²² Of the sons of **Simeon**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, their numbered men, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ²³ their numbered men of the tribe of Simeon *were* 59,300. ²⁴ Of the sons of **Gad**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ²⁵ their numbered men of the tribe of Gad *were* 45,650. ²⁶ Of the sons of **Judah**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ²⁷ their numbered men of the tribe of Judah *were* 74,600.

*Reader 5** Amen. ²⁸ Of the sons of **Issachar**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ²⁹ their numbered men of the tribe of Issachar *were* 54,400. ³⁰ Of the sons of **Zebulun**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ³¹ their numbered men of the tribe of Zebulun *were* 57,400. ³² Of the sons of **Joseph**, *namely*, of the sons of **Ephraim**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ³³ their numbered men of the tribe of Ephraim *were* 40,500. ³⁴ Of the sons of **Manasseh**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ³⁵ their numbered men of the tribe of Manasseh *were* 32,200.

*Reader 6** Amen. ³⁶ Of the sons of **Benjamin**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ³⁷ their numbered men of the tribe of Benjamin *were* 35,400. ³⁸ Of the sons of **Dan**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ³⁹ their numbered men of the tribe of Dan *were* 62,700. ⁴⁰ Of the sons of **Asher**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ⁴¹ their numbered men of the tribe of Asher *were* 41,500. ⁴² Of the sons of **Naphtali**, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war*, ⁴³ their numbered men of the tribe of Naphtali *were* 53,400.

*Reader 7** Amen. ⁴⁴ These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each of whom was of his father's household. ⁴⁵ So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to go out to war* in Israel, ⁴⁶ even all the numbered men were 603,550. ⁴⁷ The **Levites**, however, were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe. ⁴⁸

For Yahweh had spoken to Moses, saying,⁴⁹ "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel.⁵⁰ "But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle.⁵¹ "So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death.⁵² "The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies.⁵³ "But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."⁵⁴ Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which Yahweh had commanded Moses, so they did.

Hosea 1:10 – 2:1

*Reader 8** Amen.¹⁰ Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and in the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."¹¹ And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader, and they will go up from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.^{2:1} Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah."

Psalm 91 (To be sung.)

¹ He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say to Yahweh, "My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!" ³ For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. ⁴ He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. ⁵ You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; ⁶ of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. ⁸ You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. ⁹ For you have made Yahweh, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. ¹⁰ No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. ¹¹ For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. ¹² They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. ¹³ You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. ¹⁴ "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵ He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. ¹⁶ With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation."

Revelation 7:1-17

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. ² And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." ⁴ And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: ⁵ from the tribe of **Judah**, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of **Reuben** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Gad** twelve thousand, ⁶ from the tribe of **Asher** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Naphtali** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Manasseh** twelve thousand, ⁷ from the tribe of **Simeon** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Levi** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Issachar** twelve thousand, ⁸ from the tribe of **Zebulun** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Joseph** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Benjamin**, twelve thousand were sealed.

*Reader 10** Amen. ⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; ¹⁰ and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹¹ And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them. ¹⁶ "They will hunger no longer, nor

thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; ¹⁷ for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes."

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads." 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 5 from the tribe of **Judah**, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of **Reuben** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Gad** twelve thousand, 6 from the tribe of **Asher** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Naphtali** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Manasseh** twelve thousand, 7 from the tribe of **Simeon** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Levi** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Issachar** twelve thousand, 8 from the tribe of **Zebulun** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Joseph** twelve thousand, from the tribe of **Benjamin**, twelve thousand were sealed. 9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying, "Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." 13 And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where have they come?" 14 And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. 16 "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes."

Commentary:

The Tabernacle

Yahweh’s presence rested upon Israel at Mt. Sinai (), at the Tabernacle in the wilderness (), and at the Temple in Jerusalem (). As Israel encamped around Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah, so also they encamped around the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and later dwelt around Jerusalem in Canaan. Yahweh and His Torah (instruction) were always to be at the center of their lives. They, in turn, were to be a light to the nations ().

The census in the wilderness

The census was a count of the men from the age of twenty years to sixty years – “the legion,” those suited for military duty. The count was performed by taking a half-shekel coin from each, and counting the coins (Exodus 30:12-13).

Previous censuses counted the nation as a unit. This census counted by tribes. The final counts would be useful for structuring the tribal armies, and for dividing territories.

The counts were performed through a “called” leader of each tribe. This means an elder recognized and chosen by the people, not someone seeking a position by claiming that he feels God called him.

Listings of the twelve tribes:

<u>Genesis 29*</u>	<u>Numbers 1**</u>	<u>Revelation 7***</u>
Reuben	Reuben	Judah
Simeon	Simeon	Reuben
Levi	Gad	Gad
Judah	Judah	Asher
Dan	Issachar	Naphtali
Naphtali	Zebulun	Manasseh

Gad	Joseph	Simeon
Asher	Benjamin	Levi
Issqacher	Dan	Issachar
Zebulun	Asher	Zebulun
Joseph	Naphtali	Joseph*
Benjamin	Levi	Benjamin

*Genesis here records the birth order of the sons of Israel.

** Joseph fulfilled the part of priest (instead of the firstborn), and was used to save all the family: therefore he was given a double portion through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, who are also named in this chapter. Levi is shown last, because Levites were to keep the Tabernacle, and not be counted for warriors or land portions.

***Dan is not in this listing; Joseph and one son (Manasseh) are listed, with the other son (Ephraim) being omitted.

(Hosea 2:1) Say to your brothers, “*Ammi (My people)*,” and to your sisters, “*Ruhamah (obtained mercy)*.”

God’s people were not chosen for any worthiness in themselves. They are the ones chosen before the world began, and shown mercy – redemption from slavery to sin, forgiveness, cleansing, and future glorification.

(Psalm 91)

Psalms 90 through 100 were written by Moses: “*A Prayer of Moses the man of God*” (Psalm 90:1). Each was written for one of the tribes – Simeon being excluded (see Deuteronomy 33). Psalm 91 is for Levi.

This Psalm describes the state of the person who walks with God – be it Moses, the Israelites (and we who worship their God), or Yeshua.

(V.1) “*He who sits in the secret place of the Most High, shall dwell in the shadow of the Almighty.*” Consider the three interpretations: literal, spiritual, and prophetic.

- This can refer to the Levites, who served in the Tabernacle, and dwelt next to it.
- This can also refer to God’s people (whom we are, if we are of the faith). He who seeks God’s holiness and wisdom need fear neither man nor natural harm: whatever befalls him is for his good (*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose* – Romans 8:28). In this world there is darkness, where man does not see the light of God: but we can dwell here, fully protected by God, without the understanding of the world.
- This can also refer to Yeshua, who applied this Psalm to Himself (see v.11-12 below).

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- God fills everything, being omnipresent (Psalm 139:7); yet He dwells in the Tabernacle / Temple / Synagogue in a special sense, where man can come to “meet” Him at appointed times (Leviticus 23).

- God also dwells in the hearts of His people.

- And His fullness dwelt in Yeshua (Colossians 2:9).

(V.2) Whenever a person sets out to walk with God, demonic forces struggle to block the way – with such weapons as other people, one’s own emotions, and worldly events. So, Moses said as he climbed Mt. Sinai, “*Yahweh is my strength and my fortress – My Elohim, I will trust in Him.*” Not only did Moses trust God as Yahweh for mercy (forgiveness) and grace (unmerited favor), but as Elohim for true justice.

(V.3-6) In justice Elohim will deliver from the enemies’ snares, and in grace Yahweh will cover us – His truth will be our shield and armor. We will not fear “*terror of the night*” – unseen danger, nor “*the arrow that flies by day*” – dangers that we can foresee. We will not fear “*pestilence that walks in gloom*” – disease that we may be susceptible to in inclement weather, nor “*the destroyer who lays waste at noon*” – an attacker who comes when all seems well.

(V.7-8) We will see many fall, but we shall be upheld by God’s hand (Psalm 37:24). We will only see the destruction of those who spurned God, none of the harm will befall us.

(V.9-10) For those who proclaim, “*Yahweh is my refuge*”, and make *the Most High* their dwellingplace, no evil will befall them, and no plague will come to their home.

(V.11-12) “*For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone.*” We see here that God provides guardian angels – He did so for Moses on Mt. Sinai, He does so for us, and He did so for Yeshua (as Satan quoted to tempt Yeshua to jump off the pinnacle of the Temple – Matthew 4:6).

(V.13) The word translated *lion* means a large mature lion, and the word for *viper* means an old vicious snake. The *young lion* and the *snake* are two creatures that hate each other, and arouse each other to murderous fury. Those who walk with God can trample on both at the same time without danger! This may easily be seen as a reference to Yeshua in the midst of different kinds of enemies at the same time. It can also apply to our spiritual standing in the midst of various spiritual enemies.

This Psalm is especially meaningful for me, and I would like to sing the last portion. Take this as personal from God about you.

*Because he set his love on Me, from danger I will set him free.
Because to him My Name is known, on high I'll set him as Mine own.*

*As oft has he will call to Me, most gracious shall My answer be.
I will be with him in distress, and in his troubles I will bless.*

*Yes, great salvation send will I, with length of life will satisfy.
On him I honor will bestow, to him My great salvation show.*

Feb 1, 2003

“WASHINGTON - U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Friday that President George Bush will become more deeply involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than he was in his first two years in the White House. . . . aims to create a Palestinian state by the year 2005 carved out of land that Israel has held for more than 35 years.”

The Space Shuttle Columbia, with the first Israeli astronaut, exploded this morning over . . . Palestine ! Texas – the home state of President Bush.

The Israeli astronaut said earlier that he was not religious, but would mark the Sabbath and eat kosher in space.

Considering today’s Torah lesson: what if . . . this astronaut had been a believer walking with God, and our President would have been standing up for God’s ownership and rule in Eretz Israel?

From Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers)

(2:4) “Treat His will as if it were your own will, so that He will treat your will as if it were His will. Nullify your will in the face of His will, so that He will nullify the will of others in the face of your will.”

(4:7) “The one who studies Torah in order to teach is given the means to study and teach; and the one who studies Torah in order to practice is given the means to study and to teach, to observe and to practice.

(4:11) “Whoever fulfills the Torah despite poverty will ultimately fulfill it in wealth; but whoever neglects the Torah because of wealth will ultimately neglect it in poverty.”

(4:21) “This world is like a lobby before the world to come; prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall.”

(5:13) “There are four character types among people:

- a) One who says, ‘My property is mine, and yours is yours,’ is an average character type, but some say this is characteristic of Sodom;
- b) ‘Mine is yours and yours is mine,’ is an unlearned person;
- c) ‘Mine is yours and yours is yours,’ is scrupulously pious;
- d) ‘Yours is mine and mine is mine.’ Is wicked.

(5:18) “There are four types among those who sit before sages:

a sponge, a funnel, a strainer, and a sieve –

- a) a sponge, which absorbs everything;
- b) a funnel, which lets in from one and lets out from the other;
- c) a strainer, which lets wine flow through and retains the sediment;
- d) and a sieve, which allows flour dust to pass through and retains the fine flour.

Ish al Diglo / Each Man by his Own Banner

Numbers 2:1-34 (no prophet) Psalm 92 Luke 15:1-7

Commentary Y2-48

I Adar 6, 5763 / Feb 8, 2003
Shevat 28, 5766 / Feb 25, 2006

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Now Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ² "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. ³ "Now those who camp on the **east** side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of **Judah**, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab, ⁴ and his army, even their numbered men, 74,600.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁵ "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of **Issachar**, and the leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar, ⁶ and his army, even their numbered men, 54,400. ⁷ "Then comes the tribe of **Zebulun**, and the leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon, ⁸ and his army, even his numbered men, 57,400. ⁹ "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁰ "On the **south** side shall be the standard of the camp of **Reuben** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur, ¹¹ and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500. ¹² "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of **Simeon**, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, ¹³ and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁴ "Then comes the tribe of **Gad**, and the leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel, ¹⁵ and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650. ¹⁶ "The total of the numbered men of the camp of **Reuben**: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second. ¹⁷ "Then the tent of meeting shall set out with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹⁸ "On the **west** side shall be the standard of the camp of **Ephraim** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud, ¹⁹ and his army, even their numbered men, 40,500. ²⁰ "Next to him shall be the tribe of **Manasseh**, and the leader of the sons of Manasseh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, ²¹ and his army, even their numbered men, 32,200. ²² "Then comes the tribe of **Benjamin**, and the leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni, ²³ and his army, even their numbered men, 35,400. ²⁴ "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third.

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁵ "On the **north** side shall be the standard of the camp of **Dan** by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, ²⁶ and his army, even their numbered men, 62,700. ²⁷ "Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of **Asher**, and the leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ochran, ²⁸ and his army, even their numbered men, 41,500. ²⁹ "Then comes the tribe of **Naphtali**, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan, ³⁰ and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400.

*Reader 7** Amen. ³¹ "The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan was 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards." ³² These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550. ³³ The **Levites**, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses. ³⁴ Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his father's household.

(No prophet)

Psalm 92 *(To be sung.) A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day.*

¹ It is good to give thanks to Yahweh and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; ² to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night, ³ with the ten-stringed lute and with the harp, with resounding music upon the lyre. ⁴ For You, O Yahweh, have made me glad by what You have done, I will sing for joy at the works of Your hands. ⁵ How great are Your works, O Yahweh! Your thoughts are very deep. ⁶ A senseless man has no knowledge, nor does a stupid man understand this: ⁷ that when the wicked sprouted up like grass and all who did iniquity flourished, it was only that they might be destroyed forevermore. ⁸ But You, O Yahweh, are on high forever. ⁹ For, behold, Your enemies, O Yahweh, for, behold, Your enemies will perish; all who do iniquity will be scattered. ¹⁰ But You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil. ¹¹ And my eye has looked exultantly upon my foes, my ears hear of the evildoers who rise up against me. ¹² The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ Planted in the house of Yahweh, they will flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, ¹⁵ to declare that Yahweh is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Luke 15:1-7

*Reader 8** Amen. 1 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. ² Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” ³ So He told them this parable, saying, ⁴ “What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.”

Commentary:

Numbers 2 is God’s picture-plan for the encampment of the tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

While it is common to see pictures showing tents of the twelve tribes all around the Tabernacle, it may be noted here that they were required to camp at a distance from the Tabernacle (v.2). The camps stretched about eight miles (*Talmud*), holding something like three million people.

The Levites camped around the south, west, and north of the Tabernacle, and Moses and Aaron camped in front of the entrance, to the east.

If one goes four directions from the Tabernacle, with three camps in each direction, a cross is formed. The Torah says that Benjamin was to camp “over” (*al*) the banner of the bull, Manasseh was to camp “over” Benjamin, and Ephraim was to camp “over” Manasseh. Though our translation read “under” the banner and “beside” the other tribe, the preposition (*al*) “over” would seem to mean beyond.

Approaching the cross from the top (west), one comes to “Causing to Forget” (Manasseh), and “Doubly Fruitful” (Ephraim), then “The Son of My Right Hand” (Benjamin). The former two seem to picture Yeshua as our two atonements – taking away sin and imputing to us righteousness, and the latter obviously representing the Son of God.

From the east, the world (Revelation 17:15, Matthew 13:47) comes to the “Haven of the Sea” (Zebulun); then “The Hired One” (Issachar) – “*Make me as a hired servant*” (Luke 15:19); and then reaches the entrance to the place of worship through “Praisers of Yahweh”, Judah.

If we consider Yeshua facing us on the cross, at His right hand is “Good Fortune” (Gad), from whence we come to “Hear” (Simeon or *Shimon*, which is related to *Sh’ma*) and “Behold a Son” (Reuben). At His left is “Judgment” (Dan), after “My Wrestling” (Naphtali) and “Happiness” (Asher) – perhaps alluding to the happiness of this world. This brings to mind the two who were crucified, one on each side of Yeshua (Luke 23:39-43), one going to Paradise and the other to judgment.

When we get to the place of worship, we have an “Escort” (Levi) – the Torah teachers, to lead us to the door (Yeshua): “The Torah is our schoolmaster, to lead us to Messiah” (Galatians 3:24). Moses, a type of Messiah, is at the door.

There are four standards, or banners, behind which each group of tribes must camp. To the east, the banner of Judah is a lion. To the west, the banner of Ephraim is a bull. To the south, the banner of Reuben is an eagle. To the north, the banner of Dan is a serpent.

Luke 15 has a parable. In Numbers 2, we see that God had very specific numbers of people in His army, and they were a minority group. In Yeshua’s parable, we see that every one of God’s people – His sheep – is going to be brought in to the fold. He will seek out every last one. Whereas in Leviticus, His people are referred to as Israel – in contrast to gentiles, in Luke they are referred to as His sheep – in contrast to goats (Matthew 25:32-33). Yeshua laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:11; see also Matthew 15:24, 18:12).

Psalm 92 is the third of the eleven Psalms by Moses. As Psalm 90 was dedicated* to Reuben, and Psalm 91 to Levi, this one was to Judah. It is, specifically, a song for the Sabbath. If we were going to the Tabernacle for Sabbath service, we would go through the camp of Judah, the praisers of Yahweh. So, the Psalm begins, *“It is good to give thanks to Yahweh, and to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High”*.

* [Psalm 93 was to Benjamin, 94 to Gad, 95 to Issachar, 96 to Zebulun, 97 to Joseph, 98 to Naphtali, 99 to Dan, and 100 to Asher. Simeon was excluded.]

				EPHRAIM 40,500						
				MANASSEH 32,200						
				BENJAMIN 35,400						
				BULL						
				LEVI						
GAD 45,650	SIMEON 59,300	REUBEN 46,500	EAGLE	LEVI	□	LEVI	SERPENT	DAN 62,700	ASHER 41,500	NAPHTALI 53,400
				Moses & Aaron						
				LION						
				JUDAH 74,600						
				ISSACHAR 54,400						
				ZEBULUN 57,400						

V'eleh Toldot / These are the Generations

Numbers 3:1 – 4:16 Isaiah 43:1-13 Psalm 93 Hebrews 12:1-29

Commentary Y2-49

I Adar 13, 5763 / Feb 15, 2003
Adar 4, 5766 / Mar 4, 2006

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Now these are the records of the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when Yahweh spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. ² These then are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ³ These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests. ⁴ But Nadab and Abihu died before Yahweh when they offered strange fire before Yahweh in the wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of their father Aaron. ⁵ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶ "Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him." ⁷ "They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle." ⁸ "They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle." ⁹ "You shall thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel." ¹⁰ "So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death."

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹¹ Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² **"Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine."** ¹³ **"For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am Yahweh."** ¹⁴ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, ¹⁵ "Number the sons of Levi by their fathers' households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number." ¹⁶ So Moses numbered them according to the word of Yahweh, just as he had been commanded. ¹⁷ These then are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari.

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁸ These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei; ¹⁹ and the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel; ²⁰ and the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households. ²¹ Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites; these were the families of the Gershonites. ²² Their numbered men, in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, even their numbered men were 7,500. ²³ The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward, ²⁴ and the leader of the fathers' households of the Gershonites was Eliasaph the son of Lael. ²⁵ Now the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting involved the tabernacle and the tent, its covering, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, ²⁶ and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords, according to all the service concerning them.

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁷ Of Kohath was the family of the Amramites and the family of the Izharites and the family of the Hebronites and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites. ²⁸ In the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, there were 8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary. ²⁹ The families of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the southward side of the tabernacle, ³⁰ and the leader of the fathers' households of the Kohathite families was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. ³¹ Now their duties involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all the service concerning them; ³² and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was the chief of the leaders of Levi, and had the oversight of those who perform the duties of the sanctuary. ³³ Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these were the families of Merari. ³⁴ Their numbered men in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, were 6,200. ³⁵ The leader of the fathers' households of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They were to camp on the northward side of the tabernacle. ³⁶ Now the appointed duties of the sons of Merari involved the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, all its equipment, and the service concerning them, ³⁷ and the pillars around the court with their sockets and their pegs and their cords.

*Reader 5** Amen. ³⁸ Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death. ³⁹ All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of Yahweh by their families, every male from a month old and upward, were 22,000. ⁴⁰ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names." ⁴¹ "You shall take the Levites for Me, I am Yahweh, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel." ⁴² So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as Yahweh had commanded him; ⁴³ and all the firstborn males by the number of names from a month old and upward, for their numbered men were 22,273. ⁴⁴ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁴⁵ "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am Yahweh." ⁴⁶ "For the ransom of the

273 of the firstborn of the sons of Israel who are in excess beyond the Levites,⁴⁷ you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take them in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs),⁴⁸ and give the money, the ransom of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons."⁴⁹ So Moses took the ransom money from those who were in excess, beyond those ransomed by the Levites;⁵⁰ from the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the money in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, 1,365.⁵¹ Then Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and to his sons, at the command of Yahweh, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

*Reader 6** Amen.^{4:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,² "Take a census of the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' households,³ from thirty years and upward, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting."⁴ "This is the work of the descendants of Kohath in the tent of meeting, concerning the most holy things."⁵ "When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it;⁶ and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles."⁷ "Over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall also spread a cloth of blue and put on it the dishes and the pans and the sacrificial bowls and the jars for the drink offering, and the continual bread shall be on it."⁸ "They shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet material, and cover the same with a covering of porpoise skin, and they shall insert its poles."

*Reader 7** Amen.⁹ "Then they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand for the light, along with its lamps and its snuffers, and its trays and all its oil vessels, by which they serve it;¹⁰ and they shall put it and all its utensils in a covering of porpoise skin, and shall put it on the carrying bars."¹¹ "Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth and cover it with a covering of porpoise skin, and shall insert its poles;¹² and they shall take all the utensils of service, with which they serve in the sanctuary, and put them in a blue cloth and cover them with a covering of porpoise skin, and put them on the carrying bars."¹³ "Then they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it."¹⁴ "They shall also put on it all its utensils by which they serve in connection with it: the firepans, the forks and shovels and the basins, all the utensils of the altar; and they shall spread a cover of porpoise skin over it and insert its poles."¹⁵ "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry."¹⁶ "The responsibility of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest is the oil for the light and the fragrant incense and the continual grain offering and the anointing oil-- the responsibility of all the tabernacle and of all that is in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

Isaiah 43:1-13

*Reader 8** Amen.¹ But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!"² "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."³ "For I am Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place."⁴ "Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life."⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west."⁶ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth,"⁷ Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

*Reader 9** Amen.⁸ Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, and the deaf, even though they have ears.⁹ All the nations have gathered together so that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, "It is true."¹⁰ "You are My witnesses," declares Yahweh, "And My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me."¹¹ "I, even I, am Yahweh, and there is no savior besides Me."¹² "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you; so you are My witnesses," declares Yahweh, "And I am God."¹³ "Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"

Psalm 93 (To be sung.)

¹ Yahweh reigns, He is clothed with majesty; Yahweh has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.² Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.³ The floods have lifted up, O Yahweh, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding

waves. ⁴ More than the sounds of many waters, Than the mighty breakers of the sea, Yahweh on high is mighty. ⁵ Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O Yahweh, forevermore.

Hebrews 12

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹ Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. ⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; ⁶ for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

*Reader 11** Amen. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. ¹² Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. ¹⁴ Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶ that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷ For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

*Reader 12** Amen. ¹⁸ For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, ¹⁹ and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. ²⁰ For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." ²¹ And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling." ²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. ²⁵ See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. ²⁶ And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens." ²⁷ This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

Commentary:

(Psalm 93) Yahweh reigns; He is clothed with majesty. The world is firmly established, it will not be moved. His testimonies are fully confirmed; holiness befits Yahweh's house forevermore.

He established a priesthood, for intercession for the people, to maintain righteousness and knowledge of God.

(Isaiah 43:9) "*All the nations have gathered together in order that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, 'It is true.'*"

The original order of the priesthood, showing *Year of the World* for birth and death: (see chart below)

Adam: 1 – 930, priest for 930 years;

Seth: 130 – 1042, priest for 112 years (Cain lost the position by sin, and Seth was “instead of” Able, who was killed – Genesis 4:25.);
 Enosh: 235 – 1140, priest for 98 years (From his birth, men began to call upon the name “Yahweh” – Genesis 4:26);
 Kenan: 325 – 1235, priest for 95 years;
 Mahalalel: 395 – 1290, priest for 55 years;
 Jared: 460 – 1422, priest for 132 years;
 Methuselah: 687 – 1656, priest for 234 years, until the Great Flood;
 Noah: 1056 – 2006, priest for 350 years;
 Shem: 1558 – 2158, priest for 152 years;
 [Abraham: 1948 – 2123, was born 390 years after Shem, and died 35 years before Shem. His days were “few and unpleasant”, and he never attained the priesthood. Noah, then Shem, was Abraham’s priest.
 Gen 47:9 - *So Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.”*]
 Isaac: 2048 – 2228, priest for 105 years (Shem was priest for part of Isaac’s life);
 Jacob: 2108 – 2255, priest for 27 years (Esau lost the position through lack of regard for it.) (Shem was priest for part of Jacob’s life);
 Levi: 2194 – 2332, the twelfth in succession, and third son of Leah (Reuben {Genesis 35:22} and Simeon {Genesis 34:25} lost the position through sin; Ephraim and Manasseh, grandsons of Rachael, were given inheritance “like Reuben and Simeon”, sons of Leah {Genesis 48:5}).

Adam and Noah held the position the longest, their lives spanning almost from creation to Abraham. Omitting Noah: Adam, Methuselah and Shem held it longest, spanning from creation to Israel, as the most direct links for transmitting Torah (God’s instruction).

God henceforth took the Levites “instead of the firstborn”. Since there were more “firstborn” than Levites, a ransom was required for the additional firstborn, who belonged to God. The Levites were counted: 22,000. The firstborn of Israel were counted: 22,273. For each of the 273 additional, a five shekel ransom was paid.

The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Gershon was to camp to the west of the Tabernacle, and be responsible for carrying the coverings. Kohath was to camp to the south of the Tabernacle, and be responsible for the Ark and furnishings. Merari was to camp to the north of the Tabernacle, and be responsible for carrying the frames and poles.

John the baptizer was a priest of the Levitical order, of the division of Abijah. Just before John’s conception, his father was performing the priestly duties in the Temple (Luke 1:5-17).

Luke 1

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of Yahweh. 7 And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8 Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of Yahweh and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 And an angel of Yahweh appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 "For he will be great in the sight of Yahweh, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. 16 "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to Yahweh their God. 17 "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for Yahweh."

John the baptizer, who was born six months before Yeshua, said that Yeshua “was before me” – John 1:30. John came to decrease, but to have Yeshua increase – John 3:30. Yeshua was to become the high priest – Hebrews 2:17.

Yeshua was a priest after the order of the firstborn, the rulers of righteousness – *malchi tzedek*. He was even “before Abraham” – John 8:58. He is called the “firstborn of the dead” – Colossians 1:18 & Revelation 1:5, being the first to be resurrected in a glorified body.

We have a high priest who is eternal. He can relate to our weaknesses. He can perfectly make intercession for us. He will lead us in paths of righteousness. He will take us to our eternal home.

We need to keep in mind the significance of whom we are to follow, and the importance of growing in righteousness.

Consider:

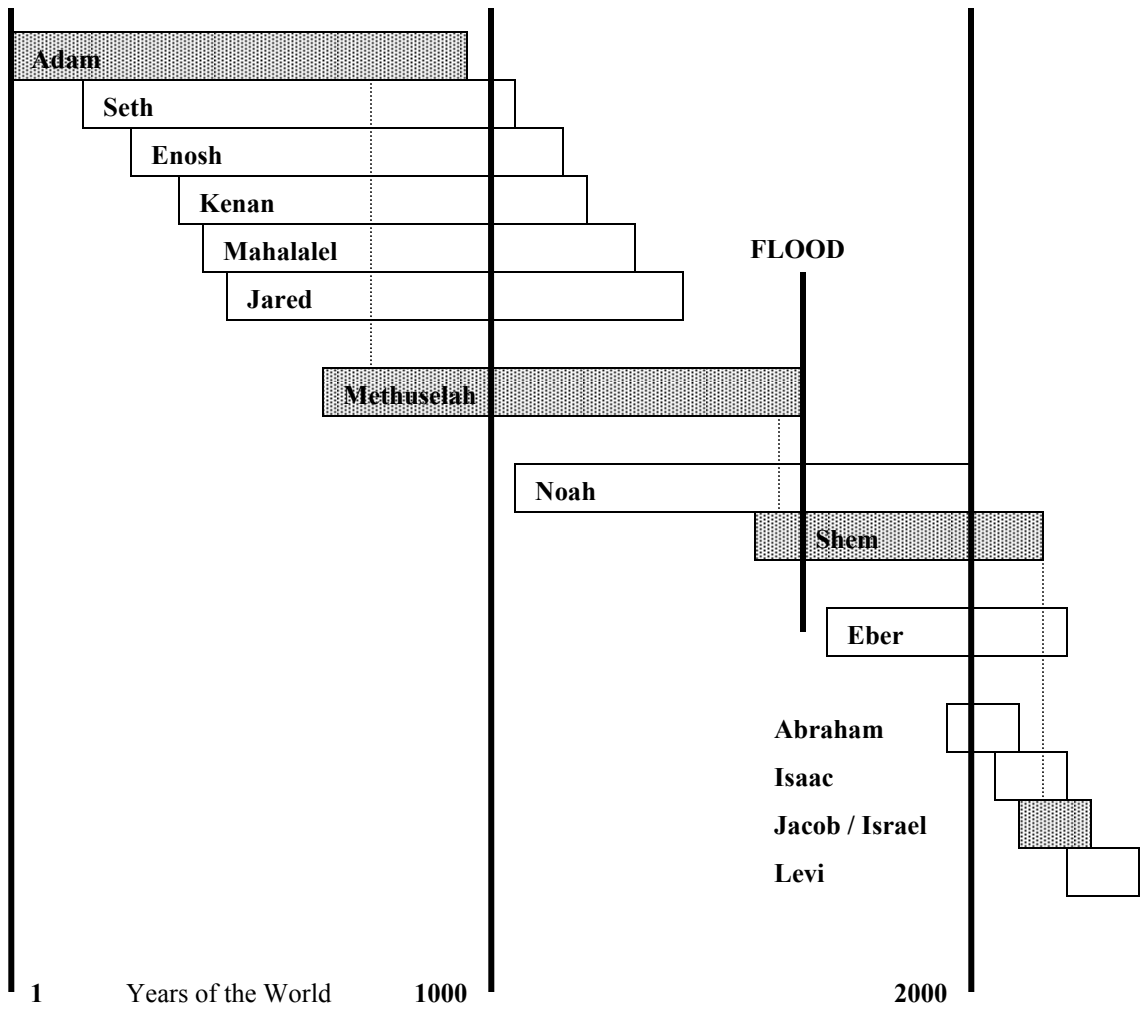
600,000 men from age 20 to 60 fit for war is estimated to represent at least 3,000,000 who left Egypt one year ago.

22,273 firstborn Israeli's out of est. 1,500,000 males = 1/67, not 1/4 as one might expect.

22,300 Levites out of 1,500,000 males = 1/67, not 1/12 one might expect of one tribe.

The firstborn were killed 1 year ago – except Hebrews. Many from the 70 nations were joined to the Hebrews who left Egypt. Most of the 3,000,000 may have been converts from the 70 nations, their firstborn having been killed!

Priesthood – Order of the Firstborn



El Tachritu / Do Not Let . . . Be Cut Off

Numbers 4:17-20 1 Samuel 6:1-21 Psalm 94 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Commentary Y2-50

I Adar 20, 5763 / Feb 22, 2003
(Combine with next readings) Adar 11, 5766 / Mar 11, 2006

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹⁷ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ¹⁸ **"Do not let the tribe of the families of the Kohathites be cut off** from among the Levites. ¹⁹ "But do this to them that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy objects: Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign each of them to his work and to his load; ²⁰ but they shall not go in to see the holy objects even for a moment, or they will die."

1 Samuel 6:1-21

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹ Now the ark of Yahweh had been in the country of the Philistines seven months. ² And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of Yahweh? Tell us how we shall send it to its place." ³ They said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it empty; but you shall surely return to Him a guilt offering. Then you will be healed and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you." ⁴ Then they said, "What shall be the guilt offering which we shall return to Him?" And they said, "Five golden tumors and five golden mice according to the number of Yahwehs of the Philistines, for one plague was on all of you and on your lords. ⁵ "So you shall make likenesses of your tumors and likenesses of your mice that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will ease His hand from you, your gods, and your land.

*Reader 3** Amen. ⁶ "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had severely dealt with them, did they not allow the people to go, and they departed?" ⁷ "Now therefore, take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which there has never been a yoke; and hitch the cows to the cart and take their calves home, away from them. ⁸ "Take the ark of Yahweh and place it on the cart; and put the articles of gold which you return to Him as a guilt offering in a box by its side. Then send it away that it may go. ⁹ "Watch, if it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth-shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance." ¹⁰ Then the men did so, and took two milch cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. ¹¹ They put the ark of Yahweh on the cart, and the box with the golden mice and the likenesses of their tumors. ¹² And the cows took the straight way in the direction of Beth-shemesh; they went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right or to the left. And the lord of the Philistines followed them to the border of Beth-shemesh.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹³ Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they raised their eyes and saw the ark and were glad to see it. ¹⁴ The cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite and stood there where there was a large stone; and they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to Yahweh. ¹⁵ The Levites took down the ark of Yahweh and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone; and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to Yahweh. ¹⁶ When the five lords of the Philistines saw it, they returned to Ekron that day.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹⁷ These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a guilt offering to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for Gath, one for Ekron; ¹⁸ and the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fortified cities and of country villages. The large stone on which they set the ark of Yahweh is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite. ¹⁹ He struck down some of the men of Beth-shemesh because they had looked into the ark of Yahweh. He struck down of all the people, 50,070 men, and the people mourned because Yahweh had struck the people with a great slaughter. ²⁰ The men of Beth-shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?" ²¹ So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of Yahweh; come down and take it up to you."

Psalms 94 (To be sung.)

¹ O Yahweh, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth! ² Rise up, O Judge of the earth, Render recompense to the proud. ³ How long shall the wicked, O Yahweh, How long shall the wicked exult? ⁴ They pour forth words, they speak arrogantly; All who do wickedness vaunt themselves. ⁵ They crush Your people, O Yahweh, And afflict Your heritage. ⁶ They slay the widow and the stranger And murder the orphans. ⁷ They have said, "Yahweh does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed." ⁸ Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? ⁹ He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? ¹⁰

He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? ¹¹ Yahweh knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath. ¹² Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Yahweh, And whom You teach out of Your law; ¹³ That You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, Until a pit is dug for the wicked. ¹⁴ For Yahweh will not abandon His people, Nor will He forsake His inheritance. ¹⁵ For judgment will again be righteous, And all the upright in heart will follow it. ¹⁶ Who will stand up for me against evildoers? Who will take his stand for me against those who do wickedness? ¹⁷ If Yahweh had not been my help, My soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence. ¹⁸ If I should say, "My foot has slipped," Your lovingkindness, O Yahweh, will hold me up. ¹⁹ When my anxious thoughts multiply within me, Your consolations delight my soul. ²⁰ Can a throne of destruction be allied with You, One which devises mischief by decree? ²¹ They band themselves together against the life of the righteous And condemn the innocent to death. ²² But Yahweh has been my stronghold, And my God the rock of my refuge. ²³ He has brought back their wickedness upon them And will destroy them in their evil; Yahweh our God will destroy them.

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. ² You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the mute idols, however you were led. ³ Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Yeshua is accursed"; and no one can say, "Yeshua is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶ There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. ⁷ But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

*Reader 7** Amen. ¹² For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Messiah. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹⁹ If they were all one member, where would the body be? ²⁰ But now there are many members, but one body. ²¹ And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; ²³ and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, ²⁴ whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, ²⁵ so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now you are Messiah's body, and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹ But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way.

Commentary:

Don't die!

Leviticus 4:17

Moses and Aaron were responsible for planning and supervising the work of the Kohathites, so that they did not commit any capital offenses in carrying out their duties. Each of the 2,750 eligible Kohathites, by name (v. 32), was given a specific task to be performed in a specific order, so that there would be no accidental overstepping of boundaries, which would bring death. (V.20) Aaron and his sons were required to wrap the holiest items, and then the Kohathites could carry them, without being able to look upon them.

There is a debate about what the problem was: were the Kohathites afraid to perform tasks for the Tabernacle, and therefore had to be assigned definite tasks? Or were they so eager to do the work, that they had to be assigned limited tasks so as not to accidentally push too far and die?

1 Samuel 6

Israel experienced a great defeat in battle with the Philistines, losing about 4,000 soldiers (1 Samuel 4:2). So, the elders of Israel decided to take the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh with them to defeat the enemy. But, the Philistines took the Ark, and killed the two sons of Eli, who were with it. Upon hearing the news, Eli, a heavy, elderly man, fell backwards and broke his neck, dying on the spot. His daughter-in-law gave birth immediately, without showing interest for her child, because of the news about the Ark of Yahweh.

Now, the Philistines took the Ark of Yahweh to the house of their god Dagon. The next morning, the great stone Dagon was found lying on the floor. So, he was set upright again. But, the following morning, Dagon was found lying on the floor again, with his head and hands smashed on the threshold. Never again would the priests of Dagon tread on the thresholds of his house.

Then, God smote the Philistines with rats, and hemorrhoids so severe that many were dying. The priests of Dagon responded that the Ark should be returned to Israel, with an offering of five golden hemorrhoids and five golden rats!

Two cows that were nursing mothers were to pull a new wooden cart with the Ark and a box containing the offerings. If the cows did not turn after their nursing calves, but headed straight to *Beit Shemesh* (House of the Sun), then they were to know that Yahweh had brought the plagues upon them.

When the Ark returned, the cart was broken up for fire-wood, and the cows used for an offering to Yahweh, for the return of the Ark. But, many of the Israelites looked into the Ark, and died there. So, the people of Beit Shemesh sent for the Levites to take the Ark to its appropriate place.

The Haftarah tells us that 50,070 Israelites were killed for looking into the Ark, when it was sent back from the land of the Philistines. The people then said: "*Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God?*" The holiness of Yahweh is a major point of this Torah portion.

Psalm 94

Those who take pride in their own ways, pouring forth their own words, are called "stupid ones" in today's Psalm. Do they think that God, who created eyes, does not see? Or He who created ears, does He not hear? Yahweh knows our thoughts, and blessed are the ones whom He chastens, that they may learn Torah!

1 Corinthians 12

Paul tells us how each member of the body has different gifts, all to be used for helping the body to be healthy. Like the consideration of the Kohathite problem, we should earnestly desire gifts to further God's work, but not push further than is proper. We must not arrogantly claim "gifts" to make a front of being spiritual. We must not pour forth our own words. One who is "prophesying" must expound God's Words – Torah, regardless of language. "*If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" – Isaiah 8:20.

In today's "Messianic" world, we have at least two major areas of spiritual pride: those who claim "spiritual gifts", such as a false "speaking in tongues" or "words of knowledge"; and Kabbalistic teaching, where "reading between

the lines” of Torah is taught by those who lack understanding of the real lines of Torah. Those who seek salvation and recognition through this kind of “wonderful works” will hear, “I never knew you; depart from me, you who work iniquity” – Matthew 7:23.

Salvation is by Yeshua, through faith in Him, not by our “wonderful works”. Our gifts and duties here are for the purpose of building-up His church (Matthew 16:18), not for our glory but for God’s glory.

God is holy – different from us. Our ways are not His ways. We are to learn holiness – a requirement for seeing Him (Hebrews 12:14).

*Reader 1** Amen. ²¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ²² "Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' households, by their families; ²³ from thirty years and upward to fifty years old, you shall number them; all who enter to perform the service to do the work in the tent of meeting.

*Reader 2** Amen. ²⁴ "This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and in carrying: ²⁵ they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering of porpoise skin that is on top of it, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, ²⁶ and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service; and all that is to be done, they shall perform. ²⁷ "All the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their loads and in all their work, shall be performed at the command of Aaron and his sons; and you shall assign to them as a duty all their loads. ²⁸ "This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their duties shall be under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

*Reader 3** Amen. ²⁹ "As for the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their families, by their fathers' households; ³⁰ from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tent of meeting. ³¹ "Now this is the duty of their loads, for all their service in the tent of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle and its bars and its pillars and its sockets, ³² and the pillars around the court and their sockets and their pegs and their cords, with all their equipment and with all their service; and you shall assign each man by name the items he is to carry. ³³ "This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tent of meeting, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

*Reader 4** Amen. ³⁴ So Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' households, ³⁵ from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. ³⁶ Their numbered men by their families were 2,750. ³⁷ These are the numbered men of the Kohathite families, everyone who was serving in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh through Moses. ³⁸ The numbered men of the sons of Gershon by their families and by their fathers' households, ³⁹ from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. ⁴⁰ Their numbered men by their families, by their fathers' households, were 2,630. ⁴¹ These are the numbered men of the families of the sons of Gershon, everyone who was serving in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh.

*Reader 5** Amen. ⁴² The numbered men of the families of the sons of Merari by their families, by their fathers' households, ⁴³ from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. ⁴⁴ Their numbered men by their families were 3,200. ⁴⁵ These are the numbered men of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Yahweh through Moses. ⁴⁶ All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and by their fathers' households, ⁴⁷ from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who could enter to do the work of service and the work of carrying in the tent of meeting. ⁴⁸ Their numbered men were 8,580. ⁴⁹ According to the commandment of Yahweh through Moses, they were numbered, everyone by his serving or carrying; thus these were his numbered men, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

*Reader 6** Amen. ^{5:1} Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person. ³ "You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst." ⁴ The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as Yahweh had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did.

*Reader 7** Amen. ⁵ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶ "Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against Yahweh, and that person is guilty, ⁷ then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged. ⁸ 'But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong must go to Yahweh for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. ⁹ 'Also every contribution pertaining to all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel, which they offer to the priest, shall be his. ¹⁰ 'So every man's holy gifts shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest, it becomes his.'"

Judges 13:2-25

*Reader 8** Amen. ² There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no children. ³ Then the angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son." ⁴ "Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing." ⁵ "For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines." ⁶ Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A man of God came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of God, very awesome. And I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name." ⁷ "But he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'"

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁸ Then Manoah entreated Yahweh and said, "O Lord, please let the man of God whom You have sent come to us again that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born." ⁹ God listened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again to the woman as she was sitting in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her. ¹⁰ So the woman ran quickly and told her husband, "Behold, the man who came the other day has appeared to me." ¹¹ Then Manoah arose and followed his wife, and when he came to the man he said to him, "Are you the man who spoke to the woman?" And he said, "I am." ¹² Manoah said, "Now when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy's mode of life and his vocation?" ¹³ So the angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "Let the woman pay attention to all that I said. ¹⁴ "She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded."

*Reader 10** Amen. ¹⁵ Then Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "Please let us detain you so that we may prepare a young goat for you." ¹⁶ The angel of Yahweh said to Manoah, "Though you detain me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to Yahweh." For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of Yahweh. ¹⁷ Manoah said to the angel of Yahweh, "What is your name, so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?" ¹⁸ But the angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?" ¹⁹ So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering and offered it on the rock to Yahweh, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. ²⁰ For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the angel of Yahweh ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. ²¹ Now the angel of Yahweh did not appear to Manoah or his wife again. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of Yahweh. ²² So Manoah said to his wife, "We will surely die, for we have seen God." ²³ But his wife said to him, "If Yahweh had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things, nor would He have let us hear things like this at this time." ²⁴ Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and Yahweh blessed him. ²⁵ And the Spirit of Yahweh began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Psalms 95 *A Psalm of David.*

1 To Thee, O Yahweh, I lift up my soul. 2 O my God, in Thee I trust, do not let me be ashamed; do not let my enemies exult over me. 3 Indeed, none of those who wait for Thee will be ashamed; those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed. 4 Make me know Thy ways, O Yahweh; teach me Thy paths. 5 Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day. 6 Remember, O Yahweh, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Thy lovingkindness remember Thou me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Yahweh. 8 Good and upright is Yahweh; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. 9 He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. 10 All the paths of Yahweh are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. 11 *For Thy name's sake, O Yahweh, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great.* 12 *Who is the man who fears Yahweh? He will instruct him in the way he should choose.* 13 His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. 14 The secret of Yahweh is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. 15 My eyes are continually toward Yahweh, For He will pluck my feet out of the net. 16 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. 17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. 18 Look upon my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins. 19 Look upon my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with violent hatred. 20 Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in Thee. 21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for Thee. 22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Acts 5:1-16

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹ But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles'

feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴ "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

*Reader 12** Amen. ⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹ Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." ¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

*Reader 13** Amen. ¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things. ¹² At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. ¹³ But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, ¹⁵ to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. ¹⁶ Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

Commentary:

Today's portion is about duties and service.

The total number of males from one month old in the tribe of Levi was 22,300. Service-eligible male Levites from age 30 – 50 were: family of Gershon – 2630, Kohath – 2750, Merari – 3200; total 8580. The remaining two-thirds were younger than 30, older than 50, or otherwise ineligible.

Their duties were very specifically assigned and supervised. While the family of Kohath was responsible for carrying the sacred articles, all three families were equally important and to be equally honored: this is based on (v.22) God's instruction that the Gershonites should also be "raised up" – counted.

Beside the work of carrying, the "work of service" (v.47) is explained as performing musical accompaniment (*Arachin 11a*).

(Lev 5) Before the Tabernacle could be erected, the camp must be purified of *tumah* – contamination associated with death or a result of the fall.

One who has stolen, failed to repay a loan, or failed to pay wages on time – in order to become clean before God, is required to make confession, repay with an added twenty percent, and bring a ram for atonement. If the victim is deceased with no kin, then the restitution is to be given to the priests serving in the Temple.

The Torah is here teaching that it is forbidden for us to take anything that God has not given to us, whether great or small, whether from a wealthy person or someone whom we think "owes us", or anything we have dedicated – such as tithes separated but not distributed.

The person, who would serve God, must have this heart attitude to desire holiness. Continual repentance is a requirement to be clean. Saying, "If I have sinned, forgive me," is insufficient toward God or man. One needs to seek God's word to show him his errors, and make restitution, and correction of his ways.

So the Psalmist says, (Psalm 95:4-13),

"Make me know Thy ways, O Yahweh; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day. Remember, O Yahweh, Thy compassion and Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Thy lovingkindness remember Thou me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Yahweh. Good and upright is Yahweh; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. All the paths of

Yahweh are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Thy name's sake, O Yahweh, Pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man who fears Yahweh? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land."

Acts 5

Ananias and Sapphira owned property: it was in their control, and they could have legitimately sold it and kept all of the money. But, they sold it and said that they were giving all of the money to the church – which means it was dedicated to God. However, they actually kept part of the money. Peter said that was “lying to the Holy Spirit” (v.3). Each of them fell dead upon confirming that they had “given the whole price”. They stole dedicated property, and they lied before the church, in order to falsely appear as spiritual as others who gave all.

This was written “for our admonition,” that we should know our hearts, and not make a pretense of spirituality.

Such fear came upon others, concerning this Holy God, that they were afraid to join the church, though they held it in high esteem! Do we have to see people die for disrespecting God, before we recognize His holiness? Are we convinced, by the religious world of today, that God only attributed sin to former generations; that we live in a different age, when we can do whatever seems right to us? Do outsiders hold us in high esteem because they can recognize the honest level of holiness by which we live?

We have an Holy God. We must be truthful, and honest in our dealings. We must learn to repent with confession and restitution, to be in right standing with God. Yeshua did not “do it all,” such that we are “free” to do whatever we wish with impunity.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap” – Galatians 6:7.

“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him” – Ephesians 1:4.

“Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Yeshua the Messiah. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’ And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Messiah” – 1 Peter 1:13-19.

The purpose of the Tabernacle and priesthood is to show us God’s holiness, and our promise of future glory in righteousness. We cannot live for sin here, and truthfully say that our hope is in a future righteous state.

Ki Tiseh / If She Goes Astray

Numbers 5:11-31 Hosea 4:14 Psalms 96 2 Peter 2:1-22

Commentary Y2-52

II Adar 4, 5763 / Mar 8, 2003
Adar 18, 5766 / Mar 18, 2006

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, ¹³ and a man has intercourse with her and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act,

*Reader 2** Amen. ¹⁴ if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself, ¹⁵ the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, a reminder of iniquity. ¹⁶ Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before Yahweh,

*Reader 3** Amen. ¹⁷ and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. ¹⁸ The priest shall then have the woman stand before Yahweh and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse. ¹⁹ The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, being under the authority of your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse;

*Reader 4** Amen. ²⁰ if you, however, have gone astray, being under the authority of your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you" ²¹ (then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman), "Yahweh make you a curse and an oath among your people by Yahweh's making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell, ²² and this water that brings a curse shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away." And the woman shall say, "Amen. Amen."

*Reader 5** Amen. ²³ The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness. ²⁴ Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness. ²⁵ The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before Yahweh and bring it to the altar;

*Reader 6** Amen. ²⁶ and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer it up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water. ²⁷ When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a curse will go into her and cause bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. ²⁸ But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children.

*Reader 7** Amen. ²⁹ This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, being under the authority of her husband, goes astray and defiles herself, ³⁰ or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before Yahweh, and the priest shall apply all this law to her. ³¹ Moreover, the man will be free from guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt."

Hosea 4:14

*Reader 8** Amen. ¹⁴ I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot or your brides when they commit adultery, for the men themselves go apart with harlots and offer sacrifices with temple prostitutes; so the people without understanding are ruined.

Psalms 96 (To be sung.)

¹ Sing to Yahweh a new song; sing to Yahweh, all the earth. ² Sing to Yahweh, bless His name; proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. ³ Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. ⁴ For great is Yahweh and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. ⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but Yahweh made the heavens. ⁶ Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. ⁷ Ascribe to Yahweh, O families of the peoples, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength. ⁸ Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name; bring an offering and come into His courts. ⁹ Worship Yahweh in holy attire; tremble before Him, all the earth. ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "Yahweh reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity." ¹¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all it contains; ¹² Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for

joy¹³ before Yahweh, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.

2 Peter 2:1-22

*Reader 9** Amen. ¹ But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ² Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³ and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

*Reader 10** Amen. ⁴ For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; ⁵ and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; ⁷ and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men ⁸ (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), ⁹ then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, ¹⁰ and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, ¹¹ whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord.

*Reader 11** Amen. ¹² But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, ¹³ suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; ¹⁵ forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; ¹⁶ but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷ These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸ For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, ¹⁹ promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

*Reader 12** Amen. ²⁰ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹ For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. ²² It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

Commentary:

Today's Torah portion, concerning a *sotah* (wayward wife), is one of those which seem difficult to understand upon a surface reading. However, when looking at "line upon line, and precept upon precept," and considering the context, understanding becomes easier.

Firstly, it should be remembered, that marriage is to picture something greater – our relationship (as the church) with Messiah. This bride is not in the same position as Messiah, but both are to be faithful and holy. Hosea 4:14-15 indicates such a comparison.

This portion follows the teaching on stealing dedicated property and purity required in the camp of Israel. Using dedicated items for personal use was called *ma'yilah* – treachery (Numbers 5:6), and the user was required to make an atonement offering in order to become pure before God.

Numbers uses these two terms for marital unfaithfulness: adultery is *ma'yilah* – treachery (v.12), and the adulteress is *nitma'ah* – defiled (v.13); the latter term is the opposite of purity required for Temple worship. Marriage is thus presented as a sacred relationship that requires both faithfulness and purity, just as the relationship between Israel and Messiah.

The situation is where a wife has acted in such a way as to cause her husband to be suspicious of her faithfulness. Based upon Torah requirements for judgment to take place, there must be witnesses that she had been secluded with another man (without coercion), after having been warned against such action. However, in this circumstance, there are no witnesses to the further act of adultery.

The jealous husband must bring a meal offering. Whereas most meal offerings are made with fine wheat flour, this one is made with coarse barley flour: coarse because the wife's actions were coarse, and animal food (barley) because she acted like an animal. The offering is not made with oil, because that represents light, and the act was done in darkness (hidden). The offering is not adorned with frankincense for a sweet aroma to God. The offering is called "jealousies" (plural), meaning that she acted against both her husband and God.

The wife cannot be punished because the required witnesses do not exist. However, if she were guilty, the prospect of an horrible death might induce her to confess; a confession would end a judgment by the court. If she were innocent, she would be vindicated by the test.

Mayim kodashim / sacred water from the Tabernacle or Temple laver is used; it represents purity and devotion. Earth is used from the floor of the Tabernacle, or from under a marble tile of the Temple floor; it represents death – returning to dust. The dirt is put into the water.

The suspect wife has the meal-offering placed in her outstretched hands, and is required to take an oath. After offering the meal-offering upon the altar, the wife is made to drink the water-dirt mixture. If she is guilty, she will die the death described in verse 21. The punishment being repeated in verse 22 is taken to mean that the man with whom she sinned will experience a similar death.

If the jealous husband is himself guilty of adultery, then the mixture will not bring death upon the guilty wife (based on the Hebrew of verse 31). If the suspect wife is innocent, she will have incurred public humiliation for her defiance in being in the company of the other man.

If she is innocent, she will be fully accepted by the husband and bear children without difficulty. This has apparent Messianic symbolism, indicative of the church that is not idolatrous bearing children.

The judgment of a *sotah* (wayward wife) is the only *halachic* action in Torah, where God directly intervenes. According to rabbinic history, it was discontinued during Second Temple times – due to rampant sin as described in the Hosea portion. God said that He would no longer punish adulteresses, when the men go apart with prostitutes.

Psalm 96 is about Yahweh judging the world with equity and righteousness. It rings with the joy of one who is devoted and expecting to be found pure.

1 Peter is about those of us who have found mercy, and how we are to be devoted and pure. We are to desire the Word of God, to grow thereby (v.2). We are to abstain from the desires of this world (v.11). We are to display righteous living before the world (v.12). We are to submit to government authority, which punishes evildoers and praises those who do right (v.13-14). Yeshua committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth: we are to be likewise holy (v.21-22).

*Reader 1** Amen. ¹ Again Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to Yahweh, ³ he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes.

*Reader 2** Amen. ⁴ 'All the days of his separation he shall not eat anything that is produced by the grape vine, from the seeds even to the skin. ⁵ 'All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to Yahweh; he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long. ⁶ 'All the days of his separation to Yahweh he shall not go near to a dead person.

*Reader 3** Amen. ⁷ 'He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. ⁸ 'All the days of his separation he is holy to Yahweh. ⁹ 'But if a man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his dedicated head of hair, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave it on the seventh day.

*Reader 4** Amen. ¹⁰ 'Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. ¹¹ 'The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for an elevation offering, and make atonement for him concerning his sin because of the dead person. And that same day he shall consecrate his head, ¹² and shall dedicate to Yahweh his days as a Nazirite, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former days will be void because his separation was defiled.

*Reader 5** Amen. ¹³ 'Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall bring the offering to the doorway of the tent of meeting. ¹⁴ 'He shall present his offering to Yahweh: one male lamb a year old without defect for an elevation offering and one ewe-lamb a year old without defect for a sin offering and one ram without defect for a peace offering, ¹⁵ and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offering.

*Reader 6** Amen. ¹⁶ 'Then the priest shall present them before Yahweh and shall offer his sin offering and his elevation offering. ¹⁷ 'He shall also offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to Yahweh, together with the basket of unleavened cakes; the priest shall likewise offer its grain offering and its drink offering. ¹⁸ 'The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head of hair at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and take the dedicated hair of his head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings.

*Reader 7** Amen. ¹⁹ 'The priest shall take the ram's shoulder when it has been boiled, and one unleavened cake out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his dedicated hair. ²⁰ 'Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh. It is holy for the priest, together with the breast offered by waving and the thigh offered by lifting up; and afterward the Nazirite may drink wine.' ²¹ "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to Yahweh according to his separation, in addition to what else he can afford; according to his vow which he takes, so he shall do according to the law of his separation."

Judges 13:2-5

*Reader 8** Amen. ² There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no children. ³ Then the angel of Yahweh appeared to the woman and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. ⁴ "Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. ⁵ "For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines."

1 Samuel 1:7-11

*Reader 9** Amen. ⁷ It happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of Yahweh, she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat. ⁸ Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" ⁹ Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of Yahweh. ¹⁰ She, greatly distressed, prayed to Yahweh and wept bitterly. ¹¹ She made a vow and said, "O Yahweh of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

Psalm 97 *(To be sung.)*

¹ Yahweh reigns, let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad. ² Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. ³ Fire goes before Him And burns up His adversaries round about. ⁴ His lightnings lit up the world; The earth saw and trembled. ⁵ The mountains melted like wax at the presence of Yahweh, At the presence of Yahweh of the whole earth. ⁶ The heavens declare His righteousness, And all the peoples have seen His glory. ⁷ Let all those be ashamed who serve graven images, Who boast themselves of idols; Worship Him, all you gods. ⁸ Zion heard this and was glad, And the daughters of Judah have rejoiced Because of Your judgments, O Yahweh. ⁹ For You are Yahweh Most High over all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods. ¹⁰ Hate evil, you who love Yahweh, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. ¹¹ Light is sown like seed for the righteous And gladness for the upright in heart. ¹² Be glad in Yahweh, you righteous ones, And give thanks to His holy name.

Psalm 98

¹ A Psalm. O sing to Yahweh a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him. ² Yahweh has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. ³ He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. ⁴ Shout joyfully to Yahweh, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises. ⁵ Sing praises to Yahweh with the lyre, With the lyre and the sound of melody. ⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn Shout joyfully before the King, Yahweh. ⁷ Let the sea roar and all it contains, The world and those who dwell in it. ⁸ Let the rivers clap their hands, Let the mountains sing together for joy ⁹ Before Yahweh, for He is coming to judge the earth; He will judge the world with righteousness And the peoples with equity.

Psalm 99

¹ Yahweh reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned above the cherubim, let the earth shake! ² Yahweh is great in Zion, And He is exalted above all the peoples. ³ Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He. ⁴ The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. ⁵ Exalt Yahweh our God And worship at His footstool; Holy is He. ⁶ Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon Yahweh and He answered them. ⁷ He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; They kept His testimonies And the statute that He gave them. ⁸ O Yahweh our God, You answered them; You were a forgiving God to them, And yet an avenger of their evil deeds. ⁹ Exalt Yahweh our God And worship at His holy hill, For holy is Yahweh our God.

Luke 1:8-17

*Reader 10** Amen. ⁸ Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Commentary:

The Nazir (Nazirite)

Yeshua was called a Nazarene, because He grew up in Nazareth; He was not called a Nazirite. John the baptizer was called a Nazirite. Therefore it is written, *“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds”* – Matthew 11:18-19.

“If a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to Yahweh . . .”

This is normally a voluntary status, of dedication to holiness, for a specified period of time (v.5) – a minimum being thirty days. It includes three restrictions: abstaining from all grape products, no cutting of hair, and no dealing with a human corpse.

Verse 2 may be translated as a desire to separate oneself, or to do something astounding. One purpose of such a vow is to separate oneself from worldly temptations, and thus relates to the previous paragraph’s concern with occasion for adultery (see previous week’s commentary). Another purpose may be to do something beyond the usual, in serving God.

Abstaining from grape products is seen as separation from intoxicating wine, including anything associated with it. The uncut hair is called “the crown of his God” (v.7), being a sign of devotion. Like the high priest (Lev. 21:11), he must maintain purity, not being allowed even to bury a dead parent. If contamination is accidentally or carelessly caused, the period of the vow must be started over when the seven days of purification are ended.

A *metzora* (see Year 2 – commentary #35), after being cleansed from impurity, is accompanied to the priest by another (Lev. 14:2), presumably of higher sanctity. But, the Nazirite, at the conclusion of the period of his vow, must “bring himself” (v.13) to the priest: he is presumably in a heightened state of sanctity.

He must bring a sin offering, a peace offering, and a thanksgiving offering. It is taught that the sin offering is required because of the decision to return to temporal pursuits. The peace offering symbolizes the contentment and joy of having been allowed to fulfill a period of devotion, and the loaves are in thanksgiving to God for the same.

After this service, the Nazirite’s hair is cut. He is still called a Nazirite (v.20), because he is to retain the spiritual gain from the dedication period.

This story was heard on the radio this week: A certain man was having a talk with his daughter’s prospective husband. The father asked: “What is your profession?” The young man responded, “I study the Word.” The father asked: “How do you plan to support my daughter?” The response was, “I will study, and God will provide.” The father asked: “How are you going to buy a ring for my daughter?” The response was, “God will provide the ring.” The father asked: “When children are born, how will you support them?” The young man answered, “I will study, and God will provide.” And so the conversation went. Later, the father was relating the situation to his wife: “He has no job, and he has no plans for one; but the good news is, he thinks I’m God.”

The moral of the story is: while living a life that is dedicated to God is very commendable, it is not an excuse to avoid supporting one’s family. One who wishes to live without any care for temporal pursuits, should not engage in marriage and building a family.

The Holy Crown of the high priest meant “Nazirship” (Ex 29:6, 39:30, Lev 8:9, 21:12).

John the baptizer – a Nazirite

A barren woman named Elizabeth had a husband named Zachariah. While ministering in the Temple, Zachariah was visited by an angel that promised an answer to his prayers, and the son was to be named John. That John was a Nazirite is indicated by Yeshua’s statement that he came “neither eating nor drinking” (Matthew 11:18). His life

style also showed dedication to God's work: he lived in the wilderness, was clothed with camel-hair, ate wild carob and dates, and spent his time preaching (Matthew 3:1-4).

Samson – a lifelong Nazirite

A barren woman named Manoah was told by an angel, "*You shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines*" (Judges 13:5). When Samson failed to honor his dedicated status, consorting with Delilah, it cost him his life.

Samuel – a lifelong Nazirite

A barren woman named Hannah vowed to God: "*O Yahweh of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thy maidservant and remember me, and not forget Thy maidservant, but wilt give Thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head*" (1 Samuel 1:11). "*And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of Yahweh*" (1b Samuel 3:20). "*Now Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life*" (1 Samuel 7:15).

Psalm 97: for Joseph – a Nazirite (For Triennial reference, this Psalm is concretely tied to the Torah portion.)

This eighth Psalm of Moses was dedicated to Joseph (*Artscroll Tanach: Psalms 73-150, pg 1193*). Joseph was called a Nazirite: "*The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished (Heb. - Nazir) among his brothers*" (Genesis 49:26); "*And with the choice things of the earth and its fulness, and the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let it come to the head of Joseph, and to the crown of the head of the one distinguished (Heb. - Nazir) among his brothers*" (Deuteronomy 33:16).

In the literal interpretation, Joshua, a descendant of Joseph, was to lead the conquest of Canaan: "*When Yahweh reigns, the land will rejoice*" (v.1). "*Fire will go before him, and burn up his enemies*" (v.3).

In the prophetic interpretation, Yeshua will go forth to conquer, fire will go before Him and burn up His enemies, and the earth will rejoice forever. Then everyone will be an eternal Nazirite – all will be dedicated to God.

The remainder of the Psalm distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked, promoting dedication to God.