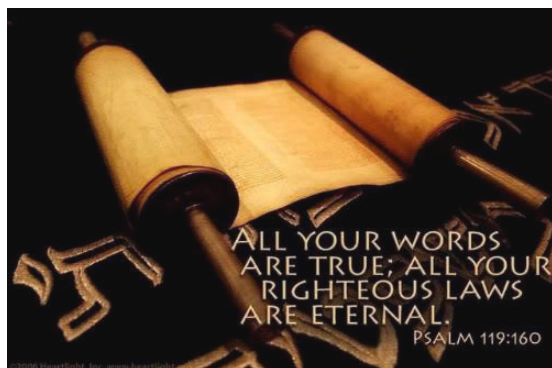


# Beyond Salvation

*Why Believers in Jesus Should Keep The Torah*



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**Rabbi Adam J. Bernay**



# **PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING BEFORE YOU READ THIS BOOK!!!**

## **Author's Note**

In going over my manuscript, I realized that – absent an explanation – this book comes off really harsh on Christians. Such is not my intention. I have no issues with the average Christian in the pew, other than a wish that they should learn that Torah is for them, which is the point of this book. My real issues are with the Church as an institution that has hidden the Truth of Torah for 1800 years, and the pastors and theologians who have an idea of the Truth and have still taught against Torah Observance. All such harsh statements are directed at the institution and the leaders who knowingly block the sheep in the fold from knowing the Truth.



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As iron sharpens iron, so too does good debate for the sake of God and His Torah sharpen the minds of those who Believe. And sometimes we'd actually agree! Thanks to the following for sharpening my iron: Joe Applegate, Bill Bartholomew, Yosef Boleware, George Cook, Yvonne Edghill, David Fenton, Yisrael Foreman, Vince Garcia, Anna Giron, Monty Horowitz, Jack Kilmon, David Klinghoffer, Richard Miller, Don Murphy, Leah Solomon, Joe Viel, everyone I've ever debated religion with online (and their numbers are legion), and most of the "people who have mentored and taught me in the Messianic community" category as well!

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<sup>1</sup> Of blessed memory – a traditional Jewish saying meaning the person has passed on.



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### **About the Author**

Adam Jonathan Bernay was born April 15, 1975 in Fresno, California, where he's lived for most of his life, except for a three-year period when he moved to Los Angeles and attempted to break into the screen-writing field ... and ended up homeless and broke on the streets of Hollywood. He moved back home and went back to college, getting a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies (minor in Mass Communication & Journalism) at California State University Fresno, and Master of Theology in Rabbinic Studies from the Messianic Bible Institute.

Adam has worked as a fund-raiser and research consultant the Alliance for the Separation of School and State, the local talk show producer for Fresno's most-listened-to news/talk station KMJ 580AM, a spokesman for the Gray Davis Recall movement in California, and a board operator for KMPH NewsRadio and KVBK 107.5FM. He has also been a columnist for the web journal Palace of Reason. His column was called The Unmitigated Gall. He is an ordained Rabbi with the Coalition of Torah Observant Messianic Congregations and serves as the Rabbi of Beit Tefillah Messianic Fellowship in Fresno.

Adam is an aspiring screenwriter, is working on a homeschool Torah study curriculum, and hoping to start up a Messianic radio station, both broadcast locally and an online station. He is single, 32 years old, and looking for Miss Right. His hobbies include science fiction, karaoke, and spouting opinions. Adam lives in Fresno, California.

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## Introduction:

### A Rest Stop, Not a Destination

“At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light,  
And the burden of my heart rolled away.  
It was there, by faith, I received my sight.  
And now I am happy all the day!”  
-- *At The Cross* refrain, Ralph E. Hudson, 1885

**I**n his wonderful book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan depicts Calvary as one stop on the odyssey Christian the Pilgrim takes. Christian's burdens roll off, and he is thus enabled to continue on his long journey to the heavenly City. This journey is one of discipleship, in which Christian studies “the book” and learns the lessons of how to live, and eventually, though the road be long and hard, Christian reaches the heavenly City. This book, read by many Christians, is an extended metaphor for the process of discipleship... and yet the Church seems to have missed the point. At the risk of repeating myself, salvation is an enabling point in the journey... but the journey continues from that point. There is still much of “the book” to read, many trials to come, and much growth needed. But the Church has made the entire focus of their faith The Cross. The teachings of Christianity that salvation is all that matters and that “the Law is dead” have discouraged Christians from beneficial study and kept them at the foot of the Cross, at the point of their salvation.

The message of this book is that this *anomian* (literally, without law) theology is wrong, dangerous, and counter-scriptural. The Torah has been given to us by God as His rules for how to live as He wishes us to live. Paul wrote in Second Timothy 3:16 that “every scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” By this, Paul means the Tanakh (what Christians call the “Old Testament”), which is a Hebrew acronym for Torah, Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings), because there was not yet any other canonized Scripture. Paul and the Apostle John also tell us that the Torah defines that which is sinful behavior and that which is righteous behavior (1 John 3:4, Romans 3:20, Romans 7:7, and Romans 7:12).

As Dr. David Hargis (of blessed memory), formerly of the Messianic Bible Institute points out, Yeshua will reject anyone who works against Torah:

"Not every one who says to Me, L-RD, L-RD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only he that does the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, L-RD, L-RD, have we not prophesied in Your name? and in Your name cast out devils? and in Your name done many wonderful works? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you! Depart from me, you who **work against the Law\***" (Matthew 7:21-23).

[Note: The King James Version says "iniquity" but the Greek word is *anomia*, meaning lawless, anti-law or "against the Law. "] <sup>2</sup>

Messiah Himself sums it all up in what I suggest is the thesis statement of the Sermon on the Mount:

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:13-20)

The function of the Torah is to be our guidebook to getting through the obstacle course of life. David Miller, rabbi of Am HaDehrek Messianic Congregation, has said that life is a minefield, and the Torah is the map to the mines, marking off the safe path between the danger of sin's explosions, which can spiritually injure, maim, cripple, and even kill any person, but especially Believers because the Adversary puts more mines in the path of them.

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<sup>2</sup> The New Testament Speaks Out on The Law, David Hargis,  
<http://www.messianic.com/articles/nt-law.htm>, © 1996.



Back in the early 1980s, there was a television series called *The Greatest American Hero*, about a mild-mannered high school teacher who is given a suit made by aliens that gives him super powers, which he is supposed to use to help mankind. Unfortunately, this guy loses the instruction book and so does not know how to operate the suit properly. Frequently we see him flying into buildings and doing other inept actions while going around saving people's lives and doing good deeds. It is only when he gets another copy of the instruction book that we see that the powers can be used so much better, and that there are powers in the suit beyond what he has discovered. Naturally, he promptly loses this second copy as well, thus preserving the comedic premise of the series.

This show is a great metaphor for most Christians: good, decent people who want to do the right thing, but they do not have the instruction book and thus cannot perform to their optimum as Children of God. It's not really their fault – they've been taught by those set up as their spiritual authorities to disregard these instructions as “no longer binding,” “nailed to the Cross,” and “legalism” – and they do manage to do good, but it's despite not following God's Torah, not because of it.

This, then, is what is meant by the title Beyond Salvation: that the Church needs to move beyond a simple salvation doctrine to a doctrine of discipleship through Torah. The message of this book is the message of Romans 7:12 and Deuteronomy 30:11: “So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good” and “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.” This is not to say it is possible to keep the Torah perfectly, but that we should keep it as well as we can, improving all the while, and letting righteous living perfect us (Matthew 5:48, Romans 12:2, James 1:4).

This work is divided into three major topic areas: Part One, “Beyond Salvation,” details who Jesus and His followers were, the source of the anti-Torah theology, and details why Believers should be Torah-Observant. Part Two, “Okay, What Now?,” is a simple course in basic Torah Observance, the purpose of which is to show you that keeping Torah is not as difficult as one may think. Part Three, “God's Calendar,” introduces you to the Holy Festivals, God's Appointed Times when we are called to fellowship with Him and our fellow Believers. Finally, the epilogue will encourage you to continue in the way of God's Torah and give you some additional resources to help you along the way.

It is my fervent prayer that this book gives you valuable insight into what God wishes for His People – which, if you are a Believer in Yeshua haMoshiach (Jesus the Messiah), you are one of – and enables you to receive the rich blessings God has in store for you. That is my sole purpose in writing this tome, and I wish you nothing but the best as you continue *Beyond Salvation* down the path of righteousness to the heavenly City.

Let Us Exalt His Name Together!

Rabbi Adam J. Bernay, MRbs  
Fresno, California

# **Part A**

# **“Beyond Salvation”**

## Chapter One

### Recognizing The Real Jesus

**I**n his excellent book, “The Mystery of the Gospel,” D. Thomas Lancaster writes about the confrontation between Joseph and his brothers in the palace of Pharaoh as a metaphor for why the Jewish people en masse do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah:

Almost a decade later [after his marriage to Asenath], Joseph found himself face-to-face with his long-estranged brothers. When at last he could control himself no longer, he turned his back on his guests and servants and shouted in Egyptian, “Have everyone leave my presence!” Only Joseph’s stunned and terrified brothers were left. ... Suddenly, there was a sound from the governor. It was a small gasp, a breath, a sob. His shoulders convulsed... The Egyptian governor turned to his brothers... [o]nly by great force of will was he able to choke out two simple Hebrew words between his cries... “**Ani Yoseif**.” [I am Joseph.]

...

To truly enter into the moment, we must remember that at this point in the story, Joseph’s brothers still have no idea who he is. Joseph is dressed like an Egyptian. He has Egyptian hair and Egyptian makeup. He speaks the Egyptian language, and until this moment has only spoken Hebrew through a translator. To the eleven brothers, Joseph is a Gentile prince. They have no idea that this is their own brother...

...

Just as Joseph was ‘disguised’ – made unrecognizable by his Egyptian clothing and hairstyle, so too has the Messiah been made unrecognizable – ‘disguised’ by Gentile culture. We have painted Him to look like one of us. We have represented Him in our artwork with Gentile hair, makeup and clothes. We have made His mouth speak in Greek and in the language of every nation, but we have forgotten that He spoke Hebrew first. We have removed Him from His Hebraic and Torah context, and made Him unrecognizable to His own brothers.<sup>3</sup>

The brothers do not recognize Joseph as their long-lost brother because he looks and acts like an Egyptian. He is wearing the clothes, the makeup, the headdress. He speaks Egyptian and even – to quote from a band I listened to in my youth – “walks like an Egyptian.” In the same way, we read, Jesus has been presented to Jews as a foreigner – most pictures show Him looking very European, Gentile, almost effeminate, with long hair, dressed in a theatrical rendition of Arabic clothes, minus the French Foreign Legion headdress, and teaching The End of The Law – not as He truly was, a Jew, and so His brothers, the Jews, do not recognize Him.

But let’s talk about some players in this little melodrama that Dr. Lancaster didn’t discuss in much detail – the Egyptian Court and Joseph’s servants. They are hustled off-stage so Joseph can do his big revelation of who he really is. To the Court and the servants, Joseph is still one of them. He is still an Egyptian. Just like Joseph’s brothers, they cannot see through the false front Joseph’s superiors have forced upon him. They think this is who he really is.

In the same way, the Messiah has had a false front put on Him as well. For the past 1500 years, those who have preached of Him have dressed Him up as a Gentile – a long-haired, rebellious one, at that. They have taken words He said grossly out of context and slanted interpretations so that His ideas, instead of being grounded in the Faith of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has become grounded in the false god of Babylon. And they did it so long ago that few people today can recognize who He is because of the costuming, makeup, and script they’ve handed Him, as if He’s an actor in a play.

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<sup>3</sup> D. Thomas Lancaster, “The Mystery of the Gospel,” pp.55-57, published by First Fruits of Zion, <http://ffoz.org>

But this is starting to change. Just as more and more Jews are having their revelation moment that Jesus is, in fact, a Jew and, more importantly, the Messiah – they are having their Joseph-and-the-Brothers moment – more and more Gentiles are having their Joseph-and-Pharaoh moment. Remember when Joseph came before Pharaoh with his father and his brothers and introduced them to the sovereign of Egypt? His boss was amazed, but embraced Jacob and the brothers and welcomed them into his house. Pharaoh saw who Joseph really was in that moment.

But that's just the first step. Pharaoh recognized who Joseph was, but he didn't start worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he didn't let Joseph go back to looking, talking, and acting like a Hebrew. As a Jew might say, all that's well and good, but business is business. As a maitre d' might say, we do have a dress code around here! As long as he's my viceroy, Joseph must remain in Egyptian garb!

The rest of this chapter is designed for you to recognize Jesus for who He is – a Jew, with all that entails – and for you to accept it. We're going to go beyond the Joseph-and-Pharaoh moment, beyond recognition, to acceptance. Only after you accept The Real Jesus can you move further on down the road, to all He has for you.

### **Name Above All Names**

An incredible phenomenon several years ago was the film *"The Passion of the Christ"*. This film was notable for several things, but a major one was the use of the real Name of the Savior. That's right, "Jesus" is not what He was called! "Jesus" is a translation and transliteration – a poor one, in my view – of the Name "Yeshua," a Hebrew/Aramaic name and word which means "Salvation." It is a shortened form of the name "Yehoshua" (the name translated in most Bibles as "Joshua") that was in common use in the Second Temple Period, which was the period during which Yeshua had His ministry as recorded in the Gospels. People in the Messianic Jewish community prefer to use "Yeshua" instead of "Jesus" and "the Messiah" (or the Hebrew "HaMoshiach") instead of "Christ" as more authentic because they're Hebrew, the language of the teachers in the Bible (including Him). As my mother puts it, when Mary called Him in for lunch, she called Him "Yeshua," not "Jesus."

But this is not to say it is wrong to call Him "Jesus." He knows Who you mean. There are those who claim that the name "Jesus" is really a reference



to the Greek god Zeus and thus is unacceptable, but there's no basis for that claim in history or language. If you feel more comfortable calling Him "Jesus," He understands. You can think of it this way: like most Jews, the Savior has come to have both a Hebrew Name and an English name (well, a common name – French Jews have French common names, not English ones!). "Yeshua" is the Hebrew Name and "Jesus" is the common name. If you want to use the common name because that's what you're used to, it's okay. But keep in mind, the Name He was called – the "Name Above All Names" – is Yeshua.

### **Not a Long-Haired Hippie**

Most pictures of "Jesus" depict Him in a manner that He would never have looked like, for many reasons. The first has to do with the fact that He kept the Commandments in the Torah. The only Torah Observant male who was allowed to keep his hair long was one under a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21). All other men were to keep their hair short (Leviticus 19:27 and 21:5, also noted in 1 Corinthians 11:14). Also, His beard was almost certainly long, since the interpretation of the Commandment in Leviticus 19:27 has been, until relatively recently in history, that the beard was not to be trimmed, except under specific circumstances.

Additionally, "Jesus" is usually depicted with a very beautiful – almost effeminate, if you removed the beard – face. Yet, one of the prophecies of Messiah tells us specifically that He was not beautiful or even remotely attractive (Isaiah 53:2). Finally, though this is far more conjecture than the other points, Yeshua was from Galilee, and many Galileans had red hair, and we know that people could tell by looking at Him that He was Galilean, so He may have been redheaded. This fits nicely with ancient Jewish traditions that King David had red hair, and with His title, "The Lion of Judah."

### **The Clothes Make the Man**

Many pictures of "Jesus" depict Him in loose, flowing robes. While He of course wore robes, they would more likely be of the type we think of as "Arab" today. We read that He wore a fringed "cloak" over His robes (Matthew 9:20, 14:36; Mark 5:27, 6:56; Luke 8:44). This was a **tallit**, a traditional garment with fringes or tassels on each corner with a distinctive blue thread woven into it, in obedience to the commandment in Numbers 15:37-41). Today this has come down to us as a shawl worn during prayer or a small undergarment worn loosely on the torso, but back in Biblical times (and for quite some time afterwards, till it was banned by the Romans) it was

sort of a long, woolen sarape or poncho. These **tallit** were woven as a single piece – no seams – making it likely that this was the seamless garment the Roman soldiers drew lots over at the Crucifixion.

When standing, the fringes would come down below the knees, but when riding a horse, the garment would “hitch up” to the point where the fringes would be on the thigh. An interesting side note is that, although today the fringes are knotted in a uniform way for all wearers (varying only by ethnic background, whether European or Hispanic or Black – there are Jews from every color in humanity), there is evidence that back then, the knotting was a linguistic code that told you the person’s name, his tribe, and possibly other information. We see this as possibly what is meant in Revelation 19:16, where it says His Name is written on His thigh.

Also, it is likely that, in keeping with traditional Jewish Law, Yeshua wore a head-covering of some sort, probably the sort of headgear that most Arabs wear in the Middle East, which comes from one worn to protect the person from the desert heat (although most of them are ornamental now). So the bareheaded depiction of “Jesus” isn’t likely accurate either.

### **Giver of the Torah**

In Exodus 24 – right in the middle of the giving of the Covenant and Commandments of Torah – the Scriptures tell us that Moses, Aaron, and the 70 Elders of Israel “saw the God of Israel” Who was giving them these Commandments and Covenant. They saw a man on a sapphire platform. Who was that? Well, we are told that no human may see God the Father and live (Exodus 33:18-23, John 1:18, John 5:37). The Holy Spirit doesn’t manifest itself that way in any part of the Bible. So, Who is this, appearing to the Moses, Aaron, and the Elders of Israel... not to mention, Who appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where it says it is God? Who walked with Adam in the cool of the evening in the Garden of Eden? Yeshua. Yeshua gave the Torah. They are His Commandments. “If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments,” He said in John 14:15, and He said in John 15:10, “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.

### **What WOULD Jesus Do?**

The “WWJD?” phenomenon is an interesting one, since most people who wear the bracelets, t-shirts, etc. with that logo probably have little idea that Yeshua led a lifestyle in keeping with the Commandments of the Torah. So,

the answer to “What Would Jesus Do?” is, “Jesus would keep the Torah.” That is, in fact, the basic piece of data you need to understand to know about The Real Jesus. Otherwise, you probably wouldn’t recognize Him if you ran into Him on the street.

If we want to be like the Messiah (1 Corinthians 11:1), we should keep the Torah, as He did. And that’s what you’ll learn about in the rest of this book.

## Chapter Two

### Grafted In

In the last chapter, we discussed the idea that Yeshua kept the Commandments, and thus you should too. However, there is natural reluctance on the part of most Christians. “Isn’t that Jewish law? I’m not Jewish!” It is good that you have this reluctance – otherwise, you would fall for every wind of new doctrine, no matter where it lead you (Ephesians 4:14).

Let’s address this notion that the Commandments are “Jewish law.” This is a natural reaction, since it is Jews who have primarily kept them historically. But the idea of a “Jewish” people – as opposed to God’s People, the Israelites or Hebrews – came about only in the Common Era (also known as Anno Domini or A.D.), because of the Dispersion of the Kingdom of Judea after the Kingdom of Israel had already become “The Ten Lost Tribes.” I won’t go in-depth into this history – it’s a subject for another whole book – but we need to get past the idea that God’s People are the “Jews.” Yes, that’s what the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are called today, but the true, Biblical name for God’s People is **Am Yisrael**, the Nation or People of Israel.

Alright, then, you’re saying... but I’m not “**Am Yisrael**.” Well, don’t be too sure about that. Maybe you are not physically **Am Yisrael**, but membership in God’s People has never been limited to Jacob’s physical lineage. When the Israelites came out of Egypt, a mixed multitude came out with them (Exodus 12:38), and were with them at Mount Sinai, and accepted the Covenant – the Torah – that was the Constitution of **Am Yisrael**. Sinai was the Birth of **Am Yisrael**, and even the ancient Rabbinic Sages tell us that there were representatives from all 70 Nations of the world there (Shabbat 88b). They became one people – **Am Yisrael** – by declaring of God’s Torah, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" (Exodus 19:7)

Yes, you're saying, but my ancestors weren't there! Maybe not, but just as they were grafted into **Am Yisrael** through a declaration of faith, so were you! That is, if you have proclaimed faith in Yeshua as your Savior:

### **Romans 11:16-27**

If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either. Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery -- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation -- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

The cultivated olive tree is a Scriptural metaphor for Israel and its leadership. You will find this in Deuteronomy 24:20, Judges 9, and Psalm 52:8, among other Scripture passages.

So, you are grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel! You are a part of **Am Yisrael!** Of course, this is nothing new to many Christians, but what may be new is that idea that this means you should keep Torah, all of God's Commandments as contained in the first five books of the Bible. Not that you must keep it for salvation – you are grafted in through faith alone – but you should keep it because you are saved. We read in:

### **Matthew 5:13-20**

You are salt for the land; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine among men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

We will be going over this in more depth in Chapter Six, but for now, let's just take the Messiah's words at face value, their literal meaning: He wants you to keep the Commandments of the Law. Until heaven and earth pass away, they are intact. If you keep and teach them, you will be called great in the kingdom of heaven; if you don't keep them and don't teach them, you will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. This is how you can be salt and light to the world. You're called to be salt and light, but too many Christians are just Lite Salt. They have lost some of their savor and are not light at all.

### **The Move Away From Torah**

But why has the Christian Church taught that you shouldn't keep "The Law"? Isn't that in the "New Testament"? Well, let's check some of our terminology: the whole concept of "Old Testament" and "New Testament" is

not Scriptural. There is no such division. It was created by an anti-Jewish bigot named Marcion, who lived in the second century of the Common Era. Although denounced as a heretic, many of his views eventually became mainstream. Before Marcion's time, the followers of Yeshua were considered a Sect of Judaism, called "The Sect of the Nazarene" or "The Way." But Marcion was bound and determined to get rid of all elements of the "Hebrew Bible" in his new faith.

His worst legacy is this idea that the Tanakh – "the Law and the Prophets" or more properly the Torah (the five Books of Moses) and the Haftarah (the Prophets and the Writings, though the whole rest of Tanakh was sometimes just called the Prophets in common language) – is the "Old Testament," playing into Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 3 that the old covenant has been taken away in Messiah. What this specifically refers to is the need of animal sacrifices to have your sins washed away, but Marcion – and later, the mainstream Church – expanded this to mean the entirety of the Torah.

There seemed to be good reasons for this. Not only could they twist the Apostolic Writings to mean that – which speaks out against misuse of the Torah as legalism – but the Roman Empire was starting to persecute anyone who seemed to be a Jew, and if you were keeping the Commandments, you were a Jew to them. So it seemed to be the safe choice to move away from Torah. Safe, but not Scriptural.

The final move away from Torah came at the Council of Nicea established by the Emperor Constantine, who had made what was by then "Christianity" the official religion of the Roman Empire. By his order, the Church appropriated the rituals of the Roman religion – which was based on the Babylonian Mythru cult – to replace the Torah and the rituals of "Judaism." The drive to create a separate Christian religion, started by Marcion, was complete.

## **The First Century or New Testament Church**

A statement heard often in Christian circles is that they want to "get back to the First Century Church" or the "New Testament Church" as it's sometimes called. Well, the "First Century" Believers were all Torah-Keepers, and loved it so much that we read they were all "zealous for the Law!" (Acts 21:20) If you want to get back to what it was like to be a First Century Believer, let me encourage you to be zealous for Torah – in fact, all of God's Word. Remember, when the Israelites and the mixed multitudes were grafted

together into *Am Yisrael*, they said that all that God had commanded, they would do. Teaching the how and why of that is the purpose of this book.



## Chapter Three

### The Law of Libertine: Shall We Sin, That Grace May Abound?

**T**he Christian Church in the West is a body in crisis. It seems that everything it claims to despise, it engages in. According to statistics collected at abortion clinics, most of the women who receive abortions are Christians:<sup>4</sup>

Religious affiliation. The majority of women older than 17 who obtained an abortion reported a religious affiliation. The highest proportion (43%) identified themselves as Protestant. Twenty-seven percent of women having an abortion identified themselves as Catholic, and 8% as a member of another religion; 22% reported no religious affiliation. Thirteen percent identified themselves as "born-again" or evangelical, three-fourths of whom were Protestant (not shown).

Divorce is rampant in the Christian community, at the same or ***higher*** rates than society at large:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> According to the report "Patterns in the Socioeconomic Characteristics of Women Obtaining Abortions in 2000-2001" by Rachel K. Jones, Jacqueline E. Darroch and Stanley K. Henshaw in the journal "Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health," Volume 34, Number 5, September/October 2002, as found on <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3422602.html>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_dira.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_dira.htm)

The slogan: "*The family that prays together, stays together*" is well known. There has been much anecdotal evidence that has led to "*unsubstantiated claims that the divorce rate for Christians who attended church regularly, pray together or who meet other conditions is only **1 or 2 percent***". <sup>8</sup> [Emphasis ours]. Dr. Tom Ellis, chairman of the *Southern Baptist Convention's Council on the Family* said that for "*...born-again Christian couples who marry...in the church after having received premarital counseling...and attend church regularly and pray daily together...*" experience only 1 divorce out of nearly 39,000 marriages -- or **0.00256 percent**. <sup>9</sup>

A recent study by the *Barna Research Group* throws extreme doubt on these estimates. Barna released the results of their poll about divorce on 1999-DEC-21. They had interviewed 3,854 adults from the 48 contiguous states. The margin of error is within 2 percentage points. The survey found:

●	11% of the adult population is currently divorced.
●	25% of adults have had at least one divorce during their lifetime.
●	<b>Divorce rates among conservative Christians were significantly higher</b> than for other faith groups, and for <a href="#">Atheists</a> and <a href="#">Agnostics</a> .

...

**Variation in divorce rates among Christian faith groups:**

Denomination (in order of decreasing divorce rate)	% who have been divorced
Non-denominational (small conservative groups; independents)	34%
Baptists	29%
Mainline Protestants	25%
Mormons	24%
Catholics	21%
Lutherans	21%

For drugs, it's the same story. The Church is not raising kids to avoid drugs much better than the rest of the population.<sup>6</sup>

[A] survey released by the University of Colorado shows that the problem of drug use is not just outside the church. The study involved nearly 14,000 junior-high and high-school youth.

It compared churched young people with unchurched young people and found very little difference.

For example, 88 percent of the unchurched young people reported drinking beer compared with 80 percent of churched young people. When asked how many had tried marijuana, 47 percent of the unchurched young people had done so compared with 38 percent of the churched youth. For amphetamines and barbiturates, 28 percent of the unchurched youth had tried them as well as 22 percent of the churched young people. And for cocaine use, the percentage was 14 percent for unchurched and 11 percent for churched youth.

More and more Christian denominations are becoming more and more accepting of gay adherents, gay marriage, and gay clergy. Every day brings a new story about a clergyman committing child abuse. The AIDS infection rate is incredibly high for Catholic priests, much higher than the general populace.<sup>7</sup> The evidence of the mainstream Christian community slipping deeper and deeper into behaviors and situations decried by its own membership would fill this entire book.

But this book is not about documenting the manifest moral failures of the Christian Church. This book is about finding the answers inherent in God's Word, despite a millennium and a half (or more) of Church leaders turning away from these answers.

I want to make a radical suggestion: by preaching that the Torah – incorrectly called “the Law of Moses” – was “nailed to the Cross” and made null and void by the Sacrifice of the Messiah, the Church has sown the seeds of its own destruction. Theologians from Marcion (the Gnostic bishop from the Second Century of the Common Era who created the idea of separating the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.surfinthespirit.com/healthy-living/drug-abuse.html>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1058/is\\_7\\_117/ai\\_60114793](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_7_117/ai_60114793)

Bible into the “Old” and “New” Testaments, among other heresies) onward have perpetuated a deadly doctrine of anomianism – that God’s instructions for righteous living as contained in Torah have been replaced with “the Law of Liberty.”

Instead of being the Torah of Liberty as propounded by the Rabbi Ya’akov HaTzaddik (“James the Just”), this is The Law of Libertine – that whatever you do, it’s okay, because you will be forgiven if you just profess Christ and ask Him to forgive. That’s it. The problem is, without Torah as your standard, there is no such thing as sin, for sin is the transgression of Torah (1 John 3:4). So there’s no need for forgiveness, if you follow the anomian doctrine to its logical conclusion, because there’s no such thing as sin!

Some Christian leaders teach that not all of the Torah is done away with. The Ten Commandments, they’re good (except for that pesky one about keeping the Seventh Day holy). The commandments against homosexuality, those can stay. Definitely those commandments about tithing... but since there’s no Temple, give the Tithe to us pastors!

A commandment here, and a commandment there... somewhere they get the idea that God’s standards are a buffet – pick what you want, and just leave the rest behind. Somehow, that does not sound like something God would support. At least, it doesn’t sound that way to me.

In his excellent novel, “Piercing the Darkness,” Christian author Frank E. Peretti discusses the importance of moral fences in defining human behavior:

So all that “maximum autonomy” wasn’t the great liberation and joy I thought it would be. I felt like a kid let loose to play in an infinitely huge yard – I started to wish there was a fence somewhere. At least then I would know where I was. I could run up against it and tell myself, “I’m in the yard,” and feel right about it. Or I could climb over the fence, and tell myself, “Oh-oh, I’m outside the yard,” and feel wrong about it. Whether right or wrong, and with infinite freedom to run and play, I know I would still stay near the fence. At least then I would know where I was. I would know something for sure.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Frank E. Peretti, “Piercing the Darkness,” p.194, published by Crossway Books.

This is such a perfect example of why Torah is needed in the Christian community! A standard of behavior must be set. As human beings, we need that standard, that fence. The only reliable fence one can look to is the Torah – all of it, not the buffet-pickings the theologians have done. Why not? Because to accept the notion that you can pick and choose parts of it devalues the whole, and brings about the very situation we see in the Church today, as described above.

The Apostle John, in his first epistle, defines sin as the transgression of Torah. Rabbi Paul in Romans 6:1 asks the key, critical question: “Shall we sin, that grace may abound?” He answers his rhetorical question: “May it never be!” But by telling people that “the Law has been nailed to the Cross” and thus it is no longer God’s instructions for righteous living, what you are doing is giving license to sin:



## **LICENSE TO SIN**

The bearer is hereby released from all requirements, observances, rituals, and festivals that come from the Old Testament and Judaism, in so much as the Law has been nailed to the cross, freeing them from any requirement to obey any but Jesus' two commandments.

**Issuing Authority:** Satan

## Chapter Four

### *"From The Earliest Times, Moshe Has Had In Every City Those Who Proclaim Him...."*

**T**here are two passages in the Apostolic Writings that are probably tied for the most often misinterpreted in Christian history. One of them, the Sermon on the Mount, is the subject of a later chapter. The other is Acts 15. There is a key statement in the passage that, in most Christian interpretations, is either overlooked entirely or is simply interpreted beyond all strain of credibility. This statement forms the basis of the title of this chapter, *"From The Earliest Times, Moshe Has Had In Every City Those Who Proclaim Him...."* What I'm going to do is go in-depth on the main section of this chapter and put in, as best I can, its proper historical, cultural, and religious context. So, let's start by looking at:

#### **Acts 15:1-5**

Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

In Acts 10, Peter was given a vision that showed that it was alright to welcome non-Jews into the faith, that you should call no man unclean whom God has made clean. (Acts 10 and the issue of the dietary commandments are covered in a later chapter.) Thus began the witnessing outside of the people of Israel. But in the period between the events recorded in Acts 10 and the events recorded in Acts 15, a group has arisen in the Sect of the Nazarene.

This group becomes known later in the Scriptures as "the circumcision faction," circumcision being symbolic of their entire argument, that before accepting Messiah as their savior, a Gentile had to first undergo the ritualistic conversion to Judaism – contrary to what they said, it was not prescribed by Moses, but by the rabbis – which, for men, included either full circumcision or, if they had been circumcised already, the performance of a ritualistic pseudo-circumcision...

Pardon me for getting graphic here, but to show you just how outlandish this group is, you have to understand what it is they believe – and I meant the present tense there, as you will see later. This ritualistic pseudo-circumcision is known in Hebrew as ***hatafat dam brit*** or "drawing of the blood of the covenant". Literally, a rabbi trained in circumcision – called a mohel – uses a small pin to draw a symbolic drop of blood from the tip of... well, I'm sure you all know where I'm going here... Now, I know, you're probably asking, "Why is he getting into this much detail?" Well, because I think it's important for you all to know how unscriptural this has become. Circumcision is not enough for these people. If you didn't have circumcision the right way as a baby, well, we're going to create a ritual circumcision! You will note I said "create." There is no such symbolic circumcision anywhere in the Scriptures that I can find, and I would be surprised if any advocates of ***hatafat dam brit*** can show it to me.

The other important fact to point out here is that the Circumcision Faction required a person to be a full convert – take the years of study, the months of ritual, etc. – ***before being allowed to accept Messiah!*** In other words, they were trying to be gatekeepers, deciding who and how people could come to Yeshua! Well, Paul and Barnabas didn't agree with this! They taught against this, and so the disagreement was brought to a body usually called the Jerusalem Council, but was in fact a new Sanhedrin begun by the Sect of the Nazarene in accordance with Torah and with the transfer of authority from the rabbis and priests to the ***Talmidim*** and ***Shaliachim*** – the Disciples and Apostles.

During this audience with the Nazarene Sanhedrin, some members of the body who had been Pharisees – like Paul – stood up and agreed with the Circumcision Faction, indicating a need for the Nazarene Sanhedrin to debate this issue, since there were obviously some members on both sides of the issue. This brings us to:

### **Acts 15:6-11**

The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Now, most Christians will tell you that the "yoke on the neck of the talmidim which neither our fathers nor we have had the strength to bear" is Torah. This has been the generally accepted interpretation for the last 1500 years, if not the last 1800 years. But is it the correct interpretation? Well, let's let Scripture interpret Scripture, in keeping with the rules for interpreting Scripture:

### **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it."

So, obviously, since Scripture cannot contradict itself, the "yoke on the neck of the Disciples which neither our fathers nor we have had the strength to bear" CANNOT BE Torah! So, what is it? Well, let's look back at what the Circumcision Faction's oft-repeated demand is: "It is necessary to circumcise



them and direct them to observe the law of Moses." ... "You can't be saved unless you undergo ritual circumcision in the manner prescribed by Moses."

In other words, they were demanding that these new Believers had to **first** undergo the rabbinically-created conversion education and ritual **before being accepted as believers!** In other words... they were demanding that the Sect of the Nazarene adopt the very man-made ritual commandments Paul said perverted the Torah into legalism (1 Corinthians 9:20, Complete Jewish Bible)! Also, it is stating that faith doesn't save you, it is your works that save you before you can actually believe!

And amazingly enough, nowadays, the Circumcision Faction has reappeared in Messianic Judaism. Yes, believe it or not, folks, there are so-called "leaders" in the Messianic movement who teach that all men, when coming to faith, if they were not circumcised by a mohel on the eighth day of their life, even if they were circumcised as babies, as most men are in modern Western society, must undergo ***hatafat dam brit!***

This includes me! Yes, I have gotten into pitched debates with members of the Latter Day Circumcision Faction in which they claim that I, a trained Messianic rabbi – a Jew by birth, circumcised in the hospital by a doctor (according to California law at the time) – need to undergo ***hatafat dam brit OR I AM NOT TRULY SAVED!*** This is contrary to **everything** Yeshua taught about salvation by faith! Yet the Circumcision Faction of Biblical times insisted on bringing this before the Nazarene Sanhedrin, who gave a ruling:

### **Acts 15:12-20**

All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.

"Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood."

And that is where most Christians stop reading. Close the book! That's all we have to do!

Well, that's not where the decision of the Nazarene Sanhedrin ended. They leave off the last line: "Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath." (verse 21)

Why is this a part of the ruling and, thus, a part of the letter that they are about to send to the various Nazarene assemblies throughout the Mediterranean? Well, I would suggest to you because they intended that new Believers who had not learned the Torah – that is, non-Jews – would know to go to the synagogues and listen to the Torah being taught every Shabbat! This is what many of you reading this book today are doing. **Baruch HaShem** – Praise the Name – you have seen the truth of this!

Why did the Nazarene Sanhedrin make this ruling? Well, they knew their Torah, and they knew what the Torah had to say on the matter:

### **Numbers 15:15-16**

As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.

So, they wrote their ruling up as a letter and sent it off:

### **Acts 15:22-27**

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas --Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men

among the brethren, and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings. We have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.

You remember the list of the four basic requirements for non-Jews to join into Messianic fellowship – abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood – and that that's where most Christians stop reading? Unfortunately, that's also where many Messianic Jews stop reading, and many leaders in the Messianic movement teach that if you're not born a Jew, you are to keep what are called the Seven Noachide Laws, or Commandments for the Children of Noah:

1. ***Avodah Zarah***: Prohibition on idolatry.
2. ***Birchat HaShem***: Prohibition on blasphemy and cursing the Name of God.
3. ***Shefichat Damim***: Prohibition on murder.
4. ***Gezel***: Prohibition on robbery and theft.
5. ***Gilui Arayot***: Prohibition on immorality and forbidden sexual relations.
6. ***Ever Min HaChay***: Prohibition on removing and eating a limb from a live animal.
7. ***Dinim***: Requirement to establish a justice system and courts of law to enforce the other 6 laws.

You can see where the four things mentioned by the Apostles fit in there... but could the Noachide Laws be what the Apostles meant? Let's go back to that Numbers passage:

## Numbers 15:15-16

As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.

How can keeping a different set of laws be "The same Torah and standard of judgment will apply to both you and the foreigner living with you"? I say it can't! And that's what I'm teaching in this book: the same Torah and same standard of judgment for both Jews and non-Jews living together as **Am-Yisrael**, as the People of Israel, in the blood of Messiah! Do I expect that you will know exactly how to do that the minute you commit yourself to this way of life? **NO!** I suggest that you come to a Messianic congregation on the Sabbath and hear the Torah proclaimed to you, so that you can learn it! This is the meaning of the decision of the Nazarene Sanhedrin as recorded in Acts 15.

## Chapter Five

### *“Be Ye Perfected: Salvation vs. Sanctification”*

***Baruch atah ADONAI Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam  
asher kid'shanu b'mitsvatov...***

**B**lessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by His Commandments... Jews cant that standard blessing introduction every week, but what does it mean? Some Messianics reject this formulation of the blessing, claiming that we are not sanctified by the Commandments, but by Yeshua's blood atoning for our sins. This would indicate that “sanctification” is the same thing as “salvation.” But is it?

To discern this, we'll be defining a few Hebrew terms along the way. I'll start with one you may already know: the Hebrew word translated as “salvation,” is “Yeshua,” which is also the Name of the Messiah. The Hebrew word “Yeshua” is defined to mean “salvation, deliverance, welfare, prosperity, salvation (by God), victory.” While an action, it defines an event in time, singular, a fixed point.

What brings us salvation? We know that salvation comes only from our faith in Yeshua as Messiah, and it occurs when we make a public statement of that faith. We must be willing to stand in public and say, “Yeshua is my Messiah.” That happens once. But hopefully, when you walk forward from that point in your life, you begin to walk along God's Way. You begin a process.

## 2 Peter 1:5-11

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble.

We are thus told that faith is a starting point from which we undergo a process to furnish it with goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. When we have these qualities in abundance, Yeshua enables us so that we won't be barren, unfruitful. We are made ready to be used by God.

The Hebrew word translated as "sanctification" is "**kadash**," meaning "to be set apart, be consecrated, to be hallowed, to show oneself sacred or majestic, to set apart as sacred, consecrate, to keep oneself apart or separate, to cause Himself to be hallowed (of God)." To be made ready for use by God. It defines a process, an ongoing activity.

And how do we reach this point of **kadash**, of sanctification? How do we learn to have goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love?

## 1 Chronicles 29:18-19

"O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Your people, and direct their heart to You; and give to my son Solomon a perfect heart to keep Your commandments, Your testimonies and Your statutes, and to do them all, and to build the temple, for which I have made provision."

The Hebrew word translated as “a perfect heart” (in some translations, “wholehearted”) is “**shalem**,” which is related to the word “**shalom**,” which describes God’s Perfect Peace. “**Shalem**” is defined as “whole, wholehearted, perfect, or to become perfect.” In other words, being perfected. While it can describe a process completed, it defines a process in people.

The First Chronicles passage is the prayer of King David: that his son, Solomon, be made **shalem**, wholehearted, perfected. What is his definition of wholeheartedness, of being perfected? To obey God’s commandments, instructions, and rules. It is only when Solomon becomes perfected, when he obeys God’s commandments, instructions, and rules, that David says Solomon can build the Temple of God, “the palace for which he has made provision.” Solomon had to be made ready for use by God.

Now, we know Solomon didn’t walk perfectly before God, but we also know that God allowed him to build the Temple. But the word is **shalem**, perfect. What this tells us is that while our actions may not be perfect, when we set out to walk according to God’s commandments, the process is perfect even though we are not, and we are being perfected.

### **Matthew 5:43-48**

"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

In other words, we must be set apart from the unfaithful. How do we do that? Well, we are told that the Torah is the means by which we are set apart, by living a Torah lifestyle:

## Micah 6:1-8

Hear now what the LORD is saying, "Arise, plead your case before the mountains, And let the hills hear your voice. Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of the LORD, And you enduring foundations of the earth, Because the LORD has a case against His people; Even with Israel He will dispute. My people, what have I done to you, And how have I wearied you? Answer Me. Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt And ransomed you from the house of slavery, And I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled And what Balaam son of Beor answered him, And from Shittim to Gilgal, So that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD." With what shall I come to the LORD And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

So, not in the ritual, for the ritual means nothing without walking in purity, in **shalem**, in wholeheartedness with God. The Hebrew word for "the way to walk" is **halacha**, which is the term that means the specifics of how to live out the commandments. Now, many Christian teachers would tell us that it is too hard to keep the commandments. But God tells us otherwise, in Torah:

## Deuteronomy 30:11-19

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the



LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

"But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it.

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants."

At **Shavuot** (the Festival of Weeks, aka Pentecost), we commemorate the giving of the Torah at Sinai, as you will read in a later chapter. We remember that the Israelites agreed to enter into the Covenant with God before they knew fully what the terms were, but they were willing to follow those terms. As they said, "All that the Torah says, we will do and we will hear." Like Abraham before them, they had faith, and it was reckoned to them as righteousness, and they were saved, as Paul makes the case in 1 Corinthians 10:4, we are saved by the same faith as our fathers in the desert.

So, too, we now understand that our statement of faith in Yeshua as Messiah brings us salvation, and that enables us to enter into a process of **kadash**, of sanctification, by learning God's commandments and living them out in our lives, becoming perfected, becoming wholehearted, becoming **shalem**. This is a process with a beginning, but it should not be a process with an ending, because like Yeshua said about Torah in Matthew 5, as long as heaven and earth stand (as you will read in a later chapter), so should our continued process of perfection, until all is accomplished and we stand in the light of God at the end of this age.

# **Part B**

## **“OK, What Now?”**

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## **Introduction:**

### **Not So Tough – You Keep Most of Them Already (I Hope)**

**OKAY**, you say, I believe I should keep the Commandments. What now? What do I do? I mean, is it a lot of work? I have a full-time job, can I find the time? And how do I know what the Commandments are? Aren't there like 613 of them? How can I possibly learn to keep all of them?

Well, relax. First off, you keep thousands of laws in our society everyday – far more than you realize – just by being a good person. And secondly, out of the 613, there are not so many commandments that actually apply directly and literally to you as an individual. Many, many of them are only capable of being carried out with a Temple in on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem with a functioning Levitical Priesthood, so those don't apply to you now, and probably won't apply until we get into the Millennial Kingdom! Additionally, a lot of the Commandments are gender-specific, so if you're a man, you wouldn't keep the ones for a woman, and vice-versa. Some apply only to children. Some apply only adults. Some apply only to parents of minor children. Some apply only to married couples. Some apply only to single people. Some apply only to those in positions of Spiritual leadership above the family level. So, the total number of Commandments that actually apply to you are, well, pretty small, really.

There are lists of the Commandments out there, and you could study them – but I've never found a list that is totally correct. The best thing to do is just to go through the annual Torah cycle – reading through the entire Torah over a year – and seeing what it says. There are some basic lifestyle Commandments that I will be going over in the forthcoming chapters. If you start with these, you're well on your way. In Part B of this book (what you're starting to read right now), we start by going over the Sermon on the Mount to see what Yeshua says about a Torah Attitude and lifestyle. These are kind of general ideas, but some of it is specific. Then, I go over modes of dress, food, and the issue of tradition. In Part C of the B, I will go over the cycle of weekly, monthly, and yearly Festivals of God to show you how they work and why they're so important. Then, in the Epilogue, I'll show you where to find resources to help you out.

It's really easy. It may sound daunting, like you're going to be totally re-making your life, changing everything you do, but I doubt it. You already

keep most of the Commandments that apply to you, at least most of the time. After all, when was the last time you attacked or killed anyone? Stole from them or cheated them? Changed the boundary lines of their property? To be perfectly honest, most of the Commandments that apply today are all about living with our fellow man in peace... and if you're the type who is concerned about your life and behavior enough to be reading this, you're probably right on track with this stuff! Beyond that, most of it is just choosing not eat pork and shellfish, keeping the Sabbath and the other festivals of God, and not much else! I've included one of the most popular lists of the Commandments in an Appendix, and you scan it. Ask yourself, is most of the "Thou Shalt Not" stuff even things you'd consider doing? I doubt it!

But don't take my word for it that it's easy. What did God say?

### **Deuteronomy 30:11-20**

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Choose life! Choose the Commandments!

## Chapter Six

### The *Shiur* on the Mount, Part 1

#### A Look at Matthew Chapter 5 from a Torah Perspective

There is, perhaps, no chunk of the Scriptures more exhaustively examined in Christendom than the three chapters of Matthew that comprise what is known as “The Sermon on the Mount.” This is no surprise because these are the words of the Savior! Certainly, there can be no more worthy enterprise in Biblical study than to look at the words of the Master!

However, I admit that no book or sermon I have read from mainstream Christianity has explained it to my satisfaction. First off, rarely do we find this teaching treated as a coherent whole. As is wont in *anomian* circles, they will pull specific small portions of a larger text and examine them out of context. For example, an entire book might be written on the first twelve verses of Matthew 5 (commonly called “The Beatitudes”), with no connection to the significant verses that follow it and put them in a greater perspective.

Also, mention is rarely made of the incredibly rich connection of Rebbe Yeshua’s teachings to the Torah, the Haftarah, and traditional rabbinic literature. It is for this reason that I have named this chapter as “The Shiur on the Mount.” “Shiur” does not mean sermon; rather, it is a class in which Torah and/or Talmud is taught. More than giving a sermon, Yeshua is giving a class in Torah observance: the whys and hows of a properly Torah-observant life.

## A Torah Attitude

This first section of this chapter is called “A Torah Attitude,” because it looks at the issue of our attitude when living a life of Torah observance. It includes the so-called “Beatitudes,” which is where we begin:

How blessed are the poor in spirit! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Who are the poor in spirit? Those who realize their need for God. Those who realize that, at least in a spiritual sense, they are nothing without God. In Isaiah 66, we learn about this even more:

Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word." (vv 1-2)

Continuing with the “Beattitudes,” we read:

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (v. 4)

It is traditional, as we know, to visit mourners, to bless and comfort them in their hour of grief, but it is symbolic of those who mourn for their own sins, because when you realize your sin and mourn for it, you are making **t’shuvah**, repentance, turning from sin, and God visits them and brings them the comfort of salvation. We see this in the Jewish traditional observance of **Shabbat Nachamu**, the Sabbath of Comforting, following the traditional fast of **Tisha B’Av**, when we are consoled over the loss of the Temples, but it is merely a signpost pointing down the road of t’shuvah leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (v. 5)

This is not meek as we would view it today. In Biblical terminology, meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In

**Tanakh** (“Old Testament”), the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice.<sup>9</sup> Thus, meekness means trusting that God will show us the answer and, if He wishes us to fight, He will give us the strength.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (v. 6)

What is righteousness? We know Abraham believed, and it was reckoned unto him as righteousness<sup>10</sup>, but that really doesn’t tell us all we need to know. There are two Hebrew words that generally get translated as righteousness: **chesed** and **tzedek**<sup>11</sup>. **Chesed** means goodness, kindness, faithfulness, but it also means God’s favor, aka grace. **Tzedek** means justice, rightness, and also means mercy or charity, but in the sense of Torah-commanded justice and mercy. So, we see that the concept of righteousness is two sides of the same coin: God’s goodness, kindness, faithfulness, and grace towards us – which He gives even though we do not deserve it – and our justice, rightness, and charity in our relationships with God and our fellow man. So if we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we hunger and thirst for God’s graciousness to us and we try to live a moral, just, and charitable life.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. (v. 7)

Here we see another application of mercy, but here we see it being used in the sense of our relationships with our fellow man. We must show the same sort of mercy to others that God has shown us.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil things about you because of me! Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is

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<sup>1</sup> An Examination of the Beatitudes, By Shaun Aisbitt, <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/6528/beattitudes.htm>, among others.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 15:6

<sup>11</sup> From the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Lexicon, accessed on <http://crosswalk.com>

great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you.  
(vv. 8-12)

This is more of the same: living in the attitude that God is in control, and without Him we are nothing.

The example of Saul and David is highly applicable here. Saul ignores the specific instructions God gives him, for what he thinks are good reasons, and though he has the best of intentions, he loses his kingdom and his life<sup>12</sup>. David, on the other hand, has a simple faith in God for strength and guidance, and with that faith he wins battle after battle, but he realizes that it is really God's victory, and he praises God for it, and thus gains a new life and a kingdom that will last forever<sup>13</sup>. These two examples show us the truth of the aforementioned Isaiah 66, and also Leviticus 26: that if we live a life of a Torah attitude, God will give us His blessings (and the reverse is also true):

You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD. If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 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. 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. 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. But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; 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. So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. I am the LORD 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. But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if

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<sup>12</sup> 1 Samuel 15. Saul disobeyed the command of God through the prophet Samuel to thoroughly destroy Amalek, as we read on Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath of Remembrance.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Samuel 22, among others.



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: 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. 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. If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. (Leviticus 26:2-18)

But there's more to it than just that, because to live according to Torah simply because God will bless us is ultimately self-centered. Yeshua, however, goes on the Shiur on the Mount to tell us that there's an even greater service to God in living with a Torah attitude:

“You are salt for the land...” (v. 13, first part)

The translation we're used to says “the Earth,” (capital E) not “the land,” but that is a case of problematic translation. The Hebrew manuscripts say “**ha-aretz**,”<sup>14</sup> which literally means “the land” and sometimes means the ground or the earth, but also can mean the Land of Israel. Given the context, where Yeshua is using this as a nature metaphor to signify how we are to be seen by our neighbors, “the land” (lower-case L) is probably the best translation.

So, the question then becomes, what does it mean to be salt for the land? Remember, this is a nature metaphor to signify how we are to be seen by our neighbors. In those days before you could just go to the store and buy a box of salt, naturally-occurring salt, specifically as salt-licks, were magnets for both animals and men, since both need salt to survive. Even today, salt-licks attract animals by the scent of the minerals they have to sustain them, and then the animals come and get nutrition they need from the lick.<sup>15</sup> The salt-lick gives of itself – specifically, of the minerals put inside of it by God – to sustain others, just as we give of what God has given us -- the message of

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<sup>14</sup> According to Dr. James Scott Trimm, controversial translator of the controversial “Hebraic Roots Version” of the Scriptures.

<sup>15</sup> “Salty Christians,” <http://www.kccucc.org/sermons/1999/1999-02-07.htm>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt\\_lick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_lick), among others. I remembered a lot of this information from training in the Boy Scouts and other places, but since this sort of thing is not my sphere of expertise, I checked it on the internet.

Messiah and His Torah – to those attracted by the lives we lead (in that Torah attitude) in the hopes that they will come to a saving knowledge of Messiah.

[B]ut if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. (v. 13 cont.)

It is the special life-giving minerals that give salt its unique flavor, its “saltiness.” Once the good minerals have been exhausted from a salt-lick, the lick becomes simply a basic crystal that serves no purpose, although back then, in an image that will be very meaningful to people from colder climes than this one, people back then would grind the crystals up and use the coarsely-ground salt crystals to grit a footpath made slippery by snow or ice.<sup>16</sup>

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine among men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. (vv. 14-16)

This analogy is even more clear: when we live by Torah, we are a light for the world. Interestingly, the various manuscripts use words that essentially mean all of creation, not just this world. For example, the Greek word used is “cosmos.”

With that in mind, let’s look at this final, and very familiar, passage in this section:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be

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<sup>16</sup> Growing up in the relatively warm climes of California’s San Joaquin Valley, I did not know of this from personal experience until visiting friends in Wisconsin during late winter. Upon my return home, I discussed it with my mother, Susan Bernay, who grew up in New Jersey, who provided some of the insight in this paragraph.

called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (vv. 17-20)

Let me let you in on a little secret – at least, it seems to be a secret from many Christian pastors: to “abolish” the Torah in first-century CE theological lingo meant “to interpret falsely,” and to “fulfill” the Torah meant “to interpret properly.” That Torah observance is what will show our position in the Kingdom, even though our entrance therein is merely by faith. And the Scribes and the Pharisees – who will come under major fire later in this article – were unrighteous. In what way were they unrighteous? Well, Yeshua will be giving us a description later, but I can sum it up in two words: hypocrisy and self-aggrandizement. And to lead a hypocritical, self-aggrandizing life is not to exhibit a Torah attitude.

### **You’ve Heard It Said...**

Continuing at verse twenty-one, Yeshua says:

“You have heard that our fathers were told, ‘Do not murder,’ and that anyone who commits murder will be subject to judgment. But I tell you that anyone who nurses anger against his brother will be subject to judgment...” (vv.21-22a, Complete Jewish Bible translation)

Yeshua here is alluding to one of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:13. It is from this verse, and others, that some have developed a doctrine of passivism. But it does not say, "Thou shall not kill," but "Thou shall not murder." It doesn't have anything to do with justifiable homicide, such as killing an enemy in battle or self-defense. Anger can become the first step of committing premeditated murder. Let’s look at the Torah for a prime example:

So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob." Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, "Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides, until your brother's anger against

you subside and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" (Genesis 27:41-45)

As you can see, harboring anger against people we are close to – friends and associates as well as family – can lead people to contemplate the unthinkable. This isn't just a person saying in the moment of his frustration, "I could kill him;" this is Esau planning to kill his own brother... over a blessing! Rebekah is very smart in this; she tells Jacob to simply walk away. Some things are just not worth fighting over. Time heals all wounds, and sometimes taking time away from the problem can stop it from becoming a matter that goes beyond the two of you.

If it looks like it might go beyond the two of you, however, ecclesiastical authorities may have to step in. In the days of Yeshua, whoever nursed anger of a grudge against his brother for no good cause could be brought before the **Beit Din**; literally the House of Judgment. It is the Torah court system. All the synagogues had their own congregational courts called **Beit Din** (singular, **Beitei Din** plural) It consisted of three judges and they were qualified to judge certain matters. A matter such as being angry with a brother for no cause would be brought before this court, in addition to matters of Torah observance. This is why I advocate that Torah Observant Believers start a **Beit Din** system, much as the Orthodox still have one today.

Back to the Shiur on the Mount:

and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (v.22b)

The word translated here as "fool" is the Hebrew "racah," which is usually translated as "empty-headed" or incompetent, and can mean simply that, but it has a much more serious connotation, which we see in Psalm 53:

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God," They are corrupt, and have committed abominable injustice; there is no one who does good. God has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there is anyone who understands, who seeks after God. Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. Have the workers of wickedness no knowledge, who eat up My people as though they ate

bread And have not called upon God? There they were in great fear where no fear had been; for God scattered the bones of him who encamped against you; you put them to shame, because God had rejected them. Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

This is no simpleton; this is person who has completely turned his back on God or denies His existence. It refers to a fool who is empty of knowledge. It was used in Rabbinic literature as an expression of contempt, as if the addressee was sub-human. To make this statement containing this kind of judgment assumes a place reserved only for God. Only God knows a man's heart. We may be able to see actions and hear words, but we can't look inside a man. The emphasis here is we cannot usurp the position and authority of God. When we do that, we stand in danger of eternal judgment ourselves. One who uses this term against another has slandered that person, which was a serious offense in those days that was judged before the Sanhedrin.

Here, probably more than any other place in the Gospels, Yeshua is stressing proper relationships between people. We are so used to judgment and hard words falling on unbelievers that when the Lord turns the table it is hard for us to grasp. It is so important to the Lord that we treat each other right that He puts in His word this very stern warning. Can our actions towards our fellow man take us out of a right relationship with God and put our souls in eternal danger even though we have professed to be believers? According to the words of Yeshua this is very possible. When will we ever learn that our relationship with God is on par with our relationship with our brothers and sisters? You cannot do your brother wrong and still expect God to bless you. It just doesn't work that way. Continuing with Yeshua's Shiur text:

Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. (vv.23-24)

These two verses concern getting forgiveness from others before offering to God. Mishnah Yoma 8:9 says, "The transgression a man commits against God on the Day of Atonement are atoned, but the one against his neighbor is only atoned when his neighbor is satisfied." Mishnah Baba Kamma 8:7 states that although he made compensation, the other party must be fully reconciled, and has sought his forgiveness. If you are not in fellowship with your brother, you are not in relationship with your God, and He will not

accept your offering. The emphasis of Yeshua's teaching was not praise and worship to God, but the relationship of believers to his fellow man. He almost never says anything about "vertical relationship" (man's relationship with God). His focus was mostly "horizontal relationship" (man's relationship with his fellow man). Now, let's turn back to Matthew chapter 5:

Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent. (vv. 25-26)

I do not believe that the Lord is teaching here that we are never to stand up for ourselves when we are right. What He is saying is that when you are wrong, admit it, pay the penalty, and go on. Prolonged argument can only cost you more in the long run, and hinder any further work in the Kingdom of God. Also, you need to use a little common sense. Sometimes arguing a situation against overwhelming odds can only make you "dead right," which accomplishes nothing. Because of the way justice has been perverted in this world, you are going to lose no matter how right you are. If it comes to a choice between your ego and going on to serve God, don't make the wrong choice.

But, you may ask, what is the overarching theme of these verses? This entire section, the "You Have Heard...", they're all about more than specific halacha, although they are also about that. They are about respecting our fellow man as individual people, deserving respect as God's creations.

Ask yourself, why is what is called "murder" wrong, but not all killing? Asking His followers to make the fine differentiation is a tough one; God could've simply said killing others is wrong. Let's look at the instances where killing is allowed: war and self-defense. Killing in those cases is not one man against another man, for the reasons of his own heart and mind. Killing in those cases is about the community: protecting yourself and people around you from those who would violate the peace of the community, either singly or in a group. Killing for the reason of your own heart and mind invalidates God's position as judge of the individual and exerts your will over God's.

How is this like the other cases mentioned here, where no death is involved? Well, in each one, you are harming the individual, dishonoring him as one of God's creations. When telling someone they are good for nothing, or a "raka" (not just a fool), you have verbally denigrated their life; effectively, you have killed with your words, since a person who truly has no ability to perform any viable function – think of a person who has had a major head trauma and cannot move and is lacking most of their brain functions – or a person who is deserving of the term "raka" isn't really a person at all... they are absent of humanity, thus verbally taking their God-given life from them.

Additionally, when a person has something against another person, and the anger festers, as we've seen from the Genesis example, that can and does lead them to kill the other person thus putting such seething issues in the category of that which dehumanizes and effectively murders.

Continuing at verse twenty-seven in the Complete Jewish Bible translation, Yeshua says:


You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that a man who even looks at a woman with the purpose of lusting after her  
has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (vv.27-28)

Now, I have used the CJB here because its intent is to get the closer to the feeling of the originals than other translations, and because the translation is less biased against Torah. But as we continue, I will also use it because it is an example of how our translations – even ones we thought good and valuable – can fool us into thinking something that's not so.

To look at these verses in the light of Torah, we must question the way most versions translate them. Something jumped right out at me when reading this: only a married person can commit adultery. The definition of adultery is "voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband." To apply the term to unmarried people is simply incorrect. So, unless the woman is married, how can you have committed adultery with her in your heart, or anywhere else for that matter?

So, since most of the translations we have are from the later Greek manuscripts, I decided to start with the Greek lexicon at Bible.Crosswalk.com. Well, lo and behold, here’s what I found:


**The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon**

<b>Strong's Number:</b> 1135	<a href="#">Browse Lexicon</a>
<b>Original Word</b>	<b>Word Origin</b>
gune	probably from the base of ( <a href="#">1096</a> )
<b>Transliterated Word</b>	<a href="#">TDNT</a> Entry
Gune	1:776,134
<b>Phonetic Spelling</b>	<b>Parts of Speech</b>
goo-nay' 	Noun Feminine
<b>Definition</b>	
<div>1. a woman of any age, whether a virgin, or married, or a widow</div> <div>2. a wife</div> <div>a. of a betrothed woman</div>	

The word can mean simply “woman” or “wife” or “betrothed woman,” depending on context. This started ringing bells in my mind, since I knew from my Hebrew studies that one of the words for woman could be used the same way. So, I checked out the Hebrew lexicon, and found:



The NAS Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon

Strong's Number: 802		<a href="#">Browse Lexicon</a>
Original Word	Word Origin	
hXXa	from ( <a href="#">0376</a> ) or ( <a href="#">0582</a> )	
Transliterated Word	<a href="#">TDNT</a> Entry	
'ishshah	TWOT - 137a	
Phonetic Spelling	Parts of Speech	
ish-shaw' 	Noun Feminine	
Definition		


1. woman, wife, female
  - a. woman (opposite of man)
  - b. wife (woman married to a man)
  - c. female (of animals)
  - d. each, every (pronoun)

Now this was very interesting to me because the Hebrew “**ishshah**” is a more specific word than the Greek “*gune*,” in that an “**ishshah**” cannot mean a virgin and, in fact, the connotation is a married woman. But, is that the word used here? When I was preparing this part, I contacted Dr. James Trimm, who was a translator on the Semitic New Testament project and is the translator of the Hebraic Roots Version of the Scriptures, which goes back to the earliest extant Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts for the Apostolic Writings and translates from there, to try to get closer to what the originals actually said than the later Greek translations do.

According to Dr. Trimm, the word in the Hebrew manuscripts for this Matthew passage is, in fact, “**ishshah**,” and therefore should be translated as “wife;” connotatively, another man’s wife. This amazed me, and I mentioned how the words in that passage had never seemed quite right, in context. Dr. Trimm told me then he’d taught this very section in his local hermeneutics class the week before, and that I was right, it was very poorly translated. He pointed my attention specifically to the words “lusting after”


and called my attention to the fact that this, too, had been mistranslated. Let's look first at the Greek:

**The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon**

<b>Strong's Number:</b> 1937	<a href="#">Browse Lexicon</a>
<b>Original Word</b>	<b>Word Origin</b>
epiqumeo	from ( <a href="#">1909</a> ) and ( <a href="#">2372</a> )
<b>Transliterated Word</b>	<a href="#">TDNT</a> Entry
Epithumeo	3:168,339
<b>Phonetic Spelling</b>	<b>Parts of Speech</b>
ep-ee-thoo-meh'-o 	Verb
<b>Definition</b>	
<div>1. to turn upon a thing</div> <div>2. to have a desire for, long for, to desire</div> <div>3. to lust after, covet</div> <div>a. of those who seek things forbidden</div>	
</TD< TR>	
<b>NAS Word Usage - Total: 16</b>	
covet 2, coveted 1, craved 1, desire 1, desired 2, desires 1, gladly 1, long 3, longing 1, lust 2, sets its desire 1	

Dr. Trimm told me the Hebrew word used was:

The NAS Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon

Strong's Number: 2530	<a href="#">Browse Lexicon</a>
Original Word	Word Origin
dmx	a primitive root
Transliterated Word	<a href="#">TDNT</a> Entry
Chamad	TWOT - 673
Phonetic Spelling	Parts of Speech
<i>khaw-mad'</i> 	

Definition
<div>1. to desire, covet, take pleasure in, delight in<div>a. (Qal) to desire<div>b. (Niphal) to be desirable<div>c. (Piel) to delight greatly, desire greatly n f</div></div></div></div> <div>2. desirableness, preciousness</div>
</TD< TR>

NAS Word Usage - Total: 21
attracted 1, covet 6, coveted 1, delight 1, desirable 2, desire 1, desired 2, desires 2, pleasing 1, precious 2, precious things 1, took great delight 1

Now, according to the Hermeneutical Law of First Usage, we need to go back to the first usage of this word in a legal context to find what it should be translated; specifically, we find it first in Deuteronomy 5:21: "Do not covet your neighbor's wife; do not covet your neighbor's house, his field, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.'

“Covet” means much more than just lust after... it means to desire a person or thing belonging to another person so much that you will scheme to get it. A good example is the story of David and Bathsheba. David desired

Bathsheba so much that he claimed her in his heart and schemed to have her husband killed so he could have her! This is what is meant in this passage.

Anyway, that's the linguistic analysis. Now, let's get down to the Torah and Tanakh analysis of the passage... but first, let's quote the whole passage as it should be translated:

You have heard that our fathers were told, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that a man who even looks at another man's wife with the purpose of coveting her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." If your right eye makes you sin, gouge it out and throw it away! Better that you should lose one part of you than have your whole body thrown into Gei-Hinnom. And if your right hand makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away! Better that you should lose one part of you than have your whole body thrown into Gei-Hinnom. It was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a get.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and that anyone who marries a divorcee commits adultery. (vv.27-31)

Yeshua is using a Hillelian rule of hermeneutics here called, "light and heavy." A common example from Paul's writing is when he says "if x is true, how much more so then is y!" Examples include Romans 11:12, "Moreover, if their stumbling is bringing riches to the world - that is, if Isra'el's being placed temporarily in a condition less favored than that of the Gentiles is bringing riches to the latter - how much greater riches will Isra'el in its fullness bring them!" and Hebrews 9:13-14, "For if sprinkling ceremonially unclean persons with the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer restores their outward purity; then how much more the blood of the Messiah, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself to God as a sacrifice without blemish, will purify our conscience from works that lead to death, so that we can serve the living God!"

The basis for this method of teaching illustrates that if one will nip the sin in the bud while it is still in the light stage, you will prevent it from destroying you. The same wording is often seen in ancient Judaism where such phrases as "the hand that promotes self-abuse among men, let it be cut off," simply refers to stopping the act in an early or light stage, not the actual cutting off of a hand (Niddah 2:1).

The phrase “**Gei-Hinnom**” or “Gehenna” (Jeremiah 32:35) is mentioned as the valley of the son of Hinnon, near Jerusalem, which idolaters used to sacrifice human lives. In this valley of slaughter, children were burned to the blood deity Moloch; hence the entire area took on a sinister aspect and became identified with woe and suffering. The name Gehenna passed into use as a designation for the place of punishment in the hereafter. The Greeks and Romans had their place of woe situated as far below Hades as Hades was below Heaven.

Now, about verses 31 and 32: Fornication in the Bible is sexual intercourse between unmarried people. This being the case, how can a married woman commit fornication? This is probably one of the most misunderstood verses in Scripture and that has been used to bring about more spiritual bondage than any other, simply because we do not understand the subject of divorce. You can be forgiven for rape, robbery, and murder by the church, but divorce is viewed as the unpardonable sin. The first thing that we have to remember is that Yeshua is talking here to Jews, and we have to look at His teaching from that context. When a Jewish man and woman become betrothed it is almost the same thing as being married. In the marriage contract (**ketubah**), the woman's virginity is mentioned at least four times. The groom pays a large sum of money for that virginity, called a dowry. The marriage is not completely consummated until the bride and groom engage in sexual intercourse. The blood stained sheets, called the “tokens of her virginity” (Deut. 22:15,17,20), become a legal document which can be used in a court of law. Later on, if a man accuses his wife of not being a virgin when they are married, she produces that sheet as evidence, and he can never divorce her again for any reason. The only way that a married woman can commit fornication is by falsifying her marriage. In that case, she was never really married to begin with.

There were many valid reasons for getting a divorce, both for the man as well as the woman. Like today, there are many opinions on this during that time. The school of Hillel said a man could divorce his wife for just about any reason, even if her appearance no longer pleased him, or if she burnt his meal. The school of Shammai said that divorce was lawful only in the case of adultery. The teaching of the school of Hillel became the accepted standard. Yeshua disagreed with both of them. He did say, “If a man divorces his wife (for a legitimate reason), let him give her a bill of divorcement (get).”

In other words, there were other valid, lawful reasons for divorce which He evidently agreed with, or He would have come against them too. But, if the

marriage contract was falsified to begin with, and the man divorces her without giving her a bill of divorcement, he causes her and another man who might marry her to commit adultery. The emphasis here is on the husband not doing the divorce properly. The sin is his, not hers. Now comes the big question! How can this be applied to us today, since we are non-Jews and do not follow these customs? The answer is that we cannot apply this verse to our teaching on divorce. The only thing we can apply from this is there are many other reason for divorce which are valid, but it has to be done properly.

Now, that's the **pashat** and **remez** meanings of this passage, the literal and implied meanings. Let's go a bit deeper, to the **drash** level of understanding, where we search the Scriptures for similar statements to draw forth more meaning. Yeshua here is saying that the coveting is as serious an offense as the actual adultery, and uses a reference to being cast into a place of idol worship in His denouncing it. What can this mean? Let me quote two other passages that reference sexual immorality and idol worship:

The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. (Deuteronomy 31:16, NASV)

"Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers? Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god. As for the man who does this, may the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob everyone who awakes and answers, or who presents an offering to the LORD of hosts. This is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth.

“For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.” You have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet you say, “How have we wearied Him?” In that you say, “Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them,” or, “Where is the God of justice?” (Malachi 2:10-17, NASV)

What is being said here? God is likening sexual immorality to idol worship! Why is that? Well, in both cases, a covenant has been violated. In the case of sexual immorality, it is the marriage covenant between a man and a woman. This ancient covenant, which dates back to the Garden of Eden itself, states that we should have sexual relations only with those to whom we are married.

Interestingly, in many places the covenant relationship between God and Israel is depicted as a marriage – both in **Tanakh** (“Old Testament”) and in the Apostolic Writings (“New Testament”) – and idol worship is depicted as adultery and prostitution, which are the primary grounds for divorce!

Now, many pastors, rabbis, and theologians have used this analogy to personalize the meaning of the covenant between God and Israel, but I’ve never heard of anyone who has examined it in the other direction. To wit, is the violation of the marriage covenant as monstrous a sin as idol worship? I would say yes it is, not because all sins are equal, but because in both cases the covenant relationship is sacred and violations of it cause the deepest pain and anguish, both on the personal level and on the national level.

Anyone who has spoken in-depth to women who have gotten pregnant out of wedlock knows the pain they have gone through emotionally. They feel abandoned, in most cases, because they believed in and loved the father enough to have sex with him, and he left. Now, witness the pain and anguish our society has had because of these actions! The cycle of illegitimacy has destroyed many of our minority and inner-city communities.

If it seems that God has turned his face away from them, and us as a larger society, you may be right, because as a society we have committed adultery, not just in the literal sense, but we have turned against God. It is only by returning to our beloved and living in a covenant relationship with Him that we can return His blessings to our land.

Continuing at verse thirty-three and going through verse thirty-seven, this paragraph is usually explained as being requirements to keep your promises to God, to not swear oaths in court, leading to the ability to, “swear or affirm,” when testifying in court in the United States, and to not perjure yourself in court, and that is, in fact, the basic, literal reading of the text, what is known in Jewish Hermeneutics as the “**Pashat**” level of understanding, the simple or basic level of understanding:

"Again, you have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'You shall not forswear yourself, but shall pay to ADONAI Your vow,' but I tell you, you shall not swear by a confirming word; not by heaven, for it is Elohim's throne; and not by the earth, because it is the footstool of His feet; and not by Yerushalayim, for it is the city of the Great King. And you shall not swear by your head, in that you have no power to whiten one hair or turn it black again. But let your words be 'Yes, yes'; 'No, no'; for whatever is more than these words is of evil." (Matthew 5:33-37, CJB)

But there are more depths in this. In the third level of understanding, “**drash**,” where one looks at similar verses in other parts of the Scriptures to see if something more is being said here. These verses in Matthew contain almost word-for-word quotes out of Torah about swearing vows:

Do not swear by my name falsely, which would be profaning the name of your God; I am ADONAI. (Leviticus 19:12, CJB)

...[W]hen a man makes a vow to ADONAI or formally obligates himself by swearing an oath, he is not to break his word but is to do everything he said he would do. (Numbers 30:2, CJB)

When you make a vow to ADONAI your God, you are not to delay in fulfilling it, for ADONAI your God will certainly demand it of you, and your failure to do so will be your sin. If you choose not to make a vow at all, that will not be a sin for you; but if a vow passes your lips, you must take care to perform it according to what you voluntarily vowed to ADONAI your God, what you promised in words spoken aloud. (Deuteronomy 23:21-22, CJB)



Seems pretty cut and dried, doesn't it? Taking verses out of context always does. However, when we take those words in context, we see a larger picture, a more complete tapestry unfolding:

When you harvest the ripe crops produced in your land, don't harvest all the way to corners of your field, and don't gather the ears of grain left by the harvesters. Likewise, don't gather the grapes left on the vine or fallen on the ground after harvest; leave them for the poor and the foreigner; I am ADONAI your God. Do not steal from, defraud or lie to each other. Do not swear by my name falsely, which would be profaning the name of your God; I am ADONAI. Do not oppress or rob your neighbor; specifically, you are not to keep back the wages of a hired worker all night until morning. Do not speak a curse against a deaf person or place an obstacle in the way of a blind person; rather, fear your God; I am ADONAI. Do not be unjust in judging - show neither partiality to the poor nor deference to the mighty, but with justice judge your neighbor.

(Leviticus 19:9-15, CJB)

As I said, in context there's a bigger picture. This passage may seem to be about many unconnected things, but they are about one basic Torah precept: **Tzedekah**, a Hebrew word that has come to mean "charity," but really means "justice," because part of dealing justly with your fellow man, treating him fairly, is helping him when he needs it. This section of Torah is about dealing justly with your fellow man, primarily in their working and judging fairly in disputes, probably in labor disputes, given the rules about payment of wages. So, we begin to see that this section is speaking about contracts for labor.

And while that doesn't detract from the general idea about not perjuring one's self, we see this in a more specific light that gives us a whole insight on the employer-employee relationship. But why the part about the deaf and the blind? I can only speculate, but I would guess that the blind and the deaf might either work as harvesters of grain or subsist as gleaners, there being very little more they could do other than begging in those days, and thus this is directed primarily towards those who would employ or work around the handicapped... something to consider especially in these days when the blind and the deaf work in just about every field of endeavor.

We see these ideas developed further in Numbers 30:

Then Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Isra'el. He said, "Here is what ADONAI has ordered: when a man makes a vow to ADONAI or formally obligates himself by swearing an oath, he is not to break his word but is to do everything he said he would do. When a woman makes a vow to ADONAI, formally obligating herself, while she is a minor living in her father's house; then, if her father has heard what she vowed or obligated herself to do and holds his peace, then all her vows remain binding - every obligation she has bound herself to will stand. But if on the day her father hears it, he expresses his disapproval, then none of her vows or obligations she has bound herself to will stand; and ADONAI will forgive her, because her father expressed his disapproval. If, having made vows or rashly committed herself to an obligation, she gets married; and her husband hears but holds his peace with her on the day he learns of it, then her vows and obligations she has bound herself to will stand. But if her husband expresses his disapproval on the day he hears it, he will void the vow which is on her and the obligation to which she has bound herself; and ADONAI will forgive her. The vow of a widow, however, or of a divorcee, including everything to which she has obligated herself, will stand against her. If a woman vowed in her husband's house or obligated herself with an oath, and her husband heard it but held his peace with her and did not express disapproval, then all her vows and obligations will stand. But if her husband makes them null and void on the day he hears them, then whatever she said, vows or binding obligation, will not stand; her husband has voided them; and ADONAI will forgive her. Her husband may let every vow and every binding obligation stand, or he may void it. But if her husband entirely holds his peace with her day after day, then he confirms all her vows and obligations; he must let them stand, because he held his peace with her on the day he heard them. If he makes them null and void after he has heard them, then he will bear the consequent guilt." These are the laws which ADONAI ordered Moshe between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter, if she is a minor living in her father's house. (Numbers 30, CJB)

This is a little difficult to talk about in today's day and age, but most women are, in an ecclesiastical sense, under the authority of a man in their lives, whether that is a father or a husband. This view has been deemed politically incorrect in modern society, and of course it is not enforceable, and is not an excuse for cruelty. As I've often said when asked, this doesn't mean God makes men better than women, but responsible to God Himself for the behavior of the women in his charge, just as congregation leaders and elders

are held responsible by God for their congregants. It is an awesome responsibility, a frightful one in fact, and not one that should be taken lightly or make one feel superior.

So, what is the larger picture being drawn here? The vows we make are not just about telling the truth, but about how we are to live. The promises we make to God and our fellow man are very important, and it is critical that we keep them. But it is just as critical that we not swear by that which we have no power over. Instead, let me recommend a traditional Hebrew term, “***Im Yirtzah HaShem***.” It means “With God’s Help,” and if you say it as a prayer, you are asking that God help you with all that you do. It is unnecessary – and, in fact, flat wrong – to swear by the mighty things of God, but it is right to seek His help in keeping your promises.

Continuing at verse thirty-eight and going through verse forty-two, this section on the surface covers two issues, and we’ll go over them separately first, and then see how they are, when you go beneath the surface, one issue:

You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. (vv. 38-39, NASV)

Now this statement would appear to be in conflict with what would later be said in Scriptures such as Romans 12:9 (Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.) and James 4:7 (Therefore, be subject to Eloah and stand against HaSatan, and he will flee from you. – from the Hebraic Roots Version translation by Dr. James Trimm). But, when we look at this verse “But I tell you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.” From the Hebrew perspective, we see that He was not creating a new saying, but quoting a well-known Jewish proverb dating back to ***Tanakh***:

Do not be envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them;”  
(Proverbs 24:19, CJB)

Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers, for they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. Trust in ADONAI and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in ADONAI, and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to ADONAI, Trust also in Him, and He will do it. He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. Rest in ADONAI and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. (Psalm 37:1-8, CJB)

In modern English we would translate this as, "Don't compete with evildoers." Yeshua was not teaching that we should lie down in the face of evil, or to submit to it. Rather, He was teaching that we should forego trying to "get back at," or take revenge on a quarrelsome neighbor. Yeshua is expressing an important principle which applies to our relationships with friends and neighbors. He is talking about the fundamentals of brotherly relationships, and how to relate to our neighbors. Once we learn how to correctly translate this verse, we can correctly understand the verses which follow. Each verse is an illustration of how we should react to a hostile neighbor. Our response to evil does not have to be resistance. It is morally wrong to tolerate evil. Our response to a "hot head" neighbor must be entirely different. His anger will be temporary if we respond to it in a Biblical manner (1 Thessalonians 5:15; 1 Peter 3:9; Romans 12:14, 17-19).

Continuing, we read:

If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, leave him have the coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you." (Matthew 5:40-42, NASV)

We see this in the traditional extra-canonical book of Jewish wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, chapter 4, verse 5: "Do not avert your eye from the needy, or give a man occasion to curse you" and in chapter 29, verse 1: "He that shows mercy will lend to his neighbor, and he that strengthens him with his hand keeps the commandments".

“**Gemiluth Hasadim**” (practice of kindness) is a Jewish concept which includes every kind of help: visiting the ill, comforting mourners, and accompanying a corpse to the grave. While **tzedakah** (charity) normally is some type of financial assistance, **gemiluth hasadim** can be some type of service. **Tzedakah** is charity for the poor, while **gemiluth hasadim** can be given to rich or poor. The **Mishnah** (part of the Talmud, a book of Jewish wisdom and law) counts it among the things for which the Torah has set no limit.

It appears in this passage that one is duty-bound to give his material possessions to anyone who asks him for them. A mistranslation of the first half of this verse is the cause of confusion. There are two words for "borrow" in Hebrew because there are actual subtle differences between the word "ask" in the sense of borrow, and the word "borrow" itself. A distinction is made between borrowing an object such as a book, which must itself be returned to the person from whom it was borrowed, and borrowing something such as money or flour which must be returned in kind. We are to be good stewards of what God has entrusted us with. One is not to foolishly dispose of possessions, nor give without God's leading in the giving. But, on the other hand, if we can help someone truly deserving our help by letting them borrow something they don't have themselves, or even giving them what we can spare, we are duty-bound to do it.

But there are more depths in this. A lot of people are unaware of this, but it was almost never the perspective in Israel that “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” was to be taken literally, except in a few isolated instances with a few sects. Instead, the way the rabbinic judges interpreted this was that each body part had an intrinsic monetary value, and that monetary damages would be decreed against the defendant who had damaged someone's eye, tooth, or any other body part.

What, then, is Yeshua saying in the passage we're reviewing? I would suggest to you that – in addition to the requirement of charity – he's saying that arguments over money and possessions should not be allowed to get so far out of hand that we are going to court for it, so we don't have to worry about “an eye for an eye.” I'm not saying don't fight major injustice, but minor issues between family and friends, and especially between fellow believers, ought not to rise to that level. Work it out personally.

People of the world drag other people into court – into the shining light of public scrutiny and humiliation – on the flimsiest of reasons. While I could write an entire book about frivolous lawsuits, that’s not what I mean here. What I mean is the sort of things that end up on television shows like “The Peoples Court” or any of the other half-million judicial arbitration shows out there. Much of the time, the claimant and the defendant on these shows are related to each other or are friends. How off-track does a relationship have to be that you can’t work it out without television cameras and a retired judge? Further off-track than Yeshua wants us to be!

So, what is the larger picture being drawn here? Arguments and concerns over money and possessions tend to be hurtful and end up destroying important relationships. We should go out of our way to help people and to make sure that relatively minor disagreements don’t flare up over issues that, at the end of the day, don’t matter as much as our relationship with God and our fellow man, even if that means going two miles with the person who forces you to go one... because it’s going that extra mile that just might save both your relationship and their soul, as you show them God’s love in Messiah Yeshua.

To finish our look at this section of the Shiur on the Mount, we’re looking at verse forty-three and going through verse forty-eight. Although this section is worth some in-depth study all on its own, and we’re going to look at it in-depth, it is also the summation of this entire section thus far. To do this, let’s divvy this up into three chunks:

You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (vv. 43-45)

This passage has unfortunately led generations of Christians to interpret Yeshua's words to mean that it is a traditional teaching of Judaism to hate your enemies. In fact, no such statement can be found in either the Bible or Rabbinic teaching. There are statements about God hating those who do evil, and there are statements about resisting evil and not loving evil and fighting evildoers, but no direct statements were made encouraging hatred of enemies.

However, such a statement was just recently found only in the teachings of the Dead Sea Sect, the community at Qumran who had a major influence on the John the Baptist Sect that also lived in the Qumran area, referred to in the era around the first century C.E. as “in the wilderness,” a term which you may recall from the Tanakh and the Apostolic Writings.

John is said to have been raised “in the wilderness,” and his ministry took place “in the wilderness,” near the banks of the Jordan River, fulfilling the prophecy, “A voice crying, ‘In the wilderness, prepare you the way of the LORD...” Yeshua also spent 40 days after his **mikvah** (Jewish ritual baptism) by John “in the wilderness”, fasting and preparing for His ministry and was then tempted by the Adversary.

What this proves is that Yeshua was very much familiar with this sect. In the **Talmud** the well-known Rabbi Abahu said, "The day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead, because the resurrection of the dead benefits only the just. But, the rain benefits both the just and the unjust. He who provides the rain takes care of His children, even when they don't deserve it."

The next bit of this section is

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? (vv. 46-47, King James Version (Authorized))

The publicans – and that’s publicans, not **Republicans**<sup>17</sup>, I would point out! – were among the leading enemies of the Pharisees. Although some claim the term publicans should be more accurately translated "tax collectors," it does refer to those Jews who were hated by their fellow Jews for participating in the demeaning work of the Romans. The publicans were the collaborators, much like those who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II, so you can see why they would be hated. They were generally wealthy men who paid for the privilege of collecting taxes in certain areas.<sup>18</sup> Often they hired local Jews to do the dirty work of collecting the many Roman taxes which included the poll tax, the land tax, tax on exports and imports, as well

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<sup>17</sup> Okay, I admit it, I quoted from the KJV primarily so I could make that joke!

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.lamed.org/Glossary\\_Jewish.htm#P](http://www.lamed.org/Glossary_Jewish.htm#P)

as the transportation of slaves, tolls on roads and bridges, and even a market tax in Jerusalem instituted by Herod.

The tax collectors often overcharged the people and pocketed the surplus.<sup>19</sup> In Rabbinic literature, they were referred to as robbers, and even in the Gospels they are looked upon as sinners. Yeshua even used them to illustrate the lowest class of people. The Roman Cicero noted the tax collectors were called "the flower of the knighthood" and "the ornament of the state," as well as "the strength of the republic."<sup>20</sup> Obviously they were a strong arm for the Romans and were looked upon negatively by the Jews.

So, what is being said here is basically, it's not enough simply to be kind to and love those who reciprocate... even people with no sense of conscience do that... it is on a higher spiritual plane to try to extend God's love even to those who hate you. Remember, this is on the interpersonal level. We're not talking about conduct between nation-states.

Finally for this section, let's look at Matthew 5:48, which wraps it all up: "You therefore, be whole-hearted, like your Father which is in heaven, Who is whole-hearted." Most translations say "perfect," but the Hebrew here is "whole-hearted," which brings to mind the two greatest commandments: Love the LORD your God with *all your heart, soul and strength*, and love your neighbor as yourself. Remember Yeshua's parable about loving your neighbor as yourself, the story of the Good Samaritan. What people really miss out of that story is the vicious hatred the Samaritans and the Judeans had for each other. It was as bad between them as it is bad between the Israelis and the PLO today, and for some of the same reasons, historically speaking.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.elite.net/~ebedyah/PastorsSite/gospels/luke5-27-32.htm>

<sup>20</sup> The Speech Of M. T. Cicero In Defence Of Cnæus Plancius.  
[http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com\\_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=587&chapter=87413&layout=html](http://oll.libertyfund.org/index.php?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=587&chapter=87413&layout=html)



But what does it mean to be whole-hearted? What does it mean to love your enemies? Let me call your attention to the Tanakh passages we read earlier. They tell us we should not defraud people, not withhold their wages, not to cause economic injustice to them due to our interactions with them. If we see our enemy's donkey in a ditch – or, in a more modern parlance, if our enemy's car is on the side of the road dead – we stop to help them. Don't rejoice when our enemies get hurt, because "they got what they deserve." Such exultance is unworthy of a child of God, no matter much fun we might get out of it. And let me tell you right now, this is a tough one for me to keep! But I'm working on it.

Nothing less than standing firm on these principles to love, help, and protect our fellow man is what is demanded here. As we look back on this chapter thus far, we see that if we bring A Torah Attitude to our day-to-day lives and thus stand for ***tzedakah*** – charity and justice in one package – by treating our neighbors as we ourselves would want to be treated, we are showing that we do, indeed, love God and serve Him.

This discussion of the Shiur on the Mount continues in the next chapter (this one's already a bit lengthy!).

## Chapter Seven

### The Shiur on the Mount, Part 2

### A Look at Matthew Chapters 6-7

### from a Torah Perspective

**A**s I stated at the beginning of the last chapter, there is, perhaps, no part of the Bible examined in more depth by Christians than Matthew 5-7, “The Sermon on the Mount.” This is not only not surprising, but it is also fitting, because these are the words of the Savior, and there can be no more worthy endeavor in theology than to draw near to the words of the Messiah! These two chapters are my contribution to untangling the massive misunderstandings of “The Shiur on the Mount.”

#### Don't Be Like The Hypocrites

We continue our study by looking at:

#### Matthew 6:1-4 (Complete Jewish Bible)

“Be careful not to parade your acts of ***tzedakah*** in front of people in order to be seen by them! If you do, you have no reward from your Father in heaven. So, when you do ***tzedakah***, don't announce it with trumpets to win people's praise, like the hypocrites in the synagogues and on the streets. Yes! I tell you, they have their reward already! But you, when you do ***tzedakah***, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Then your ***tzedakah*** will be in secret; and your Father, who sees what you do in secret, will reward you.”

Again, I've used the CJB to bring out the Hebraic mindset. The word in most translations that we read as "righteousness" or "charity" in the Hebrew is "***tzedakah***". This means "charity," "righteousness," and "justice," and the idea is that it is just to and right to help your fellow man. It is something we are called by God to do; it is not something to our own merit.

Yeshua warns the Pharisees about "sounding the trumpet" when giving their alms. Since the Lord had previously declared there would be a reward for charity and that He would bless all who participated (as indeed, there is reward and blessing for keeping all of the Commandments), Yeshua was obviously not against the principle of giving (Deut. 14:28; 15:10). Ancient Jews were taught that the three virtues of prayer, charity, and repentance were the evidence of a true heart which had turned from sin.

In the Women's Court of the Temple during the first century were 13 trumpet-shaped collection boxes for alms that made a specific sound as the coins entered. These containers were wide at the bottom and narrow at the top, resembling a trumpet. Often the Pharisees that wished to boast would drop a large number of coins in at one time, which was called "sounding the trumpet." It was this practice that Yeshua was referring to, because of the prominence of the example. Today, it would be like going over to the collection box or taking the offering plate (whatever tradition you're used to) and dropping a big roll of coins in, so the ***THUD*** would be audible. This was the ultimate in fishing for a compliment. It is in keeping with this idea that most churches use offering bags... and that it is the tradition in synagogues that the offering boxes are in a corner somewhere and that you put in offerings on a day other than the Sabbath (in addition to a general prohibition in tradition against carrying money on the Sabbath).

In the Talmud we read of this in several places, and here's three: in Baba Bathra 9b says, "He that gives ***tzedakah*** in secret is better than Moses." Mishnah Shekalim 5:6 says, "There were two vestries in the Temple, one called the 'Vestry of the Secret Ones,' the other called the 'Vestry of the Utensils.' In the former, the sin fearing men used to pour their gifts secretly and the poor of gentle birth were supported from them secretly." Tosefta Shekalim 2:16 says, "Just as there was a Vestry of the Secret Ones, so was there one in every city for the sake of the respectable people who had come down in life so that they might be helped in secret."

So, we see that this is a section about not being prideful in wanting praise for helping others. There are many stories in the Mishnah about the rabbis and how they helped people secretly. One legend even tells of a rabbi and rebbetzin (rabbi's wife) who helped a poor couple for years by quietly depositing an amount of money on their doorstep shortly before dawn each morning and then stealing away before the couple awoke.

One morning, the couple decided they wished to know who it was who had been helping them all these years, so they decided to listen for their benefactors, open the door, and thank them. The rabbi heard them instead, and so threw the package at the doorstep and he and the rebbetzin ran away, even to the point of hiding briefly in a hot oven to avoid discovery!

I don't know that that's true, but there's another wonderful story of secret charity in the Mishnah. King Solomon had despaired for years about where he would build the Temple that his father, King David, had designed, until he heard about two brothers who co-owned a large field in Jerusalem. Their homes and barns were at either end of this field. One brother had a wife and many children, while the other brother was a bachelor. At night, after he knew his married brother and family would be asleep, the bachelor brother would bring some of the produce that was his half by right and put it secretly in his brother's barn, thinking that his brother had many mouths to feed and so needed it more than he did.

Very early in the morning, long before sunup, the married brother would bring some of the produce that was his half by right and put it secretly in his brother's barn, thinking that his brother had nothing so wonderful as he had with his beautiful wife and wonderful children, and so his brother could use the money to make himself wealthier, to both try to fill the lack with wealth, and maybe he could get a wife someday and appreciate the same joy he had. And neither brother knew that his brother was helping him! Solomon, touched by the story and realizing that their love and charity had truly sanctified this field, bought it from them and it was there that the Temple was built.

The next part of this section is:

### Matthew 6:5-8 (CJB)

When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites, who love to pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners, so that people can see them. Yes! I tell you, they have their reward already! But you, when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, don't babble on and on like the pagans, who think God will hear them better if they talk a lot. Don't be like them, because your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Since Yeshua participated in synagogue practice, He cannot be refuting the value of congregational prayer. So, what is He saying? Although Yeshua agreed with the theology of the Pharisees, it is obvious that He did not condone their hypocrisy. He rebuked them for praying long public prayers, as well as sounding the trumpet, to draw attention to themselves when giving public offerings. By Yeshua's time, prayers were memorized, and there were disagreements among the Rabbis as to what could be summarized in those prayers. Yeshua talks about vain repetitions because by this time all the prayers were memorized. When prayers become simply rote and vain, without much spiritual depth, we are missing the point of prayer. In Hebraic thought, it is said that the only prayers that will last for all eternity are the prayers of thanksgiving. The highest form of prayer in praise is silence. It is taught that you should rise early enough each morning to spend an hour in silence before God. The concept is that you cannot hear God speaking to you while you are talking.

While we call what we do in the synagogue service “prayer,” it is more worshipful prayer than truly personal prayer. But it is also not what Yeshua was talking about. The traditional synagogue service gave an opportunity for personal prayer, and the hypocrites would stand there and, out loud, say prayers that were designed not really for God’s ears, but for man’s to make them seem more godly, often invoking their supposed humility, “O, God, I am like a worm before You. I am like dirt before You. How wondrous You are, and how nothing I am. Even my many charitable deeds, like dropping that big wad of money in the trumpets on the way in to services this morning, are like filthy rags before You!” Something like that.

One other thing about this section: What is this “prayer room” Yeshua is referencing here? Well, some would suggest – and I agree – that they’re not necessarily speaking of a room in a house, but by covering yourself with

your **tallit** (prayer shawl with fringes in obedience to Numbers 15:37-41, see next chapter of this book for more information) and closing out the world from around you. Why? Well, first off, most houses in Israel had no such hidden room. They had two rooms – the bedroom for the head of the household and his wife, and “the living room,” where the family ate and the rest of the family slept.

Now, the term **tallit** (some Jews say **tallis**) comes from two Hebrew words, “**TAL**,” meaning “tent” and “**ITH**,” meaning “little.” The **tallit**, when wrapped around the shoulders and pulled over the head, forms for the owner a “little tent” or “prayer closet,” where he may meet privately with God. The Psalmist writes in the 61<sup>st</sup> Psalm: *“I will dwell in your tent for all ages; I will take refuge in the shelter of the corners of your Tallit.”*

Continuing on with the Shiur on the Mount, we come to the section that has become known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” In the traditional Jewish liturgy, there is a prayer called the **Amidah**. This is the central prayer of the synagogue service, and goes back further than the first century, because it contains within it all of the various important elements of prayer, all that we would need to pray about, laid out in eighteen sections or benedictions.

However, at the time of the Messiah’s ministry, the specific make-up and order of the sections of the **Amidah** were the subject of much debate. Dr. Tamar Frankiel, instructor and Dean of Students at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles, suggests that the Lord’s Prayer should actually be considered to be “The Lord’s Prayer Service,” in other words, in context, the question Yeshua was answering was really, “Which prayers are the absolute minimum I should pray?” In the ancient Jewish tradition of naming writings after the first few words, Yeshua was actually describing prayers they already knew. The eighteen benedictions of the **Amidah**, along with some other traditional Hebrew prayers, are referenced in “The Lord’s Prayer Service.”

Some background on the **Amidah**: The **Amidah** is also called the **Shmoneh Esreh** (Hebrew for “eighteen”). This is the heart of every Jewish prayer service. It contains the basic components of prayer: praising God, petitioning Him, and thanking Him. Whenever the Talmud refers to **tefillah** (“prayer”), it means the **Shemoneh Esreh**. The prayer is called that because the original version consisted of 18 blessings. The basic formula predates Yeshua – it was composed by the Sanhedrin in the fifth century B.C.E. The word “**Amidah**” means “standing,” and the prayer is called this

because it is traditionally said while standing – standing in the presence of God, as befits a King. Traditionally, *Amidah* is said silently, based on the example set by Hannah, the mother of the prophet Samuel, “whose praying lips moved, but her voice could not be heard” (1 Sam 1:13). In the Talmud tractate on the *Berakhot*, the Blessings, it is written in the name of Rabbi Chanina: “In the first three blessings, one resembles a servant who praises his master; in the middle ones, one resembles a servant requesting some gift from his master; and in the last ones, one resembles a servant who has received his gift and takes his leave.” Rabbi Judah said similarly, “A person should never petition for his requirements in the first three blessings or in the last three.” This is why, when I pray, I try to begin and end with offerings of worship and enthronement of God.

In his book “To Pray as a Jew,” Rabbi Hayim Halevi Donin states, “It is common courtesy, when coming to someone for help, not to immediately launch into one’s request. Depending on the relationship, the introductory remarks may range from a simple self-introduction, to the exchange of greetings, to a statement of sincere praise about your benefactor’s virtues. Prayers uttered by Moses, David, and Solomon had followed the same pattern and set the example that the Sages followed in the opening blessings of the [*Amidah*]. It was not just a matter of form. There was sincere concern about showing proper reverence for God.”

“The Lord’s Prayer Service” references specifically the Kaddish, the traditional Evening Prayer, and the Amidah<sup>21</sup>: Matthew 6:9-10, “Our Father in heaven! May your Name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.” is identified with the **Kaddish**<sup>22</sup>: “Magnified and sanctified be God’s great Name throughout the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon .” Matthew 6:13a, “and lead us not into temptation,” is identified with the traditional Evening Prayer, specifically the

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<sup>21</sup> The rest of this explanation of “The Lord’s Prayer Service” draws heavily from the article “Matthew 6:9-13//Luke 11:2-4: an eschatological prayer?” by Dr. Jeffrey Gibson of the City Colleges of Chicago and Loyola University’s Institute for Pastoral Studies, from the Fall 2001 issue of Biblical Theology Bulletin.

<sup>22</sup> Transliterated Hebrew text and English translation of the **Kaddish** can be found in the Appendix.

portion, “and lead me not into sin, or into iniquity or into testing, or into contempt.”

But overall, we find connections to the **Amidah**:

From Matt: 6:9-13 we read: "After this manner therefore pray ye:

States of Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)	Summary of Benedictions of the <b>Amidah</b> <sup>23</sup>
1. Worship (vs. 9)	1. God as the protector of the Forefathers 2. God as the power that makes for salvation 3. God as the source of holiness 4. For knowledge
4. Repentance (vs. 12)	5. For the strength to repent 6. For forgiveness
3. Requests (vs. 11)	7. For relief from affliction 8. For healing 9. For bounty of the land and material prosperity 10. For the ingathering of the exiles into the Holy Land
2. Restoration (vs. 10)	11. For the establishment of the reign of true justice 14. For the rebuilding of Jerusalem 15. For the coming of the Messiah 16. For the acceptance of our prayers 17. For the restoration of the Jerusalem Sanctuary
5. Protection for righteous (#12 was not in original eighteen)	12. (Against slanderers and informers.) 13. For the support and protection of the righteous
6. Thanksgiving (Praise) vs. 13)	18. Gratitude as man's response to God's work in the world 19. For peace

<sup>23</sup> Transliterated Hebrew text and English translation of the **Amidah** can be found in the Appendix.



Now that we have the knowledge that the “Lord’s Prayer” is a summary of the petitions of the **Amidah**, let’s skip ahead a bit to verses 14 and 15: 'For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will not forgive yours. A quote from ben Sira, the author of the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus, says, "Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet, seek healing from God? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins?" This quote demonstrates that like Yeshua, the Rabbis realized that a man's relationship with his fellow man affects his relationship with God. One must forgive before requesting forgiveness. If you forgive others, your Heavenly Father will forgive you whether they do or not. If you do not forgive, you will not receive forgiveness.

The next part of the Shiur is:

### **Matthew 6:16-18 (CJB)**

Now when you fast, don't go around looking miserable, like the hypocrites. They make sour faces so that people will know they are fasting. Yes! I tell you, they have their reward already! But you, when you fast, wash your face and groom yourself, so that no one will know you are fasting -- except your Father, who is with you in secret. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

In Hebrew thought, there is primarily one reason for fasting – making **t'shuvah**, commonly called repentance, because of its connection to **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement (see chapter 19). If you don't need to make **t'shuvah**, you don't need to fast. Fasting is to bring us to the inner reflection and introspection that leads to **t'shuvah**. Many people seem to think the fast is what cleanses them spiritually. Well, God only cleanses after you make **t'shuvah**, otherwise fasting is merely self-flagellation. When you fast, do it in secret.

It was the custom for fasting in Yeshua's day that several things should happen. These can be found in Taamid, a section of the Talmud. First, work was to be stopped. Second, no eating or drinking during the day, but these could be resumed when night fell, ending the fast. Third, the individual should abstain from sex during this time. Fourth, washing or bathing was not

permitted. Finally, the disfiguring of the face spoken of was done with ashes.

An example of what Yeshua was talking about can be seen in the episode of the Pharisees demanding everyone to fast twice a week. During the time of Yeshua, Jews were expected by the Pharisees to fast on the second and the fifth day of the week at least. After the Babylonian Exile, five additional special days of fasting were added to the calendar and the Jews began to argue with the priests and agree with Zechariah as to whether all this was necessary, as we read in Zechariah 7 & 8.

By the time of Yeshua, fasting had become burdensome and had to be treated as a tradition. Yeshua rebuked three aspects of their fasting. First, he told them to be cheerful, not sad, which again, agrees with the commands of God as recorded in Zechariah 8: “The fast days of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months are to become times of joy, gladness and cheer for the house of Y'hudah.”

Second, the one fasting was not to have a self-righteous attitude. God rebukes those who fast with self-righteousness in Zechariah 7 (CJB): “It was then that this message came to me from **ADONAI-Tzva'ot** [The LORD of Hosts]: “Speak to all the people of the land and to the **cohanim** [priests]. Tell them, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months throughout these seventy years, were you really fasting for me? Was it for me?’ Rather, when you eat and drink, it's just to please yourselves, isn't it?” Whether we are fasting or feasting, we should do it for Him, not ourselves. When we do it for ourselves, we are exalting ourselves, not God!

Third, He refused to let the Pharisees force their man-made rules on others, as if they were found in Torah. It didn't bother Yeshua when the Pharisees wanted to obey these practices, but when they began to teach that God expects the people to keep them, the Lord challenged this.

So, we have three aspects of hypocritical behavior, or, more specifically, self-aggrandizing behavior, which is not quite what we mean today by hypocritical. So, what does Tanakh tell us about “hypocrisy,” and self-aggrandizement?

## Deuteronomy 15:7-11

If there is a poor man with you, one of your brothers, in any of your towns in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart, nor close your hand from your poor brother; but you shall freely open your hand to him, and shall generously lend him sufficient for his need {in} whatever he lacks. Beware that there is no base thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,' and your eye is hostile toward your poor brother, and you give him nothing; then he may cry to the LORD against you, and it will be a sin in you. You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease {to be} in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy and poor in your land.'

In other words, don't give to your brother just because you will be paid back or be praised for it, but because such is God's ***tzedakah*** – which means, remember, charity, justice, and righteousness.

## Proverbs 11:1-9 (CJB)

False scales are an abomination to ADONAI, but accurate weights please him. First comes pride, then disgrace; but with the humble is wisdom. The integrity of the upright guides them, but the duplicity of the treacherous destroys them. On the day of wrath, wealth doesn't help; but righteousness rescues from death. The righteousness of the innocent levels their way, but wickedness of the wicked makes them fall. The righteousness of the upright rescues them, but the treacherous are trapped by their own intrigues. When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; what he hopes for from evil comes to nothing. The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked comes to take his place. With his mouth the hypocrite can ruin his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered.

More about economic justice and hypocrisy, but specifically, we are told that false scales are a symptom of pride – I am so smart I can cheat people and get away with it. Yet again, we see that hypocrisy is about pride and self-aggrandizement: I am so great, no one could possibly find out what I'm

doing. Such activities are not only beneath contempt, but earn a person nothing by eternal death.

### **Job 8:8-22**

Ask the older generation, and consider what their ancestors found out; for we who were born yesterday know nothing, our days on earth are but a shadow. They will teach you, they will tell you, they will say what is in their hearts: 'Can papyrus grow except in a marsh? Can swamp grass flourish without water? While still green, before being cut down, it dries up faster than any other plant. Such are the paths of all who forget God; the hope of a hypocrite will perish - his confidence is mere gossamer, his trust a spider's web. He can lean on his house, but it won't stand; he can hold on to it, but it won't last; [for its destruction will come] like the lush growth of a plant in the sun, its shoots may spread out all over its garden, but meanwhile its roots cause the stone house to collapse, as it seizes hold of the rocks; someone who tears it away from its place denies he has ever seen it. Yes, this is the "joy" of the way [of the godless], and out of the dust will spring up others [like him].' Look, God will not reject a blameless man; nor will he uphold wrongdoers. He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouts of joy. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame, and the tent of the wicked will cease to exist.

Yet again, we learn that the hypocrite will face punishments greater than he can fathom, but now we learn why: the hypocrite is one who has forgotten God. Hypocrisy, self-aggrandizement, cheating, these are all symptoms of a mindset that says "I am the master of all I survey. These people are mere simpletons; they exist to serve my purposes and praise me." That is usurping God's place, and can only be done by one who forgets God and sets himself up to be God. In previous parts of these two chapters, we've talked about taking a Torah Attitude, and about showing we love and serve our fellow man... which is good, but only when done properly. We cannot properly serve God if we are doing it to receive the praise of man; God's rewards should be enough.

## There Will Your Heart Be Also

We continue our study by looking at:

### Matthew 6:19-21

Do not store up for yourselves treasures here on earth, where moths and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and thieves do not break in or steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

How do we lay up for ourselves treasures in Heaven? What is the opposite of storing up wealth here on Earth? What is the opposite of stealing wealth or allowing moths and rust to destroy it? We lay up treasures for ourselves by acts of ***tzedakah***. These acts are always directed outward towards our fellow man, not upwards towards God. When one gives with the right attitude, not expecting to receive, he will receive something. You give simply because God expects you to and you do it out of love for Him. The apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus states, "Lose your silver for the sake of a friend or brother, and do not let it rust under a stone and be lost. Lay up treasure according to the commandments of the Most High".

Remember the two greatest commandments are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is, again, about a heart attitude... in this case, we see that loving and serving God and our fellow man as our first priority over accumulating the wealth of this world will bring us rich rewards in the World to Come. This does not mean we are not supposed to have wealth here, but that we should not store it up for ourselves; in other words, the pursuit of wealth should not be our primary occupation, preoccupation, or goal.

The next part of this section is

### Matthew 6:22-23 (CJB)

'The eye is the lamp of the body.' So if you have a 'good eye' [that is, if you are generous] your whole body will be full of light; but if you have an 'evil eye' [if you are stingy] your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Mishnah Terumoth 4:3 says, "The person with a good eye gave the 40th part of the first fruit of the heave offering for the maintaining of the priests, while the person with the evil eye gave only a 60th." Avot 5:15 says that "he that gives, but wants a monopoly on giving and does not want others to be able to give too is considered to have an evil eye." These two verses have been misinterpreted probably about as much as any other in the Gospels. Most of the time, when a sermon is preached concerning them, the subject matter is usually about lust, or sexual immorality. That is incorrect. The "good eye" meant a person who was a generous giver and the "bad eye" meant someone who was stingy. With this knowledge of the eye in Hebraic expressions, we can now understand what Yeshua meant when He said if you have a giving attitude, your whole body will be affected.

### **Matthew 6:24**

No one can be slave to two masters; for he will either hate the first and love the second, or scorn the second and be loyal to the first.  
You can't be a slave to both God and money.

The word translated here is the word "Mammon," which should be familiar as it is commonly left untranslated in many traditional Christian Bibles. Both Yeshua and Paul declared that we are to die to sin and its laws of bondage on this earth because we Believers cannot serve two masters and belong to God.

In one of His famous expressions Yeshua took both the side of the Sages and the side of the Essenes when he said, "No man can serve two masters." The Sages described man as a servant of two masters - his own instincts and his Creator. Some view that here Yeshua grafted on the Essene element, speaking on the contrast between God and mammon as a duality between poverty and property, just as it is found in the Essene documents.

But I would point out that "mammon" comes from an ancient Hebrew word out of Aramaic which has the same Hebrew root as "Amen," meaning, "to be firm". The word is used in the **Mishnah** (part of the Talmud) to mean "Security" or "Deposit." What is being said here, then? Let us go back to what Yeshua was stating above about where our treasure should be, either here or in heaven. He is cautioning us in believing in a security deposit on our immortal souls, that to believe that monetary treasures, whether you've put them in your bank account or in the Temple treasury or your

congregation's bank account, will reserve your place in heaven. This is as tempting a false road as seeking wealth for its own sake.

And here, I believe, is the real issue of this passage. Yeshua is telling us that God expects us to choose between two masters. God has always asked this of His people, whether it be Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Abram in Ur and later Abraham on Mount Moriah, Moses in Pharaoh's palace, the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai, and on down the line. That choice is, at first blush, between God and Satan... but Satan's not that stupid. He knows his ugliness will tempt very few. Instead, he assails us with an even more devious temptation. That temptation is ourselves. Ourselves. Weren't expecting that one, were you? No one ever does. But it is precisely the temptation of ourselves that Satan cultivates.

Why? Because to choose one's self over God is to rebel, for us to become just like Satan himself. To throw off God's yoke of obedience; and while we may think we are freeing ourselves, we are not, and this is the classic error Christian pastors and theologians have made with their anti-Torah teachings. To throw off the "Yoke of Torah" is not to be free, but to accept the yoke of Satan, the **OTHER** master!

For there are only two masters to choose from here, no matter how much we want to tell ourselves otherwise. If God is not our Master, **THE ADVERSARY IS**. It is a binary system. You can only choose One or Zero. We see this quite plainly in:

### **Lamentations 3:21-29 (CJB)**

But in my mind I keep returning to something, something that gives me hope – that the grace of ADONAI is not exhausted, that his compassion has not ended. [On the contrary,] they are new every morning! How great your faithfulness! 'ADONAI is all I have,' I say; "therefore I will put my hope in him. ADONAI is good to those waiting for him, to those who are seeking him out. It is good to wait patiently for the saving help of ADONAI. It is good for a man to bear the yoke from his youth. Let him sit alone in silence when he has laid it on him. Let him submit absolutely; there may yet be hope.

What is this hope that we have in the LORD when He is all we have? Not just life eternal, but life abundantly in the here and now:

## **Matthew 6:25-29**

For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

When Yeshua said, "Take no thought for tomorrow," He was saying that we should seek to be the demonstration of God's power today, and all these other things will take care of themselves. Mishnah Kiddushin 4:14 says, "Rabbi Simeon ben Elazor said, 'Hast thou ever seen a beast or bird that followed a trade? They are fed without toil. These were only created to minister to themselves, while I was created to minister to my Maker. Was it not right then that I should be supported without toil? I have marked my work and forfeited my support.'"

## **Matthew 6:30-32**

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

A parallel teaching about us not being anxious is found in the Talmud passage Babylonian Sotah 48b: "Rabbi Elazor said, 'whoever has a piece of bread in his basket and says "what shall he eat tomorrow?" belongs to them who are of only little faith.'" I am also reminded of something science fiction author Douglas Adams wrote in his novel *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, that mankind has gone through three major states of development: "What Shall We Eat?", "When Shall We Eat?", and "Where Shall We Go For Lunch?" In modern society, we get so caught up in the day-to-day, even when the need to struggle physically just to find food has been eliminated, and the need to schedule our work and our eating has been taken care of. We put so much time and worry in, "Well, I will be in this part of town tomorrow, I better make sure I stop at <insert name of your favorite



restaurant here> so I don't have to pull through McDonald's." If we would only stop sometimes to appreciate God's provision, we would be much better off.

### **Matthew 6:33-34**

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

In the Talmud, we read in Berakoth 2:2 and Avot 3:5: "He who takes on the yoke of the law shall have the yoke of the Kingdom taken from them" and "He who quotes the Shema has accepted the yoke of God's Kingdom, and that is the first step in receiving the yoke of the commandments." The Rabbis say this yoke of the law spoken of here is the oppression of the government, not the Torah, since Torah doesn't mean "law" (it means "instruction"). Now, of course, we believe that faith in Messiah is how to become a part of the Kingdom. And, as is the point of this book, becoming part of the Kingdom of Israel means to accept keeping the Commandments. But what does it mean to receive or take on the yoke of the Kingdom, the yoke of the Commandments? Well, let me take you back to Sinai:

### **Exodus 19:1-8**

In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain.

Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

So now, we see that God's yoke of the Kingdom means not only accepting Messiah but also standing up and accepting the commandments, cementing our position in that covenant relationship, as Yeshua said those that keep and teach will be greatest, and those who don't keep and therefore don't teach will be least. Earlier in this teaching, we've discussed taking a Torah Attitude, and about showing we love and serve our fellow man, not to receive the praise of man, but rather God's rewards. The reason we do this because we accept the yoke of the Kingdom, which includes the obedience of the commandments. It is a spiritual yoke, one that circumcises the heart, for where our heart is, there shall be our treasure, our reward for living a life according to God's precepts.

## **Judging, Splinters, Dogs, & Pigs**

### **Matthew 7:1-2**

Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

Now, we know Yeshua upholds Torah, and part of Torah, as we know, is judging people's actions and meting out punishment for them. Afterall, in Psalm 106, we have learned about Pinchas, who is credited with righteousness and given a covenant of peace for judging sin and doing so with a spear to the sinner's hearts! So, what can this mean? What it means is that, while we can judge a person's actions, words, and even his doctrine and teaching, what we cannot judge is the condition of a person's heart. Only God can do that.

We read similar statements in Talmud. Mishnah Avot 2:4 says, "Rabbi Hillel said, 'Judge not your neighbor until you have come into his place.'" Mishnah Sotah 1:7 says, "Whatever measure a man metes, it shall be measured to him again." Babylonian Sanhedrin 100a says, "Rabbi Meier said, 'The measure by

which one measures will be measured out to him," Bereshith Raba 9:13 states, "All the measures have ceased, except the rule 'measure for measure' has not ceased."

One word used to judge a person's heart is to call them "heretic." A heretic is someone who doesn't conform to the norm. The meaning of this word has changed considerably since its use began in the early church. Today, it carries the connotation of someone who is teaching dangerous doctrines trying to deceive people. That is not the meaning used by the early church. A person can be a heretic and be right while the norm is wrong. We should be very careful with someone whom we disagree with and not label them as something outside of God's blessing. This is not speaking of judgment in the way we normally speak of it, but in how we deal with our brothers and sisters. You are going to be treated the same way that you treat others. If you do not give the full measure in your dealings with others, you will be slighted the same amount.

I think the most important point here, when we speak of being judged the same as we judge others, is first not to judge the condition of their heart – their salvational status – but instead, when and if we are in a position to do so (specifically, when serving on a **beit din**, a house of judgment or Torah Court), that we must judge them fairly, according to Torah, and all people must be judged according to the same scale of Torah, whether they are rich or poor, male or female, Jewish or non-Jewish. As we read in Numbers 15:15-16 (CJB): "For this community there will be the same law for you as for the foreigner living with you; this is a permanent regulation through all your generations; the foreigner is to be treated the same way before ADONAI as yourselves. The same Torah and standard of judgment will apply to both you and the foreigner living with you."

We see this message about judging fairly also in another part of Torah, Deuteronomy 25:13-16, "You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. For everyone who does these things, everyone who acts unjustly is an abomination to the LORD your God," and in the Haftarah in Proverbs 24:23-26: "These also are sayings of the wise. To show partiality in judgment is not good. He who says to the wicked, 'You are righteous,' Peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him; But to those who

rebuke the wicked will be delight, and a good blessing will come upon them. He kisses the lips who gives a right answer.”

Continuing, we read:

### **Matthew 7:3-5 (CJB)**

Why do you see the splinter in your brother's eye but not notice the log in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the splinter out of your eye,' when you have the log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First, take the log out of your own eye; then you will see clearly, so that you can remove the splinter from your brother's eye!

This section shows Yeshua's roots in traditional Jewish wisdom. In the Babylonian Talmud, Baba Bathra 176b reads, "Rabbi Yochanan bar Kokba said, 'Do they say, "Take the splinter out of your own eye?" We are taught to remove the beam from your own eye.'" In another Rabbinic statement, Rabbi Tarfon said, "I wonder if there is anyone in this generation that accepts reproof? For when one says, 'Remove the mote from your eye,' he would answer, 'Remove the beam that is in between your eyes.'"

In other words, don't worry about the toothpick in your brother's eye when you have a railroad tie in your own eye. Make sure your relationship with your brother is right. Treat all others the way you want to be treated, only do it first. This is the injunction to those who wish to follow God.

### **Matthew 7:6**

Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

This verse talks about dogs and swine. These terms were very often used at the time as derogatory references to Gentiles. They were also used as a symbol for a useless, irrelevant person. Again, we see parallels in the Talmud: Mishnah Sotah 9:15 states, "Rabbi Eleazar said, 'The face of that generation is the face of a dog. The son shall not reverence his father.'" It is also used as a symbol for a Gentile or an uncircumcised person. In Pirke Avot 2:9 Rabbi Eleazar said, "Whoever eats with an idolater is as if he ate

with a dog. Who is a dog? He that is uncircumcised." This is probably because pigs are the most common **treif** (unclean) animal pagans ate, and a lot of pagans in the Asiatic areas also eat dogs. So, once again, we are faced with references to unclean animals when dealing with the unclean people... but we know that Peter was given a vision involving eating unclean animals that meant for us not to call any person unclean. So, what can this mean? Whom is Yeshua telling us not to cast our pearls to? And what are these pearls?

In traditional Jewish literature, pearls are usually a reference to the deep things of the Torah and other Scriptures. The Babylonian Hagigah 13a says, "Rabbi Ami said, 'The teachings of the Torah are not to be transmitted to a non-Jew.'" We know that we should treat all those who have come to belief in Messiah, and have thus grafted themselves to Israel, the same way as we treat Jews. So, who can this be talking about? I would suggest it is those who reject the Word of God, even when it is offered to them. Remember what Yeshua taught about leaving the town that won't hear the Gospel message, to shake the dust off your feet as you leave, so you won't take it with you? What kind of person rejects the word of God?

The carnally minded cannot understand the deep things of the Word of God, and so rejects them. A lot of Believers have enough trouble understanding them. It is very easy for an unbeliever to twist the Word of God around to trip you up if you do not understand the Word that you are sharing with them. If you do not have the keen understanding of what you are about to share with an unbeliever, it is better that you say nothing. So, while it is important to witness, if a person demonstrates an unkosher mindset that cannot hear what you have to tell them, then they are the dogs and pigs we are not to cast our pearls before. (Metaphorically, remember, it's just a metaphor.) We still should treat them with respect and compassion, as we do all human beings, but we should not attempt time after time to show them what they reject. Maybe someone else will be able to reach them, but God tells us that repeated attempts by the same evangelizer are just a waste of time, and it denigrates the Gospel message to the sorts of things that dogs and pigs eat; it makes the Gospel unkosher. We must guard against such activity, just as we must guard against unjust judgment of our fellow man.

We must always remember that there are two types of people: those of Israel and those not. Those who are willing to listen to the Word, those we treat as brothers and live with them in a Torah community, responsible to each other. Those who are unwilling, we should treat as neighbors, but we should not

attempt to force the Gospel down their throats, because to do so to the unwilling heart merely casts pearls before swine.

## **Asking & Having**

### **Matthew 7:7-11 (CJB)**

“Keep asking, and it will be given to you; keep seeking, and you will find; keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who keeps asking receives; he who keeps seeking finds; and to him who keeps knocking, the door will be opened. Is there anyone here who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? So if you, even though you are bad, know how to give your children gifts that are good, how much more will your Father in heaven keep giving good things to those who keep asking him!”

We have centered our relationships around the man Yeshua and have forgotten the God that He is. At a certain point in history He became flesh so that He might bring His people back to Him. That is the greatest gift of all. God gave Himself. Christianity has become a selfish, self-centered religion that, for the most part, completely ignores our fellow man, and a misinterpretation of this passage is one of the chief culprits. In fact, one might expect this, given the strong differences in the cultures: Eastern culture in general, and Jewish culture in specific, is far less individualistic and far more communalistic than Western culture in general, and the Greco-Roman pagan culture that became the standard-bearer for the Christian faith.

Christianity has viewed this passage, and others like it, from their Western “me-first” culture of selfishness under a false face of selflessness. What is not often known is that this is a direct result of the influence of the Roman army on the Catholic Church. The Roman culture was very focused on self-gratification, so much so that the Roman army had to instill through harsh discipline an insect-like uniformity, which is a false sense of community. This has come down through the centuries both in the Church and in Western culture as “military professionalism,” which often just barely masks and blunts the individual’s desire for glory and power. It is only in the last couple of centuries has this become lessened, but the idea is still there.

The Israelite army did not require the kind of harsh discipline as was used in the Roman army and their successor forces, because they were citizen-soldiers who fought solely out of a sense of duty to the Am Yisrael, the People or Nation of Israel, not because they wanted power or glory. While I'm sure there were exceptions, those who did fight for the glory, from the beginning, Israel's defenders operated on a different ethic.

It is this ethic of community that informs Hebrew thought and Yeshua's teachings. The real thrust, or emphasis, of Yeshua's teachings has to do with man's relationship with his fellow man within God's community of Am Yisrael. We see it in what is identified by Yeshua as the two greatest commandments:

When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching. But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' All of the Torah and the Prophets are dependent on these two commandments."

(Matthew 22:33-39, NASV; Matthew 22:40, CJB with English translation)

First, we must love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength... that's the greatest commandment. Then, the second greatest commandment is similar to it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." But aren't we using all of our heart and soul and strength to love God? How can we have enough self left over to love our neighbor if we love God with all that we are? This is the question asked by the self-centered person trying to use a Western context to understand scripture. The Jewish context would tell him that this passage means that loving your neighbor as yourself and loving God is the same thing – that God has made us a part of a community, and that community, being the Body of Messiah, and Messiah being a part of God... the connections are all there. When we love our neighbors out of our love for God, we are elevating others above ourselves, because they are like God in that way. It is the opposite of self-centeredness. Realize this is not literal – the Body of Messiah is not God, but it is similar in this way, in the way of

our love. Only when we can learn to love others with God's love will we truly love God. How do we do that?

### **Deuteronomy 6:1-9**

Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In context, the first and greatest commandment focuses on studying and discussing God's word. So obviously, this is the first step. What is next?

### **Leviticus 19:17-19 (CJB)**

"Do not hate your brother in your heart, but rebuke your neighbor frankly, so that you won't carry sin because of him. Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am ADONAI. Observe my regulations."

So, next we see that we are not to carry hatred around in our hearts. Therefore, when your neighbor has done something that hurts you, rebuke them frankly, so you won't be carrying the hatred, and thus the sin, around with you. You ease off of hatred by telling the person who has hurt you, "You know, that hurt me. It wasn't necessary." This may also be familiar to you as the first step in the method of problem-solving in the Body that Yeshua identifies: first confront the person yourself, and if that doesn't work, find a



neutral third party who is not in leadership to act as a mediator the next time you talk to the person who has hurt you. If that doesn't work, then you call for the Elders to mediate.

This method is commanded to reduce hatred between people caused by gossip and back-biting, also known in Jewish theology as ***lashon hara***, the evil tongue. Hatred leads to fear and thus to taking action against our neighbor to hurt them in return for their hurting you... in other words, vengeance. Rather, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, because God is our Lord, and we want to observe His regulations.

Turning to God and teaching others is the way to find ourselves satisfied in our lives:

### **Psalm 22:22-31**

I will tell of Your name to my brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You. You who fear the LORD, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; But when he cried to Him for help, He heard. From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD'S, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, Even he who cannot keep his soul alive. Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of the Lord to the coming generation. They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

When I delivered this teaching as a sermon, I didn't dress for the service as I normally would have. I wore old clothes I normally reserve for hard, sweaty work: an oil-stained T-Shirt and paint-stained sweat pants. Why was I dressed like this? Well, let me begin by telling you a couple of stories from the Talmud: a famous rabbi was out walking one hot day, dressed in shabby work clothes. He came upon some cattle in a corral that had no water, they were covered with flies, they were miserable. Their owner was nowhere to

be found. So, the rabbi gave the cattle water, and gave them a cool bath with some more, and shooed away the flies.

As he was finishing, their owner came with more hot, miserable cattle and – thinking the rabbi was one of his ranch hands – told him to do the same to these new ones. Without a word of correction, the rabbi did as the owner had told him.

When the owner came back, he was so pleased with the “ranch hand’s” work that he immediately began to give him some money. The rabbi refused, telling the owner who he was and saying, “Why should I accept payment for serving God’s creatures?” The owner was naturally perplexed as to why the great rabbi was dressed as he was, and the rabbi said that he was dressed as God wanted him to be dressed, so he could help the poor animals.

Another story tells of a great king who wanted to know what his people truly thought of him. He asked a wise sage, and the sage told him to get dressed as a common worker, leave the palace secretly while it was still dark in the morning and head out to the market, and he would learn what people thought. Of course, no one in the market knew who he was, and he was able to talk to his people and learn that some loved him and others did not. He was also able to help some of them that would never have come to him if they knew he was their king. So you see, appearances often get in the way of what God has in mind to teach us.

It is important to remember that God doesn’t just call us to love and serve the well-fed and the well-dressed. On the other hand, God doesn’t just call us to love and serve the poor and shabby. When we make God the center of our lives, he will give us a heart for all people and the means with which to help them, even though we are not perfect. When we show God’s love to others, we are causing His Name to be blessed. When we love and serve our fellow man with no desire for self-gratification, we are enthroning God in our lives.

## The Road of Life

### Matthew 7:12-14 (CJB)

"Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets. Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Many scholars have shown that, even though He castigated them for their hypocrisy ("Do what they tell you, but do not do as they do...") Yeshua's teachings were closest to that of the Pharisees, especially the school of Hillel. Here is one of the most significant interconnections. In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Shabbat, the story is told of a man who wishes to learn the Torah, but his request to the rabbis is: "Teach me the whole Law while I am standing on one foot." Various rabbis scoffed at this. But Rav Hillel said, "What you would not have done to you do not to another; that is the whole Law. The rest is commentary, go study it" (Babylonian Shabbat 31a). As you can see, this is nearly identical to what Yeshua says here. In many ways they are the same, because if you do not to others what you wouldn't have done to you, if you have contact with them at all, you must do unto him that which you would have done to you. And to both Yeshua and Hillel, both of these summed up the whole Law.

But what more can we learn from this? Immediately following this statement are instructions that read like a roadmap: "Go in through the narrow gate, take the hard road," etc. It is important to know that the word translated "road" here is the Hebrew word "**derekh**," meaning "way." Now, it is from this statement that the Sect of the Nazarene came to be called "The Way." However, we should ask ourselves, what is the hard way that comes through the narrow gate?

Some people define religion as a system of ethics, a code of conduct, an ideology, or a creed. To the traditional Jewish mindset, it is none of these. Such definitions are misleading, deficient, or inaccurate. Rather, a Hebraic mindset understands the daily life of faith in terms of a journey or a pilgrimage. Religion is tantamount to the way one chooses to walk. If a person knows God, he is daily at God's disposal, and walks in close relationship with Him along the road of life.

Or, as the prophet Micah gave the Word of the LORD:

### **Micah 6:1-8 (CJB)**

So listen now to what ADONAI says: "Stand up and state your case to the mountains, let the hills hear what you have to say." Listen, mountains, to ADONAI's case; also you enduring rocks that support the earth! ADONAI has a case against his people; he wants to argue it out with Isra'el: "My people, what have I done to you? How have I wearied you? Answer me! I brought you up from the land of Egypt. I redeemed you from a life of slavery. I sent Moshe, Aharon and Miryam to lead you. My people, just remember what Balak the king of Mo'av had planned, what Bil'am the son of B'or answered him, [and what happened] between Sheetim and Gilgal - so that you will understand the saving deeds of ADONAI." "With what can I come before ADONAI to bow down before God on high? Should I come before him with burnt offerings? with calves in their first year? Would ADONAI take delight in thousands of rams with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Could I give my firstborn to pay for my crimes, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Human being, you have already been told what is good, what ADONAI demands of you - no more than to act justly, love grace and walk in purity with your God.

Mountains, hills, rocks... sounds like a hard road to me!

Ceremonialism and ritualism alone did not meet God's requirements for the good life. But, those who act justly and love mercy and walk humbly with God do please Him (Micah 6:8). Thus, we return to the fact that the essence of religion is relationship. It is walking with God in His path of wisdom and righteousness and His way of service to others. In the Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua used this familiar Hebraic imagery to teach about the two ways. The broad one leads to destruction and the narrow one leads to life. The concept of "The Way" is also found in other religious literature outside of the Bible. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls indicated that the Qumran community also called itself "the way."

But what is this way? How do we love and serve God? Do you recall, "If you love Me, keep my commandments"? In fact, in Leviticus, God ties our relationship with our fellow man in with the commandments, as we see in:

### **Leviticus 19:17-19a**

You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 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 the LORD. You are to keep My statutes.

So, we see that there is a connection somehow between doing unto others as we would have them to do unto us with observing the Commandments. How does it tie together?

### **Deuteronomy 30:11-14**

For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.

Notice that the word used is “us,” and not “me.” It ties us together with our neighbor. The word is in our mouths and our hearts. Could it be that what Yeshua is telling us is that the Way, the Road of Life, consists not only of doing the commandments ourselves, but in encouraging and helping our fellow man to do so? Isn't that what we would want others to do for us, to help us in leading righteous lives, exhibiting God's love to us in helping us along the way?

When Yeshua teaches us to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, but that the way is hard, what He's reminding us of is the call to keep God's commandments out of love, and – and here's the tough part – to help our fellow man along the way. And while that seems like an awfully heavy burden to bear – to be our own keepers and our brother's as well, God reminded us through Moses that the burden is not too heavy... that we can do it.

## Prophets & Fruit

### Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of the false prophets! They come to you wearing sheep's clothing, but underneath they are hungry wolves! You will recognize them by their fruit. Can people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every healthy tree produces good fruit, but a poor tree produces bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, or a poor tree good fruit. Any tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire! So you will recognize them by their fruit.”

First, Yeshua warns us about false prophets. Then he makes an analogy about trees and knowing them by their fruit. In what context would the average person listening to his sermon place this comment?

Well, the traditional book of wisdom Ecclesiasticus, well-read at the time and possibly even considered canonical, had a statement, “The fruit discloses the cultivation of the tree; so the expression of a thought discloses the cultivation of a man's heart.” Let me remind you of Paul's cultivated and uncultivated olive tree analogy when speaking of Israel – the cultivated olive tree – and the other nations – the uncultivated olive tree (back in chapter two). If cultivated trees produce more and better fruit than uncultivated trees, we may see that being part of Israel – by having faith in Messiah and living thus as He commands, by Torah – should produce more and better fruit than simply “living a good life” outside of it.

And that is simply being a part of Israel or not. What is the significance of this analogy to prophets? Let's look at what the Torah has to say:

### Deuteronomy 18:20-22

But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Okay... so why, if we have nothing to fear from these false prophets, do we need to execute them? Could it be that there's something more going on here?

### **Ezekiel 13:1-8**

Then the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy from their own inspiration, 'Listen to the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD, "Woe to the foolish prophets who are following their own spirit and have seen nothing. O Israel, your prophets have been like foxes among ruins. You have not gone up into the breaches, nor did you build the wall around the house of Israel to stand in the battle on the day of the LORD. They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word. Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, 'The LORD declares,' but it is not I who have spoken?"' Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, "Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you," declares the Lord GOD.

Let me reiterate this: by giving false prophecies – by speaking futilities and seeing falsehoods while claiming to speak for God – they are following their own spirits and not God, thus disobeying the first commandment. When doing so and leading members of ***Am Yisrael*** (the People of Israel, God's Covenant People – which includes all those who Believe in Yeshua!) to do so as well, they do serious damage to the house of Israel, when they should have been building it up to withstand the battle on the great and terrible Day of the LORD.

If a person says he's speaking for God, he had better be speaking what God wants him to say, or he's in very big trouble. While this is said only about prophets, I would suggest this applies equally to all those who work for God and claim to speak that which He gives us. And yes, this applies most heavily to those, like me, who are in positions of spiritual authority. But it applies to all of us. We should all be busying ourselves with the building up of the body of Messiah – the house of Israel – and we should all be careful about what we are saying, to make sure it is in line with what God wants us to say.

But most importantly, let's turn our attention away from false prophets. This is an especially important warning Yeshua is giving us, as we hurtle full-tilt towards the end of the age. We know that there will be false prophets coming our way. We will be told to look for God out in the desert, across the seas, and in a world leader who will one day set up an abomination that causes desolation in a rebuilt Temple. We must be sure not to listen to them, but instead listen to the Word of God and be watchful against their evil ways.

## **The Foundation – of Our Faith & Our Lives**

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, only those who do what my Father in heaven wants. On that Day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord! Didn’t we prophesy in your name? Didn’t we expel demons in your name? Didn’t we perform many miracles in your name?’ Then I will tell them to their faces, ‘I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!’”

Let me point specific attention to this last word. In the Greek manuscripts, the word used is “*anomia*.” Now, normally, I point you to the Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts, but the men who translated the Apostolic Writings are teaching us a powerful lesson here. “*Nomia*” is the Greek word used for “Torah”. The prefix “a” means “without” or “totally lacking.” We use this in English: if a person knows morality and abides by them normally, when they act in contrariness to those morals, we speak of them engaging in immorality. The prefix “im” means “not”. In other words, a person who has morals and doesn’t follow them is not engaging them.

But when a person shows themselves totally lacking in morality whatsoever, we speak of them as being “amoral.” They have no morals at all. Forgive me for getting political for a moment, but a good example would be Bill Clinton, whose actions show (in my opinion) he is lacking in a basic moral core, and thus he lives his life in a sense of pragmatism: what can I do today that furthers my own desires and that no one will notice or call me on? Not what is right and wrong, since those are not a consideration to the amoral person.



So it is here. “*Anomia*” literally means “Torahlessness.” What does it mean to be a “Worker of Torahlessness”? Could it be those who have the understanding that Scripture is saying that people should keep Torah and teaches others that it is no longer in effect? Yeshua is saying these people will be told to depart from His presence. I will make no definitive statements on individuals’ states of salvation, I just give you that interpretation of this passage.

These verses speak about doing something "in the name of...." This indicates that which is said was on that individual's authority. In the Talmud, Mishnah Berakoth 4:7 states, "Rabbi Yahudah said in the name of Rabbi Eleazar, 'In all places where there is a public congregation, individuals are exempt from saying the additional prayers.'" This is a common Rabbinic reference meaning that what was said was using the authority of another person. So what does this tell us? Yeshua is especially angry at those who preach Torahlessness in His Name.

Those about whom Yeshua is speaking fall under the same curses of those who practice Torahlessness, since Yeshua told us previously in Matthew 5:18 equates the teaching and the doing. Recall that God had the people of Israel recite each individual sin having its own curse. Could it be any better for those who teach people that these rules are no longer binding on them?

The next section of the Shiur is:

### **Matthew 7:24-27**

So, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on bedrock. The rain fell, the rivers flooded, the winds blew and beat against that house, but it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the rivers flooded, the wind blew and beat against that house, and it collapsed - and its collapse was horrendous!"

This is a familiar parable to most people who have spent time in churches. But it is almost always taught by itself, totally out of context with the preceding part of the passage. The message most pastors give is that “Jesus is the rock!” Well, in context, coming right after preaching against the

workers of Torahlessness, we can see that the rock is Torah and the sand is Torahlessness! (Of course, since Yeshua is the Living Torah, you can say He is the rock, too.)

Again, we see that there is parallel to the teachings of many of the rabbis. Let me quote some Talmudic proverbs for you: "A man who has good deeds to his credit and also has studied much Torah, what is he like? He is like one who builds a structure and lays stones below for the foundation and bricks above, so that no matter how much water collects at the site, it will not wash away. But, a man who has no good deeds to his credit, even though he has studied much Torah, what is he like? He is like the one who lays bricks first and builds a structure. He lays no stone above, so that even if a little water collects, it undermines it."

Sounds very similar, doesn't it? Could Yeshua have been referring to that teaching? A similar one reads "He whose wisdom is greater than his works, what is he like? A tree whose branches are many, but whose roots are few, and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it. But, he whose works are greater than his wisdom, what is he like? A tree whose branches are few, but whose roots are many. Even if all the winds were to come against it, they could not remove it." Again, very similar in message, even if the analogy is different.

And thus we come to the end of Yeshua's shiur, His teaching on Torah. But before we close out our look at the Shiur on the Mount, let's consider the audience:

### **Matthew 7:28 – 8:1 (CJB)**

When Yeshua had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at the way he taught, for he was not instructing them like their Torah-teachers but as one who had authority himself. After Yeshua had come down from the hill, large crowds followed him.

Here the Scriptures mention the fact that He teaches with authority. The scribes were the ones who taught the Oral Law (***Mishnah***, a part of the Talmud) by citing previous Rabbis from whom the teacher received his tradition. To do otherwise was considered arrogant and disrupted the whole system because it broke the continuity of the process. The Babylonian Megillah 15a says, "Anyone who says a thing in the name of one who said it

brings deliverance to the world." When Yeshua taught the people and did not reference a previous tradition, He was implying that He was the original source of the teachings, and not another man.

That's why Yeshua was so feared by the establishment! Not only did He teach as though He were the source, but the people accepted it, and Him! Some Christian teachers claim that Israel as a whole rejected Yeshua. Nothing could be further from the truth! Once again the Gospel record that "great multitudes" followed Yeshua. This again demonstrates that the common people of Israel accepted Him as the Messiah. No Rabbi in history drew the great following that Yeshua did. When He taught them on His own authority the people never questioned Him, but instead followed Him in great crowds. They knew He was more than just a man.

In bringing us to the conclusion that Torahlessness is the path to curses, that Torah is the path to safety and surety, and speaking with His own authority, Yeshua established Himself as the author of Torah, and thus the source of Torah, which should be the solid rock foundation of our faith, and our lives, lest we be tossed aside like so much garbage in the winds of life and storm of judgment. That's the point of this section of the Shiur on the Mount... indeed, of the entire Shiur on the Mount...

And now, as we have reached the end of this Shiur, a class on Torah observance, let us give the traditional prayer for the end of a section of Torah study:

***Chazak Chazak Venitchazek***

Be Strong, Strong and let us be strengthened!

Let us be strengthened in the sure rock foundation of Yeshua's Torah teaching.

## Chapter Eight

### Dressing the Part

**W**hat makes up people's very first impression of other people? How they look, in most cases, the clothing. How we dress shows people who we are – and as Torah Observers, it shows them who we are in God. This is not to say we always need to be dressed in fancy clothes, or even dressy clothes. The issues with clothing come under two categories: moral and ritual.

#### Moral Issues

The moral issues primarily involve modesty. The issue of modesty in Torah is primarily taken from Deuteronomy 23:14: *"Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you."* In Leviticus 19:14, it also talks about not putting out a stumbling block, and in Numbers 15:39, it talks about not following after your own eyes and playing the harlot, and the Rabbinical Sages have come to view these as applying to the issue of not dressing in a suggestive way. In other words, while I'm not saying women must not wear pants or that men have to be in suits, I am saying, in the old-fashioned term my mother uses, don't dress like you're advertising your wares for sale. Additionally, I would suggest that, if you think an item of clothing might be questionable, then it probably is! That doubt in your mind is your conscience trying to keep you on the straight and narrow. Listen to it!

## Ritual Issues

This first one is a bridge between the moral and ritual. We read in:

### Numbers 15:37-41

The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God."

Most Jewish men today keep this commandment by wearing a **tallit**, or prayer shawl, with the commanded tassels (commonly called fringes or, in the Hebrew **tzitzit** [singular] **tzitziyot** [plural]). The prayer shawl came about around the year 135 of the Common Era as a means of keeping the commandment because the Roman authorities outlawed the wearing of the fringes, and Jewish men would hide the tallit in a bag while going to and from prayer services, and don it just before the service. They would then hide it in the bag again before they left. Today, most tallit bags are designed to be shown off, not as a hiding place, with velvet or other rich cloth embroidered with beautiful religious designs, but they still keep the tallit out of sight until the bag is opened.

Most Jewish women today do not keep this Commandment, because the Rabbis made a ruling – which I do not support – exempting them from keeping this Commandment and many others. They traditionally wear fancy lace or silk prayer shawls in feminine colors without the special, commanded tassel-type fringes on the corners (although they are frequently bordered with fringe). However, there is a growing number of Jewish women – and also non-Jewish Messianic women – who are starting to put the commanded fringes on their prayer shawls. I applaud this return to Torah, and suggest that they – along with men – start to wear the fringes most of the time, which is still done by ultra-Orthodox men.

The way ultra-orthodox men wear the fringes is attached to a small, poncho-like undergarment called a **tallit katan** (literally, small tallit). Men may

choose to wear them like this, or in a new way I've developed, called "tznaptzit," which enables them to snap a single set of fringes into and out of their shirt corners using invisible snaps. The design is simple and easily replicable. I plan to put the design on the web soon and one day to market them. Women who wear the fringes on a regular basis should do so attached to a small, light scarf that can be easily pinned up, as so many women wear today.

There are, also, many Messianic men who try to keep this Commandment by tying the fringes into the belt loops. While I applaud their desire to keep the Commandments, this is not truly a proper way to do it and invites ridicule from the Jewish community, and thus I do not recommend it.

But what's important is not the garment itself, except that it must have four corners, and that it have these tassels with a thread of blue. Now, the Hebrew word translated as "corners" in that passage is "**Kanaf**". This is a very interesting word, because it is used all over the Tanakh in connection with God... but when it's used to describe God, it's translated as – WINGS! – as in:

### **Psalms 17:1-8**

Hear a just cause, O LORD, give heed to my cry; Give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips. Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; Let Your eyes look with equity. You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress. As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent. My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet have not slipped. I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; Incline Your ear to me, hear my speech. Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings.

And...

### **Malachi 4:1-2 (3:19-20 in the original Hebrew numbering)**

For the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of Hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But for you who fear My Name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Now, I don't know about you... but when I picture God, I don't picture Him as having wings. When I mentioned this to a Pastor once, he said, "Well, Adam it's metaphorical." Well, I don't know about that... but when I picture God, I don't picture Him as being metaphorical either! **HOWEVER**... I have no problem picturing Him wearing a tallit...

In fact, Scripture implies this also, where in Isaiah 6:1, it says "In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the LORD sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the hem of his robe filled the temple." What do you think Isaiah really meant? It is also written that, in the Gathering of Jacob at the end of the age, ten men will grab the corners of a Jew's garment and ask to be taken along... what do you think that's talking about?

A few other points on the tallit, the tzitziyot, and its corners: The first is, do you remember reading about Elijah's mantle in the Bible? The mantle of his authority as a prophet, which Elisha received when Elijah was taken away in a chariot of fire? What do you think that was? Well, before the Roman prohibition of wearing the fringes, they were worn attached to seamless garments designed similar to ponchos or Mexican sarapes. This was Elijah's mantle, and John the Baptist's "coat of camel's hair" (they were woven from wool or other animal hair).

Now, we also read in:

### **Matthew 9:20-22 (Complete Jewish Bible)**

A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years approached him from behind and touched the tzitzit on his robe. For she said to herself, "If I can only touch his robe, I will be healed." Yeshua turned, saw her and said, "Courage, daughter! Your trust has healed you." And she was instantly healed.

Now, most translations say she touched the “hem of His garment.” But what it really was was the tzizit. That’s because this is the symbol of the Torah, God’s covenant with Mankind, which is why we read about Gentiles grabbing them to be taken along with the Jews. There will, however, probably a physical fulfillment of this as well. I believe it also means Gentiles grabbing ahold of the Torah and understanding that it is for them as well, as we approach the end of the age... gee, isn’t that sort of how you got here, reading this book?

### **Ruth 3:9-10 (CJB)**

He asked, "Who are you?" and she answered, "I'm your handmaid Rut. Spread your covering over your handmaid, because you are a redeeming kinsman." He said, "May ADONAI bless you, my daughter."

What word do you think has been translated as “covering” there? “**Kanaf**,” the corner!

Now, about those little hats...<sup>24</sup>

The following is There has been in recent times much controversy over "head-coverings" for men in the Messianic Community. Some claim it is only tradition dictated by Jewish tradition, and others, like me, believe that it is permitted – if not commanded – by God for men to be covered in prayer and worship.

Moses is one of our examples in the Torah. In Exodus 3:4-5, in the Burning Bush incident, God commanded him to remove his shoes as he was on set-apart ground. Moses, being a shepherd in the desert of Midian, surely wore some type of covering over his head to protect him from the blistering sun and heat, yet God **NEVER** commanded him to remove any head covering in His presence.

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<sup>24</sup> The following is extracted and adapted from an article found online several years ago, “Headcoverings for Messianic Men – Tradition or Torah?” by Rabbi Edward Levi Nydle of B’nai Avraham Messianic Congregation. It has since been taken off the Internet. A full copy is available from the author of this book, although he does not agree with everything in the article nor does he appreciate its liberal use of the Sacred Name.



In the Millennial Kingdom all **Am Yisrael** shall be priests to God as He said in:

**Exodus 19:3-8 (CJB)**

Moshe went up to God, and ADONAI called to him from the mountain: "Here is what you are to say to the household of Ya'akov, to tell the people of Isra'el: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim [priests] for me, a nation set apart. 'These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el.'" Moshe came, summoned the leaders of the people and presented them with all these words which ADONAI had ordered him to say. All the people answered as one, "Everything ADONAI has said, we will do." Moshe reported the words of the people to ADONAI.

and confirmed in 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light..."

Now, what sort of headgear was worn by the priests? Well, as we read in Exodus 29 about a "turban". The word TURBAN or BONNET in some translations is **migba'ah**, a CAP (as in hemispherical) bonnet. The HEMI- means half, SPHERE means globe, ball, round. Hence the migba'ah was shaped as a half a ball. It comes from the word **gib'ah** meaning a small hill. Now, if you think of the design as a resembling a small hill, you can see that this would be very similar as the modern "**kippah**" (the Hebrew word for what is commonly called a "yarmulke") now worn.

It is interesting that, according to the Torah, the High Priest could **NEVER** uncover his head even in mourning for the dead (Lev.21: 10-11). Yeshua is now our High priest after the order of Melchizedek. Surely He wears some type of head covering as our High Priest as he ministers in the heavenly Temple. We also read in:

## Isaiah 61:10-11 (CJB)

I am so joyful in ADONAI! My soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in salvation, dressed me with a robe of triumph, like a bridegroom wearing a festive turban, like a bride adorned with her jewels. For just as the earth brings forth its plants, or a garden makes its plants spring up, so ADONAI, God, will cause victory and glory to spring up before all nations.

Note that this says that a bridegroom wears a head covering on His wedding day! Yeshua is coming back as a **BRIDEGROOM** to marry Am Yisrael after the Tribulation. He will be wearing some type of fancy headcovering as the bridegroom! If we are to follow His example...

Which brings us to...

## 1 Corinthians 11:1-7

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you. But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head. But every woman who has her head uncovered while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head. For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

Now we can see some confusion, because it says, "Try to imitate me, even as I myself try to imitate Christ," and we know Messiah wears one of these ***kippot*** (plural of kippah). But it also says, "Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head," which has caused a lot of confusion.

In the Greek manuscripts, the word translated as "covered" is *kata* meaning "down, about, AGAINST, in OPPOSITION TO, down from (like a VEIL hanging from his head)". This can then mean to hang down from the head

(over the face) like a woman's veil, which in context makes sense as Rabbi Paul (who certainly wore a kippah himself) is contrasting the worship of men and women, and that men are not to look like women.

This verse is **NOT** against head coverings for men. It is against the wearing of a veil by a man over his face, as was the custom of the women of that period! Why does Paul speak of men wearing long hair or actually adorning the long locks of hair with ornamental jewels as women? Paul did not want the men of Corinth (which was the center for male temple prostitutes of Apollo, Poseidon, and other gods) to be mistaken for women in their dress, and hairstyle – in other words, **NO CROSS-DRESSING**. The men were pulling their long locks of hair over their faces as a veil as was the manner of women and imitating their hairstyles and manner in prayer. This is not talking of a man wearing a head covering in prayer or worship but a veil!

We put these coverings – ***kapparah*** – over ourselves when we pray, whether it is a man's tallit or a woman's tallit, like what my mother wears – a lace shawl – with the tzitziyot; or if it's a hat like this the kippah to show God's covering over us, and to experience God's covering over us.

We find safety in the shadow... not of His wings, but in the corners of His Tallit.

## Chapter Nine

### *"Do Not Put Unfood In Mouth"*

**M**y mother tells a story about one time many years ago when she was in a grocery store parking lot and saw a little Cambodian toddler – he was at that stage parents will recognize when he put anything and everything into his mouth – spot a bottle cap on the ground. Naturally, this shiny thing attracted his attention, and he picked it up and started to bring it closer to his lips, and his mother – God bless her, she was obviously still learning proper English – shouted, "Do not put unfood in mouth!" Naturally, the little guy dropped the bottle cap and went and looked up at his mother with an "I'm sorry" look on his face.

When writing on the dietary commandments, this story popped into my mind, because the giving of the dietary commandments is essentially the same story: God discovered His children putting that which was not food into their mouths, and he had to stop them. So, that is why this chapter is entitled *"Do Not Put Unfood In Mouth"*.

In the first part, I'm going to focus on the mechanics of the dietary commandments: what we can and cannot eat, and some of the reasons we think why. Notice I said we *think*. God doesn't tell us a reason *why* particular animals are clean and other particular animals are unclean. He essentially says, "This is what is clean to eat, because I said so, and I am God." Those of you who have raised or are raising children... how many times have you said similar things, "Do this" or "don't do that", "because I said so, and I am the parent"?"

In the second part, I will discuss some of the deeper lessons we can apply from the dietary commandments and address some objections to the dietary commandments people have raised based on statements in the Apostolic Writings.

Anyway, let's get started with a little terminology. The first word I want to teach you is **kashrut**, pronounced kosh-root, the first syllable has a short o sound, like fox. Go ahead and say these words when you read, so you can start to be comfortable with them. The pronunciations I give you are approximate, as not all of the sounds translate properly from Hebrew to English. This is a starting point.

Okay. **Kashrut** or "keeping kosher" is the name given to the traditional Jewish dietary laws. Food in accord with... here's another new word... **halakha**, pronounced hah-lah-kah. **Halakha** is the Hebrew term for "law" or the interpretation of the commandments. It literally means "going" or "the correct way", since it is the correct way to do the commandments. Now, there are different opinions as to what is proper **halakha** and what is not, usually based on the branches of traditional Judaism, so one might speak of Orthodox **halakha**, or Conservative **halakha**, or Reform **halakha**. Messianic Judaism is working on developing its own **halakha** as well. But for now, unless I say that it's Orthodox **halakha**, or Conservative **halakha**, or Reform **halakha**, or my own **halakha**, my own interpretation, you should assume I mean that this is the generally accepted interpretation by basically everyone. If it's something Messianics have decided upon, or the specific association I belong to – the Coalition of Torah Observant Messianic Congregations – has decided on, I'll tell you that as well.

Now, food in accord with **halakha** – anyone's **halakha**, this is a general term – is termed... **kosher** in English, from the Hebrew term **kasher** (kah-shur) ... from the Hebrew word meaning "fit" (in this context, fit for human consumption). Food not in accord with Jewish law is usually termed ... **treif** (pronounced trayf – basically the word "tray," like a serving tray, with an f on the end... think of F for a failing grade, and this food fails the test to be served on the tray), meaning "torn"; the term originally referred to animals (from a kosher species such as cattle or sheep) which had been either incorrectly slaughtered or mortally wounded by wild beasts and therefore were not fit for human consumption.

Okay, let's review before we go on. Interpretation of the commandments is... **halakha**. Food that is in accord with **halakha** is termed... **kosher**. Food that is **not** in accord with **halakha** is termed... **treif**. **Good!** You all get an "A" in your first lesson in Basic Hebrew Terms You Need To Know.

Alright, now that we know these words, let's talk about what animals are and are not food. We'll start with the land animals. In **Leviticus 11:1-8**, we read:

The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth. Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. 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. Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.'"

Okay, let's look at this. There are two requirements for a land animal to be **kosher**. They have to have a separate or divided or split hoof – also called a cloven hoof – and chew the cud. What does that mean? Well, cud is regurgitated, partially digested food<sup>25</sup>. You see, the most commonly-eaten of these animals – called bovines, they're cows and buffalo and similar animals – have extraordinary stomachs. It has four compartments. The first, Rumen, holds a large quantity of cud. Rumen cud contains microflora, which are useful for feed and fodder digestion. The second, Reticulum or the hardware stomach, is where accidental food, like a piece of fencing scrap, lodges; the third, Omasum, works as a filter of sorts and the fourth, the Abomasum, is like our stomach. In between these processes, the food comes back up and gets re-chewed so it can go on to the next process.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cud>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruminant>

Now that I have thoroughly spoiled your dinner... What purpose does all this serve? Well, it helps cows not to digest things that will make them sick. Only plants are cud. Kosher animals are mainly herbivores – plant-eaters – not carnivores (meat eaters) or omnivores (plant and meat eaters, like us). This is why cows who are fed meat get mad cow disease, because it is poison to them!

The other land animals that are kosher are the deer family, which includes deer, reindeer, and caribou; the antelope family, which includes antelope, goat, and – while not scientifically related, pronghorns; and – get this – some undulates, including giraffe and water buffalo. These also chew the cud, but not like the bovines, with the four stomach compartments. They have one chambered stomachs, but they still use cud-chewing to process their plant food so they don't eat that which is unhealthy to them!

What's the difference between **kosher** and **treif** land animals? Well, other than the obvious – **kosher** land animals have both cloven hooves and chew the cud, and **treif** land animals don't have both... they might have one or the other, or they might have neither, but a land animal has to have both to be kosher – **treif** land animals eat all sorts of nasty things. Take pigs, for example. Pigs eat all sorts of refuse, including their own bodily wastes. They're basically walking garbage disposals. That basically makes you not want to eat them again anyway, right?

Alright, let's continue with the fish, in **Leviticus 11:9-12**:

"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. 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, and they shall be abhorrent to you; you may not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall detest. Whatever in the water does not have fins and scales is abhorrent to you."

So, the rule is that they must have both fins and scales. This leaves in many commonly eaten fish today – like salmon, trout, snapper, saltwater cod, tuna, and a fish that has become popular recently, tilapia. Side note on tilapia: *Tilapia* species are native to Africa and the Levant, including the sea of Galilee, where according to legend Yeshua used it to feed the 5000 and the

fish Yeshua had Peter catch that had the silver shekel in its mouth to pay the Temple tax for the two of them, resulting in the nickname St. Peter's fish.

So, what fish aren't kosher? Well, all of your shellfish, and also Sturgeons, Beluga – including the caviar... only caviar from kosher fish is kosher – swordfish, catfish, freshwater cod, eels, octopus, squid, and lamprey... there are others, but those are the major ones. More complete lists of **kosher** and **treif** fish are available online.<sup>26</sup>

But what's the difference between **kosher** and **treif** fish? Well, other than the obvious – **kosher** fish have both fins and scales, and **treif** fish don't have both... they might have one or the other, or they might have neither, but a fish has to have both to be kosher – treif fish are all bottom-feeders. Remember what I said about pigs, how they're basically walking garbage disposals? Well, most of the **treif** fish are the garbage disposals of the water.

Now, let's talk about birds and other flying animals:

### Leviticus 11:13-19

"These, moreover, you shall detest among the birds; they are abhorrent, not to be eaten: the eagle and the vulture and the buzzard, and the kite and the falcon in its kind, every raven in its kind, and the ostrich and the owl and the sea gull and the hawk in its kind, and the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl, and the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture, and the stork, the heron in its kinds, and the hoopoe, and the bat."

Now, here we have something interesting. Unlike with land animals and fish, God doesn't specify characteristics of flying animals we can eat and characteristics of flying animals we can't eat, He simply names off those we cannot eat. But let's do a little thinking here. Given what you know about these flying animals and what we learned above about the differences between clean and unclean land and water animals, what do you think is the difference between these unclean flying animals and the flying animals that we know are clean, like chicken or turkey or goose or duck?

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/>,  
<http://www.crcweb.org/kosher/consumer/fishList.html>, and others



All of these unclean animals are scavengers. They eat other animals, primarily rodents, and they also consume other dangerous things, whereas clean flying animals eat primarily grains.

So, as you can see, the differences between the clean and the unclean animals are primarily what foods they eat and how they live... in short, clean and unclean. The rest of the commandments in Leviticus 11 are similarly about cleanliness. You can read them on your own and I think you'll see how much sense it all makes. I want to point out a couple of interesting things about eating only clean animals.

First off, let's look quickly at the Apostolic Writings. Specifically, in both Matthew and Mark, we read the exact same description of Yochanan the Prophet – also known as John the Baptist – in Matthew 3:4 and Mark 1:6: "John wore clothes of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; he ate locusts and wild honey." Well, of course he could eat locusts! It says so right in Leviticus 11!

Secondly, studies have shown that a **kosher** diet is healthy, much healthier than eating food like pork that is not healthy. People who eat **treif** animals or who eat **kosher** animals that are not kept clean and prepared cleanly are susceptible to all sorts of diseases. In Exodus 15:26, God says, And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." This is a perfect example of that! You're not going to get trichinosis, for example, if you don't eat animals like pigs that carry it! As my brother Brian said as a kid, they call it "tricky noses" because pigs have weird noses.

But, most importantly, animals like pigs that are unclean are not considered food by God, and therefore, if you want to live by God's standards, you should not consider them to be food either, should you? And, as that Cambodian mother said – and as my mother loves to quote, "Do not put unfood in mouth!"

## The Deeper Meanings of Clean & Unclean

Now, because we're dealing with deeper meanings of a commandment, I wanted to start off with a few more terms you should know, because sometimes people think when you get into "deeper meanings," it cancels out the literal meaning, and in Jewish scriptural exegesis, that's just not the case. Oh, there's a good word to start with. Exegesis (ex-uh-gee-sis). This is not a Hebrew word, but it's an important word for you to know.

Exegesis is defined as "an explanation or critical interpretation of a text." In other words, it's a fancy term for explanation. Like lots of professionals, theologians like to use fancy terms no one outside their field understands so they can sound smarter than non-professionals... but I'm going to explain some fancy theological terms so you can be one up on those snooty theologians!

In traditional Jewish exegesis, there are four levels of meaning. We're going to cover the first three briefly. The first level of understanding is **pashat** (pah-shot, a short o sound on the second syllable). **Pashat** means "simple".

The **Pashat** is the literal meaning of the text. The **Pashat** is the plain, simple meaning of the text; understanding scripture in its natural, normal sense using the customary meanings of the words being used. This is in accordance with the primary rule of exegesis in the **Talmud** that no passage loses its **pashat**. While there is figurative language, symbolism, allegory, and hidden meanings in the Scriptures, the first thing to look for is the literal meaning or **pashat**.

I realized I used another term there some of you might not know. That is **Talmud** (first syllable is "tall," like a person with height, and the second syllable rhymes with "good," not "mood" or "mud"). Okay, let's all say it. **Talmud**. **Talmud** literally means "study," but when I talk about **THE Talmud**, I am referring to the collection of Jewish commentary on the Scriptures that traditional Judaism has exalted to the status of law. There is much in the **Talmud** that is wise and worthy of our attention. The concept of the four levels of meaning is one example. There's also a lot in there that is not so good, and in fact that is what Yeshua talked about when He castigated people for legalism. Remember, the Scriptures are our first source for what is commanded by God. But when we are looking to understand the meaning of the Scriptures, we may look beyond to commentaries written by men, one collection of which is the Jewish legal work called **Talmud**.

Now, the second level of meaning is called **remez** (reh-mehz). **Remez** means hint. This is the implied meaning of the text. Sometimes we find peculiarities in the text, and they are regarded as hinting at a deeper truth than that conveyed by its **pashat**. An example is last week when I listed the birds that were clean to eat.

This is implied by the fact of the list of birds that are **treif**, are not **kosher**, and we realize that the similarity between all of them is that they are scavengers, birds of prey. From that we can imply that birds that are not birds of prey are generally **kosher**. While it may seem a simple matter of the literal meaning of the text, this is an implied meaning that goes along with the literal meaning, so it's not **pashat**, it is **remez**.

The third level of understanding the Scriptures is called in Hebrew **drash** (pronounced like it's spelled, like rash with a d on the front). **Drash** means *search*. This is the allegorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. Creativity is used to search the text in relation to the rest of the Scriptures, other literature, or life itself in order to develop an allegorical, typological or homiletical application of the text. This is the level of understanding I am going to attempt to bring to the dietary commandments today, the allegorical application, the **drash**.

That word may sound familiar to you. If you've ever heard of **Midrash**, which are stories the rabbis told based on Biblical passages that don't give a lot of detail. The **Midrash** would give an application of the passages.

Anyway, I'm going to give a **drash** on the dietary commandments. First, let's look back at Leviticus 11:1-8. This is the quintessential bit of dietary commandment. It symbolizes the entire chapter:

## Leviticus 11:1-8

The LORD spoke again to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them, "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'These are the creatures which you may eat from all the animals that are on the earth. Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat. 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. Likewise, the shaphan, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.'"

We are given two requirements for the land animal to be **kosher**. It must chew the cud and have a cloven hoof. What is striking is that these requirements look both internally and externally. The outside of the animal is the hoof. But what's inside is the chewing of the cud. In other words, to be **kosher**, the animal must have both the internal and the external cleanness. It's not just about what we see on the outside that makes a difference.

This is a lesson Peter learns in Acts 10, which is probably one of the most misunderstood passages in the entire Bible. Acts 10 is usually cited as an order from "Jesus" not to keep the dietary commandments. What people have to realize is that, when God gives His servants visions, if God doesn't give the servant the meaning directly, the one He gives the vision to will state, later in the passage, what it means. Let's look at the passage:

## Acts 10:1-6

Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"

And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

What do we know about Cornelius from this passage? From being told that he was a God-fearer and that he was praying at three in the afternoon (the ninth hour of daylight), which was about the time of the afternoon prayer service in the Temple, the **Mincha** service, we can piece together that he was what is called a "Righteous Gentile." He lived according to God's commandments. This was not terribly uncommon among the officers who served in Israel. However, as we'll see later, that does not mean they were accepted by the Jews. So, we pick up this story the next day about noon, as the men are still on their way to Joppa to find Shimon Kefa, or as you know him by the Greek version of his name, Simon Peter. We continue:

### **Acts 10:9-16**

On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

Now this is where traditional Christian analysis of this passage ends. The Pastor closes the Bible and says, "There you see, the dietary commandments are done away with! Now, let's go have a ham and cheese sandwich." However, as we know, Peter's analysis still has not been given, and I

personally would give more weight to his analysis than the average pastor's, wouldn't you? Let's continue with this passage:

### **Acts 10:17-28a**

Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself."

Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"

They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you." So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man." As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him..."

What Peter is referring to here is the practice among Jews of the day not to mix with non-Jews, because it was felt this would make you unclean, because those people were unclean, even if they kept God's commandments, as Peter himself talks about later. Pretty bigoted, isn't it? Yes, amazing as it may seem, Jews are human beings, flawed like everyone else. Comes as a shock, doesn't it? Well, anyway, I left off in the middle of a verse, and now

we get to Peter's interpretation of the vision he has received. I'll back up a little to put this in perspective:

### **Acts 10:27-28**

As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, "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.*

Note the emphasis I've added. Peter is telling us that his vision is not about food, it's about people! What was God's message? What God said was, "Stop treating as unclean what God *has made* clean." What is Peter's interpretation of this?

### **Acts 10:34-36**

Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation *the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.* The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all).

Yes, that is the message here that God has used the clean and unclean animals as an allegory for: that those who fear Him (have faith in Him) and do what is right (keep Torah) is acceptable, no matter what people he belongs to. Now, that does not mean Torah observance is required for salvation. Let's leave the Acts passage for a minute and take a quick look at another one:

### **Matthew 5:13-20**

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not

the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."

So, we know that keeping the commandments is what determines whether we will be first or last in the Kingdom, but all those who have faith in Yeshua as Messiah will be there. But this was not well understood by everyone at the time of the Acts passage. There was a group in the Sect of the Nazarene – which is what the followers of Yeshua were called at the time – who believed that a Gentile had to convert to Judaism before they could accept Messiah! These people were known as the Circumcision faction, because the final part of converting to Judaism for a man is for him to be circumcised. Anyway, the Acts passage continues with a powerful rebuke of the Circumcision faction:

### **Acts 10:44-48a**

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. The members of the Circumcision Faction<sup>27</sup> who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, this event didn't shut down the Circumcision Faction; it just dumbfounded them for awhile. Later, in Acts 15, we read of the big confrontation in which they were finally shut down. So, now, we see that God calls His people – whether they are Jewish or not – to keep Torah, and that it is not our place to call unclean those whom God has called clean. In

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<sup>27</sup> Most translations say "the circumcised Believers" or something similar, but we know this cannot be an accurate translation, as all of the Believers at this time were Jews, all of whom would've been circumcised. Thus, contextually with the rest of Acts – particularly with the next chapter and Acts 15 – I have rendered it this way, the translation used in Dr. David Stern's "Complete Jewish Bible" and "Jewish New Testament" versions.



other words, it's not our place to judge another person's status as a Believer based on their background. God makes this point very clearly in:

### **Isaiah 6:1-10**

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.

Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim , Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

God's so upset he's speaking sarcastically here. He's saying that "this people," the Jews, God's chosen people, are not clean! God had to send a seraphim with a burning coal to make Isaiah clean! God did this because Isaiah repented. Isaiah's internal repentance brought him to the point where God could make him fully clean, both inside and outside. You will notice that the seraphim touched Isaiah's lips, not his heart! Both the inside and the outside had to be made clean, so Isaiah could be made ready to be used by God! Only then could he say, "I am here, Lord, send me!"

That's what it means to be clean! That's what it means to be sanctified! You must first have faith in God as your deliverance. That redeems you; that saves you. Then you must learn to live by His Word, His Commandments, and be ready to repent, to make t'shuvah, to turn back to the path of His Commandments. That sanctifies you; that makes you clean! That makes you ready for use by God! And that is the deeper lesson we find today in the dietary commandments – not setting aside the basic lesson of what is ***kosher*** to eat and what is ***treif***.

## Chapter Ten

### Even If You Don't Like Gefilte Fish & Chopped Liver

Someone who joined my congregation awhile back told me she was reluctant to become Torah Observant, especially keeping the dietary commandments, because, she said, she'd tried a lot of Jewish food and while some of it was okay, she really didn't like Gefilte fish, chopped liver, and most other typical Jewish dishes in general. I couldn't control myself; I laughed out loud. I then quickly assured her that I wasn't laughing at her, and that what she'd experienced was not only even close to all of the styles of Jewish cuisine – only the Eastern European bit of it. But there are Torah Observers in every culture, I explained further, and they use many of the same recipes as others of their ethnicity who don't keep the dietary commandments, simply adapting the ingredients and preparation to the Commandments when necessary.

Hey, while I love most, if not all, of the Eastern European Jewish food, when I get a chance to make something special, I usually make a big pot of spicy chili, not Chicken Soup with Matzah Balls! Maybe it's growing up in California, but I love Mexican and Tex-Mex food...

Let me tell you a true story. Shortly before my congregation began holding our **Erev Shabbat** (Sabbath Evening – Friday night) services, one of our congregants generously donated a beautiful Temple-style menorah to the congregation. Well, that excited me. I said, "We're going to use that for the Erev Shabbat candle-lighting, it's beautiful." Another congregant came up to me and said, "Wait, isn't that wrong? I thought you were supposed to light only two candles for Shabbat." Many people in Messianic circles think that, because most of the founders of the Messianic movement came from the families in which that was the tradition... in other words, from a particular large segment of European Jewish society.

I've had to explain – several times – that there are many, many traditions in Judaism about the Sabbath candles. One is, indeed, to light two, and because of the massive influx of those particular Ashkenazi Jews into America in the early to mid twentieth century, it has been supposed this is **THE** way to do it. In fact, that was what **\*I\*** thought for quite some time. In doing some research, I found that there are many other traditions: some say you should light one candle, for the One God Most High. Others say you should light three, for the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Others say you should light four, for the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

Others say you should light as many candles as there are people participating – that's one I'd like to do someday, outside, with a whole congregation or conference of people lighting their candles, there as sun goes down. Another tradition is to light either seven separate candles in memory of the Temple menorah or to light seven candles in a Temple-style menorah, which of course has become our tradition here. But it doesn't matter. I happen to think seven is the most appropriate, because it symbolizes Shabbat, and is the number of completeness. We could keep any of the traditions, all of the traditions at some point, or none of the traditions particularly. We simply should know **WHY** we do it.

One other problem with the traditions is that many non-Jewish Messianics think they should keep the traditions because that's the way the Jews have done it, and because to us was entrusted the Oracles of God (Romans 3:1-2) we must know what we're doing, so they should look, dress, and act like we do... without knowing **WHY**, and being convinced in their own mind. This is bad on many fronts. First off, if you do that, you are operating in ignorance, and we are exiled and die from lack of knowledge – Isaiah 5:13 and Hosea 4:6. If you want to know why Jews push learning, those verses are one big reason.

In his book, "The Mystery of the Gospel," author D. Thomas Lancaster shows that the reason Paul taught against circumcision by new Believers from among the nations was because they did it in ignorance. They did it merely because they were being told they had to do it to get saved, and not because they'd earnestly searched the Scriptures and come to the conclusion that that this is what God desires of His People. They did it for the wrong reasons, and it put up a stumbling block to their salvation.

But another problem with the traditions is, when non-Jews keep traditions around us, sometimes it seems like they're doing it in a phony manner to get in good with us and, maybe, God. Let me give you another example by telling another story. I was heavily involved in politics for quite some time. Early on in my political exploits, I wore a kippah for the first time to a political event, because it was the first formal dress political event I'd been to, and my notions of formal dress included the kippah. Of course, now my notions of not-so-formal dress include the kippah too, but not then. Anyway, one politician I knew but was not particularly close to – I will not say who, but he was a Fresno City Councilman at the time – saw me and greeted me with “Shalom.” No big deal, he saw the kippah (yarmulke, skullcap), and maybe it was his way of saying, “I didn’t realize you were Jewish,” though how that’s possible from knowing me even slightly, I don’t know. I respectfully said, “Shalom, Mr. Councilman,” and he lit up.

Well, from then on, no matter where, no matter what the occasion, he greeted me with a very loud “**SHALOM!**” When this brought about the glare of the local Chabad Rabbi at one event, I decided enough was enough. What had started out as a seemingly innocent desire to reach out had become patronizing. So I replied, “Howdy!” I started doing that every time. He didn’t get it, and I didn’t want to alienate someone who was becoming as important as he was by saying, “You know, that’s getting excessive.”

On the other hand, while I’ve not been a paragon of Jewish tradition myself, we read in:

### **Deuteronomy 18:9-14**

When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you {to do} so.

Now, I have never done those things – in fact, I teach against them – but this passage is also used as a cry against assimilation. And I have done that... how else can you explain my fascination for chili-making, karaoke, and country and rock-n-roll? Now, among my congregants, only my parents are likely to define those last few as the detestable things of the nations around us, but I've still assimilated a bit. Should I embrace more Jewish tradition? Not necessarily, but yeah, I probably should.

Should you embrace more Jewish tradition? Maybe. But don't make two big mistakes: The first is, don't confuse a particular branch of Ashkenazi Judaism for all of Judaism. We have traditions from all over the world. Many of them may even fit in with your own background! And the second one is, don't forsake your own traditions, as long as they do not violate Torah. After all, as I told my congregation, if you all become no different than my family, who is going to bring cheese borag (an Armenian dish) for Oneg? Who is going to invite me over for chicken mole (a Mexican dish)? Those were **NOT** hints. They were **EXAMPLES**. They were examples of the wonderful tapestry of tradition that has been woven in each of your upbringings. You bring the borag, you bring the mole, we'll bring the chicken soup. Okay, Mom will bring the chicken soup, I'll bring the chili.

# **Part C**

# **God's**

# **Calendar**

## **Introduction:**

### **God's Appointed Times, Not Ours**

Many of my readers may work or have worked in service industries. People who work in service industries know the importance of appointments. You live and die on keeping set times when you are working, giving your service to others. And even if you don't, you probably work for a boss who will set appointments to meet with you at various times, or you have staff meetings you have to attend at certain set times. Well, living a life in service to God – as all those who claim to be Believers are supposed to do – is being a part of a service industry.

And just as the 10:00AM appointment every Friday is essential to the life of the beautician, so are the appointments God has made with us essential to the life of the Believer. These are Divine Appointments, God's Appointed Times. If you cannot decide to not keep your appointments and stay in business (or keep your job), how much worse is it not to keep your appointments with God?

The first day of Nissan was and always remains a historic day for the Jewish nation. It was the day when the people received their first commandment as a nation: Sanctify the New Moon.

This ritual has a profound spiritual and historic significance. It is noteworthy that it was one of three commandments that the Syrian Greeks, in the time before the Chanukah miracle, attempted to nullify by force. The other two were the Observance of Shabbat and Circumcision. Clearly, therefore, Israel's enemies understood that the sanctification of the New Moon was basic to the existence of Israel as a nation of Torah.

Commentators explain that, by virtue of this Commandment, God gave the Jewish people mastery over time. From that moment onward, the calendar with its cycle of festivals could exist only when the Sages of Israel declared the New Month. This signifies more than control over the reckoning of time, the dating of legal documents, and all the banalities to which man is subject in his everyday life. It represents the potential for renewal.



The Assembly of the LORD – God’s Redeemed People – is symbolized by the moon because, although the moon wanes, it waxes as well. It stands for hope, for the confidence that there is a future as well as a past. This vibrancy assures that any conquest of the Jewish people can never be more than temporary. Israel may seem to disappear from the panorama of history - but so does the moon.

The moon returns - and Israel, by means of the power vested in it by the Torah, sanctifies the New Month. So, too, the nation constantly renews its vigor, constantly defies the laws of history that insist it should have long since become extinct, constantly demonstrates its ability to make itself the vehicle for the prophecies of redemption and a greater spiritual world.

What does this mean for us in light of the message of Messiah? Yeshua berated the Pharisees and the Saducees in today’s reading for not reading the signs of the times. To what signs could He have been referring? Could He have meant that they were missing the plain fact of His Messiahship, from knowing the prophecies and being about to read the signs in front of their faces? What are the signs of the times that they are missing?

In a literal sense, the signs of the times are the phases of the moon and how they show us the calendar of God. In a less literal sense, the calendar of God is an ongoing sign for us. While the holidays have had literal fulfillments and also have prophetic fulfillments, they also have fulfillments in our lives, if we can simply read the signs.

On this date of renewal, the New Moons, our ancestors were given specific sacrifices to perform, and were told to sanctify this as the beginning of our months, and thus of our renewing. But what, precisely, is this a renewal of? Just the calendar?

God’s Calendar is one of the strongest ties we have to Him. It tells us that, no matter what the world thinks or does, we will meet with Him on the Shabbat, on the Seventh Day, a day set aside for praise, worship, and rest. It tells us that, no matter what the world thinks or does, we will commemorate the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and the resurrection of the final Paschal Lamb on the first first day of the week following the first Shabbat after Passover. It tells us that, no matter what the world thinks or does, we do not celebrate the birthday of our Messiah on the day of a pagan god’s birth, but on the first day of Sukkot. It marks us as different, as set

apart, as holy. It is a living and perfect cycle, after the fashion of its Creator. At this time, our relationship to God's Calendar – and thus our relationship to Him – is renewed. To do this, we must read the signs of the times before us.

## Chapter Eleven

### *Kosher Hog – An Overview of God's Appointed Times*

God's Appointed Times are times of joy and gladness. Even the mournful fast of **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement) ends with a feast to celebrate God's provision. So, the first thing I wish to teach you in this festival overview is the festival greeting: "**Chag Same'ach**", or "Joyful Feast!" Let's break that down a bit. "**Same'ach**" means "joyful" or "contented." There is a game Jewish children game called the wishing game, where every child says that if they could have anything in the world, they would have... whatever it is they want. And at the end, they say, "**Same'ach B'chelko**," which means, "We are contented (or happy or joyful) with our lot."

The other word is the word I had some fun with in naming this chapter, which I've called "**Kosher Hog**." The Hebrew word spelled in English transliteration **C-h-a-g** is pronounced "hog," like the swine. But it means "festival" or "feast". Thus, the festivals are the only kosher hog you get!

Anyway, let's talk about the Holy Festivals of Israel. There are two beginnings to the Jewish festival calendar. The Hebrew month of **Nisan** (about mid-March to mid-April on the Gregorian calendar, which is the one in common usage) when Passover comes, is the first month, according to Scripture. However, the Hebrew calendar years are counted from the seventh month, **Tishri** (about mid-September to mid-October). This is because, I believe, that both beginnings of the "year" are times when, in addition to celebrating, we are called to repent of that which we've done wrong.

So, in this chapter, we will go through the festivals in the order of what is known as the "liturgical year," starting with the month of Tishri. In the in-depth explanations of the festivals, however, we will go through the festivals in the order of what I would call the religious year or the Scriptural year, starting with the month of Nisan. In this way, you will experience the duality of the Hebrew year encapsulated into this book.

## The Fall Feasts

The first festival is commonly known as **Rosh Hashanah** or "Head of the Year" in English, but it is more properly called **Yom Teruah**, or in English "Day of Blowing" (the trumpets). We are commanded to keep this festival in:

### Leviticus 23:23-25

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.'"

This is all we are commanded about this festival. We are not told what we are to remember, we are not told what to call it. We are told merely to remember, and we are told to have a holy convocation announced with blasts on the **Shofar** (the ram's horn trumpet), and we are told not to do any kind of ordinary or wage work, and we are told to bring an offering made by fire to God. That last part is from when there was a Temple.

So, from the Scripture, we can see why this holiday would've come to be called "the Day of Blowing" the trumpets. But where did the "head of the year" come from? Well, according to ancient tradition, this is the day the first man was created and began to live in the garden. Thus, the calendar years are figured from this date, despite the commandment that the month of Aviv (now Nisan) is to be the first of the months. This "new year" is the new civil year. (Whether or not Scripture agrees with this duality is a matter of some debate.)

There are, in fact, four "new years" in the Hebrew calendar: the civil new year, figured from the first day of the month of Tishri – also known as "Yom Teruah" or "Rosh Hashanah." There is also the religious new year, figured from the first day of the month of Nisan, in keeping with the commandment

in Exodus 12:1-2: “Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ‘This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.’”

There is also a traditional holiday, the New Year for Trees, called **Tu B'shvat**, or the 15th of the month of **Sh'vat**. This is the date from which the age of trees were figured in terms of when the offerings from their harvest were to be given. And finally, there is the royal new year, which dates from whenever the presently-serving king of Israel – when there was such – was crowned.

So, anyway, back to Rosh Hashanah or Yom Teruah. How do we keep the festival? When asking that question, we must start with this question: What are we **commanded** to do on this festival? At the risk of repeating myself:

### **Leviticus 23:23-25**

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.'"

We are told to remember, we are told to have a holy convocation announced with blasts on the shofar, and we are told not to do any kind of ordinary or wage work. The last part, about the offering made by fire, is from when there was a Temple, and so cannot be kept today. But the others are fairly obvious: don't work, rejoice, remember, come to a service, and hear the shofar sound. The deeper meaning of it all... well, you'll have to read the chapter on Yom Teruah (chapter eighteen) to learn that...

So, next we have **Yom Kippur**, as we read in:

### **Leviticus 23:26-32**

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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 the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the

LORD your God. If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 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."

"Yom Kippur" means "Day of Atonement." It is the day when, according to tradition, the sins of Israel were forgiven and names written in the Book of Life or the Book of Death (also known respectively as the Book of Blessing and the Book of Curses... or, semi-humorously, the Book of Not-so-Much-Blessing) for the coming year. In fact, a common greeting among Jews this time of year is "**Le-Shanah Tovah Tikatevu**," meaning "May you be inscribed for a good year," or simply "**Le-Shanah Tovah**" (for a good year).

But what are we commanded to do on Yom Kippur? Again, you are not to work. Next, you are to "deny yourself" or "afflict your soul," depending on the accuracy of your translation. What this means is fasting. Significantly, this is the **ONLY** commanded fast in the Scriptures. That is not to say you cannot or should not do it at other times, but this is the only time it's **COMMANDED**. Also, you are to have a holy convocation, a service in the assembly of other Believers. And, again, an offering made by fire, but again, that's no longer in force without a Temple.

So, that's it: do no work, fast, and have a holy convocation. Fairly simple and straight-forward, isn't it? As for the deeper meaning of it all... well, you'll have to come to services on Yom Kippur to learn that... getting to be like a recording, isn't it? Say it with me next time!

Between these two holidays, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, are a week and a half known as "The Days of Awe." These are a count-down to the Day of Atonement. For the couple of months prior to Rosh Hashanah, you're supposed to try to go back and give forgiveness to those you have withheld forgiveness from and seek to make amends and receive forgiveness from those you have hurt.

During The Days of Awe, this process goes into overdrive, since the time is getting very short in which to forgive and be forgiven, because to the traditional Jew – the Jew who does not know the surety of salvation in Messiah – their life, their blessing, their salvation is all bound up in being inscribed in the Book of Life for the coming year. Even though we, as Believers, know that we are inscribed in the Lamb's Book of Life for eternity, the process of forgiving others and seeking to make amends and get forgiveness is an important process, and the tradition gives you a special yearly opportunity to do it; so I encourage you to take part in the tradition, even though it is not needed for your salvation.

The next holiday in the Fall Feasts is **Chag Sukkot** – or simply called Sukkot – meaning the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths (again, depending on your translation), as we read in:

### **Leviticus 23:33-43**

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. On the first day is a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work of any kind. For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD – burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day's matter on its own day – besides those of the Sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

‘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 the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 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 the LORD your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, 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 the LORD your God.””

That one was a longee, wasn't it? Let's break it down a bit more... on the fifteenth of the month of Tishri, we begin an eight-day festival when we are commanded, essentially, to camp out! This is a celebration of the land God has given us and the harvest of that land, and a remembrance of when the Israelites lived in temporary dwellings while wondering through the wilderness for forty years. While this can be very difficult for us nowadays – in fact, the rabbi's traditions say that old people, young children, the infirm, and anyone else who is likely to become sick or be hurt by sleeping outside or on the ground is exempt – it is definitely possible.

Both because the Messianic movement has brought about a renewed zealousness for the Torah and because the prophet Zechariah teaches us that the nations will come to Jerusalem during the Messianic Kingdom where all will celebrate Sukkot... and because of a renewed understanding that Sukkot is when Messiah was born to Mary (see chapter twenty)... Sukkot has recently become a festival among Messianics again celebrated by actually **LIVING** in temporary dwellings – tents, booths, RVs, etc. – for eight days. Traditional Judaism nowadays says you fulfill this commandment by simply eating a meal or spending some time in the Sukkah booth... but that's not what the commandment says.

I know I slipped in a big one there, about the Birth of Messiah. Although I will explain in more depth in Chapter Twenty, I will say that that statement is based on actual statements in Scripture about the conception and birth of John the Baptist and of Yeshua.

Anyway, another commandment we read there is that the first and last day of this festival are, again, days of no work, days when you hold holy convocations or services. Additionally, we are told to bring four species of plant life – choice fruit, palm fronds, thick branches and river-willows – as a wave offering before God. Although this, too, is literally from the Temple, it is something we can keep and do. Each of the four species has a special meaning, which we will discuss on Sukkot.

Also during this festival, we are commanded to all bring a special tithe and the men a special offering. I didn't quote this, because it is literally



something from the Temple that we cannot do literally today. However, let me quote the appropriate passages of Deuteronomy for you:

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-26**

You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.

In other words, set aside one-tenth of your income, and save it for a big party every year on Sukkot, to remind us that God is good, that He provides all of our needs! Isn't that wonderful! I'd like to see Believers really start taking this to heart and make Sukkot this sort of festival.

And now, the other commandment from Deuteronomy... and this is not just for Sukkot:

### **Deuteronomy 16:16-17**

Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Again, literally, this is a commandment for the Temple – which is what is meant by "the place God will choose for His Name to dwell" which we read throughout Torah – but it is something we can do today anyway... every man

among us can give a special freewill offering to the service of God on these three festivals.

At the conclusion of the festival is a traditional holiday called "**Simchat Torah**," or "Joy of Torah," which marks the end and the beginning of the Torah reading cycle. The Torah scroll is taken from the ark in the Synagogue, the final chapter of Deuteronomy is read from it, it is rewound to the beginning of the scroll, the first chapter of Genesis is read, and then the worshippers dance around the synagogue with the Torah scroll, and everyone is given a chance to put a kiss on the cover. It is said that this kiss is your "signature," that you accept the Covenant with the LORD.

## **The Winter Triumphs**

As celebrated today, the first one is based not on a section of Scripture but on an historical event recorded in traditional writings known as the Books of the Maccabees. **Chag Hanukkah** – or simply "Hanukkah," the Feast of Dedication [of the Temple] – celebrates when an army of Jews overthrew their Greek oppressors and cleansed and rededicated the Temple, which the Greeks had turned into a pagan house of worship. Yeshua is depicted as celebrating this festival in the book of John, and it is against the backdrop of the Temple all lit up with the lights of Hanukkah that Yeshua said, "I am the Light of the World."

Hanukkah is celebrated as an eight-day festival like Sukkot, because it was not possible to celebrate Sukkot at the Temple during the years the Greeks occupied it, so Hanukkah was conceived as a "second Sukkot." We celebrate it in many ways, but I'll mention two: The first is lighting a special eight-branched menorah (one candle for each night). The second is eating foods fried in olive oil. These are to commemorate the legend of the Temple menorah. According to this legend – which we are not sure is true or not – to rededicate the Temple, they needed specially prepared olive oil for the Temple menorah, which was an oil lampstand, not a candlestick. During the cleansing of the Temple, the legend tells us they found only one cruse of the special olive oil, enough for only one day of light, and it would take eight days for them to get more made. The legend tells us they decided to go ahead and light the menorah anyway and simply wait to relight it when there was more oil available, but the one-day's worth of oil lasted for a full eight days, until new oil was ready. This legend is why Hanukkah is called a festival of lights.

In the chapter that deals with Hanukkah (twenty-one), I will get into more depth on this festival, including its possible Biblical origins in the historical accounts of the Tanakh (Old Testament).

The other “Winter Triumph” is **Chag Purim** – or simply Purim, literally the Feast of Lots [Casting], also known as the Feast of Esther – which is a Biblically-commanded holiday, commemorating the events recorded in the Scroll of Esther. In chapter nine of Esther, we are given a summation of the story and the command to celebrate it:

### **Esther 9:20-34 (CJB)**

Mordekhai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all the provinces of King Achashverosh, both near and far, instructing them to observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day, every year, [to commemorate] the days on which the Jews obtained rest from their enemies and the month which for them was turned from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday; they were to make them days of celebrating and rejoicing, sending portions [of food] to each other and giving gifts to the poor. So the Jews took it upon themselves to continue what they had already begun to do, and as Mordekhai had written to them; because Haman the son of Hamdata the Agagi, the enemy of the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had thrown pur (that is, "cast lots") to crush and destroy them; but when Ester came before the king, he ordered by letters that [Haman's] wicked scheme, which he had plotted against the Jews, should recoil on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. This is why these days have been called Purim, after the word pur. Thus, because of everything written in this letter, and what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had come upon them, the Jews resolved and took upon themselves, their descendants and all who might join them that without fail they would observe these two days in accordance with what was written in [this letter] and at the appointed time, every year; and that these days would be remembered and observed throughout every generation, every family, every province and every city; and that these days of Purim would never cease among the Jews or their memory be lost by their descendants. Then Ester the queen, the daughter of Avichayil, and Mordekhai the Jew, gave full written authority to confirm a second letter about Purim. He sent copies of it to all the Jews, to the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Achashverosh, ensuring their peace and security and requiring the observance of these days of Purim at their

designated times, as Mordekhai the Jew and Ester the queen had enjoined them, and as they had established for themselves and their descendants concerning the matters of fasting and lamenting. At Ester's order these matters of Purim were confirmed and put in writing in the book.

Although some will say that there is no Scriptural command for Purim, I disagree. I believe we see commandments in this passage: commemorate the victory with celebration and rejoicing, send each other packages of food, and give gifts to the poor. Sounds great, doesn't it?

## **The Spring Feasts**

Let's begin by discussing possibly the best-known festival, ***Chag Pesach*** or the Feast of Passover. We read in:

### **Leviticus 23:5**

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover.

Pesach is the memorial of the Exodus from Egypt, as we read in:

### **Exodus 12:3-6**

Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, "On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

Before we get into Passover, let me discuss an important day leading up to it. Nisan 10 – "the tenth day of this month" as the verse says – is the day of the Inclusion of the Lamb. This is the day when each family would pick its Passover lamb, being careful to pick one without defect. It's a project the whole family is involved in, because the lamb must be carefully inspected

before being chosen. If we go back to the year Yeshua was crucified, what important event do you think happened on Nisan 10? Yeshua entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. He was inspected by the crowd and found worthy to be their Paschal Lamb! They waved palm branches and cheered His entry into the city. You've probably heard this story before, but you may never have heard of its connection to the Inclusion of the Lamb, since it's not taught in most churches.

So, anyway, on the Passover, we commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. The Scriptures – in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy – tell us we are to keep the Passover in the way the Israelites did on the night of the Exodus: we are to eat lamb with unleavened bread – generally the traditional matzah – and with bitter herbs; we are to eat dressed and ready for a journey; and we are to talk of the Exodus from Egypt, to tell our children, so they will know how God brought Israel out of Egypt.

Now, modern Judaism speaks of Passover as an eight-day festival. But that is not so. Passover is one night. The next night begins **Chag Matzah** or the Festival of Unleavened Bread. They are, in fact, two different festivals with two different meanings. We read about the Festival of Unleavened Bread in:

### **Leviticus 23:6-8**

Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. But for seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins and ends with a holy convocation on a festival day of rest, days in which no ordinary or wage work is to be done. For the seven days, we are commanded to eat no leavened products; again, this commandment is found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It's not required that you eat matzah per se – you can bake unleavened bread that is not crackerbread. The stringent requirements placed on Passover matzah by mainstream Judaism are not, strictly speaking, Scriptural. They are additions.

Now, I told you that mainstream Judaism treats Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread as one festival. But there is a Biblically-commanded festival – **Yom HaBikkurim** or Day of the First Fruits [of the Barley Harvest] – that modern Judaism completely ignores. Why? Well, I would suggest because it occurs on the first day of the week following Passover... which is when Yeshua rose from the grave. They don't want to call attention to the day "Christians" proclaim as the Resurrection Day of the "man" the Apostolic Writings refer to as "The First Fruits of those who have fallen asleep"! (We would view the actual time He rose as Saturday afternoon/evening, which will be explained in the chapter about Yom HaBikkurim, chapter sixteen.)

So, what is the Day of First Fruits? It is the celebration marking the beginning of the Barley Harvest, as we read in:

### **Leviticus 23:9-14**

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 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 the LORD. Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. 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.

So, we have a holy convocation in which an offering of the sheaf of the first fruits of the barley harvest are waved before God. The other requirements cannot be done without a Temple, but God tells us this is to be done forever, no matter where we live... thus we see we must keep this festival, even though modern Judaism ignores it. And we know why we were commanded to keep it... as a celebration of the resurrection of Messiah!

Usually, First Fruits occurs sometime in the middle of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. We continue the Festival during and after First Fruits,

but after First Fruits we begin counting days towards the next festival, **Chag Shavuot** or the Feast of Weeks, as we read in:

### **Leviticus 23:15-22**

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. You shall count fifty days...

As a side note, modern Judaism – since it does not celebrate First Fruits – starts this count on Nisan 15, the day after Passover. In my congregation, however, we keep the count as the Scripture commands, not how the rabbis have changed it!

You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the LORD. 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 the LORD. 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 the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be holy to the LORD for the priest. 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. 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 the LORD your God.

You will notice that it references "first fruits." In addition to being the Feast of Weeks, this is also another First Fruits celebration, the First Fruits of the Wheat Harvest. There is another First Fruits celebration, the First Fruits of the Fall Harvest, Sukkot. You will notice that these correspond to the three festivals where Israelite men were to present themselves with an offering before God.

So, the commandment here is to count fifty days from **Yom HaBikkurim**, and on the fiftieth day to bring two challah (a wonderful egg bread made by many bakeries – ask your local baker for it!) loaves to wave before God. This is also a holy convocation and a festival day of rest. The other commandments specifically about **Shavuot** are Temple commandments and thus cannot be done today.

There is a final commandment in this section, “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 the LORD your God.” I don't know that there are any farmers reading this, but there's a good principle here: that which God gives you, some part of it should be given to the poor and less fortunate. Now, what follows isn't Scripture, and it isn't a commandment, but it is simply something I have come up with: one way of keeping this commandment is to set aside all the change left over from my financial transactions and donate that money to the poor and less fortunate. In my congregation, we collect change for Children's Hospital of Central California, and present it to them at their annual Radiothon. In fact, it is this verse that was my inspiration to suggest to my congregation's Steering Committee that we collect Change for Children's year round.

My final note on **Shavuot**; you probably have kept this Festival in some way most of your life, without even knowing it. Remember it is fifty days after First Fruits. The Greek term for the fiftieth day is Pentecost. You may have heard this word before!

## **Other Times of the LORD**

Those are the major yearly holidays. Now, let's discuss some other holidays – some are minor yearly ones, but others are major holidays that come more often. The first one is the first of the Hebrew month Nisan. Nisan was originally Aviv, which means "Barley," because it was the month in which the barley ripened and was harvested in Israel. God proclaimed this day as the beginning of the religious year in:

### **Exodus 12:1-2 (CJB)**

ADONAI spoke to Moshe and Aharon in the land of Egypt; he said, "You are to begin your calendar with this month; it will be the first month of the year for you.



This also makes it the first **Rosh Chodesh** of the religious year. **Rosh Chodesh** is commanded as a celebration in Numbers 28, and we are commanded to blow the shofar on this and other holidays in:

### **Numbers 10:1-10**

The LORD spoke further to Moses, saying, "Make yourself two trumpets with silver, with hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out. When both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the doorway of the tent of meeting. Yet if only one is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall assemble before you. But when you blow an alarm, the camps that are pitched on the east side shall set out. When you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are pitched on the south side shall set out; an alarm is to be blown for them to set out. When convening the assembly, however, you shall blow without sounding an alarm. The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations. When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

This is because these events are when we are called to commemorate God for what He has done for us. God is powerful and mighty and wonderful to us. God is so wonderful, in fact, that He has given us a holiday **EVERY WEEK**:

### **Leviticus 23:1-3**

The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD'S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed times are these: 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 the LORD in all your dwellings.

This is a commemoration of when God rested on the seventh day after creating the world. We will be looking at this in-depth in Chapter Twelve, “For Six Days Shall You Labor...After That, I *Need* The Sabbath!” and Chapter Thirteen, “The Glory of the Sabbath.”

So many special days! So many festivals for us to keep, to remember God's graciousness to us! And all of them are prophetic of the Messiah... how, exactly... well, you've heard some of it, but the rest, these deeper prophetic meanings will be in the chapters forthcoming. For now, I want to leave you with this thought: God is so wonderful to us, that we don't have to guess at when these appointments are. People didn't have to assign dates for them, as the Church did in naming December 25 as when to celebrate Messiah's birth (read about the problems with Christmas in Chapter Twenty-Three), and as the mainstream rabbis did in deciding not to count First Fruits and thus setting a specific date for Shavuot that was not God's date! God has given us these divine appointments; for rest, for strength, for celebration, for worship!

## **Chapter Twelve**

### **For Six Days Shall You Labor... After That, I *Need* The Sabbath!**

**A**s we read in the last chapter, the first of God's Festivals – the one that happens the most often – is the Sabbath, which is every week. But I would suggest that there is an Appointed Time (though not a festival) that occurs more often than that:

#### **Exodus 31:15 (New International Version)**

For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

The six working days are just as much God's Appointed Times as the Sabbath, or Passover, or any Festival. They aren't festivals, but they are times God has Appointed. God has infused all parts of a Torah Observant life with special meaning and importance:

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, 22 (King James Version)**

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; time to weep, and

a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace. ... Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

We are all given tasks from God – this is our works that are our portion. There is nothing better than to rejoice in that work. Whether that work is to be a rabbi or a plumber, a teacher or a carpenter, a singer or a police officer, a dancer or a firefighter, a writer or a soldier, these are all callings in which you should delight in – as my father would say, “as long as it’s not illegal, immoral, or irreverent.” For six days a week, attack the pile of work before you with zeal, so that you may be deserving of the rest God gives us on the Sabbath, which is the subject of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **The Glory of the Sabbath**

**T**his chapter is about the why and how we celebrate, observe, and keep Shabbat. The first two sections, "So We May Yet Produce" and "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie," draw on an article written by the late Rabbi David Hargis of blessed memory, but with my own extensions and insights added.

#### **So We May Yet Produce**

For those who find themselves drawn to the Messianic movement, to a Torah Observant lifestyle, after spending years, decades, their whole lives in the Christian church, the first hurdle to get over is the issue of Shabbat. The church devotes little time to going over the issue of which day is proper – possibly because the leadership knows their reasoning has big holes in it – but it's ingrained in us from early childhood, and Western civilization is built around it, that Sunday is "the Lord's Day."

For much of my childhood, I lived in an environment that hailed Sunday as the "Lord's Day" and as the "Christian Sabbath". Sure, I knew of the True Sabbath; most Friday nights, we did a little ceremony at home...one I didn't really understand, but I did it because it was a tradition...and my parents didn't really give me an option. Doing something else was a concept we didn't even discuss, so the idea never really crossed my mind; if the family was doing it that week, then I did it, and that's the way it was, no different than we usually had eggs at the morning meal and not at the evening meal.

The rest of the Sabbath – Saturday – wasn't anything special after that. I watched Saturday morning cartoons, I played soccer in the late morning and early afternoon... no, I'm not kidding, I actually did play a sport. Not incredibly well... I'm probably the only fullback in the history of the game to sneak a paperback book onto the field in his pockets and read when the action was at the other end of the field.

But Sunday never seemed like a fully holy day either, not to me at least. My parents, I don't think, knew this; I was always an actor, and I don't know if I fooled them, but I think I played the part convincingly enough for many people. Those few hours I was at church were sometimes okay – I liked singing, and some classes I liked and others I didn't. But I got very bored at times... and when kids like me are bored... let's just say that two friends and I became known as “Sunday School terrorists” before “terrorist” became the kind of loaded word it is today.

When I got older and began doing that strange metamorphosis that many people like us did in the late 80s and early 90s – going from “Hebrew Christian” to “Messianic Jew,” and I became convinced that the True Sabbath was the proper day of worship and not Sunday, I was challenged by people whose scriptural knowledge I respected, but I just didn't buy their arguments. However, I didn't know how to properly defend the Sabbath, either. These first two sections in this chapter are designed to try to provide you with a better defense of the Sabbath than I had at the time.

So, what was the process by which I learned to defend the Sabbath as the true Lord's Day? Well, several years ago, I came to accept by faith that the Creator of the Universe never changes, as His Word declares (Malachi 3:6). This doctrine overarches everything about the work of our Creator, and ultimately everything I teach here. Ultimately, I realized that it is His Word that not only created all things, but also is permanently active to hold all things together:

### **Colossians 1:14-17 (Complete Jewish Bible)**

It is through his Son that we have redemption - that is, our sins have been forgiven. He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is supreme over all creation, because in connection with him were created all things - in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities - they have all been created through him and for him. He existed before all things, and he holds everything together.

Since we know that Yeshua is The Word incarnate – John 1 is clear about this, along with other passages – we know that Yeshua is the manifestation of God that created and maintains the universe. And since He sanctified the Sabbath as a part of that creative act, the cancellation of the Sabbath would – or should – call our entire concept of God into question. In fact, I would suggest that the belief of Christianity that the Sabbath has been annulled is a belief that borders on blasphemy, if it isn't actually blasphemy. Why? If God can change His mind, it questions the faithfulness of God. And since Malachi 3:6 says God doesn't change... if He changes, He's not faithful and thus isn't God!

And consider the following: if God CAN change His mind about what defines righteousness – since we believe Torah defines righteousness but Christianity teaches that the Torah has been done away with and a new standard of righteousness is in existence – then God can change His mind about how we are saved, too. Our salvation cannot be assured if God can change His mind! Thus, the belief in Sabbath annulment questions the very nature, faithfulness, and salvation of and through Yeshua, since as the creative force, He created Shabbat! That is absolutely critical to remember as this discussion progresses over this week and next week.

As a part of creation, Yeshua created time, and time was to be something that especially belonged to Him. Through making the seventh day of creation a day of rest from His labors, and a day given to mankind as a gift of rest, God was placing the marker of time. He was setting forth the holiness of time. Holy is defined as separate, unusual, unique and special. The celestial bodies of the Sun and Moon mark the physicality of time, but the Shabbat establishes God's holiness in time, meaning His unique control of time. The Shabbat also gives mankind the special gift of being allowed to join in that holiness with God by resting, even as He rested the seventh day. Animals do not share in the possibility of Shabbat rest. So, only mankind is given the hope of fellowship with God in His very nature, because God gave His Holy Day for mankind alone to know and enjoy.

Shabbat was meant to be a celebration both of rest and of the One Who created it. It should be joyful and fun, while totally respectful and thoughtful of the Most High. It should not be a feast for getting selfish desires. Children should know that God loves their playfulness, but it should be balanced. There should not be fasting on Shabbat unless it is a medically-required one, or if the Biblically-commanded fast of Yom Kippur should fall on Shabbat.

There is to be no regular work on the Shabbat, especially building or creating with the hands. Spiritual work, emergency work, healing work, protective work, feeding, and guarding (military and police) are all allowed exceptions. God wants us to use our common sense. He also knows that in a non-Shabbat honoring world people will be required by employers to work on Shabbat. The Sabbath keeper should make every effort not to work on the seventh day by being kindly communicative with employers about their wishes and/or looking for an alternative vocation, or at least working for a different employer.

If there's a problem, fortunately, there are laws in this country that will protect your rights under the U.S. Constitution to keep the Sabbath holy... but I ask you to consider, is this the employer you wish to work for, who is willing to stand in God's place in your life by telling you when you should and should not keep the holy day?

On Shabbat there should be praying, praising, worshiping, reading Holy Scripture, singing unto the LORD, even dancing unto the LORD, and talking to others about the LORD and His Word, that is, whatever honors the Most High.

Now, let's talk about the reward of Shabbat!

Consider Genesis 2:1-3 (CJB):

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, along with everything in them. On the seventh day God was finished with his work which he had made, so he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. God blessed the seventh day and separated it as holy; **because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce.***

The Seventh Day rest proclaimed by God is designed so that we may yet produce! This rest enables us to do that which we are called to do the rest of the week! In looking at how the process works, we turn to the Prophets. Isaiah 58 has been an inspiration to many Believers, but it is interesting how the last verses seem to have been ignored:



## Isaiah 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 the LORD honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways, From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word, then you will take delight in the LORD, 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 the LORD has spoken.

This can be a hard one for people. It took me a long time to fully divest myself of following my own interests on Shabbat. I am a member of an international science fiction fan club. However, the chapter that I belonged to met once a month on the Sabbath! In fact, for quite some time, I used to leave right after services (skipping fellowship and Bible Study), run home, change clothes, and then tear out of there to get to those meetings.

A couple of years ago, I stopped doing that. I dropped out of that chapter, and joined a group that is more beneficial to me – meets online and is made up of other media professionals. And I believe my congregation has been blessed by this decision; the most recent growth spurt we had started the month I removed that meeting permanently from my schedule. Some personal blessings happened too. You might want to examine your schedule to see if there's any personal interests that are not of a direct connection to God that is turning your foot from God's path into your own.

Now, let's talk about calling the Sabbath a delight. Remember that according to the Prophet, the *Lord's holy day* is the seventh day Shabbat. Now connect that with: "*Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart,*" Psalm 37:4. Everyone wants to know how to get the Most High to give them the desires of their heart.

*Delight in the LORD* seems easy enough! There have been many fanciful interpretations of what it means to *delight in the LORD*, but only one revelation of what this means is found in the Scriptures.

"*Delight*" here in Psalm 37:4 is the Hebrew word *oneg*, which is defined "to treat as a delicacy." There are very few places in the Scriptures where the word *oneg* is used. Yet, because it is a rarity, it helps us to solve the mystery.

There is one place, and only one, where it tells us exactly how to *delight in the LORD*, even using the word **oneg**. The only place where we are told by God what delighting in Him is, is in Isaiah 58:13 and 14 – if you call the Shabbat a delight by pursuing God's interests and not your own on Shabbat, then you delight in Adonai! Any other interpretation for "*delight yourself in the LORD*" is useless speculation and the imagination of men.

The Scriptures are therefore clear: the only true way anyone can *delight in the LORD* is to honor and obey the seventh day Sabbath! The reward for doing this is "*to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance*" of Jacob. It is sealed as a promise from "*the mouth of the LORD*." Also, as it says in Psalm 37:4, the only way anyone is promised to receive the "*desires of your heart*" is by delighting in the LORD. In other words, if you make His Sabbath your delight, *oneg*, a delicacy in your life, your heart will be gladdened. It would seem that all people truly devoted to the Creator of the Shabbat would make haste to honor the Shabbat at all costs, what with the great payoff it carries!

But there's more there; let's look at the Psalm verse in context:

### **Psalm 37:1-6 (CJB)**

Don't be upset by evildoers or envious of those who do wrong, for soon they will wither like grass and fade like the green in the fields. Trust in ADONAI, and do good; settle in the land, and feed on faithfulness. Then you will delight yourself in ADONAI, and he will give you your heart's desire. Commit your way to ADONAI; trust in him, and he will act. He will make your vindication shine forth like light, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Sabbath-keepers may look at the Sunday-keeping churches and envy their numbers, their wealth, and their greater respect in the community than we have as Sabbath-keeping Messianic Believers. But one day – in the fullness of God's time – God will show Believers what is true (this book is a part of that). As for when the Church at large sees the truth, that's not our concern. Our concern is to do what is right, right now. By this, I do not mean to call Sunday-keepers evil... but, Scripturally, they are wrong. Blessed be the Name of the LORD for His Son, we can be wrong and still have a chance to correct ourselves without damnation!

Our concern is to live a life in keeping with what we know to be God's commands. When we do so, we will receive the benefit God intended for the here and now – that we may yet produce... produce not only the basics of life, but fruit appropriate to those who humbly seek God and follow His Way. That's the foundation of the Glory of the Sabbath.

### **It's a Sin to Tell a Lie**

In your Torah-observant walk, you will likely come up – as I have – against Christians who assail you for your observance of the Sabbath. So, it is not enough for anyone to know without a doubt that neither Sunday, nor any other day, may become the Sabbath. They must be able to defend it. So, in these first two sections of this chapter I am walking you through a defense of the True Sabbath. I'm now going to give you answers for the untruths the mainstream Christian clergy teach about it, which is why this section is called "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie," a title I admit I swiped from an old song. Keep in mind, I am not saying Pastors are liars. They know what they've been taught, and part of what they've been taught is that it's heresy to question the line the Church has put out for 1800 years. I'm sure many of them have never done so.

It is not their fault they have been taught untruths! And it is not their teachers' faults either! These lies have been told for over a thousand years. Now, should they have read the Scriptures themselves with open eyes? Certainly. But when a lie is told for so long in the context of faith, it becomes imprinted into the pattern of faith, so questioning the lie would entail questioning their faith... even though, as we all here know, the day we started questioning the questionable teachings of the Christian church is the day our faith in God and Scripture began a process of being rejuvenated and strengthened, not destroyed!

### **LIE #1: WE DO NOT NEED A SABBATH REST ANYMORE**

Some say we do not need a Sabbath rest anymore. That is untrue because our bodies yet need rest, but even if that was so, the Shabbat is not simply based on our need, for God did not rest because He was tired, but rather to appreciate His work. Does the Creator no longer want to have His creation appreciated? The fact is Hebrews 4:9 says that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. While the passage is speaking literally of the millennial reign of King Messiah, we have the Shabbat as our preparation!

Messiah said that He is “Lord of the Sabbath” in the Gospels (Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5)). Now since He is the same yesterday, today and forever, and He is the God of the living and not of the dead, then quite naturally the Sabbath remains today. One might also postulate that if God does not keep His promise concerning the Sabbath creation, then it would be prudent for us all to worry each morning as to whether or not the Sun will rise.

I hear others saying, “But the Sabbath was made for man”. Absotively! God is our Father. Now, if your earthly father made something for you, would you turn around and reject it because your next door neighbor says, "Hey, use mine!" You would be an ungrateful child to do so. The Most High has given you a gift from Himself, so it is actually a part of His own holiness. How ungrateful a child can you be?

Oh, and don't forget, “The gifts and callings of God are without return” (Rom 11:29). This statement that the Sabbath was made for man only proves the continuation of the Shabbat. Now, someone might say, “Well, if the Sabbath is a gift, then I can do with it what I want.” That's an ungrateful child, alright. I would say to that person, “You would be wise not to throw any of God's gifts in the trash! Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

How many times have you done something for someone you love, even if you did not like it, at least at first? Why would anyone who loves God NOT want to do what He loves?

## **LIE #2: MESSIAH BROKE THE SABBATH**

For too long people have been deceived into thinking that Messiah Yeshua broke the Sabbath in order to show us we were free from the Sabbath. I don't get this – why would anyone want to be “free” from a gift of God, can anyone tell me that?

And the entire concept of Messiah breaking the Sabbath is a blasphemy and an affront to the Most High. It is born out of ignorance and rebellion, and it denies the plain Scriptural statements that Yeshua never violated the Torah, which even the Church admits, although they use it to claim that since He kept it all, we don't have to keep it, which of course makes absolutely no

sense unless you are looking for an excuse to get away with breaking Torah. We will return to this idea in a minute.

Actually, Messiah affirmed the Sabbath – and the Torah in general – with the things that He did and only performed those deeds that were permissible on the Sabbath. His critics came against Him with their current traditions for Sabbath keeping, which were not commanded in the Torah. They were traditions of men, not commandments of God. Messiah Yeshua healed on the Sabbath because healing is a form of being freed from labor – the laborious pain of illness – which is central to the Sabbath. Again, the Scriptures tell us Messiah Yeshua never committed sin. He never broke the Torah, which, I would remind you, was His own, the thing which He wrote Himself!

### **LIE #3: MESSIAH CANCELLED SABBATH BY FULFILLING TORAH**

This goes back to what I was saying earlier. In most translations of the Apostolic Writings, it says Messiah Yeshua said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Mat 5:17). Dr. David Stern, the man behind the "Jewish New Testament" and "Complete Jewish Bible" translations exploded this myth. In his introduction to the CJB, Dr. Stern explains that, in the Greek text – since that's what he had to work with – the word normally translated there as "fulfilled" really means "to fill," and therefore he says that it should be translated not to fulfill but rather to fill fully or to complete, as in completing a manuscript... which is fully in keeping with the ancient Jewish tradition that the Messiah would explain fully difficult Torah passages and even change completely our understanding of them!

But let's say it really means "fulfill." To argue that *fulfilling means cancellation* is faulty reasoning. Many seem to have no ability to see Messiah's statement for what it plainly says. Our Messiah was clear: fulfilling has nothing to do with destroying or annulling, and, in truth, fulfilling is the opposite of annulment. Fulfilling means to complete or make whole; to bring to the full; to provide what was lacking. Messiah Yeshua came to make sure the Torah had all the necessary elements in it, especially the principal thing: His death and resurrection.

In fact, in the language spoken at the time of Yeshua, for someone to say you've "fulfilled" the Torah meant simply that you've interpreted it

correctly; likewise, to “destroy,” “abolish,” or “nullify” the Torah meant that you’d interpreted it incorrectly!

Why would Messiah take away the Sabbath by His death and resurrection? How would that correlate? No one has ever given me a common sense answer. Surely Messiah has provided us with a spiritual rest from sin; a kind of Sabbath rest within the soul. However, that in no way removes the seventh day Shabbat. The Shabbat was given before sin came into the world, so it is not a type of rest from sin. Remember, God took a Sabbath rest. Did God rest on the seventh day from His sin?

Come on! To put forth the seventh day Sabbath as a type of rest from sin progresses towards blasphemy, because it implies God needed rest from sin, since He rested then. Of course, the Apostolic Writings nowhere implies such.

Also, I would point out that this statement, that Yeshua's perfect Torah-keeping cancels out our need to keep Torah, is in complete contradiction to the Church's claim that He violated the Sabbath! Their own argument is internally inconsistent! What this shows us is the strong – albeit blind – faith of so many intelligent people in the Church. Only strong but blind faith could stand up to such obviously faulty and incoherent logic. If only we could harness that faith by opening their eyes to these truths, what mighty things we could accomplish for God and His Truth!

#### **LIE #4: WE CAN CHOOSE ANY DAY TO MAKE OUR SABBATH**

God stopped creating on the Seventh Day, and specified that we should as well, so we stop our work also. The Shabbat is rest from the labor of creative processes. When our mind and hands have stopped creating, we have time and ability to appreciate what has been created, especially by the Creator. Only then are we experiencing something He experienced. Since He is holy, then the experience of His Shabbat is holy. As we experience His Holy Day, then we are holy also.

The only regular day of the week the Most High ever made holy is the seventh day. Only He can decide what day is holy. No matter how hard we try, we ourselves cannot make a day holy, because holiness is not dependent on our actions. Holiness is solely dependent on His determination. Many

believers have thought to make certain religious days holy by the force of their celebration on that day. How is that possible? There is not one place in the Bible where anything is holy, except that called holy by the mouth of the Almighty. Therefore, no person can choose any day they wish to celebrate the Shabbat, because only the seventh day is holy. Celebration of Sabbath rest on any other day is totally void. Also, the word "Sabbath" comes from the Hebrew word "Sheva," meaning "Seven". To try to make the Sabbath Sunday would mean reorienting the calendar (and indeed, there are calendars that have been printed in this fashion).

## **LIE #5: THE SABBATH CHANGED BECAUSE JESUS ROSE SUNDAY MORNING**

Well, first off, to anyone saying this I would begin by asking this person where the Scripture says that anyone, but especially God, changed the Sabbath. Ask them to cite chapter and verse. They will not be able to, because it is not there.

But I would also like to challenge the idea that Yeshua rose on Sunday morning. As I talk about in Chapter Sixteen, Matthew 28:1 reads in most translations, "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave." Let's analyze this sentence from a point of logic. As we know, the day begins and ends in the Hebrew concept not at dawn or midnight, but at evening. So, "dawn" would be a long time "after the Sabbath." And what does it mean "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week"? Sounds like convoluted sentence structure, doesn't it?

Now, let's look at the actual words used there. Those translations come from the Greek so, to be fair to the translators, let's look at the Greek. The Greek word translated there as "dawn," is "Epiphosko," which is used a grand total of two times in the Greek manuscripts of the Apostolic Writings, according to Strong's. The other time is in Luke 23:54, "It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin." Let's look at this verse in context:

### **Luke 23:50-56**

And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of

Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Here "Epiphosko" is translated "about to begin." That's a bit different than "dawn." The same word can specify two totally different specific times of day: dawn and dusk? Does anyone here really believe that Greek, one of the most literate and precise languages in the world, would really be that vague? I will tell you my theory: I think "dawn" is an intentional mistranslation. I think the original manuscripts – both the original Hebrew manuscript and the first Greek manuscript – meant that as "about to begin".

So, we see that the two Marys were going to the tomb as the Sabbath was about to begin... so, just as the sun is going down. But by the time they get there – Yeshua has already risen! That means, even if you believe that "Epiphosko" should be translated as "dawn," **YESHUA DID NOT RISE ON SUNDAY.** Even their mistranslations show that.

## **LIE #6: THE EARLY CHURCH MET ON SUNDAY MORNING**

This is partially based on Acts 20 verse 7, which in most translations reads, "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight." If that was Sunday morning, then Paul is a very long-winded guy. Let's say they got together 11AM – still morning, barely, but they probably would've called that midday. But say 11AM. Let's say they'd been hanging out for a couple of hours before Paul started preaching. That means Paul preached for AT LEAST TEN HOURS. Come on. Does anyone reading this book really buy that?

Let me tell you what is far more likely. The Sabbath traditionally ends with a meal (breaking bread) and the Havdalah service, at sundown or about an hour after sundown, and that begins the first day of the week. Let's say it was at sundown that they got together for the last meal, which is a Seudat Mitzvah, or adorning the commandment, like the meal after a wedding is.



So, they ate and talked and had Havdalah. Say it started at six PM and normally broke up around eight. Let's say that's when Paul started speaking, and went from eight to midnight, four hours. **FAR MORE LIKELY.** That's still a long sermon, "prolonging his message," but far more reasonable than at least ten hours.

You see, with some simple bits of knowledge of Jewish practice and culture from antiquity to now, a little bit of knowledge of the words used in the manuscripts, and we can begin to let the light dawn for these Sunday-keepers – a little play on words there...

We must begin to open the eyes of our friends and neighbors who challenge us on the issue of Sabbath Observance. We must do so with love and patience, but with the firm belief in God's Word as the centrality of what we do. God's Word must prevail over the institutionalized untruths of the Church's teaching.

## **Welcoming the Sabbath Queen**

I have been teaching the why of Sabbath observance, both from the perspective of the commandments and in answering Christian objections to it. Now I am moving on to include the how, starting with the ***Kabbalat Shabbat*** ceremony in which we receive or welcome the Sabbath.

But first, some background. The term "Kabbalat Shabbat," literally "Receiving Sabbath," has two distinct connotations. One implies "acceptance of the Sabbath." The other implies "welcoming the Sabbath," and is the standard translation. However in the halakhic literature, the literature on how to keep the commandments, it is the "acceptance" connotation that is dominant, because of the importance of beginning the Sabbath yourself by accepting it. Just as on a fast day, one could "accept" the fast earlier than the time set for its obligatory commencement, by declaring it to be in effect for oneself from that moment on – so a person could declare even before sundown that for him, the Sabbath has begun. Any statement that takes note of the start of the Sabbath constitutes its acceptance. This is the moment of Kabbalat Shabbat. The sages ruled that the saying of the blessings at the end of the Kabbalat Shabbat marked the moment of acceptance.

Kabbalat Shabbat is a relatively new ceremony. Although welcoming the Sabbath happened before that, these preparations were, apparently, individualistic until the 16th century. Many of them provided the theme that Shabbat was the Bride of Israel and the **Shekinah**, the spiritual presence of God in the world, viewed by many Jewish mystics as the feminine side of God, came to the Jewish community during Shabbat. (Many theologians, including me, believe that the **Shekinah** is what is known in Apostolic Writings as the Holy Spirit.) The Welcoming of Shabbat became, therefore, a personal experience for Jews.

The sage Solomon ben Moses HaLevi Alkabetz was, apparently, one of the major forces in establishing the ritual. We know that he wrote the hymn "**Lecha Dodi**," Come, My Beloved, which became the main feature of the Kabbalat Shabbat ritual, some time between 1535 and 1545. He also encouraged (if not created) the custom of going into the fields on Friday at sunset to welcome Shabbat as the sun descended. The practitioners would then escort the Sabbath Bride (or the Shekinah, depending on the theology ascribed....) back to the synagogue for the evening service.

The ritual for Kabbalat Shabbat remains relatively fluid. Some communities begin directly with Psalm 29 followed by Lecha Dodi. Other traditions begin with Psalms 95-99 and then chant Psalm 29 (thus having six Psalms, one for each day of creation). They then chant Lecha Dodi, and the Sabbath could then be begun with the blessings over the candles and the bread and the wine. Some traditions begin with the canting of the Hebrew poem "**Yedid Nefesh**." In any case, it can be noted that Psalm 29 and Lecha Dodi are the center pieces for the Kabbalat Shabbat ritual.

However popular these rituals have become, they are not considered obligatory. What is obligatory according to Scripture? Simply that we set apart the day as holy, have a holy convocation, and that we do no work, as we read in Leviticus 23:1-3:

The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The LORD’S appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations – My appointed times are these: 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 the LORD in all your dwellings.’” Even the notion that the Sabbath begins absolutely at

sunset is not in Torah itself, not that I can find. We are told that a day is evening and morning, but nothing more specific.

So, I want to stress that these practices are not required. It is not a sin to choose not to start the Sabbath in this manner. And even if you choose to do so, you don't have to do it every week this way. So why am I teaching it to you? To give you knowledge, and to show you something you can do.

So, let's start with Yedid Nefesh. This poem is actually canted two times during the Sabbath in strictly traditional homes. The first time, at Kabbalat Shabbat, it is sung with an upbeat tempo; the second time, at the third Sabbath meal, the lunch after services, which is when we do Oneg Shabbat. In English, it says:

Beloved of my soul, merciful Father,  
draw Your servant toward You.  
Let Your servant run like a doe  
to bow before Your glory.  
Let Your affection for him be sweeter  
than a honeycomb or any other delicacy.  
Glorious One, most beautiful splendor of the world,  
my soul is sick with love for You.  
Please God, heal it by revealing  
the delight of your splendor.  
Then it will be invigorated and healed,  
enjoying everlasting happiness.  
Ancient One, let Your mercy be aroused  
and have pity on Your beloved son.  
For I have yearned for so long  
to see Your mighty splendor.  
This is the desire of my heart  
have pity and do not hide Yourself.  
Reveal Yourself and spread over me,  
beloved One, the shelter of Your peace.  
Let the earth sparkle with Your glory,

We will rejoice and be happy with You.  
Be quick, beloved, for the time has come,  
and favor us as in days of old.

Next are the Six Psalms, Psalm 25 and Psalms 95-99 (from the CJB):

**Psalm 25**

I lift my inner being to you, ADONAI;  
I trust you, my God. Don't let me be disgraced,  
Don't let my enemies gloat over me.  
No one waiting for you will be disgraced;  
Disgrace awaits those who break faith for no reason.  
Make me know your ways, ADONAI,  
Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth, and teach me;  
For you are the God who saves me,  
My hope is in you all day long.  
Remember your compassion and grace, ADONAI;  
For these are ages old.  
Don't remember my youthful sins or transgressions;  
But remember me according to Your grace  
For the sake of Your goodness, ADONAI.

ADONAI is good, and He is fair;  
This is why He teaches sinners the way [to live],  
Leads the humble to do what is right  
And teaches the humble [to live] His Way.  
All ADONAI's paths are grace and truth  
To those who keep his covenant and instructions.

For the sake of Your Name, ADONAI,  
Forgive my wickedness, great though it is.  
Who is the person who fears ADONAI?  
He will teach him the way to choose.  
He will remain prosperous,  
and his descendants will inherit the land.  
ADONAI relates intimately with those who fear him;  
He makes them know His covenant.

My eyes are always directed toward ADONAI,  
For He will free my feet from the net.  
Turn to me, and show me your favor;  
For I am alone and oppressed.  
The troubles of my heart are growing and growing;  
Bring me out of my distress.  
See my affliction and suffering,  
And take all my sins away.

Consider my enemies, how many there are  
And how cruelly they hate me.  
Protect me and rescue me;  
Don't let me be disgraced, for I take refuge in you.  
Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
Because my hope is in you.  
God! Redeem Isra'el from all their troubles!

### **Psalm 95**

Come, let's sing to ADONAI!  
Let's shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation!  
Let's come into his presence with thanksgiving;  
Let's shout for joy to him with songs of praise.

For ADONAI is a great God,  
A great king greater than all gods.  
He holds the depths of the earth in his hands;  
The mountain peaks too belong to him.  
The sea is his - he made it -  
and his hands shaped the dry land.

Come, let's bow down and worship;  
Let's kneel before ADONAI who made us.  
For he is our God, and we are the people  
In his pasture, the sheep in his care.  
If only today you would listen to his voice:

"Don't harden your hearts, as you did at M'rivah,  
As you did on that day at Massah in the desert,  
When your fathers put me to the test;  
They challenged me, even though they saw my work.  
For forty years I loathed that generation;  
I said, 'This is a people whose hearts go astray,  
They don't understand how I do things.'  
Therefore I swore in My anger  
That they would not enter My rest."

### **Psalm 96**

Sing to ADONAI a new song!  
Sing to ADONAI, all the earth!  
Sing to ADONAI, bless his name!  
Proclaim his victory day after day!  
Declare His glory among the nations,  
His wonders among all peoples!

For ADONAI is great, and greatly to be praised;  
He is to be feared more than all gods.  
For all the gods of the peoples are idols,  
But ADONAI made the heavens.  
In his presence are honor and majesty;  
In his sanctuary, strength and splendor.

Give ADONAI his due,  
You families from the peoples;  
Give ADONAI his due of glory and strength;  
Give ADONAI the glory due to his name;  
Bring an offering, and enter his courtyards.  
Worship ADONAI in holy splendor;  
Tremble before him, all the earth!

Say among the nations, "ADONAI is king!"  
The world is firmly established, immovable.  
He will judge the peoples fairly.  
Let the heavens rejoice; let the earth be glad;  
Let the sea roar, and everything in it;  
Let the fields exult and all that is in them.

Then all the trees in the forest  
will sing before ADONAI,  
Because he has come, He has come to judge the earth;  
He will judge the world rightly  
And the peoples with his faithfulness.

### **Psalm 97**

ADONAI is king, let the earth rejoice,  
Let the many coasts and islands be glad.

Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
Righteousness and justice  
are the foundation of his throne.

Fire goes before him,  
setting ablaze His foes on every side.  
His flashes of lightning light up the world;  
The earth sees it and trembles.  
The mountains melt like wax  
at the presence of ADONAI,  
At the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

The heavens declare his righteousness,  
And all the peoples see his glory.  
All who worship images will be put to shame,  
Those who make their boast in worthless idols.  
Bow down to him, all you gods!

Tziyon hears and is glad, ADONAI;  
The daughters of Y'hudah rejoice at Your rulings.  
For You, ADONAI, most high over all the earth,  
You are exalted far above all gods.

You who love ADONAI, hate evil!  
He keeps his faithful servants safe.  
He rescues them from the power of the wicked.  
Light is sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart.  
Rejoice in ADONAI, you righteous;  
And give thanks on recalling His holiness.



### **Psalm 98**

Sing a new song to ADONAI,  
Because he has done wonders.  
His right hand, His holy arm has won Him victory.  
ADONAI has made known His victory;  
Revealed His vindication in full view of the nations,  
Remembered His grace and faithfulness  
to the house of Isra'el.

All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.  
Shout for joy to ADONAI, all the earth!  
Break forth, sing for joy, sing praises!  
Sing praises to ADONAI with the lyre,  
With the lyre and melodious music!  
With trumpets and the sound of the shofar,  
Shout for joy before the king, ADONAI!

Let the sea roar, and everything in it;  
The world, and those living in it.  
Let the floods clap their hands;  
Let the mountains sing together  
for joy before ADONAI,  
For he has come to judge the earth;  
He will judge the world rightly and the peoples fairly.

### **Psalm 99**

ADONAI is king; let the peoples tremble.  
He sits enthroned on the k'ruvim; let the earth shake!  
ADONAI is great in Tziyon;  
he is high above all the peoples.  
Let them praise your great and fearsome name

(he is holy):  
"Mighty king who loves justice,  
you established fairness,  
Justice and righteousness in Ya'akov."

Exalt ADONAI our God!  
Prostrate yourselves at his footstool (he is holy).  
Moshe and Aharon among his cohanim  
And Sh'mu'el among those who call on His Name  
Called on ADONAI, and He answered them.  
He spoke to them in the column of cloud;  
They kept His instructions  
and the law that He gave them.

ADONAI our God, You answered them.  
To them You were a forgiving God,  
Although You took vengeance on their wrongdoings.  
Exalt ADONAI our God,  
Bow down toward his holy mountain,  
For ADONAI our God is holy!

The Six Psalms all express the theme of God's sovereignty, and symbolize the six working days of the week. Following the Six Psalms is the hymn Lecha Dodi. I will be discussing that last, as it symbolizes the entire ceremony and gives the true depth of this teaching.

The next part of Kabbalat Shabbat is the reading of Psalm 92 and 93 (CJB):

A song for Shabbat:  
It is good to give thanks to ADONAI  
and sing praises to Your name, 'Elyon,  
to tell in the morning about Your grace

and at night about Your faithfulness,  
to the music of a ten-stringed [harp] and a lute,  
with the melody sounding on a lyre.  
For, ADONAI, what You do makes me happy;  
I take joy in what Your hands have made.  
How great are Your deeds, ADONAI!  
How very deep Your thoughts!

Stupid people can't know, fools don't understand,  
that when the wicked sprout like grass,  
and all who do evil prosper,  
it is so that they can be eternally destroyed,  
while You, ADONAI, are exalted forever.  
For Your enemies, ADONAI,  
Your enemies will perish;  
all evildoers will be scattered.  
But You have given me the strength of a wild bull;  
You anoint me with fresh olive oil.

My eyes have gazed with pleasure  
on my enemies' ruin,  
my ears have delighted in the fall of my foes.  
The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
they will grow like a cedar in the L'vanon.  
Planted in the house of ADONAI,  
they will flourish in the courtyards of our God.  
Even in old age they will be vigorous,  
still full of sap, still bearing fruit,  
proclaiming that ADONAI is upright,  
my Rock, in whom there is no wrong.

ADONAI is king, robed in majesty;  
ADONAI is robed, girded with strength;  
The world is well established; it cannot be moved.  
Your throne was established long ago;  
You have existed forever.

ADONAI, the deep is raising up,  
the deep is raising up its voice,  
the deep is raising its crashing waves.  
More than the sound of rushing waters  
or the mighty breakers of the sea,  
ADONAI on high is mighty.

Your instructions are very sure;  
holiness befits Your house,  
ADONAI, for all time to come.

You may recognize some of these verses as the inspiration for the song "It is Good," written by Paul Wilbur, as well as other wonderful songs.

Apart from its title, "A Psalm, a song for Shabbat," there is no other mention of the Sabbath in this Psalm. It may have been designated for the Sabbath simply because this was the Psalm that the Levites sang in the Temple on the Sabbath day. But inasmuch as its theme of reward and punishment in a world-to-come, the title could be a veiled reference to "**Olam Haba**," the "world to come," which is described in the Mishnah (a part of Talmud) and in the Book of Hebrews in the Apostolic Writings as a Sabbath rest.

After Psalms 92 & 93, it is the custom in some communities to read the Mishnah passage called **Bameh Madlikin**, "With What May We Light," referring to the Sabbath lamps or candles. This is done because it is a discussion of the rules for preparing for the Sabbath. After that, the lady of the house lights the Sabbath lights. This is important because no lighting of fires may occur during the Sabbath, and so, before the advent of electric lights, light was needed for nighttime (and even today in some communities

that forbid even the turning-on of electric lights during the Sabbath as violating the spirit of this commandment.)

As for how many lights to light, there are many different traditions for this, the reasons for which are lost to antiquity, but we have some good guesses: some communities light one light, possibly in honor of the One God. Some communities light two lights, possibly because most houses in ancient Israel had two rooms, one room in which the head of the household and his wife slept and one "living" room in which most activity took place and in which the rest of the family would sleep.

In some communities, the tradition is for each person present to light a candle, and a candle is lit for those present who cannot light them for themselves for reasons of age or infirmity. This may be so that each person may welcome the Sabbath themselves. And finally, in some communities, it is traditional to light a seven-branched menorah like the one in the ancient Temple; it has seven branches for the days of the week and because seven is the perfect number, the number of completeness. This is the tradition here at Beit Tefillah.

Which brings us back to greeting the completion of the week as a Bride, as encapsulated by the liturgical song, "Lecha Dodi." The words mean:

Beloved, come to meet the bride;  
Beloved, come to greet Shabbat.  
Keep and Remember: a single command,  
the Only God caused us to hear;  
the Eternal is One, God's name is One,  
for honor and glory and praise.  
Come with me to meet Shabbat,  
forever a fountain of blessing.  
Still it flows, as from the start:  
the last of days, for which the first was made.  
Awake, awake, your light has come!  
Arise, shine, awake and sing;  
the Eternal's glory dawns upon you.

Enter in peace, O crown of your husband;  
enter in gladness, enter in joy.  
Come to the people that keeps its faith.  
Enter, O bride! Enter, O bride!

Lecha Dodi was composed by the sage I mentioned before, Solomon ben Moses HaLevi Alkabetz, one of the Kabbalists of the town of Safed in the mountains of the Galilee region of Israel. You'll note, this is also the same area Yeshua was raised and where much of His ministry took place. A note on the question of Kabbalah: like all collections of traditional Jewish wisdom, there are elements of it that are very good, there are elements of it that are okay, there are elements of it that are bad, and there are elements that are VERY bad. In fact, much of our traditional liturgy and prayer that we use from traditional Judaism originated with the Kabbalists, so obviously all of what they taught was not bad.

Anyway, back to Lecha Dodi. The author arranged the poetical composition so that the first letters of each stanza spells out his name, a practice quite common among liturgical poets. This song has been described as perhaps one of the finest pieces of religious poetry in existence.

After the **Mincha** service on Friday afternoon, as the sun cast its setting rays over the distant hilltops, this saintly mystic and his disciples would go out into the fields to stand on one of Safed's magnificent slopes. Gazing out upon plunging ravines and soaring heights, they would open their hearts in song as the sunset swelled into a cadence of changing colors: "**Lecha dodi, likrat kallah; P'nei Shabbat, nekablah**" (the refrain of Lecha Dodi). This refrain concludes each of the nine stanzas of the hymn, in which Biblical phrases from the books of Judges, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Psalms are pieced together to create a liturgical mosaic. There is scarcely a phrase in the entire hymn which is not borrowed from the Bible.

Only the first two and the last stanzas relate to the Sabbath theme. The rest reflect the Jewish longing for redemption, which includes the restoration of Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. Each of these other six stanzas describe another stage in the process of redemption. As Believers in Yeshua the Messiah, we can sing these lines in celebration and not just longing.

The words of the refrain and the last two words of the hymn were taken from the Talmud. The Talmud relates that every Shabbat eve, Rabbi Hanina would don his finest garments and declare: "Come, let us go out to meet the Sabbath Queen." Rabbi Yannai likewise put on his festive clothes and declared: "Come, O Bride, Come, O Bride" (Shabbat 119a; Bava Kama 32b).

Although the theology of the Sabbath as the Bride and Queen of Israel is somewhat questionable, one can view the Sabbath – given by our King – as the Queen of the week, when work is laid down and celebrate the beauty of being God's subjects. Some commentators have even half-humorously suggested that calling it "the Sabbath Queen" is a reference to the Lady of the House in each household, who not only doesn't work on the Sabbath, but also kindles the Sabbath lights at the beginning of this ceremony.

But let me suggest a further idea. The Sabbath is given to us as the symbol of our covenant with God. That covenant, the Torah, is the covenant of our marriage to Messiah. Since the Messiah is the King, that would make His bride the Queen, would it not? The Sabbath is our wedding ring, which symbolizes our marriage to God. Therefore, in symbolizing the marriage, we are calling forth to the day of eternal Sabbath rest when we will, finally, be married to the King. We are beckoning to Messiah to greet us, and we are beckoning ourselves to become the Bride Messiah wants us to be, and we do it on the Sabbath, the day that symbolizes our union to Messiah in marriage. That is the meaning behind Welcoming the Sabbath Queen in the Kabbalat Shabbat ceremony.

### ***"Koreh Oneg Shabbat!"***

I want to start this by reading from the book "To Be a Jew" by Rabbi Hayim HaLevy Donin. The chapter on Sabbath observance in this volume is a wonderful study, as is the entire book, and I encourage you to read it. But a few thoughts from the book are in order here:

“Six days shall you labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any manner of work . . . for the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it” (Exodus 20:9-11). This passage from the Ten Commandments does not in itself reveal the absolutely profound role that the Sabbath has played in Jewish life throughout history and the role that it continues to play in the lives of those who lead Jewish lives. But the fact that it is the only commandment among the Ten

Commandments which deals with a purely ritual observance ought to indicate the priority assigned to it by the Almighty Himself in the broad context to all the commandments that concern man's relationship to God. (p.61)

To describe the feeling that overcomes one on the Sabbath is like trying to describe a beautiful sunset to a blind man. However rich in words one may be, the sense of rapture that even a simple person with sight senses at the sight of such beauty can never be totally conveyed even by a master poet. Looking in from outside at those who observe the Sabbath might be compare to a deaf man coming upon a scene where people are dancing to music being played by an orchestra hidden from sight. Not hearing the music, the deaf man might well mistake the dancers for a group of people who have gone mad. Of course, he does not hear the music, and so the movement of the body which the music inspires is unappreciated and leaves him cold. And so might the Sabbath with its restrictions leave an observer – unless he has had an opportunity to become part of the experience. Only then may it dawn upon him that what he may have thought of as burdensome and inconvenient is really deliciously desirable and eagerly awaited. It is not without reason that the Midrashic description of the eternal Paradise, of the world to come, Is that of one long, extended, unending, eternal Sabbath day “yom shekulo Shabbat,” or that the Biblically-derived expression the Delight of the Sabbath, “Oneg Shabbat” (Isaiah 58:13), has become so commonplace a phrase, used – and sometimes misused today – by Jews everywhere.

Another Midrash portrays God as saying: “A precious jewel have I in my possession, which I wish to give to Israel, and Sabbath it its name.” No Jew who has ever truly observed the Sabbath will argue with that description. If anything, he will tell you that it is an understatement.

(pp. 62-3)

Herman Wouk [Jewish author] has observed, with much insight into the problem, “The Sabbath is the usual breaking off point from tradition, and also the point at which many Jews rejoin Judaism.” [ENDNOTE: Herman Wouk, *This is My God* (New York, Doubleday, 1959), p. 61] (p. 64 of “To Be a Jew”)



So it is with Christians who decide to keep Torah. The first major break-off for the Church from its Hebrew roots was the Sabbath, and Sabbath observance is usually the first commandment a Believer observes in striving to come to a more Biblical faith.

The theme of this section is "**Koreh Oneg Shabbat!**", or "Come Take Pleasure in Sabbath!" This traditional exhortation includes a phrase with which you are all familiar "Oneg Shabbat," meaning "Delight or Pleasure or Joy of the Sabbath." I will be looking at the joyful, feast-day elements of the Sabbath.

Because make no mistake, it is a festival, or feast day. It is, in fact, the primary one, the one God tells us about first in Leviticus 23, which outlines the festival calendar. It is also the model for the major festivals, because they, too, involve a day of rest. The Hebrew wording calls them "Sabbaths" as well in many places. So, as it is a festival, a feast, we should celebrate it with joy.

But what are the joyful, festive traditions for Sabbath? Well, it begins with the Kabbalat Shabbat, the service we discussed last week. But then we come to the Friday night dinner. It is traditional to have a large, festive meal, starting with an appetizer and/or soup, go to roast beef or chicken and side dishes, and end with a nice dessert. We do something similar when we gather together after service around the table for some food and fellowship.

In many homes, there is a custom to sing zemirot, songs, specially designated for Shabbat, during the meal. Many date back to the Middle Ages, however it is also popular to sing modern Israeli or Hebrew songs. This is fully in keeping with the command in:

### **Psalms 95:1-6**

Come, let's sing to ADONAI! Let's shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation! Let's come into his presence with thanksgiving; let's shout for joy to him with songs of praise. For ADONAI is a great God, a great king greater than all gods. He holds the depths of the earth in his hands; the mountain peaks too belong to him. The sea is his - he made it -and his hands shaped the dry land. Come, let's bow down and worship; let's kneel before ADONAI who made us.

You will remember that this is from the first Psalm sung at the Kabbalat Shabbat service!

After dinner, many families engage in ***Divrei Torah***, Speaking Torah or discussing the weekly Torah portion. This is a wonderful way to engage children and other family members in wide ranging topics for discussion. Many children who attend Jewish Day Schools will come home Fridays with Parasha sheets, a brief summary of the Torah portion which will be read in Synagogue the following morning. Parasha sheets often come with a list of discussion questions parents can review with their children. This is a wonderful endeavor and can be repeated at each Sabbath meal.

On Sabbath morning, it is traditional to eat pre-made food such as pastries or easy to put together items like bagels with lox and cream cheese and hard-boiled eggs. These are items that can be eaten without utensils and put together the evening before, preferably before Sabbath starts, so no work is done on the Sabbath itself. Also, it's a quick, nourishing meal to help you get through a day at synagogue!

After services, we engage in a tradition called "***Oneg Shabbat***." This is a tradition begun in Israel in the late 19th century or early 20th century, before even the founding of the State of Israel, as an attempt to get people back to Torah. In the original Onegei (the plural of Oneg) Shabbat, the rabbis and the influential men of the community would gather on Friday afternoon for a time of socializing and of Torah study. The rabbis who established the tradition took both the idea and the name from:

### **Isaiah 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 the LORD honorable,  
And honor it, desisting from your own ways,  
From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word,  
then you will take delight in the LORD, 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 the LORD has spoken.

When the Oneg Shabbat was brought to this country in the mid-20th century, congregations began expanding it to all members and having "Oneg," as the term was soon shortened to colloquially, at various times, including after

services. It became blended in with the traditional post-service Kiddush, which had existed to that point solely as a social time.

On Sabbath afternoons, there are various ideas as to what is appropriate. Many congregations have special interest classes in topics of religious interests. Others sponsor special clubs or groups for various fun, non-work-related, and relaxing interests. Some people will go home and take a nap, or take a short walk in a park while your children play. Sometimes friends from synagogue are invited home for a light afternoon meal and fellowship.

Some people will enjoy gathering with non-Jewish friends for recreation or organized activities in the late afternoon, although that is usually done out of a sense of compromise with the world. Although not violating the letter of the commandments, some may view it as a violation of the spirit of them. As Paul said, let each be convinced in his own mind... as long as you have set aside the day to do no regular work, as long as you attend a holy convocation and hear the shofar sound, and you keep any work done in the general sphere of doing good for people and the community, it is not a sin, at least not technically.

In the late afternoon, as the sun is waning, families – and sometimes friends too, or even large groups of people from the same neighborhood or the same synagogue – gather for **Motza'ei-Shabbat**, or Saturday night. It begins with Havdalah, the ceremony that ends the Sabbath. I will be going over Havdalah in detail next week.

After Havdalah is the “**Seudat Mitzvah**,” which literally means "Adorning the Commandment," but has come to mean a festive meal. This meal is called "The Meal of King David" because of a very interesting story in the Mishnah; apparently, King David believed – or was told in a prophetic vision – that he would die on a Sabbath. Every Sabbath that he lived through, he would end with a feast. This is why many Jews begin their Saturday night dinners by saying “**Zeh Seudat d'David HaMelech**,” "This is the Meal of the King David."

In some communities, after dinner a special party called a **melava malka** (Hebrew for “escorting the queen”) is held with singing and dancing. Sometimes a small band is hired. A **melava malka** party prolongs the feeling of Sabbath and is another opportunity for the community to get together and socialize.

In fact, these Saturday night gatherings were when the early groups of Believers would gather for fellowship and teachings about Yeshua. We read about one of these gatherings in:

### **Acts 20:7-12 (CJB)**

On Motza'ei-Shabbat, when we were gathered to break bread, Sha'ul addressed them. Since he was going to leave the next day, he kept talking until midnight. Now there were many oil lamps burning in the upstairs room where we were meeting, and there was a young fellow named Eutychus sitting on the window-sill. As Sha'ul's drash went on and on, Eutychus grew sleepier and sleepier; until finally he went sound asleep and fell from the third story to the ground. When they picked him up, he was dead. But Sha'ul went down, threw himself onto him, put his arms around him and said, "Don't be upset, he's alive!" Then he went back upstairs, broke the bread and ate. He continued talking with them till daylight, then left. So, greatly relieved, they brought the boy home alive.

Also, Paul taught that the time for taking monetary collections for the ministry was on Motza'ei-Shabbat, as we learn in:

### **First Corinthians 16:1-2 (CJB)**

Now, in regard to the collection being made for God's people: you are to do the same as I directed the congregations in Galatia to do. Every week, on Motza'ei-Shabbat, each of you should set some money aside, according to his resources, and save it up; so that when I come I won't have to do fundraising.

So, obviously, after going to synagogue on the Sabbath – as we know from both the Bible and historical records that the Believers were doing – they would gather together on "Motza'ei-Shabbat" for fellowship, for teaching, and for fundraising.

Why are we to be so joyful on Sabbath? Wouldn't it be more "restful" not to do so much celebrating? Well, yes, but rest is not the only reason for Sabbath. Another reason seems particularly joyful:

## Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD 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. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

We are called upon to remember our people's slavery in Egypt and how God redeemed them, which we know is also a type of our salvation from sin and our redemption into eternal life. That sounds like a reason to celebrate to me!

### ***“Ha-Mavdil Bayn Kodesh L'chol”***

This final section is about the ***Havdalah*** (Separation) ceremony, which ends the Sabbath. “***Ha-Mavdil Bayn Kodesh L'chol***” means "Who Separates the Sacred & the Secular," and is a line from the Havdalah prayer.

Havdalah is the ceremony that ends the Sabbath. Specifically, it refers to the Prayer of Separation, a specific prayer said during the larger ceremony, but the ceremony has come to be known by the name of the prayer. The text of the Havdalah ceremony is in the Appendix. Please feel free to follow along.

The purpose of the Havdalah ceremony goes back to the purpose for Kabbalat Shabbat. Just as each individual should accept the Sabbath's start, it is also important that each individual should acknowledge its passing. As the most important day of the week, the central point of our weekly living, we must know where it begins and ends. We must separate the Sacred and the Secular parts of the week, the day of rest from the six working days. Tradition says this is done by means of this ceremony.

The ceremony begins with saying an introductory blessing made of verses from the Haftarah, specifically from Isaiah, Psalms, and the Scroll of Esther. These verses are not considered an obligatory part of the service. Like the Psalms at the beginning of Kabbalat Shabbat, they are there to bring extra meaning and ceremony to the event. And their inclusion is a relatively new part of the ceremony. As late as the sixteenth century, the rabbinic authorities listed only three of the eight verses that are now customary.

What are these verses?

***Hinay, El yishu'ati evtach velo efchad, ki azi vezimrat Yah, Adonai, va'yehi li lishu'a.***

"Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."

Isaiah 12:2

***U'she'avtem ma'yim besason, mima'a'yenay ha'yeshu'a.***

Therefore you will joyously draw water from the wells of salvation.

Isaiah 12:3

***La'Adonai ha'yeshu'a, al amcha virchatecha, Selah!***

Salvation belongs to the LORD; Your blessing be upon your people. Exalt!  
Psalm 3:8

***Adonai Tzeva'ot imanu, misgav lanu, Elohay Ya'akov, Selah!***

The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Exalt!  
Psalm 46:11

***Adonai Tzeva'ot, ashray adam botay'ach bach***

O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Psalms 84:12

***Adonai hoshi'ah, hamelech ya'anaynu ve'yom kor'aynu.***

Save, O LORD; May the King answer us in the day we call.

Psalms 20:9

***La'yehudim ha'yetah orah vesimcha vesason vikar,***

For the Jews there was light and gladness and joy and honor.

Esther 8:16

***kayn te'hi'yeh lanu.***

so be it with us. (This is the only part that is not a Scripture verse.)

***Kos yeshu'ot esa u'veshaym Adonai Ekra.***

I shall lift up cup of salvation and call upon the name of the LORD.

Psalms 116:13

It is important to note that the mainstream Jewish Rabbis teach that the "salvation" referred to in these verses is the deliverance from immediate troubles or dangers. However, as those who know the salvation of Messiah Yeshua, we know differently. We know that these speak of our Messiah. We know that the cup of salvation David speaks of in Psalm 116 is the third cup of the Passover Seder, over which Yeshua said was the symbol of the new covenant in His blood, the covenant under which we will live in the world to come, which will be one long Sabbath!

But let's look at some of the passages these are quoting in greater depth. The Isaiah verse is from:

**Isaiah 12**

Then you will say on that day, "I will give thanks to You, O LORD; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation."

Therefore you will joyously draw water From the springs of salvation. And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted."

Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

What is the day being spoken of here? To find out, we must backtrack to:

### **Isaiah 11:1-12**

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

In other words, the Great & Terrible Day of the Lord, which leads us to the Eternal Sabbath of His Kingdom! Yeshua will come to save Israel from the armies of the world that are arrayed against it, just as He has saved in the past as depicted in the passages from Psalms and Esther that we read, from which many of the verses in the introduction come.



Interestingly, the verse from Esther is one of the few places in the Tanakh where the term "Yehudim" or "Jews" is used. In fact, the word "Yehudim" has a more specific meaning, the Judeans, the people of the Kingdom of Judah after the division of Israel into two countries as described in the Bible. The word is used in Esther because it was Judah who was taken into captivity in Persia, and thus specifically the Yehudim who were saved by Esther and Mordecai's efforts. This is why the phrase "so be it with us" was added after that verse.

After the introductory verses, the leader pours wine into a cup until it overflows. A basis for this custom is a Rabbinic interpretation of the Biblical verse that God will bless our food and water in Exodus 23. The reasoning is that a household where wine flows like water is one in which God has blessed their food and water. Hence the overflowing cup, symbolizing our share in the Divine blessing.

It is important to note that even though the Kiddush, the blessing over the wine, is said at this point, we DO NOT drink the wine at this point. That will come later.

Next, we bless the spices and the light. Fragrant spices and light used in connection with the Havdalah ritual began around the second century B.C.E. or Before the Common Era, so it was a tradition Yeshua would've likely practiced. It was then customary for the sages to extend their third Sabbath meal, usually eaten in the afternoon, until well past nightfall. Toward the end of this meal, fire and incense would be brought in, because fire cannot be lit on the Sabbath and incense since it must be prepared by being heated and thus could not have been prepared during Sabbath. So, this ended Sabbath for them. These two items and the blessings associated with their use eventually became an integral part of the Havdalah ritual.

But there are other reasons why spices and fire are brought in at this point. A reason given for the use of fragrant spices at the end of the Sabbath day is that we are saddened by the departure of the Sabbath, and the lift provided by the fragrance is supposed to compensate somewhat for the resultant gloom.

The candle lighting is the first fire of the new week, and the Talmud tells us that the light of the candle and blessing of it is to commemorate man's discovery of fire. The story is that God provided Adam with the knowledge to take two stones and strike them together, bringing forth fires, and that this

discovery took place on the first Saturday night. Thus, since we are forbidden to light a fire on the Sabbath, it is as though this discovery is made again each Saturday night, and so we thank God for it.

The line that gives us the title of this section, “*Ha-Mavdil Bayn Kodesh L'chol*,” can be translated two ways, "Who Separates the Sacred & the Secular" and "Who Separates the Holy from the Profane." Remembering God's provision of fire to us is such a separation. The Talmud story may be seen as a response to the ancient Greek legend of Prometheus, which says that a man stole fire from Olympus and brought it down to man, and that when Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, discovered the theft, he ordered Prometheus, the thief, chained and tortured for all eternity.

In contrast, we believe that God GAVE fire to man, that God taught man to light it. Ours is a God Who wants to help man discover the way to progress, not a god who punishes man for daring to light a fire! In writing this blessing, the sages deliberately chose the plural "lights of the fire" to signify that God is the source of all of our progress, all of our discoveries of how to make light, even though we are the agents of that discovery rather than being directly taught by God. Thus, we are separate in our beliefs from the profane.

Next is the Havdalah blessing, which goes (in English):

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe, who makes a distinction between holy and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six working days. Blessed are you, O Lord, who makes a distinction between holy and profane.

The text of the Havdalah blessing is based on various separations or havdalot mentioned in Scripture:

### **Leviticus 10:10 (CJB)**

...so that you will distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean...

## Genesis 1:4 (CJB)

God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.

## Leviticus 20:26 (CJB)

Rather, you people are to be holy for me; because I, ADONAI, am holy; and I have set you apart from the other peoples, so that you can belong to me.

Finally, before the end of the ceremony as celebrated in fully traditional homes, the Sabbath is separated from the rest of the week by three songs: **HaMavdil**, which is taken from the Havdalah prayer; **Shavua Tov**, which is the counterpart to **Shabbat Shalom**, in that it repeats over and over the Hebrew words "**Shavua Tov**," meaning "Good Week," and **Eliyahu HaNavi** ("Elijah the Prophet"), which is also sung on Passover. This is to remind us of the Messianic kingdom, which is one long Shabbat, because Elijah the Prophet foretells the coming of Messiah. We sing two of these songs, "Shavua Tov" and "Eliyahu HaNavi." The English translation of the lyrics for "Eliyahu HaNavi" are:

Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite,

Elijah, Elijah, Elijah the Gileadite.

Come soon, bringing with you,

Messiah son of David, Messiah son of David

These separations, and especially the separations referenced in the Havdalah prayer itself, imply different levels of holiness established by God. We see differing levels of holiness in the Scriptures. The High Priest, for example, had to be kept especially holy, so some things were forbidden to him that were allowed to others, such as marrying a widow. Yeshua also implies that there are levels of holiness in the Kingdom, based on whether or not a person keeps and teaches the commandments:

## Matthew 5:19

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Paul also backs this up when he discusses the levels of heaven.

But what is important here is the separation in levels of holiness for days. While God created all days, and thus all are holy to a certain extent, only one day – the Sabbath – is separated as holy unto God. Its level of holiness is much higher than the other days of the week. It is this separation – this holiness, this glory – that is the lesson of the Sabbath.

## Chapter Fourteen

### Passover in the Life of the Believer

**O**f all the festivals in Leviticus (God's Appointed Times) Passover may be the one most familiar to Christians, because a major Christian observance – Communion – comes directly from it, and the Messiah's Last Supper is known to have been a celebration of Passover, and so there has been some study of it. My hope in this teaching is to show you more fully what it means in the life of the Believer.

#### The Lead-Up

Passover doesn't begin on Passover. The first part is the lead-up to the actual Passover night. The preparation for a holy day is frequently just as important as the holy day itself, and this is no exception. In this case, it begins a little less than a month beforehand, with the Sabbath of the Red Heifer, or ***Shabbat Parah*** in Hebrew. In the days of God's Temple in Jerusalem, you could not come to the Temple to bring your festival offering, or come to the Temple at any time, if you were ritually unclean. This was commanded in Numbers chapter nineteen, and in that passage it is commanded that you had to be purified with the "water of lustration," which is water with the ashes of the red heifer mixed into it. Why was this commandment made into a special Sabbath almost a month before Passover? Because people needed time to arrange to undergo the ritual to become ritually clean in order to celebrate the Passover at the Temple.

Now, I know you may be saying, there's no Temple in Jerusalem anymore, we are the Temple, so how does this apply to us today? Well, the Apostle Paul – one of the greatest rabbis who ever lived, by the way – tell us in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.

Now, as I'll show you in a bit, the bread and the cup are a specific part of the Passover ceremony. But let's look at this statement that you shouldn't take it in an unworthy manner, that a man must examine himself first, before partaking. As we've discussed in previous chapters, this process in Hebrew is called **t'shuva**, which is translated as repentance but literally means "turning," to turn from the bad ways to God's ways. And we all need to do that, amen? We all fall short, even when we're Believers, amen?

This process cannot be fully done in the short period of time between when the pastor tells us it's time for Communion and when we actually partake. This process takes some time, just like the ability to go and get yourself sprinkled with the water of lustration took some time, so they announced it almost a month in advance. And if our physical bodies needed to be made ritually clean before entering God's physical Temple, how much more so do we need to prepare our bodies to be God's Temple as we approach His Appointed Times, so we don't partake in an unworthy manner?

I like to think of the Sabbath of the Red Heifer as the beginning of a period of "Spring Cleaning of the Heart." Those three weeks or so between that Sabbath and Passover are an incredible time of reflection.

Now, the next important time in the lead-up to Passover is **Shabbat KaChodesh**, the Sabbath of the Month, or the Sabbath of the Renewal, depending on how one renders the Hebrew. This is the Sabbath closest to **Rosh Chodesh Nisan**. “Rosh Chodesh” means “Head of the Month” (first day of the month) and “Nisan” is the first month, so this is the first first of the month by the Biblical cycle. We read in the beginning Exodus 12: The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt; he said, *“You are to begin your calendar with this month; it will be the first month of the year for you.”*

Fourteen days before the Passover is the beginning of the festival calendar, Rosh Chodesh Nisan. On this date of renewal, our ancestors were given specific sacrifices to perform, and were told to sanctify this as the beginning of our months, and thus of our renewing. But what, precisely, is this a renewal of? Just the calendar?

God’s Calendar is one of the strongest ties we have to Him. It tells us that, no matter what the world thinks or does, we who keep His Commandments will meet with Him on the Sabbath, on the Seventh Day, a day set aside for praise, worship, and rest. It tells us that, no matter what the world thinks or does, we will commemorate the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan and the resurrection of final Paschal Lamb on the first first day of the week after Passover. We will keep His commandments and act as befitting God’s Redeemed.

Finally, in the lead-up to Passover, is the Inclusion of the Lamb, the selection of a perfect lamb for the Sacrifice, which is commemorated in Judaism on **Shabbat HaGadol**, the Great Sabbath, the Sabbath immediately preceding Passover, and in Christianity on Palm Sunday, because Yeshua’s Triumphal Entry occurred on the day of selecting the lambs, the tenth day of the first month, the month called Nisan. And He was evaluated and found worthy of being Messiah on that day by those crowds, amen?

In fact, the discrepancy of the Sabbath and Sunday as the Inclusion of the Lamb is indicative of a whole problem with the standard view of the chronology of what is known as “Passion Week” in Christianity. Let’s review what Scripture has to say about it. To figure the way the week lays out, we need to first figure out the proper times of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, and then we can figure the week back from that point in time. The standard Christian theology says that the Crucifixion was on Friday and

the Resurrection on Sunday morning, but we know for many reasons that this cannot be.

The first is that Friday afternoon (when Yeshua died) to Sunday morning would only be about a day and a half of being dead and in the grave, which does not match what Yeshua Himself told us:

### **Matthew 12:38-40**

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

### **Matthew 17:22-23**

And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved.

### **Mark 8:31-32**

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He was stating the matter plainly.

### **Mark 9:30-31**

From there they went out and began to go through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know about it. For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."



## **Mark 10:32-34**

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again."

## **John 2:12-22**

After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days. The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."

His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME." The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Okay, what did Yeshua say?

- ✧ He would "be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."
- ✧ "[T]hey will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day."
- ✧ He would "be killed, and after three days rise again."
- ✧ "[W]hen He has been killed, He will rise three days later."
- ✧ "Destroy this temple (Him), and in three days I will raise it up."

First off, it seems that there are two three-day periods being discussed here; death and resurrection, and being “in the heart of the earth,” or buried. That may seem like it would be the same three-day period, but remember that He died on the Cross several hours (we’ll review exactly how long shortly) before He was put in the Tomb.

Secondly, let’s review the prophecies about the timing of the death and resurrection. “On the third day,” “after three days,” “three days later,” and “in three days.” These are significantly different concepts linguistically, and the only way for all of them to be true at the same time is if it is an exact 72 hour period, exactly three days. Not part of a day equaling a whole day, which I’ve heard claimed is an ancient Jewish tradition (it is not). But exactly three days. So we know that a Friday Afternoon Crucifixion and a Sunday Morning Resurrection cannot work.

So, let’s see if we can figure the time of the Resurrection, and then work backwards:

### **Matthew 28:1-8**

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.

The word “dawn” here is very interesting. In the Greek manuscripts – which is where this translation comes from – the word is *Epiphosko*, which is found in precisely two places in Scripture, here and in Luke 23:54, where it says, “And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.” Well, the Sabbath doesn’t begin at “dawn.” In Scriptural terminology and thought, a day doesn’t begin at sunup or at midnight:

## Genesis 1:1-8

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

So, we see that, Biblically, a day starts in the evening, traditionally at sunset. So, we can see that a better translation of Matthew 28:1 would be, "Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was about to begin..." Another good hint we have that this is "**Motzei Shabbat**" (After Shabbat, Saturday night), is that the women were coming to prepare the body and bought spices on the way (Mark 16:1). In Jerusalem then, as now, the shops are closed early Sunday morning, but the marketplaces come alive as the Sabbath is ending and Saturday night is beginning.

So, it is becoming the First Day of the Week – the sun is going down – as they approach the Tomb. But we read that Yeshua has already Resurrected and is out of the Tomb by the time they arrive! So, if Yeshua Rose as the Sabbath is ending, and we figure back three days, it would be what we call Wednesday night that the Tomb is closed, giving us a Wednesday Crucifixion.

Now, let's see if we can come up with a Chronology for that Wednesday from the references to time in the lengthy description in Matthew 27 and the brief description of the end of the day that we read in Mark 15:

### **Matthew 27:1-2**

Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor.

### **Matthew 27:45-50**

Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "**ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?**" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" And some of those who were standing there, when they heard it, began saying, "This man is calling for Elijah." Immediately one of them ran, and taking a sponge, he filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink. But the rest of them said, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

### **Matthew 27:57-58**

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

### **Mark 15:42-45**

When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

This last passage is where the confusion about the Crucifixion happening on Friday comes. In the week containing Passover, there are two days that can be described as "sabbath" – both the regular, weekly Sabbath and the Festival

Day of Rest that is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the week-long Festival that modern Judaism lumps together with the one day of Passover. The day of Passover is also the Preparation Day for the First Day of Unleavened Bread, and the Passover Seder – the eating of the Passover Lamb – actually occurs after sundown, beginning the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The term “Passover” technically refers only to the sacrificing of the lamb itself.

So, let us review these time references. You will notice references to numbered “hours” – sixth hour, ninth hour, etc. These are meant to refer to hours of daylight, “Morning” beginning at sunup and these mark time from sunup. Most historians and theologians, for the sake of not having to worry about atmospheric data about when the sun actually rose on a given day, will peg these references as starting with sunup at 6:00AM. Thus “the sixth hour,” meaning six hours after sunrise, when darkness fell over the face of the land, would be approximately noon. The darkness lasted for three hours, until “the ninth hour,” or approximately 3:00PM, so we see that Yeshua “yielded up His Spirit” (died) at approximately 3:00PM.

Now, figuring the time of the burial becomes a little more interesting. We are told it is “evening” when Joseph of Arimathea goes to speak to Pilate. The term “evening” in Jewish thought usually means when the sun is beginning its descent in the sky, but is not actually close to going down, and is generally pegged, like the hours of sunlight, to be about 5:00PM. This is the time in traditional Jewish communities on Friday afternoon when the men of the community would go to Synagogue for the Erev Shabbat service, arriving home about sundown, when the family would receive the Sabbath together (see chapter thirteen). It obviously took some time to get Yeshua into the Tomb, as Joseph had to hurry and buy a burial shroud before the Festival Day of Rest began. Harkening back to Matthew 28:1 and counting back exactly three days from sundown ending the Sabbath, the time of the stone rolling away, we can figure that it was sundown on Wednesday when the Tomb closed. This means Yeshua actually “woke up” from death on Sabbath afternoon about 3:00PM and then left the Tomb three hours later, about 6:00PM. This is fitting, since it is tradition among many Jews to have a nap after lunch on the Sabbath and wake up in time for the final service which, in traditional communities, would begin about 3:00PM!

So, here we can come up with a reconstructed timeline for the Crucifixion and the Resurrection:

## **Reconstructed Crucifixion/Resurrection Timeline**

### **WEDNESDAY:**

**6:00AM: Sunrise**

**6-12AM: Jesus' trial, carries cross to site of the Crucifixion, nailed up**

**12 Noon: Darkness falls for three hours**

**3:00PM: Jesus Dies**

**5:00PM: Joseph of Arimathea arranges for custody of the Body.**

**6:00PM: Sundown:**

- 1) Tomb is closed as sun goes down.**
- 2) Festival Day of Rest (aka "the sabbath"/"high sabbath") begins at sundown.**

### **THURSDAY:**

**6:00AM: Sunrise**

**3:00PM: 24 Hours since Jesus' Death.**

**6:00PM: Sundown:**

- 1) 24 Hours since Tomb is closed.**
- 2) Festival Day of Rest (aka "the sabbath"/"high sabbath") ends at sundown.**

### **FRIDAY:**

**6:00AM: Sunrise**

**3:00PM: 48 Hours since Jesus' Death.**

**6:00PM: Sundown:**

- 1) 48 Hours since Tomb is closed.**
- 2) Weekly Sabbath begins at sundown.**

## **SATURDAY:**

**6:00AM: Sunrise**

**3:00PM: 72 Hours since Jesus' Death:**

***Jesus rises from the dead!***

**6:00PM: Sundown:**

**1) 72 Hours since Tomb is closed.**

***Jesus walks out of the tomb!***

**2) Weekly Sabbath ends at sundown.**

**3) *Yom HaBikkurim* (Day of the First Fruits)  
begins at sundown.**

### **1 Corinthians 15:20-22**

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

So, we see that Yeshua was Crucified on Passover, and that His actual death occurred at 3:00PM, which is the time of the afternoon sacrifice on Passover! Yeshua is the Passover Lamb! In John 1, we read that John the Baptist said of Yeshua, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!"

Now, let's talk about the Passover Seder itself. While Yeshua's Last Supper was actually the night before the Passover Seder, if we look at the Scriptural accounts of the Last Supper to see that it matches up with the Passover Seder perfectly! This is not unusual: it is a tradition that a Rabbi would hold a "Practice Seder" with his disciples the night before, so they would see how he does it and what insights he brings to it, and Rabbi Yeshua was no different. Let's look at the various elements of the Passover Seder and what Rabbi Yeshua showed us they mean. I will be quoting at length, and interspersing my comments:

## **Matthew 25:18-30**

He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."'" The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. As they were eating, He said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me." Being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him, "Surely not I, Lord?" And He answered, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man is to go, just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." And Judas, who was betraying Him, said, "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself."

*The Passover Seder is the only meal at which this dipping is done in Judaism: we dip green vegetables into salt water – representing that a life in slavery is a life immersed in tears; we dip matzah, the unleavened bread, into bitter herbs and a sweet mixture made of apples and walnuts and raisins and wine, to remind us that even the most bitter of trouble is sweetened by the promise of redemption.*

While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

*In First Corinthians, this is described as taking place after the meal. From this, we know that this is the Afikoman and the Cup of Redemption, the cup after the meal. The tradition of the Afikoman is an interesting one. Three matzahs are placed in a three-chambered bag before the service. We can see this represents the three primary manifestations of God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. During the part of the ceremony before dinner, we remove the middle matzah from this bag, singling it out for special treatment.*



*But let's look at this matzah before we do anything with it. Rabbis have examined matzah for millennia in this manner. The matzah must be sufficiently pierced that you can see the light through it. It also must have sufficient striping on it. For He was wounded for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed, amen?*

*Now, this is what is done with the middle matzah: we break it roughly in half, wrap the bigger half in a white linen napkin, and we hide it. The children then look for it, and the one who finds it receives a prize. Afterwards, it's passed around, everyone breaks off a piece, and eats it. Then, they take the third cup, the cup after dinner, which is known as the Cup of Redemption. Sound familiar?*

*Yeshua said it was His Body, which is broken for you. It was hidden away for a time, and then comes back out. The connections are there.*

After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

*The closing hymn of the Passover Seder is the Hallel, Psalms 113-118.*

### **John 13:2-8**

During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

*In a Passover Seder, there is a bit of eating ritually (the dipping mentioned earlier is a part of it), but before the main meal is served, a ritual washing occurs.*

So, as we can see, both Passover is highly significant to us as Believers, and is the time every year when we are supposed to take the Cup of Redemption and the Matzah that symbolizes Messiah's body. It is a time when we can take stock of who we are in Him, and remember His Sacrifice, which causes sin to Pass Over us, just as the blood of the first Passover Sacrifice caused the Angel of Death to Pass Over the homes of the Israelites as recorded in Exodus. So, we can commemorate both events and celebrate our Salvation every Passover.

## **Chapter Fifteen**

### **The Feast of Unleavened Bread**

#### **– Clean Out The Old Leaven**

**F**or one week in the Spring, we are commanded to have turned our whole houses and property upside down and live for a week without any yeast or other leavened products:

#### **Deuteronomy 16:1-4**

Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. You shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to establish His name. You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with it unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), so that you may remember all the days of your life the day when you came out of the land of Egypt. For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall remain overnight until morning.

#### **Leviticus 23:5-6**

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

So, what is the point of this yeast-less week? Why are we given this commandment? Well, as we have read, in the time leading up to Passover, we have made **t'shuvah** – repented – our sins so we can take the Cup of Redemption and the Afikoman (the Matzah the represents Messiah's body) of the Seder "in a worthy manner." And right after the Passover, no leaven is to be found on our properties. So, at the same time that we are searching our domiciles for leaven, we are searching out our hearts for the leaven of sin:

### **1 Corinthians 5:7-8**

Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. 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.

First, we clean out the leaven – a process of repentance that we discussed in the last chapter takes about a month. Then, in the night of the Passover Seder, we commemorate the Crucifixion, the Passover Sacrifice, and the Passing Over of the Angel of Death. But what happened on the morning after the First Passover? The Israelites left Egypt. They walked away from the slavery that had held them for so long, and into a life of service to God (Exodus 10:3). So, we too, are freed from slavery to sin by Yeshua's Passover Sacrifice of the Crucifixion, and we walk into a life of service. The purity of the Festival of Unleavened Bread – a week without leaven, which symbolizes sin – sets the tone for the purity of service we try to bring to the Most High God.

What is the seriousness of this week without leaven? We read in Exodus 12:19: *"Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land."* To be "cut off from the congregation of Israel" meant death, being cast out of the Covenant. No one would sell anything to you, not even food. You were an exile from the People of God.

What did Yeshua say about leaven?

## **Matthew 16:1-11**

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, "He said that because we did not bring any bread."

But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? Do you not yet understand or remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

What is the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees? You may recall this from Chapter Seven: "Although Yeshua agreed with the theology of the Pharisees, it is obvious that He did not condone their hypocrisy. He rebuked them for praying long public prayers, as well as sounding the trumpet, to draw attention to themselves when giving public offerings." Their sins of pride and hypocrisy were their leaven. What is your leaven? We all have our weaknesses, "for all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God." This week of festive assembly, we remember to leave behind the leaven of our sin as we go forward from the Crucifixion.

In many ways, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the message of this entire book: salvation is a starting point. We must learn to continue on, leaving our sin behind by learning to live out God's Commandments. And that's the long and the short of it.

## Chapter Sixteen

### The Day of the First Fruits

**Y**om *HaBikkurim*, the Day of the First Fruits. What is the Day of the First Fruits? On the first “first-day” of the week after the Passover, an offering of the first fruits of the barley harvest was brought to the Temple, and the beginning of a count of seven weeks and one day – fifty days – began, counting up to Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, which many of you know as Pentecost. It is at the beginning of this day (remember, in Biblical parlance, the day begins as at sundown), as the sun was going down, the end of the Sabbath that Yeshua walked out of the Tomb (as we read in Chapter Fourteen)! We read about Yom HaBikkurim in Scripture:

#### Leviticus 23:9-14

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 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 the LORD. Its grain offering shall then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its drink offering, a fourth of a hin of wine. 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.'

Although it is traditional in Christian Churches to celebrate the Resurrection on Sunday Morning, it is traditional among many in the Messianic community to celebrate it in combination with Yom HaBikkurim on Saturday night. Let's review when Yeshua rose. First, let's look at the account in Matthew:

### **Matthew 28:1-9 (Complete Jewish Bible)**

After Shabbat, as the next day was dawning, Miryam of Magdala and the other Miryam went to see the grave. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of ADONAI came down from heaven, rolled away the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were as white as snow. The guards were so terrified at him that they trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know you are looking for Yeshua, who was executed on the stake. He is not here, because he has been raised -- just as he said! Come and look at the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell the talmidim, 'He has been raised from the dead, and now he is going to the Galil ahead of you. You will see him there.' Now I have told you." So they left the tomb quickly, frightened yet filled with joy; and they ran to give the news to his talmidim. Suddenly Yeshua met them and said, "Shalom!" They came up and took hold of his feet as they fell down in front of him. Then Yeshua said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go and tell my brothers to go to the Galil, and they will see me there.

If you look at the manuscripts, the word translated as "dawning" actually means "beginning," and as we know, in the Hebrew calendar, the day starts at sundown. But does this mean Yeshua rose at the end of the Shabbat? Well, let's look at what Yeshua Himself said about his death and resurrection and the time involved:

### **Matthew 12:38-40 (CJB)**

At this some of the Torah-teachers said, "Rabbi, we want to see a miraculous sign from you." He replied, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign? No! None will be given to it but the sign of the prophet Yonah. For just as Yonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea-monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the depths of the earth.

### Mark 9:30-31 (CJB)

After leaving that place, they went on through the Galil. Yeshua didn't want anyone to know, because he was teaching his talmidim. He told them, "The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men who will put him to death; but after he has been killed, three days later he will rise."

So, Yeshua made two definitive statements: he would be in the ground for three days, and he would be dead for three days. Now, we know Yeshua died about three in the afternoon and was put into the tomb about six, as the sun was going down. So, we see that, for both statements to be true, he rose at 3pm – the time of the Mincha or Afternoon service at the Temple – at he left the tomb at 6pm, as the sun was going down, as it was becoming the first day of the week, which is when the two Miriams were enroute to the tomb. This time, the end of Sabbath, is marked the Havdalah ceremony, which I explained about in Chapter Thirteen.

So, since we believe that Yeshua left the tomb at Havdalah, is there significance to that? I would suggest that there is. I have come to see Yeshua's Resurrection as: ***The Counter-Havdalah***." The word "Havdalah" is Hebrew for "separation," and the ceremony at the end of Shabbat is called that because it separates one week from another... or, in the words of the central prayer of the ceremony, Havdalah marks the separation "between holy and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six working days." It can be viewed as symbolic, therefore, as the separation between God and man caused by sin. Yeshua's death and resurrection obliterated that separation.

In the Havdalah service, wine is poured until it spills over, and a candle is snuffed out by being dipped into the wine. At Passover, we learn that the wine of the Cup of Redemption (and, therefore wine, in a ***drash*** – searched, or allegorical – sense, may be viewed as symbolic of blood in general). When the Scriptures speak of the spilling of innocent blood (as Yeshua's was), it usually means they are killed -- their life has been snuffed out, like the candle in the Havdalah service is snuffed out in the wine that has also been spilled previously.

Also, since the service marks the end of the week, it can be viewed as commemorating the "death" of the Sabbath preceding -- indeed, the rabbis tell us the wine and spices at Havdalah are supposed to gladden us at the loss



of our "extra soul" we are supposedly granted on Shabbat, so we could view it as death, the loss of the "extra soul."

### **1 Corinthians 15:20-24 (CJB)**

But the fact is that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died. For since death came through a man, also the resurrection of the dead has come through a man. For just as in connection with Adam all die, so in connection with the Messiah all will be made alive. But each in his own order: the Messiah is the firstfruits; then those who belong to the Messiah, at the time of his coming; then the culmination, when he hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, after having put an end to every rulership, yes, to every authority and power.

### **James 1:17-18 (CJB)**

Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father who made the heavenly lights; with him there is neither variation nor darkness caused by turning. Having made his decision, he gave birth to us through a Word that can be relied upon, in order that we should be a kind of firstfruits of all that he created.

When Yeshua's blood was spilled... His Light passed through the spilt blood, and it came out shining as brightly as it always did, and now we can see it better, because the Separation (Havdalah) between us and God has been removed in His sacrifice, so we are now, as He has always been the First Fruits! And then we become first fruits, like Him! The Separation is gone! That is the message of Yom HaBikkurim.

## Chapter Seventeen

### ***Shavuot* – The Feast of Pentecost**

#### **The Journey to the Mountain**

**E**very year around Passover time, Jews read and hear about the Paschal sacrifice, and Moses arguing with Pharaoh, and the plagues, and the Egyptians giving the Hebrews their gold and silver jewelry, and the Hebrews getting out at night and the parting of the Red Sea, and the Hebrews escape, and the drowning of Pharaoh's army. Then, at ***Shavuot***, we hear about standing at the foot of Sinai and receiving the Torah... and, in our minds, this is **THE STORY OF THE EXODUS**. We usually forget that there were fifty days between those two events... fifty very important days. And, as Believers, every year around Easter time, we read and hear about the ultimate Paschal sacrifice, and the Resurrection, and then, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles in the Upper Room on the Temple Mount, and this is **THE STORY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH**. We usually forget that there were, again, fifty days between these two events... fifty very important days. In fact, though separated by 1500 years or so, The Journey to the Mountain, from the Red Sea to Mount Sinai, and from the Empty Tomb to the Temple Mount's Upper Room. They are both the same Journey: the journey from a slave people to a people who had accepted God's covenant. It is the journey from salvation through the blood sacrifice to sanctification through the covenant and obedience to it.

“Hold Your Water.” That’s an old expression I learned from my parents that has a double meaning, but the less literal meaning is to calm down and wait for things to be straightened out. I thought of that saying when beginning to prepare this sermon. The beginning of the Torah passage I cite below is three days after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and the people are crying for water; this is just six days after they left Egypt, remember. They had just gone through an incredible period of seeing the power of God flow over Egypt, which culminated in them being freed, and the Egyptians giving them lots of gold and silver and other precious metals and jewels as they left. They’ve seen the mighty Red Sea parted so they could cross on dry ground, and the same Sea flow back and drown their oppressors.

They’ve just seen this! Less than a week has gone by, and they’re already complaining! They must’ve had water during this period, or they wouldn’t have been alive a week later! So, what’s going on here? Let’s look at the Scripture passage:

### **Exodus 15:22-25**

Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore it was named Marah. So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw {it} into the waters, and the waters became sweet.

The people are complaining. They don’t remember what God has done for them. They are grumbling. Interestingly enough, the passage does not say they had no water, and it does not say they were thirsty. It says they complained because they hadn’t found any water, and then the water they did find was bitter.

I believe God was trying to teach them to have faith in Him for everything. Have faith that He would provide their needs. They tried it on their own. Then, they went to God, through His prophet Moses and His High Priest Aaron, just as we now go to God through Yeshua, Who is a Prophet and our High Priest. So, what happened after they depended on God?

## **Exodus 15:26-27**

There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them. And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." Then they came to Elim where there {were} twelve springs of water and seventy date palms, and they camped there beside the waters.

So, we see that when they began to turn back to God and away from their grumbings, God began to teach them how to live, and He brought them to a place where there was water and food.

So, the Israelites were grateful for what God had done for them, put their trust in Him, obeyed His commandments, and stopped grumbling, right? You would think! But, no!

## **Exodus 16:1-3**

Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Yet again, I find it significant that we are not told there was no food. We are not told they were starving. We are not told they were hungry. We are only told that they were... grumbling! They've been wondering around in the desert for over a month, obviously they've got food and water, right? We're not told they were dropping dead of dehydration or starvation, right? Don't you think if this was occurring, the Torah would tell us this?

Instead, we are left with the inescapable conclusion that these people, who were granted redemption from slavery, who were escorted out of hostile territory and given their enemies' wealth, who saw God part the Red Sea, who got bitter water made drinkable... all these things, and they still think God wants to do them in!

How like we once were! Remember back to when you first were saved, and then after the initial euphoria wore off, and the first trials began. How many of us were willing to blame God when things weren't perfect? How many of us still do?

And if you have a problem with this, maybe it will help you feel better to know that the Disciples did as well!

### **John 20:19-29**

So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Judeans, Yeshua came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Yeshua said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." But Thomas, one of the twelve (the name means "twin"), was not with them when Yeshua came. So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

So, here we see that the Disciples – the people who were closest to Yeshua during His ministry, who were supposedly learning at His feet, and were told many times about what would happen – even they lacked faith! Even they lacked wisdom to see what was going on!

You see, they were on the very same journey the Israelites had gone on 1500 years earlier! They had been redeemed by the blood of Messiah. They were told He was alive. And yet, they lacked the basic faith in Him to simply

accept it, and praise God! They were worried. They were in fear. I will bet they even did some... grumbling. But, they turned back to God, and He turned to them, but not without chastising them for their lack of faith in God.

One of my favorite Psalms addresses this lesson that both the Israelites and the Disciples had to learn as their first leg on their Journey to the Mountain:

### **Psalms 48**

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, In the city of our God, His holy mountain. Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion {in} the far north, The city of the great King. God, in her palaces, Has made Himself known as a stronghold. For, lo, the kings assembled themselves, They passed by together. They saw {it,} then they were amazed; They were terrified, they fled in alarm. Panic seized them there, Anguish, as of a woman in childbirth. With the east wind You break the ships of Tarshish. As we have heard, so have we seen In the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God; God will establish her forever. Selah. We have thought on Your lovingkindness, O God, In the midst of Your temple. As is Your name, O God, So is Your praise to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is full of righteousness. Let Mount Zion be glad, Let the daughters of Judah rejoice Because of Your judgments. Walk about Zion and go around her; Count her towers; Consider her ramparts; Go through her palaces, That you may tell {it} to the next generation. For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death.

Be still and know that I am God! The literal translation of “be still” is “Desist.” It follows on with the previous lines. Desist from your fears in the face of troubles, and know that He is God! How simple, and yet how difficult, because the world has told us that we must be self-sufficient. We shouldn’t lean on anyone. But God says we’re to lean on Him. We are to cease our grumblings before Him, stop cowering behind locked spiritual doors because we’re afraid to venture out boldly in faith, and know that He is God. That He will take care of you, as He said he would do:

## Exodus 16:4-12

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?" Moses said, "{This will happen} when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumblings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us but against the LORD." Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumblings.' "It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the grumblings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

Cease your grumblings before Him, stop cowering behind locked spiritual doors because you're afraid to venture out boldly in faith, and know that He is God and He will provide. That's the first step in the Journey to the Mountain. To take the next step, we read:

## Exodus 16:13-15 (Complete Jewish Bible)

That evening, quails came up and covered the camp; while in the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp. When the dew had evaporated, there on the surface of the desert was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the people of Isra'el saw it, they asked each other, "**Man hu**?<sup>28</sup> [What is it?]"

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<sup>28</sup> One of my proofreaders, Ellen Mumper, who is also a Hebrew teacher, points out to me that there is no literal word for "it" in Hebrew, and that "**hu**" literally means "he." She then gave this analysis: What they were doing is asking "What is HE!" for 40 yrs they ate the question "What is HE!?" Later Yeshua said "I am that bread that came down from Heaven..." Thank you, Elli, for that invaluable insight.

because they didn't know what it was. Moshe [Moses] answered them, "It is the bread which ADONAI has given you to eat."

It is from this question by the Israelites – "**Man hu?** [What is it?]" – that the name of the stuff they ate for forty years comes from. Every time you hear someone say "manna", they are asking, "What is it?" You will notice God and Moses refer to it mainly as simply bread, which is "**lechem**" in Hebrew, and is part of the name of the town Yeshua was born in, **Beit-Lechem**, the "House of Bread."

As an aside, let me make one little observation: Parents, don't be upset when your kids ask you "What is this?" when you serve dinner... as you can see, they're just upholding an ancient Israelite tradition!

Anyway, we might ask, why is the name given to this stuff that sustained the Israelites the question, "What is it?" I would suggest that it was a constant reminder that the Israelites had no means of supporting themselves and they had to rely totally on God, for to constantly be having to ask "What is it?" reminded them – and us – of Moses's response: "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat." This would constantly reinforce the need to look to God for the answers, which is key to any understanding of these next steps in the Journey to the Mountain. The next section is:

### **Exodus 16:16-21 (CJB)**

"Here is what ADONAI has ordered: each man is to gather according to his appetite - each is to take an 'omer [two quarts] per person for everyone in his tent." The people of Isra'el did this. Some gathered more, some less; but when they put it in an 'omer-measure, whoever had gathered much had no excess; and whoever had gathered little had no shortage; nevertheless each person had gathered according to his appetite. Moshe told them, "No one is to leave any of it till morning." But they didn't pay attention to Moshe, and some kept the leftovers until morning. It bred worms and rotted, which made Moshe angry at them. So they gathered it morning after morning, each person according to his appetite; but as the sun grew hot, it melted.



God ordered people to gather according to their appetites... basically, every day, it was an all-you-can-eat manna buffet, but like in the military, take all you want, but eat what you take. And look what happened to those who didn't do as God said: those who underestimated still were fed. Those who were greedy found they still only had enough to fill them. Those who kept it over until the morning found it spoiled. Those who decided to go out later and get some more found it melted away. This, I believe, was designed as an object lesson: when you go about obeying God's commandments, your will is to be nullified before His will.

### **Exodus 16:22-29 (CJB)**

On the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two 'omers per person; and all the community leaders came and reported to Moshe. He told them, "This is what ADONAI has said: 'Tomorrow is a holy Shabbat for ADONAI. Bake what you want to bake; boil what you want to boil; and whatever is left over, set aside and keep for the morning.'" They set it aside till morning, as Moshe had ordered; and it didn't rot or have worms. Moshe said, "Today, eat that; because today is a Shabbat for ADONAI - today you won't find it in the field. Gather it six days, but the seventh day is the Shabbat - on that day there won't be any." ADONAI said to Moshe, "How long will you refuse to observe my mitzvot and teachings? Look, ADONAI has given you the Shabbat. This is why he is providing bread for two days on the sixth day. Each of you, stay where you are; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day." So the people rested on the seventh day.

The manna and the Sabbath are the same in that they are symbols of the Covenant, reminders to us to look to God's words before our own understanding in order to make our way in the world.

The next section is:

### **Exodus 16:30-36 (CJB)**

The people called the food **man** (what). It was like coriander seed, white; and it tasted like honey cakes. Moshe said, "Here is what ADONAI has ordered: 'Let two quarts of **man** be kept through all your generations, so that they will be able to see the bread which I fed you in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.'" Moshe said to Aharon, "Take a jar, put in it two quarts of **man**, and set it aside

before ADONAI to be kept through all your generations." Just as ADONAI ordered Moshe, Aharon set it aside before the testimony to be kept. The people of Isra'el ate **man** for forty years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate **man** until they arrived at the borders of the land of Kena'an. (An 'omer is one-tenth of an eifah [which is a bushel dry-measure].)

Here we see a clear connection between manna and the Torah: to be "set aside before the testimony to be kept" is a reference to the Torah that is coming shortly. The jar of manna was sitting there, a remembrance of the Israelites' lesson to rely on God and harken unto His Word, **before** His Word had been recorded unto them! Baruch HaShem, although we do not know where the Ark is, it is still in the Ark of the Covenant, still standing as that reminder to obey God's commands!

This is something the Disciples still needed an object lesson on, as we see in:

### **John 21:1-14**

After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way. Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They \*said to him, "We will also come with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing. But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered Him, "No."

And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

So when they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire already laid and fish placed on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have now caught." Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

The Disciples here are depicted seeking food and not getting it, and then God – in this case, in the manifestation of Yeshua – comes and tells them what to do. And when Kefa comes ashore – leaving his fellow Disciples behind to pull in the net, I would point out – he finds that Yeshua already has fish cooking! This, again, is a lesson that no matter where the food seems to be coming from, it is really coming from God, since we are shown that Yeshua already has fish! He doesn't need to rely on our reeling in the fish; we need to rely on Him and His commands to sustain us.

It's too bad that the Israelites didn't remember this! As we read in:

### **Exodus 17:1-7**

Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin [Short for Sinai, not meaning iniquity], according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water that we may drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you

struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. He named the place Massah [testing] and Meribah [quarreling] because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"

Here we go again... they've just been given the manna from heaven and a double portion on Fridays to sustain them for the Sabbath... and they're back to the grumbling, and not just grumbling, but quarreling! And they asked the wrong question; the question should not be, "Is the LORD with us or not," but rather, "Are we with the LORD or not?" If we are His faithful children, if we are with Him, we will follow His commandments, keep His Sabbaths, and nullify our will before His will. The manna and the Sabbath are the same in that they are symbols of the Covenant, reminders to us to look to God's words before our own understanding in order to make our way in the world. That's the next step in the Journey to the Mountain.

For our third and final step, we read:

### **Exodus 17:8-16**

Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Moses built an altar and named it The LORD is My Banner; and he said, "The LORD has sworn; the LORD will have war against Amalek from generation to generation."

From this, we learn that God fights for us and will defeat our enemies when they are His enemies, but only when we – and especially our leaders – lift their hands and hearts to God. When we accept the LORD as our banner, He will protect us.

Continuing in Exodus 18, the first section introduced Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and then we read:

### **Exodus 18:13-18**

It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?"

Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws."

Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone."

Here we see an important point: people working for God have a tendency to take on too much, frequently to the point of self-destructiveness. We are a part of a group – the Body of Messiah – because we can't do it alone, and we must remember that.

### **Exodus 18:19-23 (CJB)**

So listen now to what I have to say. I will give you some advice, and God will be with you. You should represent the people before God, and you should bring their cases to God. You should also teach them the laws and the teachings, and show them how to live their lives and what work they should do. But you should choose from among all the people competent men who are God-fearing, honest and

incorruptible to be their leaders, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Normally, they will settle the people's disputes. They should bring you the difficult cases; but ordinary matters they should decide themselves. In this way, they will make it easier for you and share the load with you. If you do this - and God is directing you to do it - you will be able to endure; and all these people too will arrive at their destination peacefully."

Here is where we get the system of Elder rule, the ***Beit Din*** or Torah court system, which feeds up successive appellate levels to the Sanhedrin. The level closest to the individual is the leader of ten – ten being the minimum for a congregation, a religious community. There is some question whether this meant ten people or ten heads-of-households, but the principle is the same: God puts people in spiritual authority at varying levels in our lives and in the lives of His people. The Messianic movement – and the Body of Messiah in general – is sorely lacking in formalizing this relationship, despite the fact that Yeshua gave specific commands to do so.

Having people whose job is both to judge and serve the people, and accepting them in those positions of spiritual authority and responsibility is an integral step in the journey to the mountain, as Yeshua teaches in:

### **John 21:15-17**

So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He \*said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He \*said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

By thus passing on the position of shepherd of the flock to Peter, Yeshua established an important pattern of instilling spiritual authority and responsibility in leaders.

This is something the Apostles take to heart, as we see in:

## **Acts 1:14-26**

These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren (a gathering of about one hundred and twenty persons was there together), and said, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry."

(Now this man acquired a field with the price of his wickedness, and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his intestines gushed out.

And it became known to all who were living in Jerusalem; so that in their own language that field was called Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

"For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'LET HIS HOMESTEAD BE MADE DESOLATE, AND LET NO ONE DWELL IN IT'; and, 'LET ANOTHER MAN TAKE HIS OFFICE.' Therefore it is necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us -- beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us -- one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection."

So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabbas (who was also called Justus), and Matthias. And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Moses, too, took his father-in-law's similar words to heart:

## **Exodus 18:24-26 (CJB)**

Moshe paid attention to his father-in-law's counsel and did everything he said. Moshe chose competent men from all Isra'el and made them heads over the people, in charge of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. As a general rule, they settled the people's disputes - the difficult cases they brought to Moshe, but every simple matter they decided themselves.

After passing along the yoke of spiritual authority and responsibility and impressing upon His Disciples the need to pass it on themselves, Yeshua knew it was time to leave them to their work, so He could assume His duties as our High Priest in the Heavenly Temple:

## **Acts 1:1-14**

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."



Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Yeshua's teachings to them complete, He left the Apostles, and they went to the upper room, which is where they would soon receive the outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit, as they fully entered into the covenant as promised. That was the final steps in their journey to the mountain. For the Israelites too – and especially for Moses – the same thing needed to happen. After Jethro saw that Moses was doing as God had told him to tell his son-in-law, we read:

### **Exodus 18:27 – 19:2 (CJB)**

Then Moshe let his father-in-law leave, and he went off to his own country.

In the third month after the people of Isra'el had left the land of Egypt, the same day they came to the Sinai Desert. After setting out from Refidim and arriving at the Sinai Desert, they set up camp in the desert; there in front of the mountain, Isra'el set up camp.

Now, as we see, we have made it through our Journey to the Mountain. From the pain of doubt because of not looking to God, we have come through turning to God, nullifying our will before His will, making sure we are with Him, keeping His Sabbaths, learning to look to God's words before our own understanding in order to make our way in the world, uplifting our hands and hearts to Him when we are assaulted by the forces of the Adversary, and finally, to look to His establishment of authorities in our lives.

When we do these things, we are able to end our period of preparation, and come to the Mountain, where we can enter fully into a covenant relationship with Him and receive the ***Ruach HaKodesh*** (Holy Spirit) at Shavuot. Only when properly looking to Him as our Heavenly Father and respecting the fathers, the elders He has placed over us, can we make that final step in the Journey to the Mountain.

## **Tongues of Fire!**

Here it is, fifty days after leaving Egypt. This has been an incredible seven weeks for the Israelites. First, they have seen the great plagues sweeping through Egypt, a judgment upon each of the false gods of the Egyptians. Then, they have been brought out of Egypt and, on the way out, the Egyptians give them fortunes of precious metals and jewels. Then they have seen the Red Sea has parted in front of them so they could walk across on dry land, and the Egyptian army that is pursuing them drowned as the Red Sea crashes back over them. They've definitely seen God's power at work.

And throughout these fifty days, they continued to see God's power at work, despite their grumbling, their distrust, their disobedience. They've been give water from rocks. They've had quail descend until they've eaten their full of them. They've been given the special bread, the manna, to eat every day – coming six days a week, double on the sixth day so they can keep the Sabbath and not have to gather on those days.

They've fought a mighty battle and, with the help of God, defeated the Amalekites. They've been given a full appellate court system to bring their disputes before their wisest men and up the chain of appeals to Moses and to God. It's been an incredible fifty days – and I highly recommend, if you've not read it before, and even if you have that you take the time to read Exodus chapters fifteen through eighteen and contemplate just how amazing these days were. And here they are, standing at the foot of Sinai:

### **Exodus 19:3-8**

Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

Now, notice this: although they had not yet received the Torah in writing, they had committed to the covenant; they had committed themselves to doing what God has said to do. Through this act of faith, they had bound themselves to God and His Word.

The giving of the Torah to the nation of Israel in effect changed the spiritual "status" of the people. The Talmud and Midrash tell us that the Israelites adhered to the precepts contained in the Torah, even though they had not yet been commanded to do such. Once the Torah was given, however, the nation was obliged to follow all of the commandments contained within. There are a number of commentators who liken this transformation to the conversion process. Prior to the giving of the Torah, the members of the nation of Israel were not "Jews," so to speak. There was nothing specific that constituted a distinct faith.

Yes, the people believed in the One and Only God. They saw vividly how He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. However, that belief was the sum and substance of the faith until the Torah was given. However, once the Torah was given, the nation was not merely the nation of Israel; they became the People of the Book, full-fledged children of the Almighty, who followed all contained in the Torah.

There are two aspects of this pivotal event in the history of the nation of Israel that warrant attention. The Torah, when describing the encampment of the nation by Mt. Sinai prior to the giving of the Torah, alludes to the fact there was a spirit of unity that permeated the entire nation. The nation was like "one man, with one heart." The nation was unified, and brotherly love was abundant. Furthermore, the nation was united in purpose.

The nation stated, "All that God says, we will do and we will hear." The nation expressed their willingness to abandon their individual wants, desires, beliefs and practices for that which God was to command them. They committed themselves to the Torah unconditionally, and with that commitment they had to suppress their individual proclivities. They had to nullify their will before God's will. The nation demonstrated self-sacrifice, evidenced by their devotion to God and His Torah at a time when all may not have been logically clear or understood.

Think about that for one moment: before knowing what all the rules were – before seeing the terms of the covenant – the Israelites were willing to

commit themselves to a life of obedience to it. Why would they do that? The rabbinic traditions tell us that God in fact gave them a choice: accept this covenant or the mountain will tumble down on top of you, and this will be your grave. I'm not sure I'm ready to buy into that.

I would suggest another possibility: that finally they were starting to get an inkling of just how powerful a life devoted to God could be. They had been freed from a terrible life of slavery. They had made a daring escape, by walking on dry ground where a mighty sea was lying only minutes before, and their oppressors had been drowned in it. They had been kept alive, given food and water through the desert. Their relatively small band of warriors had defeated the army of the mighty nation of Amalek. Somewhere, the light was going on in the back of their minds – maybe following this Elohim guy might be a good idea!

So, the people are gathered at the foot of Sinai, and they have accepted the Torah. What happened? Let's go back and read some of what we read before:

### **Exodus 19:5**

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

In the Apostolic Writings, we also read of being a nation of priests:

### **1 Peter 2:9-10**

But you are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

In this letter, Peter is reminding the Dispersed Jews of the covenant community they were a part of, and that it was a condition that they entered into, not one that was simply theirs. How did they receive mercy? How did they become the holy nation of priests? By accepting God's calling to them, by saying, "Everything the LORD has said, we will do."

Now, the oral traditions tell us that when this occurred, tongues of fire came down, went over the peoples' heads, and lit the menorah, the seven-branched lampstand of the Tabernacle. From that moment on, the Shekinah, which is God's glory and which we believe is the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit, physically dwelled in the Temple.

Does that sound familiar? Tongues of fire descending and bringing the Holy Spirit?

### **Acts 2:1-6**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.

Imagine for a moment what that was like. You've been told all your life about the tongues of fire coming down over the people and lighting the Tabernacle menorah, and thus began the dwelling of the Shekinah in the Tabernacle. Now, you're seeing it firsthand... and this time, **you** are one of the lamps! I've tried to imagine what any sort of equivalent would be in our culture. Maybe suddenly seeing redcoats coming over the bridge and **you** are the one to fire the first shot of the American Revolution. Or maybe standing behind a bunch of people gathered around a table, and one of them – John Hancock – turns around and hands you the pen and points under his signature on the Declaration of Independence, showing you where to sign.

And while it liberated us from the bonds of sin and death, this was vowing a Declaration of Dependence – a dependence on God as the Source of all. Because the Law of Liberty is still the Law – the Torah, God's covenant with us. And so we must accept that covenant; we enter into it by the blood of Messiah, but we must still recognize its hold on our lives. Just as the

Children of Israel were a part of the covenant before arriving at Sinai by virtue of being the descendants of Abraham, but they still had to accept the covenant, to stand boldly and say "Everything the LORD has said, we will do." And every year, we have this opportunity to renew in our hearts and minds our covenant relationship with God, every year at Shavuot, Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, we are again at the foot of Sinai... we are again able to turn our lives toward God and say, "Everything the LORD has said, we will do." Will Tongues of Fire descend? Maybe not... or maybe not visually. But we have the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit by re-affirming our commitment to the Covenant of God. And that's the message of Shavuot.

## Chapter Eighteen

### ***Yom Teruah* – “And the Trumpet Shall Sound...”**

**T**his chapter is about the first of the fall festivals of the Most High. You may have heard it called “***Rosh HaShanah***,” the Head of the Year. The more proper Biblical name for this day is “***Yom Teruah***” – Day of Blowing of the Shofar, the ram’s horn trumpet.

When we hear the call of the Shofar, it excites us. It brings shivers to the spine. The ***Tekiah Gedolah*** – the stretched, uplifting blast that brings the service to its climax on Yom Teruah and ***Yom Kippur***, the Day of Atonement – especially calls for our attention. As some liturgy says, “Pay heed to the call of the Shofar, the long, clarion call of the Shofar, calling God’s people to do God’s will.” What is the significance of a holy convocation called specifically to hear the Shofar? Why does God set aside a whole day of rest, feasting, and prayer for us to hear the Shofar? And what are we supposed to remember, as the Leviticus passage commands us?

Let’s begin by re-examining the basic commandments of this day:

#### **Leviticus 23:23-25**

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “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. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD.’”

A passage in Numbers gives more specificity, at least to the offerings:

## Numbers 29:1-6

Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you a day for blowing trumpets. You shall offer a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs one year old without defect; also their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. Offer one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you, besides the burnt offering of the new moon and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

What do these sacrifices signify? Well, let's look at them: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs, and a male goat as a sin offering. We'll take these out of order as I suggest some possible significances for them. The male goat as a sin offering is the standard sin offering, but it reminds us of the twin goats of Yom Kippur – one of which is a burnt offering and one upon which the guilt for the sins of Israel were cast – the scapegoat. This scapegoat was driven over the edge of a cliff by the servants of the High Priest, so the sins of Israel would not return to Israel. Doesn't this sound like our Messiah, on Whom the sins of Israel were cast and who was handed over to the Romans for crucifixion by the High Priest and his cohorts? We'll go into greater depth about that in the next chapter, on Yom Kippur.

The ram reminds us – especially on this day when we blow the ram's horn – of the story of the **Akeidah**, the binding of Isaac. God called on Abraham to sacrifice his son – Abraham's only son, the one through whom the Promise of God is supposed to come – in a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. Abraham puts the wood for the burning on the back of Isaac as they are climbing the mountain, and the two set off together.

While climbing up the mountain that would one day be the site of God's Temple, Isaac – his young voice no doubt barely heard from under the pile of wood stacked on top of his body – asks where is the ram for the sacrifice? Abraham's Hebrew answer, which rings across the millennia, literally translates, "God will look to Himself for the sacrifice."



They get up to the mountain top, and they set up the altar, arrange the wood on it, and then Abraham binds Isaac to the altar. That's what the Scripture tells us, a bald description. But think about it... Abraham is over 100 years old. Isaac is young, probably in his teens, his HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD father binds him? Isaac had to have LET him do it! He had the ability to get away, if he so chose... but like the Messiah would, many centuries later, he didn't even open his mouth, let alone try to get away. Then, just as Abraham is raising the knife to slay Isaac, the Scriptures tell us that The Angel of the LORD – Who we believe to be Jesus the Messiah – tells Abraham, "Don't lay your hand on the boy! Don't do anything to him! For now I know that you are a man who fears God, because you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." Then we are told Abraham sees a ram for the sacrifice in the thicket by the altar, and he quickly substitutes the ram for Isaac – the substitutionary sacrifice!

Jewish legend tells us that the Angel then took one of the horns of the ram, and it became Heaven's shofar. Now, we know that the Great & Terrible Day of the Lord will be announced with the call of a Shofar: in Joel 2, we read, "Blow the shofar in Zion! Sound an alarm on my holy mountain! Let all living in the land tremble, for the Day of the LORD is coming! It's upon us!" In Matthew 24, we read, "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, all the tribes of the Land will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with tremendous power and glory. He will send out His angels with a great shofar..."

In 1 Corinthians 15, we read, "Look, I will tell you a secret - not all of us will die! But we will all be changed! It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed. For this material which can decay must be clothed with imperishability, this which is mortal must be clothed with immortality."

In 1 Thessalonians 4, we read, "When we say this, we base it on the Lord's own word: we who remain alive when the Lord comes will certainly not take precedence over those who have died. For the Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a rousing cry, with a call from one of the ruling angels, and with God's shofar; those who died united with the Messiah will be the first to rise; then we who are left still alive will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord. So encourage each other with these words."

Where do you think this Shofar comes from? What other Shofar could do, but the one from the substitutionary sacrifice of Isaac, as proclaimed by our Messiah, the one He took Himself? All of these passages are referencing:

## **Isaiah 26 & 27**

In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; He sets up walls and ramparts for security. Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, The one that remains faithful. The steadfast of mind You will keep in perfect peace, Because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, For in GOD the LORD, we have an everlasting Rock. For He has brought low those who dwell on high, the unassailable city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust. The foot will trample it, The feet of the afflicted, the steps of the helpless."

The way of the righteous is smooth; O Upright One, make the path of the righteous level. Indeed, while following the way of Your judgments, O LORD, We have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of our souls. At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; For when the earth experiences Your judgments The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Though the wicked is shown favor, He does not learn righteousness; He deals unjustly in the land of uprightness, And does not perceive the majesty of the LORD. O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame; Indeed, fire will devour Your enemies. LORD, You will establish peace for us, Since You have also performed for us all our works.

O LORD our God, other masters besides You have ruled us; But through You alone we confess Your name. The dead will not live, the departed spirits will not rise; Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And You have wiped out all remembrance of them. You have increased the nation, O LORD, You have increased the nation, You are glorified; You have extended all the borders of the land. O LORD, they sought You in distress; They could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them.

As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth, She writhes and cries out in her labor pains, Thus were we before You, O LORD. We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were inhabitants of the world born. Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Come, my people, enter into your rooms And close your doors behind you; Hide for a little while Until indignation runs its course. For behold, the LORD is about to come out from His place To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; And the earth will reveal her bloodshed And will no longer cover her slain.

In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea. In that day, "A vineyard of wine, sing of it! I, the LORD, am its keeper; I water it every moment. So that no one will damage it, I guard it night and day. I have no wrath. Should someone give Me briars and thorns in battle, Then I would step on them, I would burn them completely. Or let him rely on My protection, Let him make peace with Me, Let him make peace with Me."

In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout, And they will fill the whole world with fruit. Like the striking of Him who has struck them, has He struck them? Or like the slaughter of His slain, have they been slain? You contended with them by banishing them, by driving them away. With His fierce wind He has expelled them on the day of the east wind.

Therefore through this Jacob's iniquity will be forgiven; And this will be the full price of the pardoning of his sin : When he makes all the altar stones like pulverized chalk stones; When Asherim and incense altars will not stand. For the fortified city is isolated, A homestead forlorn and forsaken like the desert; There the calf will graze, And there it will lie down and feed on its branches. When its limbs are dry, they are broken off; Women come and make a fire with them, For they are not a people of discernment, Therefore their

Maker will not have compassion on them. And their Creator will not be gracious to them. In that day the LORD will start His threshing from the flowing stream of the Euphrates to the brook of Egypt, and you will be gathered up one by one, O sons of Israel.

It will come about also in that day that the great Shofar will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

So, we see that the sounding of the Shofar is intrinsically connected to the Day of the Lord that ends our current period of existence and brings us into the Millennial Reign of King Messiah, and thus that the ram sacrifice is a remembrance of the substitutionary sacrifice of Isaac from which that Shofar comes.

Now, let's discuss the bull. The sacrifice of the bull is connected to the consecration of the office of High Priest; it is the daily sin offering for the High Priest during the week of his consecration for service. It is also the sacrifice that must be brought throughout the year if the High Priest has sinned. While it is one of the animals that may be brought by anyone who has sinned, it is specified for the High Priest. Specifically, it is called for as the sacrifice for the High Priest's sins on Yom Kippur, so that he may enter the Holy of Holies.

When the pagan king Balak wished the priest Balaam to curse Israel, Bilam sought God's instruction by erecting seven altars and offering one bull and one ram on each altar. God then told Bilam not to curse Israel, but to bless Israel... so the bull sacrifice brings God's blessing upon Israel. When Jacob was dying and he blessed his sons, of Joseph he blessed, "May blessing come on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers. His firstborn bull - glory is his; his horns are those of a wild ox; With them he will gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth. These are the myriads of Ephraim; these are the thousands of Menaseh." It is through Ephraim and Menaseh that we know that all the peoples of the Earth directly received some physical connection to Israel, since they spread among the Earth.

When Elijah the Prophet competed directly with the prophets of Ba'al to show the people of Israel who the true God was, he did so by having each

sacrifice a bull and wait for fire from heaven to come down. In Ezekiel, we are told that the Prince of Israel is responsible for providing the bull for the priest's sin sacrifice on Passover. I bet you never thought there was so much bull in the Scriptures, did you?

Over and over again, the Scriptures connect the sacrifice of the bull with our connection with God, with the High Priest and with the Prince. Who is our High Priest? Who is our Prince of Peace Who provided the sin sacrifice on Pesach? It is Jesus the Messiah!

Now, what about those seven male lambs? Well, seven is the number of creation, is it not? Jewish tradition tells us that the rabbis began counting the calendar years from the day of the creation of man:

### **Genesis 1:26-31**

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food "; and it was so. God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

It is the position of our theology that the seven days of creation and the beginning of the numbering of the calendar on the sixth day tells us that there will be six thousand years of man on Earth, and then there will come a thousand-year reign of the King Messiah on this Earth, and then after that will come the final judgment and we will spend eternity in the New Heaven and the New Earth.

Because we believe that the calendar begins its numbering of days, weeks, months, years, and millennia from this day of Yom Teruah, and because we are told that this is a day when we are told to hear the blowing of the Shofar and "remember" – but not specifically what we are to remember – and because we told that Messiah's return will occur with the sound of the Shofar, many Messianics – including me – believe that Messiah will return on Yom Teruah. And we believe it for one more important reason: Yeshua told His Talmidim, "You shall not know the day" when He would return. The day of Rosh Hashanah – because it is supposed to be pegged to the spotting of the New Moon – is called in Jewish tradition "the day which is not known," because before the formal calendar was adopted and the new months were proclaimed from actual visual spotting of the new moon, no one knew in advance precisely when it would occur.

So, it is on this day of Yom Teruah that we believe that Messiah will return to gather His people from the four corners of the Earth, ending their seven years of Tribulation.

Every year on Yom Teruah, I look for news of the coming Apocalypse... and I listen for the sound of the Shofar, not from the front of the sanctuary, but in the skies. When it doesn't come, I realize there's more time until He comes to get us... and I know that the long, clarion call of the Shofar calls me to do His will... until we stand together in His glorious light.

### **NO, We Don't WORSHIP The New Moon!**

Yom Teruah is held on the first day of the seventh month, the month of Tishri. In God's Calendar, the months begin on the new moon. In fact, each and every New Moon is a festival to God, called **Rosh Chodesh!**

The whole concept of celebrating the lunar cycle can certainly be confusing without such an explanation. The title for this section, "***NO, We Don't WORSHIP the New Moon,***" comes from a discussion I had about this some time ago with a person who had spent all of her life in the mainstream Christian church. She was very much convinced that I was a part of some sort of moon-worshipping cult. It is my hope that this will show you what I believe I may have failed to show her: that this is a monthly commemoration designed not simply to mark the passage of the moon in the sky, but to give us monthly reminders of what we are supposed to be.

Let's begin with reviewing the origins of this observance. In Genesis 1, in the recording of the days of creation, we are told that on the fourth day:

### **Genesis 1:14-19**

God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years; and let them be for lights in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth"; and that is how it was. God made the two great lights - the larger light to rule the day and the smaller light to rule the night - and the stars. God put them in the dome of the sky to give light to the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. So there was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.

The "lights in the dome of the sky" – the sun and the moon – were given both as light but also as signs for seasons, days, and years. Early on, man noted that the moon went through a specific visual cycle that lasted about the same amount of time. In accordance with God's giving of the sun and the moon to mark the passage of time, man used this cycle to bring order out of the chaos of his life. This divinely-inspired organization became the month. We know it is divinely-inspired because God specifically told us, in Torah, to mark this as the head of the month with specific ceremony and sacrifices.

Let's look at these sacrifices. In Numbers 28, which discusses the New Moon celebration, we see burnt offerings of bulls and rams, a meal offering of grain, and a drink offering of wine. Oh, and a sin offering, in addition to that, a single male goat. A sin offering is tacked on at the end. One might be tempted to view it almost as an afterthought. Could it be, however, that it is separate, at the end, to call attention to it? Generally, sin offerings are done by the individual when they've sinned. However, every month, we are told to make a sin offering. Why? We'll get back to that in a bit.

The two silvered trumpets – I am told by historians that the hammered silver were actually gilding sleeves hammered onto the standard kind of rams horn shofar trumpets at the ends – would be blown. This commandment is given as a part of a whole list of times to blow the silvered shofars. During the time of the forty years' wandering in the wilderness, they were used to summon the leaders, to summon the entire assembly, and to make the call to break camp and move on. When taking the Land of Israel, they were to be used to sound an alarm when going to war, so that God would be there and help them in their fight. And they would be used at all festivals, including the Rosh Chodesh. Do these occasions have anything in common?

The Hebrew phrase “**Rosh Chodesh**” literally means “Head of the Month.” The root of the word **Chodesh** is the word **Chadash**, a primitive root meaning, “to be new, renew, repair, to renew oneself.” Now, in Biblical Hebrew, these two words are spelled the same, **het-dalet-shin**. The word **Rosh** means “head, top, summit, upper part, chief, total, sum, height, front, beginning.” The root of this word, according to the Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Lexicon is, quote, “from an unused root apparently meaning to shake.”

So, one can look at **Rosh Chodesh** as meaning to be shaken and renewed. The sound of the shofar sounding the alarm certainly shakes us up. It demands our attention, it makes us shake our head and become alert. And perhaps this is what we are being called to do: be shaken out of the cycle of our lives, and renew ourselves in our relationship with God. This would be why both honor and sin sacrifices would be required: to have a proper relationship with God, we must be blameless before Him. The ultimate sin sacrifice, Yeshua, gave us the atonement. But we must be reminded of the relationship and our constant need to turn ourselves towards Him and make repentance.

Now, in Torah, we are commanded to celebrate the **Rosh Chodesh**. And yet, in his first word from God, the Prophet Isaiah suddenly gives us a different picture:

"Oh, sinful nation, a people weighed down by iniquity, descendants of evildoers, immoral children! They have abandoned ADONAI, spurned the Holy One of Isra'el, turned their backs on him! Where should I strike you next, as you persist in rebelling? ... Stop bringing worthless grain offerings! They are like disgusting incense to me! **Rosh Chodesh**, Shabbat, calling convocations - I can't stand evil together with your assemblies! Everything in me hates your **Rosh Chodesh** and your festivals; they are a burden to me - I'm tired of putting up with them! (taken from Isaiah chapter one, Complete Jewish Bible)

Some would suggest that what this means is that we are to stop celebrating the biblical festivals, including the **Rosh Chodesh**. But look again. He doesn't say, stop bringing grain offerings, He says stop bringing WORTHLESS grain offerings. He doesn't say **Rosh Chodesh** is to end, but that He is sick and tired of us celebrating His festivals when we allow evil to exist in our assemblies, when we persist in rebelling against Him!



Isaiah's word from God continues by telling us:

“Wash yourselves clean! Get your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing evil, learn to do good! Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, defend orphans, plead for the widow.” ... “Come now,” says ADONAI, “let's talk this over together. Even if your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow; even if they are red as crimson, they will be like wool. ... How the faithful city has become a whore! Once she was filled with justice, righteousness lodged in her; but now murderers! Your silver is no longer pure, your wine is watered down. Your leaders are rebels, friends of thieves. They all love bribes and run after gifts. They give no justice to orphans, the widow's complaint doesn't catch their attention. ... Tziyon will be redeemed by justice; and those in her who repent, by righteousness. Rebels and sinners together will be broken and those who abandon ADONAI be consumed.” (more from Isaiah 1, CJB)

It is not the observances that must end, but our evilness! All of the prayers, all of the festivals, all of the worship we do is worthless unless we internalize it and constantly make t'shuvah, returning towards God, always trying to make ourselves what He wants us to be, rather than what our fallen natures want us to be.

This is all in preparation for when we will live under Yeshua's direct rule as King Messiah. In Isaiah 66, the prophecy of that wondrous time reads:

### **Isaiah 66:22-24**

"For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I am making will continue in my presence," says ADONAI, "so will your descendants and your name continue. Every month on Rosh-Hodesh and every week on Shabbat, everyone living will come to worship in my presence," says ADONAI. "As they leave, they will look on the corpses of the people who rebelled against me. For their worm will never die, and their fire will never be quenched; but they will be abhorrent to all humanity."

Think about that for a moment: every week on Shabbat and every month on **Rosh Chodesh**, all those living will be ushered into the presence of God to have a time of worship in His presence. Then on our way out, we will see the corpses of the people who rebelled against God. Apparently, their decay won't be total, since the corpses will last the entire time, and we will see the worms crawling around their bodies and the fire of the eternal torment their souls are experiencing<sup>29</sup>. Now, that's a reminder of Who is in charge and why we shouldn't rebel if I've ever heard one!

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<sup>29</sup> My Rosh Shamash (Head Deacon) Bill Bartholomew – who is far better at the ancient Biblical languages and, really, a much deeper academic theologian than I am – suggests a different possible explanation (I do not necessarily agree with it, but found it interesting enough to include; please forgive the smaller type, but it was a lengthy statement:

“This [passage] specifically deals with the time you're mentioning.

“<sup>NAU</sup> **Malachi 4:1 ¶** "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts, "so that it will leave them neither root nor branch." <sup>2</sup> "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. <sup>3</sup> "You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts.

“A 100,000,000 man army, if that is its size, will be annihilated by Yeshua at his coming... There will not be enough people left in Israel to bury such a mess, but a fire will start. There will not be enough water or equipment in Israel to quench it. Once it starts burning, it will burn until all the bodies are ashes. While the fire spreads, maggots will feast, become mature flies, lay eggs and die. The eggs will hatch on other bodies and feast away. Some forest fires and building fires cannot be quenched either, in our time or in times past. They must be allowed to burn themselves out when they run out of fuel. The fuel in this case is quite disgusting – let's talk about this over lunch.

“[Jewish law forbids cremation, and] [a]shes indicate the death of a wicked person. Emissaries from the world over will witness the mess and take the report back to their nations. I doubt that transportation will be very efficient at that time. Power plants will be knocked out, oil refineries destroyed, shipping, trains, trucks and planes will be stopped. But, mules and horses will still be available. We'd better take riding lessons!!

“The Greek theology/philosophy of the immortal soul is inserted into [Christian dogma] thru the Isa. 66 passage and Yeshua's quote of it in the A.W. They demand immortal worms to make immortal souls work, because the Bible knows nothing of immortal souls. Common sense, and other Biblical passages clear up the picture.

“Are the immortal worms in the fire too? Is the fire eaten by the immortal worms? Do they do battle with each other over the flesh? Or will the land have some really good soil for growing crops in a few years? Now that's a huge YUCK FACTOR.”

So, while some may look at this commemoration of **Rosh Chodesh** and think we're violating the commandment in Deuteronomy 4 not to worship the moon, we know that the moon is but a reminder to us that not only does the cycle of months continue, but that our constant renewal of our minds and hearts must continue. We hear the long, clarion call of the shofar, and we are put on the alert! We are recalled to our service to the Most High, to renew our relationship with Him. That is the purpose of commemorating the New Moon.

## Chapter Nineteen

### Why a Day of Atonement?

A question I've been asked many times – both by people in and out of the Messianic Movement – is why we're keeping The Day of Atonement when we've already been atoned for by the sacrifice of Yeshua. There are many reasons why we're keeping the Day of Atonement. First off – and I don't mean to sound flippant – but we're commanded to, in:

#### **Leviticus 23:27-32**

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 the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people.

As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 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.

## **Numbers 29:7-11**

Then on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall humble yourselves; you shall not do any work. You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD as a soothing aroma: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs one year old, having them without defect; and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, a tenth for each of the seven lambs; one male goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

We are commanded to keep a holy convocation on the tenth day of Tishri, the seventh month, for quote “The Day of Atonement” unquote, and we are told to humble our souls, do no work, and fast (“deny yourself”). Now, what does all that have to do with the sin sacrifices? Well, I would suggest that there is no direct connection but that they are manifestations of a contrite heart and a devotion to God. So, why do we do it? Well, I would suggest these were put in by God to point to a future fulfillment of this festival.

A future fulfillment? Well, yes. Just as most prophecies have dual fulfillments, so do the festivals, and most of the second fulfillments have to do with our salvation in Messiah Yeshua. This brings us to our second reason for keeping Yom Kippur: to celebrate our Atonement in Messiah. In that, it is fitting to use the traditional liturgy that speaks of atonement not sorrowfully, but also joyfully. We also sing songs about our joy of salvation. But what does that have to do with humbling our souls and fasting? That brings us to our next two reasons to keep Yom Kippur.

Humbling our souls, fasting, praying... these remind us that, although we have found Messiah, many people – especially the Jewish people but also friends and family members – have not yet come to believe. Our joy cannot be complete, as sweet, when we know they are still consigned to She’ol (the fiery pit) for their disbelief. Yom Kippur reminds us that we must feel for them and bring them the message of Messiah. Additionally, we must remember what specifically brings our salvation:

## **Romans 3:21-31 (CJB)**

But now, quite apart from Torah, God's way of making people righteous in his sight has been made clear - although the Torah and the Prophets give their witness to it as well - and it is a righteousness that comes from God, through the faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah, to all who continue trusting. For it makes no difference whether one is a Jew or a Gentile, since all have sinned and come

short of earning God's praise. By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua. God put Yeshua forward as the kapparah [covering] for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past; and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness. So what room is left for boasting? None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules? No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting. Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with legalistic observance of Torah commands. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah!

So, we know we have salvation through Messiah. But we know that salvation confirms Torah in our lives, that we are now free to keep it!

One final reason to keep Yom Kippur as Believers is because, although our sins have been forgiven, that does not mean we've stopped sinning, nor does it mean we don't need to stop sinning. We must still be contrite and make **t'shuvah** – repentance – for our sins. James mentions this in chapter five of his letter, verses 16-20:

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit. My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

And so, on this day, we come together and ask for God to help us with the sins we still commit. In fact, this is a longer process than just one day. Although it is something that should go on all the time, the yearly reminder of the Days of Awe, starting at Rosh Hashanah and culminating at Yom Kippur, helps us to actively repent. One important thing we can do on the Day of Atonement is to allow God to take our worst sins from us.

In the sacrificial service for Yom Kippur, this was done by means of two goats – another dual fulfillment! – one goat to be sacrificed on the altar, and one goat with a red thread – to symbolize sins – tied to its horns, to be the scapegoat, on which was cast the sins of the people of Israel.

After the sins were cast upon the head of the scapegoat, a Levite would drive the scapegoat out of Jerusalem – “outside of the camp” in the Torah terminology – to the rocky cliff called Azazel. He would push the goat over the cliff so it would die... and in dying taking the sins of the people with it. When this occurred, the thread would turn white.

[One side note: in the last 40 years of the Temple – the years after Messiah’s death and resurrection – the Talmud records that the thread of the scapegoat did not turn white but remained red.]

On Yom Kippur, I lead my congregation in this spiritual exercise:

We’re about to cast away these terrible sins, ask God to relieve us of them. I want you to think about your worst sin, and confess it to God in silent prayer. (I pause at this point.) Now, I want you to picture in your mind the scapegoat – the living, breathing scapegoat, with the crimson thread tied to its horns. Now, in your mind, just as the high priest used to cast the sins of Israel onto the head of the scapegoat, cast that sin onto the head of your scapegoat. Now lead the scapegoat out of Jerusalem, to the Azazel Cliff. Look out over the cliff and see the rocky crags. Now, on the count of three, push the scapegoat over the edge. One, two, three, PUSH!

(Then I pause for a ten-count.)

I have good news for you: the crimson thread has turned white. How do I know this? Because about 2000 years ago, Messiah became the final scapegoat and died for our sins. Our sins are forgiven, and we can cast our problems upon Him, and He will heal us, as we read in Isaiah 58.

Let me focus on one particular section:

### **Isaiah 58:1-12 (CJB)**

Shout out loud! Don't hold back! Raise your voice like a shofar! Proclaim to my people what rebels they are, to the house of Ya'akov their sins. Oh yes, they seek me day after day and [claim to] delight in knowing my ways. As if they were an upright nation that had not abandoned the rulings of their God, they ask me for just rulings and [claim] to take pleasure in closeness to God, [asking,] 'Why should we fast, if you don't see? Why mortify ourselves, if you don't notice?' "Here is my answer: when you fast, you go about doing whatever you like, while keeping your laborers hard at work. Your fasts lead to quarreling and fighting, to lashing out with violent blows. On a day like today, fasting like yours will not make your voice heard on high. Is this the sort of fast I want, a day when a person mortifies himself? Is the object to hang your head like a reed and spread sackcloth and ashes under yourself? Is this what you call a fast, a day that pleases ADONAI? Here is the sort of fast I want - releasing those unjustly bound, untying the thongs of the yoke, letting the oppressed go free, breaking every yoke, sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you see them, fulfilling your duty to your kinsmen!"

Then your light will burst forth like the morning, your new skin will quickly grow over your wound; your righteousness will precede you, and ADONAI's glory will follow you. Then you will call, and ADONAI will answer; you will cry, and he will say, "Here I am." If you will remove the yoke from among you, stop false accusation and slander, generously offer food to the hungry and meet the needs of the person in trouble; then your light will rise in the darkness, and your gloom become like noon. ADONAI will always guide you; he will satisfy your needs in the desert, he will renew the strength in your limbs; so that you will be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. You will rebuild the ancient ruins, raise foundations from ages past, and be called "Repairer of broken walls, Restorer of streets to live in."



That is why we can come each year and ask God to take away the sins we continue to commit, although we are already absolved of the eternal consequences. That is why we pray for our fellow man to be saved. That is what we commemorate on Yom Kippur.

## Chapter Twenty

### ***Sukkot* – The Festival of Tabernacles**

**S**ukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths, is a very interesting holiday. Let's review briefly the basic commandments of Sukkot, as found in:

#### **Leviticus 23:33-43**

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD --burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each day's matter on its own day -- besides those of the Sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD.

'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 the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. 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 the LORD your God for seven days.

"You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, 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 the LORD your God."

Commandments for this festival are also found in:

### **Deuteronomy 14:22-29**

You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the tithe, since the place where \* the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household. Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town. The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

This is interesting... we are commanded to hold a party in the presence of God, so we will learn to fear God, to rely on Him.

When I first wrote this teaching as a sermon for Sukkot, it was tough for me to put together because of events in my own life. A couple of months previously, I was not hired for a radio job that I was ideal for, that I was one of three finalists for. And that very week, I was not hired for a job with a major Messianic ministry, booking their speakers in churches because they

had hired people with their own ministries previously, and then the people they'd hired always quit within six months because they claimed it was taking time away from their own ministries. I felt at the time that this was rather unfair, and was quite upset.

Then my upset turned from the major Messianic ministry to God. Why to God? Well, in the year and a half since the radio station I worked at changed formats and I was laid off, there have been several jobs I've had to turn down because they insisted that I HAD to work on the Sabbath. So, for keeping God's commandments, I was kept from accepting good work. And now, for following His call to ministry, I was turned down for a ministry job!

I was crushed. I talked with some people whose opinions I respect about what I was to do. I was especially confused because I had to teach today on rejoicing in the glories of God's provision, and I asked *how could I do that when I was approaching a point where I no longer believed that God would really provide?*

They all had the same response, but I'll use the terminology one of them used: I don't have an option to go with my negative feelings. We are COMMANDED to rejoice in His provision. Our feelings have to be under our control. If I have trouble seeing what He's doing, then I need to turn back to doing what He has called me to do: serve Him. I thought, well, gee, what good is that going to do? But I immediately turned my thought processes to figuring out how to move past my disappointment in human beings and rejoice in God's provision, even if I couldn't see it.

And then I did see it: I have God's provision. I am not on the streets, I am not penniless, and I am not without food, shelter, clothing, etc. I was demanding God provide for me the way I wanted Him to, when I wanted Him to. That's completely the opposite way of doing it. Does that mean I will stop looking for work? Of course not! But the WHOLE POINT of Sukkot is that we must "learn to fear God" and rejoice in His provision. The Scriptures don't say we already know how to do this, it says we must LEARN it!

As we read in Second Samuel, God is our Rock, our Deliverer (2 Samuel 22:1). We are to call on God when we are having troubles. If we don't trust God to deliver us, He won't! We cannot doubt God! "As for God, his way is perfect, the word of ADONAI has been tested by fire; he shields all who take refuge in him." (2 Samuel 22:31) There's a requirement there: we must take refuge in Him. In Hebrews 4 (especially verses 1-9), Paul tells us we will receive our Sabbath rest if we but have faith. How can you have a Sabbath

rest without having work to rest from? And how can you have a Sabbath rest if you are not provided for, since we cannot work during a Sabbath rest?

On Sukkot, it is traditional to read the book of Ecclesiastes. I want to focus for a minute on the third chapter, and go through it and explain it:

### **Ecclesiastes 3:1-10 (Complete Jewish Bible)**

For everything there is a season, a right time for every intention under heaven a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to discard, a time to tear and a time to sew, a time to keep silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. What does the worker gain from his efforts? I have seen the task God has given humanity to keep us occupied.

If there is a season for everything, then we must rely on God for everything, because it is only He Who controls the seasons, and only He Who can tell us what season it is.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:11-15**

He has made everything suited to its time; also, he has given human beings an awareness of eternity; but in such a way that they can't fully comprehend, from beginning to end, the things God does. I know that there is nothing better for them to do than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live. Still, the fact that everyone can eat and drink and enjoy the good that results from all his work, is a gift of God. I know that whatever God does will last forever; there is nothing to add or subtract from it; and God has done it so that people will fear him. That which was is here already; and that which will be has already been, but God seeks out what people chase after.

The only way we can be happy and enjoy ourselves is to understand that everything we have, everything we are, comes from Him. A prominent radio talk show host has as one of his slogans that he has “talent on loan from God.” When taken to task for being so arrogant, his response was that it was not his boasting of his own self, but boasting in God (as we are commanded to do in Romans 5), because, as this talk show host put it, “We are ALL on

loan from God.” Everything we have and are is granted to us for but a season here in this life.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:16-22 (CJB)**

Another thing I observed under the sun: There, in the same place as justice, was wickedness; there, in the same place as righteousness, was wickedness. I said to myself, "The righteous and the wicked God will judge, because there is a right time for every intention and for every action." Concerning people, I said to myself, "God is testing them, so that they will see that by themselves they are just animals. After all, the same things that happen to people happen to animals, the very same thing - just as the one dies, so does the other. Yes, their breath is the same; so that humans are no better than animals; since nothing matters, anyway. They all go to the same place; they all come from dust, and they all return to dust. Who knows if the spirit of a human being goes upward and the spirit of an animal goes downward into the earth?" So I concluded that there is nothing better for a person to do than take joy in his activities, that that is his allotted portion; for who can enable him to see what will happen after him?

Let's analyze that last sentence for a minute: When the writer of Ecclesiastes says, "So I concluded that there is nothing better for a person to do than take joy in his activities," who is being spoken of when it says "his"? The person himself? No, of course not, because the activities chosen by man can frequently be things we should take no joy in, that we should not do. And what is the word "activities"? The Hebrew word is Ma'aseh, which means deeds or work.

Whose deeds or work should we undertake? Whose deeds or work should we take joy in? The ones given to us by the God Who made us!

Like everything else, this is a call to turn back to God. During the Ten Days of Awe, the time from Yom Teruah to Yom Kippur, we turned back to God in the sense of turning from sin to follow His commandments. We are now called to turn back to Him in our work. We are to cease striving in our own strength and on our own initiative and our own ideas... and to learn to fear the Lord our God. Only when we turn back to Him in this way, can everything happen in... its proper season, as this song suggests:

## **Turn, Turn, Turn**

*Words from Ecclesiastes Chapter 3*

*Original Adaptation & Music by Pete Seeger*

*New Adaptation of Lyrics by Adam J Bernay*

### **CHORUS**

***To Everything, Turn, Turn, Turn,  
There is a Season, Turn, Turn,  
Turn, And a time for every purpose  
under heaven.***

A time to be born, a time to die;  
A time to plant, a time to reap;  
A time to kill, a time to heal;  
A time to laugh, a time to weep.

### **CHORUS**

A time to build up,  
A time to break down;  
A time to dance, a time to mourn;

A time to cast away stones,  
A time to gather stones together.

### **CHORUS**

A time of love, a time of hate;  
A time of war, a time of peace;  
A time that you may embrace,  
A time to refrain from embracing.

### **CHORUS**

A time to gain, a time to lose;  
A time to rend, a time to sew;  
A time to love, a time to hate;  
A time for joy; Rejoice, O Zion.

And Sukkot is known in Judaism as “The Time of Our Rejoicing.” This is because it is a time of harvest, of ingathering, of delighting in God’s provision. But there’s another reason to rejoice on Sukkot...

## **He Came and Tabernacled With Us**

I want to connect for you two things not connected in most people’s minds: the first day of Sukkot – the Feast of Tabernacles – and the Birth of Yeshua. Since the Feast of Tabernacles comes in the early fall and most of the world celebrates "Jesus' birth" as "Christmas" in late December, those two events wouldn't seem to be connected. But let's just get one thing straight: all of the religious leaders involved know that Yeshua was not born on December 25th, or anywhere near that time.

In fact, in analyzing the Catholic Church's celebrations, we find an odd thing; they celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25th – actually a date for celebrations of thoroughly pagan origin – but they celebrate the **CONCEPTION** of **MARY** on December 7 and 8! Now, if that was originally

a celebration of the Conception of Jesus (which is now celebrated by the Catholics, Anglicans/Episcopalians, and some others as the Annunciation on March 25) and was changed to fit their celebration of Christ's Mass on December 25, they just might have been on to something with that conception date... as you'll see...<sup>30</sup>

To show how this all works on the calendar, we must go back to the record of the Conception of John the Baptist in Luke 1:5-25:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.

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. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 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. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 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."

Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years."

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<sup>30</sup> This section is based on "Biblical Dates for Messiah's Conception and Birth" by Rabbi David Hargis, <http://www.messianic.com/articles/dates.htm>



The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.

When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."

We see the priestly divisions listed in 1 Chronicles 24:10, with Abijah being the Eighth Division. According to the Talmud, the weekly Divisional rotation began at the beginning of the month of Nisan, which means that the Abijah Division ended its service just before or at Shavuot (Pentecost). The text implies that John's conception occurred fairly immediately after Zacharias' return home... which makes sense, when you consider that he'd just come home after a week away!

Now, Shavuot usually comes in mid-June. Six months after Shavuot – in fact, exactly 27 weeks, or two trimesters – comes the Festival of Dedication, Hanukkah (see chapter twenty-one). And what happened when Elisabeth was six months pregnant?

### **Luke 1:26-37**

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him

Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

About three months – in fact, 14 weeks, exactly one trimester – after Hanukkah comes Passover. So, we see that John the Baptist was born at Passover... which even fits an ancient Jewish tradition that says that Elijah would return to herald the Messiah at Passover, and we know that John is the fulfillment of that prophecy!

And six months – in fact, exactly 27 weeks, or two trimesters – comes Sukkot, showing us that Yeshua was born on Sukkot! Amazing, isn't it?

The Book of John even supports this. In John 1:14, most translations read something like, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Literally translated, however, verse fourteen of the first chapter of John reads, "And the Word became flesh, and did **TABERNACLE** among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth." John is making a little play on words here, to an audience who apparently **KNEW** Yeshua was born on the first day of Sukkot!

Let me make two other important observations about Sukkot, ones about its future fulfillment. We read in:

### **Zechariah 14:16**

Finally, everyone remaining from all the nations that came to attack Yerushalayim will go up every year to worship the king, ADONAI-Tzva'ot, and to keep the festival of Sukkot.

We know from Zechariah 13 and the previous verses in chapter 14 that this is talking about the climactic battle of this age, at the end of the Tribulation, when all the nations of the world will attack Israel, and Yeshua Himself will descend at the head of the Army of the Hosts of Heaven, to rout these armies and save Israel. Now, you will remember from my chapter on Yom Teruah that this will occur on Yom Teruah.

Ten days after that battle, Messiah will call the nations to account for what they have done, this on Yom Kippur. Now, we see from Zechariah, that five days later, at the festival of Sukkot, the nations will come up to give tribute to Yeshua, the King Messiah! Now, we know, in most kingdoms, the birthday of the sovereign is a national festival. What better time, then, for the nations to come and give tribute, than on the birthday of their sovereign King, Yeshua!

My other observation is this... what is the first big event that we know takes place after the Millennial Kingdom is established? The Marriage Feast of the Lamb, where the Assembly of Adonai marries Messiah! The first opportunity to do this, in the chronology I've laid out above, would be when? During Sukkot!

So, as we gather to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, we are not just remembering our ancestors who wandered in the wilderness for forty years. We look back to that, and we look back to the birth of our Messiah, and we also look forward, to the day when we will celebrate His birthday and our marriage to Him in the Millennial Kingdom!

## **Chapter Twenty-One**

### ***Hanukkah & Purim – For Such A Time As This***

#### ***Hanukkah***

**T**he Festival of Dedication as celebrated by modern Judaism has its origins in the valiant struggle by the Maccabees – Jews who rebelled against Greek-Syrian rule in 167 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) under the leadership of a family of priests and retook Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple. The history of it is recorded in the Talmud and the Books of the Maccabees, which are no longer considered part of Scripture. Because of its (supposed – see below) extra-Scriptural status, its celebration by Believers is somewhat controversial. However, I would suggest it is a good festival to keep, for many reasons.

One reason is that we see Yeshua participating in Hanukkah in John 10:22-39. While some would say that this just shows He was in Jerusalem at the time, I would point out that we rarely see Yeshua in Jerusalem unless He is partaking in a festival. The rest of the time, He primarily operated in the Galilee region.

Another reason is, as discussed in Chapter Twenty, it is the time of Yeshua's conception. Since He is the Light of the World and Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights (in addition to being the Festival of Dedication), it is fitting to celebrate Hanukkah in light of Messiah. Also since, in one of His prophecies about His death and resurrection, He calls Himself the Temple (John 2:12-22), celebrating the Dedication of the Temple can be seen as celebrating Him.

One final reason for keeping the Festival of Dedication is that, as we are now the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), we can view this as a time to remember to rededicate ourselves to God. In fact, we see this bound up in what I believe is the original Hanukkah, which we see depicted in Tanakh.

In Numbers 7 & 8, the original Altar and the Cohanim (Priests) were dedicated. This is followed immediately by Numbers 9, where the Israelites are instructed to keep the Passover. They've already been given the commandment to keep the Passover, so why give it again? I would suggest that God's message was: it is alright to celebrate the Dedication of the Altar, and I want you to do it for eight days, in keeping with this festival forthcoming.

When King Solomon dedicated the Altar in the Temple, they did it on the seven days before Sukkot, as 1 Kings 8 makes clear. But then, as Sukkot was ending, the people wanted so much to continue celebrating that they extended it another week and a night – eight nights set aside to celebrate the Dedication of the Temple!

In Ezra chapter six, we read the story of the Rededication of the Temple after the Babylonian exile. This Rededication took place immediately before Passover. And we read they “had renounced the filthy practices of the nations... in order to seek ADONAI the God of Isra'el, ate [the Pesach lamb] and joyfully kept the feast of matzah for seven days; for ADONAI had filled them with joy by turning the heart of the king of Ashur toward them, so that he assisted them in the work of the house of God, the God of Isra'el.” (Ezra 6:21-22, Complete Jewish Bible)

So, while they cleaned up the Temple to prepare it for Rededication, they cleaned up their own lives at the same time – they renounced and cleansed themselves of their assimilation into the pagan practices of the lands in which they had dwelt as exiles! Similarly, the Levites in Numbers 8 had to be cleansed before the Dedication could be complete and the Festival could begin.

Hanukkah is a wonderful time for the family to celebrate together. It is traditionally more of a home holiday than a Synagogue holiday, and the festivities include not just lighting candles, but special games and foods. I really do suggest that you keep this festival.

In many places in the Apostolic Writings, we are God's Temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:15-18; Eph. 2:18-22), and that we are also a nation of priests (1 Peter 2:9). If we are to celebrate the Festival of Dedication... don't we first have to Dedicate the Temple? And if we are to Dedicate the Temple, don't we first have to cleanse and prepare ourselves... not just as the Temple, but as Priests?

I see this as the end of a three-festival cycle. Prior to Passover – which symbolizes our salvation – we work on our relationship with God, make t'shuvah, so we don't take the Cup of Redemption and the Afikoman in an "unworthy manner," as Rav Paul warns against in 1 Corinthians 11. Prior to Yom Kippur, we work on both our relationship with God and our fellow man – reconciliation. Yom Kippur celebrates our time of reconciliation, as Passover celebrates our time of redemption. And Hannukah celebrates our Dedication to God, which means we are now to keep His commandments, just as the Dedication of the Altar meant they were ready to keep His commandments of sacrifice on it.

Starting three weeks before the beginning of the Festival of Dedication, let me encourage you to spend two weeks preparing yourself to be Dedicated to the Most High. Is there a project you've been putting off, that keeps you from serving Him as well as you might? For me, it has been disorganization – of my living space, my work space, and my life in general. Maybe that's yours, but maybe it's not. What's important is that you put your house in order – in whatever way is necessary, just as the Babylonian exiles and the Maccabees did with the Temple before they Rededicated it each of those times.

Then, for that last week before Hanukkah begins, rededicate your life to the service of God. How? Sacrifice – do without something special in your life, something you especially enjoy. Give a special offering to God of money or time or something else you can give. Fast and pray. Offer prayers every day during that week, telling HaShem that you are rededicating your life to Him and His Service.

Then, after you've Dedicated... you can properly celebrate the Festival of Dedication... afterall, how can you celebrate doing something if you've not done it yet?

## **Purim**

**Chag Purim** – the Festival of Lots, also known as the Feast of Esther – is the commemoration of when the Jews, exiled in Persia, came close to being destroyed with the blessing of the government they were living under, the Persian monarchy. A Jewish girl, Hadassah, gets caught up in what is essentially a beauty pageant for the king to pick a new queen. Hiding her true (Jewish) identity, she adopts a Persian name, Esther, and wins the king's favor, who marries her. Following an assassination attempt on the king by two of his courtiers, foiled by a man name Mordechai (who is really Esther's cousin and adoptive father), the political shakeup in the palace elevates a man named Haman to the position of Prime Minister.

Haman doesn't like the fact that Mordechai is the only one in the area around the palace who will not bow to him, discovering that it's because Mordechai is a Jew and Jews bow only to God. Haman plans revenge on all Jews by getting the king to agree to allow people to attack them. Mordechai informs Esther, and Esther risks death to approach the king in his throne room to tell him the information. The king is incensed, orders Haman hung on the gallows he made for Mordechai, elevates Mordechai to Haman's old job as Prime Minister, and arranges for Mordechai's plan to save the Jews to be implemented.

The Jews are saved, and they establish a yearly festival to commemorate the victory. This is ruthlessly condensed to over-simplicity, but that's the basic story. You may have seen a movie loosely based on these events called *One Night with the King*.

The moral lesson of Purim is a simple one: you have to stand up for what you know is right, even if it might cost you dearly, because you may be the only one to do so. Mordechai stresses this when he tells Esther, "Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14) "For such a time as this" has become a rallying cry for Jews to speak truth to power or, as Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel put it, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation."

Purim is celebrated with a carnival atmosphere – plays are put on based on the Book of Esther, congregants dress in costume and give sweets to each other (making it a good substitute for the pagan holiday Halloween for those coming into Torah Observance), and the Rabbi usually puts on a comedy skit or routine. It is even traditional to drink in Synagogue... the ultra-Orthodox say you should drink until you can't tell the difference between "Blessed be Mordechai" and "Cursed be Haman." Let me stress that 1) these people usually live a block or so from their synagogues and 2) I am **not** advocating this part of the tradition.

But the important thing is that, amidst the craziness, the overall message should not be lost. You can make a difference, when you stand up for God, His Word, and His People. The message of Purim – and also Hanukkah – is as simple as that: you can change the world, when you know that you were placed in the situation you're in for such a time as this, when you are called to stand up for God, His Word, and His People.



## **Chapter Twenty-Two**

### **Not God's Appointed Times**

#### **Can a Celebration Be Bad?**

**W**e've discussed all the wonderful festivals, God's Appointed Times. But what about times God has not appointed? We read, in Chapter Thirteen, about Sunday, a time man has appointed to supersede God's Sabbath. Now, let's look at two other times man has appointed to supersede God's Appointed Times.

#### **Christmas vs. *Hanukkah* – Which Would Jesus Celebrate?**

You've seen those WWJD bracelets, t-shirts, etc., the letters standing for "What Would Jesus Do?" Well, as I think has been demonstrated in this book, Yeshua would be keeping the Commandments... but a part of that is what He wouldn't do. In this case, I want to discuss the two "competing" winter festivals, Christmas and Hanukkah.

Many times, growing up, I would hear Hanukkah referred to as "The Jewish Christmas." I think I did too, a few times, before I really understood what Christmas and Hanukkah were all about. Back then, in our family, we kept both holidays, and I admit, I enjoyed Christmas... before I really understood what Christmas was all about.

When I found out, I was shocked... and though I still remember with fondness some wonderful family times, I no longer look at Christmas as something innocent and beautiful... or even innocuous and fun. No, once I looked the truth straight in the eye, I could never accept things the way they were... once I learned the truth that is the answer to the question asked by this teaching: ***Christmas vs. Hanukkah: Which Would Yeshua Celebrate?***

Let's look at the history of Christmas, which does not begin 2000 years ago in a stable in Bethlehem. You see, the celebration of the birth of a god on the Winter Solstice does not date back just to the Catholic Church... it dates all the way back to Babylon, the source of all paganism in the world.

To understand this, we have to go back to Genesis 10:8-9: Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." The traditions tell us that this was not a compliment! When it says, "A mighty hunter before the LORD," they meant to say that he stood in God's face; he was a braggart, and stood before God in the eyes of the people. We are also told in the traditions that while he hunted wild animals, he also hunted people... and one of the people he hunted was young Abram – one day to be renamed Abraham – because Nimrod knew from Abram's infancy that he would bring people back to God.

The Biblical reference to Nimrod as a "mighty hunter" is important because he was seen as the Savior of the ancient world for that very reason. People were living in small, scattered villages with little protection from wild animals. Nimrod was more than just a hunter, he was also a charismatic figure who could gather people together to build walled cities where they could live in safety. They were obedient to him as their leader, and considered that their loss of independence was a price worth paying for the safety that Nimrod and his kingdom offered.

There is nothing in the Bible about the death of Nimrod, but the ancient traditions suggest that he died a violent death. One tradition says that he was killed by a wild animal. Another says that Shem killed him because he had led the people into the worship of Baal.

The Bible does not identify Nimrod's mother, or his date of birth, but Egyptian and Babylonian antiquities identify his mother as Semiramis, and his birthday is celebrated on December 25th. Sometimes Semiramis is

referred to as the mother of Nimrod, and sometimes as his wife, leading to the belief that Nimrod married his mother.

His wife-mother, Semiramis, who had risen to greatness on his account, was not going to disappear into obscurity because of his death. Instead she pronounced him to be a god, so that she herself became a goddess. She produced another son, and proclaimed him to be the resurrected Nimrod. This was not difficult, because she was so promiscuous that she produced many children whose fathers could not be identified. She proclaimed that she had gone down to the world of the dead, rescued Nimrod and brought him back in her womb.

Thus began the worship of Semiramis and the child-god, and the Babylonian religious system. After the decline of Babylon, the religion was adapted in Egypt where they worshipped Isis and her son Osirus. The same mother and child deities appeared in other pagan cultures: in Rome as Fortuna and Jupiter, and in Greece as Ceres, the Great Mother, with the babe at her breast, or as Irene, the goddess of Peace, with the baby Plutus in her arms.

The Roman Pagans used to celebrate the birthday of their child-god on the 25th of December, and the Roman Catholic Church sought to win over as many people as possible to nominal Catholicism by proclaiming the same day to be the birthday of Jesus. So the Pagans had no difficulty worshipping the Catholic Madonna and child. They were seen as yet another manifestation of the Queen of Heaven and her son. The Pagans made no compromises, and they didn't need to, they just continued their Pagan worship within the church. And what was the Assyrian name of this Queen of Heaven? Ishtar, from which we get the name of the holiday Easter, which was a pagan fertility festival in her honor! In the Hebrew, Greek, and Phoenician languages, her name is **Ashtoreth** or **Asherah**. Sound familiar?

You may have heard of the Asherah Pole or Tree. We read about it in:

## **Jeremiah 10:1-5 (CJB)**

Hear the word ADONAI speaks to you, house of Isra'el! Here is what ADONAI says: "Don't learn the way of the Goyim [Nations, aka pagans], don't be frightened by astrological signs, even if the Goyim are afraid of them; for the customs of the peoples are nothing. They cut down a tree in the forest; a craftsman works it with his axe; they deck it with silver and gold. They fix it with hammer and nails, so that it won't move. Like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch, it cannot speak. It has to be carried, because it cannot walk. Do not be afraid of it; it can do nothing bad; likewise it is unable to do anything good!"

The celebration of the Saturnalia tree and holly branches is rooted in this ancient pagan practice of the poles of Asherah (the goddess of good luck) in which a tree is cut down, put in the house and decorated for good luck and hope that winter will be short. In ancient times, as offerings to and from the gods, gifts were put under the tree. Today the effect is the same as the family bows down to the tree to get the gifts, which they cannot open until the unholy day of December 25! Even the ancient "fertility balls" of old pagan worship are put on the modern tree (and I know of no nicer way to say that). In fact, this tree was inaugurated as a part of the worship of Nimrod's supposed birthday.

In the days when my family still kept Christmas, I would always get very sick with upper respiratory infections around this time. I also helped carry the tree in every year, put it up, decorate it. It turns out I was allergic to pine! Nowadays, I just tell people I'm allergic to Christmas; it covers the whole mishegias (Yiddish for craziness)!

Let's talk for a minute about that joyous figure of the season, Satan Claus (and that's not a typo)! Santa Claus, or the St. Nicholas legend, is a fantasy that substitutes the benevolent Santa for the benevolent God Most High as our Father. To substitute anything or anyone for God is idolatry. But it is worse even than that. In doing my research for this teaching, I spoke with a woman who is a pagan priestess. She practices Wicca now, but her family's practice of paganism goes back for many, many centuries, to the British Isles, primarily Ireland. I told her I'd heard that Santa Claus was based on a pagan diety, and she told me yes, this was true. And she told me the story of the "holly king" and the "oak king".

The “holly king” and the “oak king” are part of Celtic mythology, and they represent two sides to the “greenman,” or “horned god.” (I find that latter title very interesting.)

They battle twice a year, once at Yule (the Winter Solstice) and once at the Summer Solstice (known in pagan circles as Litha) to see who would rule over the next half of the year. At Yule, the “oak king” wins and at Litha, the “holly king” is victorious. In other words, the “oak king” rules over the lighter half of the year, and the “holly king” over the darker half. The change from one to the other is a common theme for rituals at Yule, and also at Litha.

Another version of the “holly king and oak king” symbolism, is that they do not directly switch places twice a year, but rather both live simultaneously. The “oak king” is born at Yule, and his strength grows through the spring, peaks at Beltane and then he weakens and dies at Samhain (Halloween). The “holly king” lives a reverse existence, and is born at Litha, waxes more powerful through the summer and fall, to his peak at Samhain. His influence then lessens until Beltane, when it is his turn to pass away. In this perspective, the two kings enjoy a more intricate interplay of power and is perhaps a better illustration of their duality. At any given time, they both exist but have varying levels of influence throughout the year.

What do you think the “holly king” looks like? Well, he’s an old man with a white beard in a red suit trimmed with white fur, wearing a red stocking cap trimmed with white fur, and a sprig of holly. Sound familiar? Just like Santa, who has his day in the upswing towards Christmas and then isn’t heard from again afterwards till the upswing towards Christmas, so does the holly king die on Yule and come back in the next upswing towards Yule.

Santa's reindeer seem to have evolved from Herne, the Celtic Horned God. In Northern European myth, the Mother Goddess lives in a cave, gives birth to the sun child, and can shape shift into a white hind, or doe, female deer. Therefore, in the Celtic lore, the white hind was magical, to be protected and never hunted. In myth, graceful running women of the forest – who were

actually magical white hinds – brought instant old age or death to hunters who chased them.<sup>31</sup>

To the Celts, all deer were especially symbolic of nurturing, gentle and loving femaleness. White deer hide was used to make tribal women's clothing. White deer called "faery cattle" were commonly believed to offer milk to fairies. In Britain amongst the Druids, some men claimed to experience life-transforming epiphanies from spiritual visions or visitations by white hinds, balancing and healing their inner feminine energy.

Mistletoe was also known as “the golden bough” and was held sacred by both the Celtic Druids and the Norse. Mistletoe was used by the Druid priesthood in a very special ceremony held around this time...five days after the New Moon following winter solstice, to be precise. The Druid priests would cut mistletoe from a holy oak tree with a golden sickle. The branches had to be caught before they touched the ground.

Celts believed this parasitic plant held the soul of the host tree. The priest then divided the branches into many sprigs and distributed them to the people, who hung them over doorways as protection against thunder, lightning and other evils. The folklore, and the magical powers of this plant, blossomed over the centuries. A sprig placed in a baby's cradle would protect the child from faeries. Giving a sprig to the first cow calving after New Year would protect the entire herd.

Although many sources say that kissing under the mistletoe is a purely English custom, its origin actually extends back into Norse mythology. The Norse god Balder was the best loved of all the gods. His mother was Frigga, goddess of love and beauty. She loved her son so much that she wanted to make sure no harm would come to him. So she went through the world, securing promises from everything that sprang from the four elements – fire, water, air, and earth – that they would not harm her beloved Balder.

According to this pagan legend, Loki, a sly, trickster spirit, found the loophole, which was mistletoe. He made an arrow from its wood. To make

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<sup>31</sup> Much of the information in this section comes from <http://www.mythinglinks.org/wintersolstice~YuleLinks.html> and other similar websites.

the prank even nastier, he took the arrow to Hoder, Balder's brother, who was blind. Guiding Hoder's hand, Loki directed the arrow at Balder's heart, and he fell dead.

Frigga's tears became the mistletoe's white berries. Balder is restored to life, and Frigga is so grateful that she reverses the reputation of the offending plant--making it a symbol of love and promising to bestow a kiss upon anyone who passes under it.

Balder is sometimes seen as the sacrificed and resurrected god, who is restored to his people after the Battle of Ragnarok. The sacrificed and resurrected god... yet again, the Adversary makes a false version of the truth in order to confuse people into following him, the father of all lies.

So you see, the Christmas traditions many people hold dear are, in fact, pagan rituals. Now, I know that many people defend doing these rituals, claiming, "That's not what they mean anymore." Well, you can call something anything you like, it doesn't change its essence. You can call a pig a cow, but that does not make its flesh clean to eat.

God has never allowed us to simply change the names of the pagan practices, adopt them, and that makes them holy. In fact, He has told us quite the opposite:

### **Exodus 23:20-24 (CJB)**

"I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you on the way and bring you to the place I have prepared. Pay attention to him, listen to what he says and do not rebel against him; because he will not forgive any wrongdoing of yours, since my name resides in him. But if you listen to what he says and do everything I tell you, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to your foes. When my angel goes ahead of you and brings you to the Emori, Hitti, P'rizi, Kena'ani, Hivi and Y'vusi, I will make an end of them. You are not to worship their gods, serve them or follow their practices; rather, you are to demolish them completely and smash their standing-stones to pieces.

Don't worship their gods, serve them, OR follow their practices! We weren't given the option to change their names and make them our own! God KNEW the temptation would be to compromise! But He doesn't give us the out!

The Apostolic Writings confirm this! In the follow reading from First Corinthians, we are reminded of the holy revelation in the Sinai desert:

### **1 Corinthians 10:1-6 (CJB)**

For, brothers, I don't want you to miss the significance of what happened to our fathers. All of them were guided by the pillar of cloud, and they all passed through the sea, and in connection with the cloud and with the sea they all immersed themselves into Moshe, also they all ate the same food from the Spirit, and they all drank the same drink from the Spirit - for they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah. Yet with the majority of them God was not pleased, so their bodies were strewn across the desert. Now these things took place as prefigurative historical events, warning us not to set our hearts on evil things as they did.

God knows we are tempted by the evil practices around us... no one would accept evil if it LOOKED evil, now would they? Evil wraps itself in a camouflage of debauched fun and false piety to make itself look like it's of God... BUT IT IS NOT!

The Letter to the Corinthians continues:

### **1 Corinthians 10:7-14 (CJB)**

Don't be idolaters, as some of them were - as the Tanakh puts it, "The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to indulge in revelry." And let us not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, with the consequence that 23,000 died in a single day. And let us not put the Messiah to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by snakes. And don't grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the Destroying Angel. These things happened to them as prefigurative historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the acharit-hayamim [Latter Days]. Therefore, let anyone who thinks he is standing up be careful



not to fall! No temptation has seized you beyond what people normally experience, and God can be trusted not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. On the contrary, along with the temptation he will also provide the way out, so that you will be able to endure. Therefore, my dear friends, run from idolatry!

In other words... we are tempted by evil, but we should run, run from idolatry, not take up its practices by other names! But the people who want to support Christmas say otherwise. They say it's just fine, it's a wonderful day. The late Rabbi David Hargis (of Blessed Memory) wrote the following to dispute the many statements people try to make in defense of Christmas<sup>32</sup>:

***Christmas is when we celebrate the birthday of Messiah:*** Messiah Yeshua was born during Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), not on December 25. It is this celebration that the prophets say will be kept by all nations in the Kingdom of Messiah. December 25 is the birthday of Nimrod and, symbolically, of pagan religion.

***"Christmas has been made a holy day:*** Nowhere has God proclaimed Christmas (December 25) to be a holy day. Pope Julius declared December 25 to be "Christmas Day" in 359 A.D. Those who adhere to this, even unknowingly, are accepting the authority of an apostate faith.

***Christmas is about giving:*** Christmas time, by the actions of people, is about buying and giving in order to get. It fosters reciprocal greed. It falsely teaches children that they have a right to their covetous desires ("What do you want for Christmas?"). God commanded us to teach children His Word ("You shall not covet" "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want" "Give and it shall be given to you") all year long.

***Christmas is not based in evil:*** Christmas means "Christ-Mass" which is the Catholic service of performing the death of Messiah over again, and physically ingesting His actual body and blood (according to their belief). This is totally unbiblical and akin to cannibalistic thinking (pagan cannabals eat human flesh because they think they will take on the traits of the person eaten)."

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.messianic.com/articles/liesofxmas.htm>

Specifically, it goes back again to the Babylonian religion where they would ingest the flesh and blood of animals as symbolic of ingesting the flesh and blood of Mythru, one of their gods. The Catholics grafted this concept onto the symbols of the Passover Seder – They believe the piece of Matzah and glass of wine taken after the dinner, called the Afikoman and the Cup of Redemption are literally, not symbolically, Messiah's body and blood (see chapter fourteen)!

So, now that we have dispensed with Christmas, let us turn towards Hanukkah. What is Hanukkah? Hanukkah is about how a small but brave group of people, led by the priests of God, fought a war against insurmountable odds and reclaimed God's Temple from their pagan oppressors. These pagans had taken over the Land of Israel, driven the true priests out of the Temple, turned the Temple into a house of worship for their pagan gods, and attempted to force the Jews to turn from God and His Torah and live by the pagans' rules and worship their gods.

So, let us see, what is the difference, Christmas vs. Hanukkah? Christmas is a holiday which gets Believers in God to perform pagan practices and worship false Messiahs and horned Gods. Hanukkah is a holiday on which we remember when the Jewish rebels – called the Maccabees – fought to cleanse the Temple of God and re-establish worship of God and following His Torah, keeping His Practices.

So, which would Yeshua celebrate, Christmas or Hanukkah? I think we can all understand that He would celebrate Hanukkah, and reject Christmas.

### **Easter vs. First Fruits – Which Would Jesus Celebrate?**

I once loved Easter. I loved getting a basket of goodies – kind of obvious, isn't it? – hunting for Easter Eggs, all the things going on at church... before I really understood what Easter was all about.

When I found out, I was shocked... and though I still remember with fondness some wonderful family times, I no longer look at Easter as something innocent and beautiful... or even innocuous and fun. No, once I looked the truth straight in the eye, I could never accept things the way they were... once I learned the truth that is the answer to the question asked by this teaching: *Easter vs. First Fruits: Which Would Yeshua Celebrate?*

There are a lot of Christians who are desperately seeking to de-paganize their faith. Part of this has been to declaim a lot of Easter traditions – the Easter Bunny, Easter Eggs, Hot Cross Buns, Easter Ham – as having nothing to do with Easter. While I applaud their diligence to get rid of the pagan influences on their faith and practice, I hate to break it to them, but the bunny, the eggs, the buns, and the swine are inherent parts of Easter! There is no separating them!

Easter is, in fact, the pagan resurrection day of the original false Messiah, Nimrod-Tammuz! Let me quote from a tract published online by Last Trumpet Ministries, adding some of my own commentary<sup>33</sup>:

Noah's son, Ham, had a son named Cush who married a woman named Semiramis. Cush and Semiramis then had a son, whom they named "Nimrod." After the death of his father, Nimrod married his own mother and became a powerful King.

The Bible tells of of this man, Nimrod, in Genesis 10:8-10 as follows:

"And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Nimrod became a god-man to the people and Semiramis, his wife and mother, became the powerful Queen of ancient Babylon. The rabbinic sages tell us that Abram lived there with his father, before he was called by God to become Abraham, the father of the Nation of Israel, and that Nimrod tried to kill Abraham, to stop Israel from coming into existence.

Nimrod was eventually killed by an enemy, and his body was cut in pieces and sent to various parts of his kingdom. Semiramis had all of the parts gathered, except for one part that could not be found. That missing part was his reproductive organ. Semiramis claimed that Nimrod could not come back to life without it and told the people of Babylon that Nimrod had ascended to the sun and was now to be called "Baal", the sun god.

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<sup>33</sup> <http://www.lasttrumpetministries.org/tracts/tract1.html>

Queen Semiramis also proclaimed that Baal would be present on earth in the form of a flame, whether candle or lamp, when used in worship. Semiramis was creating a mystery religion, and with the help of Satan, she set herself up as a goddess. Semiramis claimed that she was immaculately conceived. This was not a problem, because Semiramis had many lovers and so her having a child after the death of her husband was easy.

She taught that the moon was a goddess that went through a 28 day cycle and ovulated when full. She further claimed that she came down from the moon in a giant moon egg that fell into the Euphrates River. This was to have happened at the time of the first full moon after the spring equinox.

Semiramis became known as "Ishtar" which is pronounced "Easter", and her moon egg became known as "Ishtar's" egg." Ishtar soon became pregnant and claimed that it was the rays of the sun-god Baal that caused her to conceive. The son that she brought forth was named Tammuz, whom she claimed was the resurrected Nimrod.

Tammuz was noted to be especially fond of rabbits, and they became sacred in the ancient religion, because Tammuz was believed to be the son of the sun-god, Baal. Tammuz, like his supposed father, became a hunter.

The day came when Tammuz was killed by a wild pig. Queen Ishtar told the people that Tammuz was now ascended to his father, Baal, and that the two of them would be with the worshippers in the sacred candle or lamp flame as Father, Son, and Spirit. You see? Satan made a perverted pagan copy of the truth!

Ishtar, who was now worshipped as the "Mother of God and Queen of Heaven", continued to build her mystery religion. The queen told the worshippers that when Tammuz was killed by the wild pig, some of his blood fell on the stump of an evergreen tree, and the stump grew into a full new tree overnight. This made the evergreen tree sacred by the blood of Tammuz, and thus became the symbol of his birthday, which was at the Winter Solstice. Many celebrate this today under the name Christmas.

She also proclaimed a forty day period of time of sorrow each year prior to the anniversary of the death of Tammuz. During this time, no meat was to be eaten. Worshippers were to meditate upon the sacred mysteries of Baal and Tammuz, and to make the sign of the "T" in front of their hearts as they worshipped.

They also ate sacred cakes with the marking of a "T" on the top. Every year, on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, a celebration was made. It was Ishtar's Sunday and was celebrated with rabbits and eggs.

Ishtar also proclaimed that because Tammuz was killed by a pig, that a pig must be eaten on that Sunday.

These celebrations came down through the ages, under various names, with different pagan gods playing the parts, until, according to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, the 600s of the Common Era, when Mellitus, a Catholic missionary in England, found them as part of the worship of a Norse goddess named Ostara. Pope Gregory I, in a letter to Mellitus, suggested that converting heathens would be easier if they were allowed to retain the outward forms of their traditional pagan practices and traditions, while recasting those traditions spiritually towards Christianity instead of to their indigenous gods (whom the Pope refers to as "devils"), "to the end that, whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God."

The Pope sanctioned such conversion tactics as biblically acceptable, claiming that God did much the same thing with the ancient Israelites, who he claimed had used pagan sacrifices! Talk about rewriting Scripture!

These pagan practices spread throughout the entire Christian church.

So you see, the Easter traditions many people hold dear are, in fact, pagan rituals. Now, I know that many people defend doing these rituals, claiming, "That's not what they mean anymore." Well, you can call something anything you like, but it doesn't change its essence. At the risk of repeating myself, you can call a pig a cow, but that does not make its flesh clean to eat.

God has never allowed us to simply change the names of the pagan practices, adopt them, and that makes them holy. In fact, He has told us quite the opposite, as we read before in Exodus 23:20-24 and 1 Corinthians 10:1-6. God knows we are tempted by the evil practices around us... no one would accept evil if it LOOKED evil, now would they? Evil wraps itself in a camouflage of debauched fun and false piety to make it self look like it's of God... BUT IT IS NOT! In other words... we are tempted by evil, but we should run, run from idolatry, not take up its practices by other names!

So, now that we have dispensed with Easter, let us turn towards Yom HaBikkurim, the Day of the First Fruits. What is First Fruits? On the first day of the week after the Passover, an offering of the first fruits of the barley harvest were brought to the Temple, and the beginning of a count of seven weeks and one day – fifty days – began, counting up to Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, which many of you know as Pentecost. It is at the beginning of this day, as the sun was going down that Yeshua walked out of the Tomb (as we read in Chapter Sixteen)! At the first Shavuot, the Israelites received the Covenant at Mt. Sinai, as the Spirit anointed them like tongues of fire... and 1500 years later, the Apostles received a fresh anointing like tongues of fire, on the same day!

So, let us see, what is the difference, Easter vs. First Fruits? Easter is a holiday which gets Believers in God to perform pagan practices, worship false Messiahs, and eat swine. First Fruits is a holy day when we remembered by bringing the sacrifice of the first fruits of the harvest to God's Temple – thus making holy the whole crop – that Messiah was the First Fruits of God's Harvest, and we are the First Fruits of His Harvest. So, which would Yeshua celebrate, Easter or First Fruits? I think we can all understand that He would commemorate First Fruits, and reject Easter.

## **Epilogue**

### **Continuing On the Journey: I Ain't Perfect Either...Yet...**

If there's a message I want you to take away from this, it is something I want to restate from Chapter Five: while our actions may not be perfect, when we set out to walk according to God's commandments, the process is perfect even though we are not, and we are being perfected. It's an ongoing process, one that every Torah-keeper is engaged in, and will continue to be engaged in, until Messiah gives us the perfect, incorruptible bodies we will take into Eternity.

I do not offer myself as a role model of perfect observance. I can only offer myself as a guide to other people who fear the LORD and desire to follow His Ways. This book is my first attempt to bring that guidance much beyond my congregation. I hope that it's been a blessing to you.

There are a lot of resources you can use to help you in your walk of being perfected. I cannot stress enough the importance of being a part of a Torah-Observant Assembly of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers in Yeshua HaMashiach. There are over 700 Messianic congregations in the world, so there will probably be one somewhere near you. Let me recommend the following organizations and their congregations (NOTE: There are other Messianic congregations and organizations out there, but these are the ones I definitely recommend):

#### **Coalition of Torah Observant Messianic Congregations – <http://ctomc.info>**

This is the organization my congregation belongs to. Here's a list of their affiliated congregations and ministries, organized by country:

#### **United States**

##### **Beit Midrash Messianic Fellowship - Sandwich, IL**

“House of Study” (literally “House of Exegesis”)

Leader: Messianic Minister Jack Holley

Please e-mail [mminjack@yahoo.com](mailto:mminjack@yahoo.com) for more information.

**Beit Tefillah Messianic Fellowship - Fresno, CA**

“House of Prayer”

<http://fresnohouseofprayer.com>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Adam J. Bernay

Please call 559-906-6297 or e-mail [RabbiAdam@comcast.net](mailto:RabbiAdam@comcast.net) for more information.

**Chavurah Eitz Chayim - Onancock, VA**

“Tree of Life Fellowship”

Leader: Messianic Minister Robin Armstrong

Please e-mail [robinruth07@google.com](mailto:robinruth07@google.com) for more information.

**Congregation Beit Lechem - Jackson, MS**

“House of Bread” (the name of the town where Yeshua was born)

<http://beitlechem.net>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Yosef Bouleware

Please call (601) 613-4121 or (601) 927-7913 or e-mail

[RavYosef@comcast.net](mailto:RavYosef@comcast.net) for more information.

**El Gibbor Messianic Ministries - Harker Heights, TX**

“The Mighty God”

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Jesus Perez (also the first Messianic chaplain in the U.S. military)

Please e-mail [jesuper03@yahoo.com](mailto:jesuper03@yahoo.com) for more information.

**Kol Shalom Messianic Ministries - York, PA**

“All Peace”

Leader: Messianic Minister Clayton Young

Please e-mail [kolshalommin@aol.com](mailto:kolshalommin@aol.com) for more information.

**Canada**

**Beit HaMashiach Messianic Fellowship - Williams Lake, BC**

“House of the Messiah”

<http://members.shaw.ca/nyack/>

Leader: Messianic Ministers Warren and Heather Nyack

Please call 250-392-9557 or e-mail [messiahhouse@aol.com](mailto:messiahhouse@aol.com) or

[Beit.HaMashiach@hotmail.com](mailto:Beit.HaMashiach@hotmail.com) for more information.



**Beit Shalom Messianic Fellowship - Trenton, ON**

“House of Peace”

Leader: Messianic Minister Caroline Oostrom

Please e-mail [dodilamb@hotmail.com](mailto:dodilamb@hotmail.com) for more information.

**Chai Chadash Messianic Ministries - Seabright, NS**

“New Life”

<http://www.forministry.com/USMAMSJEWCCCCC/>

Leader: Messianic Minister Ted Grodecki

Please e-mail [tgrodecki@eastlink.ca](mailto:tgrodecki@eastlink.ca) for more information.

**Congregation Ner Tamid - Halifax, NS**

“Eternal Flame”

<http://users.eastlink.ca/~nertamid/>

Leaders: Messianic Rabbi Avner Solomon

& Messianic Minister Leah Solomon

Please call 902-821-2252 or e-mail [nertamid@eastlink.ca](mailto:nertamid@eastlink.ca) or [ctomc@eastlink.ca](mailto:ctomc@eastlink.ca) for more information.

(This is the flagship congregation of CTOMC. Rabbi Solomon is the CTOMC president.)

**Australia**

**Beit Gan-Eden Messianic Community - Surfers Paradise, QLD.**

“House of the Garden of Eden”

<http://www.bgemc.org/>

Leaders: Messianic Ministers Ken & Robyn Yeomans

Please call +61 7 5528 5955, 0418 745 120, 0418 750 577 or e-mail [info@bgemc.org](mailto:info@bgemc.org) for more information.

**Other Congregations I Recommend, Organized by Affiliation:**

**From the Messianic Jewish Alliance of Canada (MJAC) –**

**<http://users.eastlink.ca/~nertamid/MJAC.HTM>**

**Congregation Melech Yisrael – Toronto, Ontario, Canada**

“King of Israel”

<http://www.cmy.on.ca/>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Jack Farber

Call 416-785-7612 or e-mail [cmy@ca.inter.net](mailto:cmy@ca.inter.net) for more information.

**Kehilat She'ar Yashuv - Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

“Congregation A Remnant Shall Return”

<http://www.ksy.ca/>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Natanel ben Yochanan

Call 514-481-4579 or e-mail [info@ksy.ca](mailto:info@ksy.ca) for more information.

**Independent Congregations**

**Beit Avanim Chaiot - Tuscon, AZ**

“House of Living Stones”

<http://bac2torah.com> [NOTE: Yes, that’s spelled b-a-c]

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Richard Pustelniak

Call (520)327-0344 or e-mail [rabbi@bac2torah.com](mailto:rabbi@bac2torah.com) for more information.

**Beit Gerim Messianic Fellowship - Norman, OK**

“House of the Sojourner” (or House of the God-Fearers)

[http://www.messianicproductions.com/Beit\\_Gerim.html](http://www.messianicproductions.com/Beit_Gerim.html)

Leader: Messianic Minister Charlie Dykes

Please call 405-310-3836 or e-mail [charlie@messianicproductions.com](mailto:charlie@messianicproductions.com) for more information.

**Kehilat T'nuvah Messianic Congregation – Thornton, CO**

“Congregation of the Harvest”

<http://graftedin.com>

Leader: Pastor Mark McLellan

Call 303-761-9948 for more information.

[NOTE: This congregation’s leadership hosts an excellent weekly radio show that is both broadcast locally and streamed on the Internet. Go to their website for more information.]

### **Mishkan David Messianic Congregation - Lauderhill, FL**

“Tabernacle of David”

<http://mishkandavid.org>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Gabriel Simkin

E-mail [mishkandav@aol.com](mailto:mishkandav@aol.com) for more information.

### **Ohr Yeshua Messianic Synagogue - Bradenton, FL**

“Light of Yeshua”

<http://ohryeshua.org/>

Leader: Messianic Rabbi Gary Beresford

Call 941-755-0001 for more information.

### **Beth Immanuel Sabbath Fellowship – Hudson, WI**

“House of Immanuel” [God with Us]

<http://bethimmanuel.org>

Leader: Elder D. Thomas Lancaster

Call 715-386-0106 or e-mail [info@bethimmanuel.org](mailto:info@bethimmanuel.org) for more information.

[NOTE: Dr. Lancaster is the author of two incredible books, “Restoration: Returning the Torah of God to the Disciples of Jesus” and also “The Mystery of the Gospel,” which is quoted in this book.]

## **Other Resources**

### **First Fruits of Zion**

First Fruits of Zion (FFOZ) is an educational ministry dedicated to proclaiming the Torah and its way of life, fully centered on Messiah, to today's people of God.

<http://ffoz.org>

### **Torah Resource**

Providing Resources that are BIBLICALLY BASED, HONORING YESHUA, UPHOLDING THE TORAH

<http://torahresource.com>

### **Crosswalk Online Study Bible & Lexicons**

Many, many versions of the Bible accessible via Boolean search engine and excellent study lexicons.

<http://bible.crosswalk.com>

### **Hebcal Interactive Hebrew Calendar**

Hebrew calendar for any year you want

<http://hebcal.com>

### **HisTorah4U.com**

**Massive** resource site for Messianic teaching and information.

<http://historah4u.com>

## **Appendix 1 – List of the 613 Commandments**

What follows is a list of the 613 Commandments in Torah as compiled by Rashi (courtesy of <http://historah4u.com>). Two important notes: 1) As you check these against Scripture, you will note that some of them don't quite "match up" to Scripture. This is because the rabbis have made their interpretations that don't really fit the text. 2) Not all of these apply to every individual. Some apply just to men, some apply just to women; some apply just to parents, some apply just to children; some apply just to the priests and the Levites, etc. Read critically! In fact, better yet, read the Torah and discover the Commandments yourself!

1. To know there is a God Ex. 20:3
2. Not to entertain thoughts of other gods besides Him Ex. 20:3
3. To know that He is one. Deut. 6:4
4. To love Him. Deut. 6:5
5. To fear Him Deut. 10:20
6. To sanctify His Name Lev. 22:32
7. Not to profane His Name Lev. 22:32
8. Not to destroy objects associated with His Name Deut. 12:4
9. To listen to the prophet speaking in His Name Deut. 18:15
10. Not to test the prophet unduly Deut. 6:16
11. To emulate His ways Deut. 28:9
12. To cleave to those who know Him Deut. 10:20
13. To love other Jews Lev. 19:18
14. To love converts Deut. 10:19
15. Not to hate fellow Jews Lev. 19:17
16. To reprove a sinner Lev. 19:17
17. Not to embarrass others Lev. 19:17
18. Not to oppress the weak Ex. 21:22

19. Not to speak derogatorily of others Lev. 19:16
20. Not to take revenge Lev. 19:18
21. Not to bear a grudge Lev. 19:18
22. To learn Torah Deut. 6:7
23. To honor those who teach and know Torah Lev. 19:32
24. Not to inquire into idolatry Lev. 19:4
25. Not to follow the whims of your heart or what your eyes see Num. 15:39
26. Not to blaspheme Ex. 22:27
27. Not to worship idols in the manner they are worshiped Ex. 20:5
28. Not to worship idols in the four ways we worship God Ex. 20:5
29. Not to make an idol for yourself Ex. 20:4
30. Not to make an idol for others Lev. 19:4
31. Not to make human forms even for decorative purposes Ex. 20:20
32. Not to turn a city to idolatry Ex. 23:13
33. To burn a city that has turned to idol worship Deut. 13:17
34. Not to rebuild it as a city Deut. 13:17
35. Not to derive benefit from it Deut. 13:18
36. Not to missionize an individual to idol worship Deut. 13:12
37. Not to love the missionary Deut. 13:9
38. Not to cease hating the missionary Deut. 13:9
39. Not to save the missionary Deut. 13:9
40. Not to say anything in his defense Deut. 13:9
41. Not to refrain from incriminating him Deut. 13:9
42. Not to prophesize in the name of idolatry Deut. 13:14
43. Not to listen to a false prophet Deut. 13:4
44. Not to prophesize falsely in the name of God Deut. 18:20

45. Not to be afraid of killing the false prophet Deut. 18:22
46. Not to swear in the name of an idol Ex. 23:13
47. Not to perform ov (medium) Lev. 19:31
48. Not to perform yidoni (magical seer) Lev. 19:31
49. Not to pass your children through the fire to Molech Lev. 18:21
50. Not to erect a column in a public place of worship Deut. 16:22
51. Not to bow down on smooth stone Lev. 26:1
52. Not to plant a tree in the Temple courtyard Deut. 16:21
53. To destroy idols and their accessories Deut. 12:2
54. Not to derive benefit from idols and their accessories Deut. 7:26
55. Not to derive benefit from ornaments of idols Deut. 7:25
56. Not to make a covenant with idolaters Deut. 7:2
57. Not to show favor to them Deut.  
7:2
58. Not to let them dwell in our land. Ex 23:33
59. Not to imitate them in customs and clothing Lev. 20:23
60. Not to be superstitious Lev. 19:26
61. Not to go into a trance to foresee events, etc. Deut. 18:10
62. Not to engage in astrology Lev. 19:26
63. Not to mutter incantations Deut. 18:11
64. Not to attempt to contact the dead Deut. 18:11
65. Not to consult the ov Deut. 18:11
66. Not to consult the yidoni Deut. 18:11
67. Not to perform acts of magic Deut. 18:10
68. Men must not shave the hair off the sides of their head Lev. 19:27
69. Men must not shave their beards with a razor Lev. 19:27

70. Men must not wear women's clothing Deut. 22:5
71. Women must not wear men's clothing Deut. 22:5
72. Not to tattoo the skin Lev. 19:28
73. Not to tear the skin in mourning Deut. 14:1
74. Not to make a bald spot in mourning Deut. 14:1
75. To repent and confess wrongdoings Num. 5:7
76. To say the Shema twice daily Deut. 6:7
77. To serve the Almighty with prayer daily Ex. 23:25
78. The Kohanim must bless the Jewish nation daily Num. 6:23
79. To wear tefillin on the head Deut. 6:8
80. To bind tefillin on the arm Deut. 6:8
81. To put a mezuzah on each door post Deut. 6:9
82. Each male must write a Sefer Torah Deut. 31:19
83. The king must have a separate Sefer Torah for himself Deut. 17:18
84. To have tzitzit on four-cornered garments Num. 15:38
85. To bless the Almighty after eating Deut. 8:10
86. To circumcise all males on the eighth day after their birth Lev. 12:3
87. To rest on the seventh day Ex. 23:12
88. Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day Ex. 20:10
89. The court must not inflict punishment on Shabbat Ex. 35:3
90. Not to walk outside the city boundary on Shabbat Ex. 16:29
91. To sanctify the day with Kiddush and Havdalah Ex. 20:8
92. To rest from prohibited labor Lev. 23:32
93. Not to do prohibited labor on Yom Kippur Lev. 23:32
94. To afflict yourself on Yom Kippur Lev. 16:29
95. Not to eat or drink on Yom Kippur Lev. 23:29



96. To rest on the first day of Passover Lev. 23:7
97. Not to do prohibited labor on the first day of Passover Lev. 23:8
98. To rest on the seventh day of Passover Lev. 23:8
99. Not to do prohibited labor on the seventh day of Passover Lev. 23:8
100. To rest on Shavuot Lev. 23:21
101. Not to do prohibited labor on Shavuot Lev. 23:21
102. To rest on Rosh Hashana Lev. 23:24
103. Not to do prohibited labor on Rosh Hashana Lev. 23:25
104. To rest on Sukkot Lev. 23:35
105. Not to do prohibited labor on Sukkot Lev. 23:35
106. To rest on Shmini Atzeret Lev. 23:36
107. Not to do prohibited labor on Shmini Atzeret Lev. 23:36
108. Not to eat chametz on the afternoon of the 14th day of Nissan Deut. 16:3
109. To destroy all chametz on 14th day of Nissan Ex. 12:15
110. Not to eat chametz all seven days of Passover Ex. 13:3
111. Not to eat mixtures containing chametz all seven days of Passover Ex. 12:20
112. Not to see chametz in your domain seven days Ex. 13:7
113. Not to find chametz in your domain seven days Ex. 12:19
114. To eat matzah on the first night of Passover Ex. 12:18
115. To relate the Exodus from Egypt on that night Ex. 13:8
116. To hear the Shofar on the first day of Tishrei (Rosh Hashana) Num. 9:1
117. To dwell in a Sukkah for the seven days of Sukkot Lev. 23:42
118. To take up a Lulav and Etrog all seven days Lev. 23:40
119. Each man must give a half shekel annually Ex. 30:13
120. Courts must calculate to determine when a new month begins Ex. 12:2

- 121.To afflict and cry out before God in times of catastrophe Num. 10:9
- 122.To marry a wife by means of ketubah and kiddushin Deut. 22:13
- 123.Not to have relations with women not thus married Deut. 23:18
- 124.Not to withhold food, clothing, and sexual relations from your wife Ex.  
21:10
- 125.To have children with one's wife Gen 1:28
- 126.To issue a divorce by means of a Get document Deut. 24:1
- 127.A man must not remarry his wife after she has married someone else Deut.  
24:4
- 128.To do yibum (marry childless brother's widow) Deut. 25:5
- 129.To do chalitzah (freeing a widow from yibum) Deut. 25:9
- 130.The widow must not remarry until the ties with her brother-in-law are  
removed Deut. 25:5
- 131.The court must fine one who seduces a maiden Ex. 22:15-16
- 132.The rapist must marry the maiden (if she chooses) Deut. 22:29
- 133.He is not allowed to divorce her Deut. 22:29
- 134.The slanderer must remain married to his wife Deut. 22:19
- 135.He must not divorce her Deut. 22:19
- 136.To fulfill the laws of the Sotah Num. 5:30
- 137.Not to put oil on her meal offering Num. 5:15
- 138.Not to put frankincense on her Meal Offering Num. 5:15
- 139.Not to have sexual relations with your mother Lev. 18:7
- 140.Not to have sexual relations with your father's wife Lev. 18:8
- 141.Not to have sexual relations with your sister Lev. 18:9
- 142.Not to have sexual relations with your father's wife's daughter Lev. 18:11
- 143.Not to have sexual relations with your son's daughter Lev. 18:10
- 144.Not to have sexual relations with your daughter Lev. 18:10

145. Not to have sexual relations with your daughter's daughter Lev. 18:10
146. Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter Lev. 18:17
147. Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her son's daughter Lev. 18:17
148. Not to have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter's daughter Lev. 18:17
149. Not to have sexual relations with your father's sister Lev. 18:12
150. Not to have sexual relations with your mother's sister Lev. 18:13
151. Not to have sexual relations with your father's brother's wife Lev. 18:14
152. Not to have sexual relations with your son's wife Lev. 18:15
153. Not to have sexual relations with your brother's wife Lev. 18:16
154. Not to have sexual relations with your wife's sister Lev. 18:18
155. A man must not have sexual relations with a beast Lev. 18:23
156. A woman must not have sexual relations with a beast Lev. 18:23
157. A man not to have homosexual sexual relations Lev. 18:22
158. A man not to have homosexual sexual relations with your father Lev. 18:7
159. A man not to have homosexual sexual relations with your father's brother Lev. 18:14
160. Not to have sexual relations with a married woman Lev. 18:20
161. Not to have sexual relations with a menstrually impure woman Lev. 18:19
162. Not to marry non-Jews Deut. 7:3
163. Not to let Moabite and Ammonite males marry into the Jewish people Deut. 23:4
164. Don't keep a third-generation Egyptian convert from marrying into the Jewish people Deut. 23:8-9
165. Not to refrain from marrying a third generation Edomite convert Deut. 23:8-9
166. Not to let a mamzer ("bastard") marry into the Jewish people Deut. 23:3
167. Not to let a eunuch marry into the Jewish people Deut. 23:2

168. Not to offer to God any castrated male (including animals) Lev. 22:24
169. The High Priest must not marry a widow Lev. 21:14
170. The High Priest must not have sexual relations with a widow even outside of marriage Lev. 21:15
171. The High Priest must marry a virgin maiden Lev. 21:13
172. A Kohen (Priest) must not marry a divorcee Lev. 21:7
173. A Kohen must not marry a zonah (a woman who had forbidden relations) Lev. 21:7
174. A priest must not marry a chalalah (party to or product of 169-172) Lev. 21:7
175. Not to make pleasurable (sexual) contact with any forbidden woman Lev. 18:6
176. To examine the signs of animals to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher Lev. 11:2
177. To examine the signs of fowl to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher Deut. 14:11
178. To examine the signs of fish to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher Lev. 11:9
179. To examine the signs of locusts to distinguish between kosher and non-kosher Lev. 11:21
180. Not to eat non-kosher animals Lev. 11:4
181. Not to eat non-kosher fowl Lev. 11:13
182. Not to eat non-kosher fish Lev. 11:11
183. Not to eat non-kosher flying insects Deut. 14:19
184. Not to eat non-kosher creatures that crawl on land Lev. 11:41
185. Not to eat non-kosher maggots Lev. 11:44
186. Not to eat worms found in fruit on the ground Lev. 11:42
187. Not to eat creatures that live in water other than fish Lev. 11:43
188. Not to eat the meat of an animal that died without ritual slaughter Deut. 14:21

189. Not to benefit from an ox condemned to be stoned Ex. 21:28
190. Not to eat meat of an animal that was mortally wounded Ex. 22:30
191. Not to eat a limb torn off a living creature Deut. 12:23
192. Not to eat blood Lev. 3:17
193. Not to eat certain fats of clean animals Lev. 3:17
194. Not to eat the sinew of the thigh Gen. 32:33
195. Not to eat meat and milk cooked together Ex. 23:19
196. Not to cook meat and milk together Ex. 34:26
197. Not to eat bread from new grain before the Omer Lev. 23:14
198. Not to eat parched grains from new grain before the Omer Lev. 23:14
199. Not to eat ripened grains from new grain before the Omer Lev. 23:14
200. Not to eat fruit of a tree during its first three years Lev. 19:23
201. Not to eat diverse seeds planted in a vineyard Deut. 22:9
202. Not to eat untithed fruits Lev. 22:15
203. Not to drink wine poured in service to idols Deut. 32:38
204. To ritually slaughter an animal before eating it Deut. 12:21
205. Not to slaughter an animal and its offspring on the same day Lev. 22:28
206. To cover the blood (of a slaughtered beast or fowl) with earth Lev. 17:13
207. Not to take the mother bird from her children Deut. 22:6
208. To release the mother bird if she was taken from the nest Deut. 22:7
209. Not to swear falsely in God's Name Lev. 19:12
210. Not to take God's Name in vain Ex. 20:7
211. Not to deny possession of something entrusted to you Lev. 19:11
212. Not to swear in denial of a monetary claim Lev. 19:11
213. To swear in God's Name to confirm the truth when deemed necessary by court Deut. 10:20

- 214.To fulfill what was uttered and to do what was avowed Deut. 23:24
- 215.Not to break oaths or vows Num. 30:3
- 216.For oaths and vows annulled, there are the laws of annulling vows explicit in the Torah Num. 30:3
- 217.The Nazir must let his hair grow Num. 6:5
- 218.He must not cut his hair Num. 6:5
- 219.He must not drink wine, wine mixtures, or wine vinegar Num. 6:3
- 220.He must not eat fresh grapes Num. 6:3
- 221.He must not eat raisins Num. 6:3
- 222.He must not eat grape seeds Num. 6:4
- 223.He must not eat grape skins Num. 6:4
- 224.He must not be under the same roof as a corpse Num. 6:6
- 225.He must not come into contact with the dead Num. 6:7
- 226.He must shave after bringing sacrifices upon completion of his Nazirite period Num. 6:9
- 227.To estimate the value of people as determined by the Torah Lev. 27:2
- 228.To estimate the value of consecrated animals Lev. 27:12-13
- 229.To estimate the value of consecrated houses Lev. 27:14
- 230.To estimate the value of consecrated fields Lev. 27:16
- 231.Carry out the laws of interdicting possessions (cherem) Lev. 27:28
- 232.Not to sell the cherem Lev. 27:28
- 233.Not to redeem the cherem Lev. 27:28
- 234.Not to plant diverse seeds together Lev. 19:19
- 235.Not to plant grains or greens in a vineyard Deut. 22:9
- 236.Not to crossbreed animals Lev. 19:19
- 237.Not to work different animals together Deut. 22:10
- 238.Not to wear shatnez, a cloth woven of wool and linen Deut. 22:11

239. To leave a corner of the field uncut for the poor Lev. 19:10
240. Not to reap that corner Lev. 19:9
241. To leave gleanings Lev. 19:9
242. Not to gather the gleanings Lev. 19:9
243. To leave the gleanings of a vineyard Lev. 19:10
244. Not to gather the gleanings of a vineyard Lev. 19:10
245. To leave the unformed clusters of grapes Lev. 19:10
246. Not to pick the unformed clusters of grapes Lev. 19:10
247. To leave the forgotten sheaves in the field Deut. 24:19
248. Not to retrieve them Deut. 24:19
249. To separate the tithe for the poor Deut. 14:28
250. To give charity Deut. 15:8
251. Not to withhold charity from the poor Deut. 15:7
252. To set aside Terumah Gedolah (tithe for the Kohen) Deut. 18:4
253. The Levite must set aside a tenth of his tithe Num. 18:26
254. Not to preface one tithe to the next, but separate them in their proper order  
Ex. 22:28
255. A non-Kohen must not eat Terumah Lev. 22:10
256. A hired worker or a Jewish bondsman of a Kohen must not eat Terumah  
Lev. 22:10
257. An uncircumcised Kohen must not eat Terumah Ex. 12:48
258. An impure Kohen must not eat Terumah Lev. 22:4
259. A chalalah must not eat Terumah Lev. 22:12
260. To set aside Ma'aser (tithe) each planting year and give it to a Levite Num.  
18:24
261. To set aside the second tithe (Ma'aser Sheni) Deut. 14:22
262. Not to spend its redemption money on anything but food, drink, or ointment  
Deut. 26:14

263. Not to eat Ma'aser Sheni while impure Deut. 26:14
264. A mourner on the first day after death must not eat Ma'aser Sheni Deut. 26:14
265. Not to eat Ma'aser Sheni grains outside Jerusalem Deut. 12:17
266. Not to eat Ma'aser Sheni wine products outside Jerusalem Deut. 12:17
267. Not to eat Ma'aser Sheni oil outside Jerusalem Deut. 12:17
268. The fourth year crops must be totally for holy purposes like Ma'aser Sheni Lev. 19:24
269. To read the confession of tithes every fourth and seventh year Deut. 26:13
270. To set aside the first fruits and bring them to the Temple Ex. 23:19
271. The Kohanim must not eat the first fruits outside Jerusalem Deut. 12:17
272. To read the Torah portion pertaining to their presentation Deut. 26:5
273. To set aside a portion of dough for a Kohen Num. 15:20
274. To give the shoulder, two cheeks, and stomach of slaughtered animals to a Kohen Deut. 18:3
275. To give the first sheering of sheep to a Kohen Deut. 18:4
276. To redeem the firstborn sons and give the money to a Kohen Num. 18:15
277. To redeem the firstborn donkey by giving a lamb to a Kohen Ex. 13:13
278. To break the neck of the donkey if the owner does not intend to redeem it Ex. 13:13
279. To rest the land during the seventh year by not doing any work which enhances growth Ex. 34:21
280. Not to work the land during the seventh year Lev. 25:4
281. Not to work with trees to produce fruit during that year Lev. 25:4
282. Not to reap crops that grow wild that year in the normal manner Lev. 25:5
283. Not to gather grapes which grow wild that year in the normal way Lev. 25:5
284. To leave free all produce which grew in that year Ex. 23:11
285. To release all loans during the seventh year Deut. 15:2



286. Not to pressure or claim from the borrower Deut. 15:2
287. Not to refrain from lending immediately before the release of the loans for fear of monetary loss Deut. 15:9
288. The Sanhedrin must count seven groups of seven years Lev. 25:8
289. The Sanhedrin must sanctify the fiftieth year Lev. 25:10
290. To blow the Shofar on the tenth of Tishrei to free the slaves Lev. 25:9
291. Not to work the soil during the fiftieth year ( Jubilee ) Lev. 25:11
292. Not to reap in the normal manner that which grows wild in the fiftieth year Lev. 25:11
293. Not to pick grapes which grew wild in the normal manner in the fiftieth year Lev. 25:11
294. Carry out the laws of sold family properties Lev. 25:24
295. Not to sell the land in Israel indefinitely Lev. 25:23
296. Carry out the laws of houses in walled cities Lev. 25:29
297. The Tribe of Levi must not be given a portion of the land in Israel, rather they are given cities to dwell in Deut. 18:1
298. The Levites must not take a share in the spoils of war Deut. 18:1
299. To give the Levites cities to inhabit and their surrounding fields Num. 35:2
300. Not to sell the fields but they shall remain the Levites' before and after the Jubilee year Lev. 25:34
301. To build a Sanctuary Ex. 25:8
302. Not to build the altar with stones hewn by metal Ex. 20:23
303. Not to climb steps to the altar Ex. 20:26
304. To show reverence to the Temple Lev. 19:30
305. To guard the Temple area Num. 18:2
306. Not to leave the Temple unguarded Num. 18:5
307. To prepare the anointing oil Ex. 30:31
308. Not to reproduce the anointing oil Ex. 30:32

309. Not to anoint with anointing oil Ex. 30:32
310. Not to reproduce the incense formula Ex. 30:37
311. Not to burn anything on the Golden Altar besides incense Ex. 30:9
312. The Levites must transport the ark on their shoulders Num. 7:9
313. Not to remove the staves from the ark Ex. 25:15
314. The Levites must work in the Temple Num. 18:23
315. No Levite must do another's work of either a Kohen or a Levite Num. 18:3
316. To dedicate the Kohen for service Lev. 21:8
317. The kohanic work shifts must be equal during holidays Deut. 18:6-8
318. The Kohanim must wear their priestly garments during service Ex. 28:2
319. Not to tear the priestly garments Ex. 28:32
320. The breastplate must not be loosened from the Eford Ex. 28:28
321. A Kohen must not enter the Temple intoxicated Lev. 10:9
322. A Kohen must not enter the Temple with long hair Lev. 10:6
323. A Kohen must not enter the Temple with torn clothes Lev. 10:6
324. A Kohen must not enter the Temple indiscriminately Lev. 16:2
325. A Kohen must not leave the Temple during service Lev. 10:7
326. To send the impure from the Temple Num. 5:2
327. Impure people must not enter the Temple Num. 5:3
328. Impure people must not enter the Temple Mount area Deut. 23:11
329. Impure Kohanim must not do service in the temple Lev. 22:2
330. An impure Kohen, following immersion, must wait until after sundown before returning to service Lev. 22:7
331. A Kohen must wash his hands and feet before service Ex. 30:19
332. A Kohen with a physical blemish must not enter the sanctuary or approach the altar Lev. 21:23
333. A Kohen with a physical blemish must not serve Lev. 21:17

334. A Kohen with a temporary blemish must not serve Lev. 21:17
335. One who is not a Kohen must not serve Num. 18:4
336. To offer only unblemished animals Lev. 22:21
337. Not to dedicate a blemished animal for the altar Lev. 22:20
338. Not to slaughter it Lev. 22:22
339. Not to sprinkle its blood Lev. 22:24
340. Not to burn its fat Lev. 22:22
341. Not to offer a temporarily blemished animal Deut. 17:1
342. Not to sacrifice blemished animals even if offered by non-Jews Lev. 22:25
343. Not to inflict wounds upon dedicated animals Lev. 22:21
344. To redeem dedicated animals which have become disqualified Deut. 12:15
345. To offer only animals which are at least eight days old Lev. 22:27
346. Not to offer animals bought with the wages of a harlot or the animal exchanged for a dog Deut. 23:19
347. Not to burn honey or yeast on the altar Lev. 2:11
348. To salt all sacrifices Lev. 2:13
349. Not to omit the salt from sacrifices Lev. 2:13
350. Carry out the procedure of the burnt offering as prescribed in the Torah Lev. 1:3
351. Not to eat its meat Deut. 12:17
352. Carry out the procedure of the sin offering Lev. 6:18
353. Not to eat the meat of the inner sin offering Lev. 6:23
354. Not to decapitate a fowl brought as a sin offering Lev. 5:8
355. Carry out the procedure of the guilt offering Lev. 7:1
356. The Kohanim must eat the sacrificial meat in the Temple Ex. 29:33
357. The Kohanim must not eat the meat outside the Temple courtyard Deut. 12:17

358. A non-Kohen must not eat sacrificial meat Ex. 29:33
359. To follow the procedure of the peace offering Lev. 7:11
360. Not to eat the meat of minor sacrifices before sprinkling the blood Deut. 12:17
361. To bring meal offerings as prescribed in the Torah Lev. 2:1
362. Not to put oil on the meal offerings of wrongdoers Lev. 5:11
363. Not to put frankincense on the meal offerings of wrongdoers Lev. 3:11
364. Not to eat the meal offering of the High Priest Lev. 6:16
365. Not to bake a meal offering as leavened bread Lev. 6:10
366. The Kohanim must eat the remains of the meal offerings Lev. 6:9
367. To bring all vowed and freewill offerings to the Temple on the first subsequent festival Deut. 12:5-6
368. Not to withhold payment incurred by any vow Deut. 23:22
369. To offer all sacrifices in the Temple Deut. 12:11
370. To bring all sacrifices from outside Israel to the Temple Deut. 12:26
371. Not to slaughter sacrifices outside the courtyard Lev. 17:4
372. Not to offer any sacrifices outside the courtyard Deut. 12:13
373. To offer two lambs every day Num. 28:3
374. To light a fire on the altar every day Lev. 6:6
375. Not to extinguish this fire Lev. 6:6
376. To remove the ashes from the altar every day Lev. 6:3
377. To burn incense every day Ex. 30:7
378. To light the Menorah every day Ex. 27:21
379. The Kohen Gadol must bring a meal offering every day Lev. 6:13
380. To bring two additional lambs as burnt offerings on Shabbat Num 28:9
381. To make the show bread Ex. 25:30

- 382.To bring additional offerings on the New Month ("Rosh Chodesh") Num. 28:11
- 383.To bring additional offerings on Passover Num. 28:19
- 384.To offer the wave offering from the meal of the new wheat Lev. 23:10
- 385.Each man must count the Omer - seven weeks from the day the new wheat offering was brought Lev. 23:15
- 386.To bring additional offerings on Shavuot Num. 28:26
- 387.To bring two leaves to accompany the above sacrifice Lev. 23:17
- 388.To bring additional offerings on Rosh Hashana Num. 29:2
- 389.To bring additional offerings on Yom Kippur Num. 29:8
- 390.To bring additional offerings on Sukkot Num. 29:13
- 391.To bring additional offerings on Shmini Atzeret Num. 29:35
- 392.Not to eat sacrifices which have become unfit or blemished Deut. 14
- 393.Not to eat from sacrifices offered with improper intentions Lev. 7:18
- 394.Not to leave sacrifices past the time allowed for eating them Lev. 22:30
- 395.Not to eat from that which was left over Lev. 19:8
- 396.Not to eat from sacrifices which became impure Lev. 7:19
- 397.An impure person must not eat from sacrifices Lev. 7:20
- 398.To burn the leftover sacrifices Lev. 7:17
- 399.To burn all impure sacrifices Lev. 7:19
- 400.To follow the procedure of Yom Kippur in the sequence prescribed in Parshat "Acharei Mot" (After the death of Aaron's sons...) Lev. 16:3
- 401.One who profaned property must repay what he profaned plus a fifth and bring a sacrifice Lev. 5:16
- 402.Not to work consecrated animals Deut. 15:19
- 403.Not to shear the fleece of consecrated animals Deut. 15:19
- 404.To slaughter the paschal sacrifice at the specified time Ex. 12:6
- 405.Not to slaughter it while in possession of leaven Ex. 23:18

406. Not to leave the fat overnight Ex. 23:18
407. To slaughter the second Paschal Lamb Num. 9:11
408. To eat the Paschal Lamb with matzah and Marror on the night of the 14th of Nissan Ex. 12:8
409. To eat the second Paschal Lamb on the night of the 15th of Iyar Num. 9:11
410. Not to eat the paschal meat raw or boiled Ex. 12:9
411. Not to take the paschal meat from the confines of the group Ex. 12:46
412. An apostate must not eat from it Ex. 12:43
413. A permanent or temporary hired worker must not eat from it Ex. 12:45
414. An uncircumcised male must not eat from it Ex. 12:48
415. Not to break any bones from the paschal offering Ex. 12:46
416. Not to break any bones from the second paschal offering Num. 9:12
417. Not to leave any meat from the paschal offering over until morning Ex. 12:10
418. Not to leave the second paschal meat over until morning Num. 9:12
419. Not to leave the meat of the holiday offering of the 14th until the 16th Deut. 16:4
420. To be seen at the Temple on Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot Deut. 16:16
421. To celebrate on these three Festivals (bring a peace offering) Ex. 23:14
422. To rejoice on these three Festivals (bring a peace offering) Deut. 16:14
423. Not to appear at the Temple without offerings Deut. 16:16
424. Not to refrain from rejoicing with, and giving gifts to, the Levites Deut. 12:19
425. To assemble all the people on the Sukkot following the seventh year Deut. 31:12
426. To set aside the firstborn animals Ex. 13:12
427. The Kohanim must not eat unblemished firstborn animals outside Jerusalem Deut. 12:17
428. Not to redeem the firstborn Num. 18:17

429. Separate the tithe from animals Lev. 27:32
430. Not to redeem the tithe Lev. 27:33
431. Every person must bring a sin offering for his transgression Lev. 4:27
432. Bring an asham talui when uncertain of guilt Lev. 5:17-18
433. Bring an asham vadai when guilt is ascertained Lev. 5:25
434. Bring an olah v'yored offering (if the person is wealthy, an animal; if poor, a bird or meal offering) Lev. 5:7-11
435. The Sanhedrin must bring an offering when it rules in error Lev. 4:13
436. A woman who had a running issue must bring an offering after she goes to the Mikveh Lev. 15:28-29
437. A woman who gave birth must bring an offering after she goes to the Mikveh Lev. 12:6
438. A man who had a running issue must bring an offering after he goes to the Mikveh Lev. 15:13-14
439. A metzora must bring an offering after going to the Mikveh Lev. 14:10
440. Not to substitute another beast for one set apart for sacrifice Lev. 27:10
441. The new animal, in addition to the substituted one, retains consecration Lev. 27:10
442. Not to change consecrated animals from one type of offering to another Lev. 27:26
443. Carry out the laws of impurity of the dead Num. 19:14
444. Carry out the procedure of the Red Heifer ("Para Aduma") Num. 19:2
445. Carry out the laws of the sprinkling water Num. 19:21
446. Rule the laws of human tzara'at as prescribed in the Torah Lev. 13:12
447. The metzora must not remove his signs of impurity Deut. 24:8
448. The metzora must not shave signs of impurity in his hair Lev. 13:33
449. The metzora must publicize his condition by tearing his garments, allowing his hair to grow and covering his lips Lev. 13:45
450. Carry out the prescribed rules for purifying the metzora Lev. 14:2

451. The metzora must shave off all his hair prior to purification Lev. 14:9
452. Carry out the laws of tzara'at of clothing Lev. 13:47
453. Carry out the laws of tzara'at of houses Lev. 13:34
454. Observe the laws of menstrual impurity Lev. 15:19
455. Observe the laws of impurity caused by childbirth Lev. 12:2
456. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a woman's running issue Lev. 15:25
457. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a man's running issue (irregular ejaculation of infected semen) Lev. 15:3
458. Observe the laws of impurity caused by a dead beast Lev. 11:39
459. Observe the laws of impurity caused by the eight shratzim - Insects Lev. 11:29
460. Observe the laws of impurity of a seminal emission (regular ejaculation, with normal semen) Lev. 15:16
461. Observe the laws of impurity concerning liquid and solid foods Lev. 11:34
462. Every impure person must immerse himself in a Mikveh to become pure Lev. 15:16
463. The court must judge the damages incurred by a goring ox Ex. 21:28
464. The court must judge the damages incurred by an animal eating Ex. 22:4
465. The court must judge the damages incurred by a pit Ex. 21:33
466. The court must judge the damages incurred by fire Ex. 22:5
467. Not to steal money stealthily Lev. 19:11
468. The court must implement punitive measures against the thief Ex. 21:37
469. Each individual must ensure that his scales and weights are accurate Lev. 19:36
470. Not to commit injustice with scales and weights Lev. 19:35
471. Not to possess inaccurate scales and weights even if they are not for use Deut. 25:13
472. Not to move a boundary marker to steal someone's property Deut. 19:14



473. Not to kidnap Ex. 20:13
474. Not to rob openly Lev. 19:13
475. Not to withhold wages or fail to repay a debt Lev. 19:13
476. Not to covet and scheme to acquire another's possession Ex. 20:14
477. Not to desire another's possession Deut. 5:18
478. Return the robbed object or its value Lev. 5:23
479. Not to ignore a lost object Deut. 22:3
480. Return the lost object Deut. 22:1
481. The court must implement laws against the one who assaults another or damages another's property Ex. 21:18
482. Not to murder Ex. 20:13
483. Not to accept monetary restitution to atone for the murderer Num. 35:31
484. The court must send the accidental murderer to a city of refuge Num. 35:25
485. Not to accept monetary restitution instead of being sent to a city of refuge Num. 35:32
486. Not to kill the murderer before he stands trial Num. 35:12
487. Save someone being pursued even by taking the life of the pursuer Deut. 25:12
488. Not to pity the pursuer Num. 35:12
489. Not to stand idly by if someone's life is in danger Lev. 19:16
490. Designate cities of refuge and prepare routes of access Deut. 19:3
491. Break the neck of a calf by the river valley following an unsolved murder Deut. 21:4
492. Not to work nor plant that river valley Deut. 21:4
493. Not to allow pitfalls and obstacles to remain on your property Deut. 22:8
494. Make a guard rail around flat roofs Deut. 22:8
495. Not to put a stumbling block before a blind man (nor give harmful advice) (Lifnei iver) Lev. 19:14

- 496.Help another remove the load from a beast which can no longer carry it Ex. 23:5
- 497.Help others load their beast Deut. 22:4
- 498.Not to leave others distraught with their burdens (but to help either load or unload) Deut. 22:4
- 499.Buy and sell according to Torah law Lev. 25:14
- 500.Not to overcharge or underpay for an article Lev. 25:14
- 501.Not to insult or harm anybody with words Lev. 25:17
- 502.Not to cheat a sincere convert monetarily Ex. 22:20
- 503.Not to insult or harm a sincere convert with words Ex. 22:20
- 504.Purchase a Hebrew slave in accordance with the prescribed laws Ex. 21:2
- 505.Not to sell him as a slave is sold Lev. 25:42
- 506.Not to work him oppressively Lev. 25:43
- 507.Not to allow a non-Jew to work him oppressively Lev. 25:53
- 508.Not to have him do menial slave labor Lev. 25:39
- 509.Give him gifts when he goes free Deut. 15:14
- 510.Not to send him away empty-handed Deut. 15:13
- 511.Redeem Jewish maidservants Ex. 21:8
- 512.Betroth the Jewish maidservant Ex. 21:8
- 513.The master must not sell his maidservant Ex. 21:8
- 514.Canaanite slaves must work forever unless injured in one of their limbs Lev. 25:46
- 515.Not to extradite a slave who fled to (Biblical) Israel Deut. 23:16
- 516.Not to wrong a slave who has come to Israel for refuge Deut. 23:16
- 517.The courts must carry out the laws of a hired worker and hired guard Ex. 22:9
- 518.Pay wages on the day they were earned Deut. 24:15
- 519.Not to delay payment of wages past the agreed time Lev. 19:13

520. The hired worker may eat from the unharvested crops where he works Deut. 23:25
521. The worker must not eat while on hired time Deut. 23:26
522. The worker must not take more than he can eat Deut. 23:25
523. Not to muzzle an ox while plowing Deut. 25:4
524. The courts must carry out the laws of a borrower Ex. 22:13
525. The courts must carry out the laws of an unpaid guard Ex. 22:6
526. Lend to the poor and destitute Ex. 22:24
527. Not to press them for payment if you know they don't have it Ex. 22:24
528. Press the idolater for payment Deut. 15:3
529. The creditor must not forcibly take collateral Deut. 24:10
530. Return the collateral to the debtor when needed Deut. 24:13
531. Not to delay its return when needed Deut. 24:12
532. Not to demand collateral from a widow Deut. 24:17
533. Not to demand as collateral utensils needed for preparing food Deut. 24:6
534. Not to lend with interest Lev. 25:37
535. Not to borrow with interest Deut. 23:20
536. Not to intermediate in an interest loan, guarantee, witness, or write the promissory note Ex. 22:24
537. Lend to and borrow from idolaters with interest Deut. 23:21
538. The courts must carry out the laws of the plaintiff, admitter, or denier Ex. 22:8
539. Carry out the laws of the order of inheritance Num. 27:8
540. Appoint judges Deut. 16:18
541. Not to appoint judges who are not familiar with judicial procedure Deut. 1:17
542. Decide by majority in case of disagreement Ex. 23:2

543. The court must not execute through a majority of one; at least a majority of two is required Ex. 23:2
544. A judge who presented an acquittal plea must not present an argument for conviction in capital cases Deut. 23:2
545. The courts must carry out the death penalty of stoning Deut. 22:24
546. The courts must carry out the death penalty of burning Lev. 20:14
547. The courts must carry out the death penalty of the sword Ex. 21:20
548. The courts must carry out the death penalty of strangulation Lev. 20:10
549. The courts must hang those stoned for blasphemy or idolatry Deut. 21:22
550. Bury the executed on the day they are killed Deut. 21:23
551. Not to delay burial overnight Deut. 21:23
552. The court must not let the sorcerer live Ex. 22:17
553. The court must give lashes to the wrongdoer Ex. 25:2
554. The court must not exceed the prescribed number of lashes Deut. 25:3
555. The court must not kill anybody on circumstantial evidence Ex. 23:7
556. The court must not punish anybody who was forced to do a crime Deut. 22:26
557. A judge must not pity the murderer or assaulter at the trial Deut. 19:13
558. A judge must not have mercy on the poor man at the trial Lev. 19:15
559. A judge must not respect the great man at the trial Lev. 19:15
560. A judge must not decide unjustly the case of the habitual transgressor Ex. 23:6
561. A judge must not pervert justice Lev. 19:15
562. A judge must not pervert a case involving a convert or orphan Deut. 24:17
563. Judge righteously Lev. 19:15
564. The judge must not fear a violent man in judgment Deut. 1:17
565. Judges must not accept bribes Ex. 23:8
566. Judges must not accept testimony unless both parties are present Ex. 23:1

567. Not to curse judges Ex. 22:27
568. Not to curse the head of state or leader of the Sanhedrin Ex. 22:27
569. Not to curse any upstanding Jew Lev. 19:14
570. Anybody who knows evidence must testify in court Lev. 5:1
571. Carefully interrogate the witness Deut. 13:15
572. A witness must not serve as a judge in capital crimes Deut. 19:17
573. Not to accept testimony from a lone witness Deut. 19:15
574. Transgressors must not testify Ex. 23:1
575. Relatives of the litigants must not testify Deut. 24:16
576. Not to testify falsely Ex. 20:13
577. Punish the false witnesses as they tried to punish the defendant Deut. 19:19
578. Act according to the ruling of the Sanhedrin Deut. 17:11
579. Not to deviate from the word of the Sanhedrin Deut. 17:11
580. Not to add to the Torah commandments or their oral explanations Deut. 13:1
581. Not to diminish from the Torah any commandments, in whole or in part Deut. 13:1
582. Not to curse your father and mother Ex. 21:17
583. Not to strike your father and mother Ex. 21:15
584. Respect your father or mother Ex. 20:12
585. Fear your father or mother Lev. 19:3
586. Not to be a rebellious son Deut. 21:18
587. Mourn for relatives Lev. 10:19
588. The High Priest must not defile himself for any relative Lev. 21:11
589. The High Priest must not enter under the same roof as a corpse Lev. 21:11
590. A Kohen must not defile himself for anyone except relatives Lev. 21:1
591. Appoint a king from Israel Deut. 17:15

592. Not to appoint a convert Deut. 17:15
593. The king must not have too many wives Deut. 17:17
594. The king must not have too many horses Deut. 17:16
595. The king must not have too much silver and gold Deut. 17:17
596. Destroy the seven Canaanite nations Deut. 20:17
597. Not to let any of them remain alive Deut. 20:16
598. Wipe out the descendants of Amalek Deut. 25:19
599. Remember what Amalek did to the Jewish people Deut. 25:17
600. Not to forget Amalek's atrocities and ambush on our journey from Egypt in the desert Deut. 25:19
601. Not to dwell permanently in Egypt Deut. 17:16
602. Offer peace terms to the inhabitants of a city while holding siege, and treat them according to the Torah if they accept the terms Deut. 20:10
603. Not to offer peace to Ammon and Moab while besieging them Deut. 23:7
604. Not to destroy fruit trees even during the siege Deut. 20:19
605. Prepare latrines outside the camps Deut. 23:13
606. Prepare a shovel for each soldier to dig with Deut. 23:14
607. Appoint a priest to speak with the soldiers during the war Deut. 20:2
608. He who has taken a wife, built a new home, or planted a vineyard is given a year to rejoice with his possessions Deut. 24:5
609. Not to demand from the above any involvement, communal or military Deut. 24:5
610. Not to panic and retreat during battle Deut. 20:3
611. Keep the laws of the captive woman Deut. 21:11
612. Not to sell her into slavery Deut. 21:14
613. Not to retain her for servitude after having relations with her Deut. 21:14

## **Appendix 2 – Important Prayers**

### **Kabbalat Shabbat** (Receiving the Sabbath)

#### **Kindling the Sabbath Lights**

(generally done by the wife of the head of the household, or any woman, though men may as well)

***Bor-okh ah-tah Adonai El-oh-hay-nu Meh-lech hah-oh-lahm  
Ah-shair kid-ah-shah-noo bah-mits-vah-tov vits-see-vah-noo  
lah-had-leek-nair shel Shabbat.***

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,  
Who has sanctified us by Your commandments and has commanded us  
to kindle the Sabbath lights.

#### **Baruchot HaMotzi v'Kiddush**

(Blessing of the Bread & Sanctification Cup – This is the way we thank God for His provision of food and drink. It is NOT Communion.)

***Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-olam  
ha-motzi lekhem min ha-eretz. Amayn.***

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe,  
Who brings forth bread from the Earth. Amen.

***(Eat a small piece of bread, at least the size of an olive)***

***Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-olam  
borey puh-ree ha-gofen. Amayn.***

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the vine. Amen.

***(Drink a glass of grape wine or grape juice)***

## **Blessing of the Children**

### **Blessing of the Sons**

***Yeh-seem-ko Elohim kay-ef-rah-yeem veh-hee-meh-na-sheh.***

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe.

### **Blessing of the Daughters**

***Yeh-si-may-kh Elohim keh-sarah,***

***riv-koh, roh-kayl veh-lay-oh.***

May God make you like Sarah,

Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.

## **Other Shabbat Prayers**

**Shema** (“Hear” – this prayer is also said every day by many)

***Shuh-mah Yees-rah-el, Adonai El-oh-hay-noo,***

***Adonai Eh-kahd.***

***Bah-rookh shem kah-vohd mahl-khoo-toh***

***lay-oh-lam vah-ed.***

Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one!  
Blessed be His Name Whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever!



**Veshamru** (And Shall Keep)

**CHORUS**

**Vih-shahm-roo veh-nay yees-rah-el et ha-shah-baht,**

**Lah-ah-soht et ha-shah-baht lah-door-oh-tahm**

**buh-reet oh-lam.**

**REPEAT CHORUS**

**Bay-nee oo-vayn veh-nay yees-rah-el oht hee**

**lay-oh-lahm, oht hee lay-oh-lahm,**

**oht hee lay-oh-lahm,**

**REPEAT CHORUS**

**Kee sheh-shet yah-meem ah-sah Adonai, ah-sah Adonai,**

**Et hah-shah-my-eem vuh-et hah-ah-rets**

**REPEAT CHORUS**

**Oo-vy-yohm hahsh-vee-ee shah-vaht vy-yee-nah-fash,**

**shah-vaht vy-yee-nah-fash, shah-vaht vy-yee-nah-fash,**

**REPEAT CHORUS**

## ENGLISH:

**The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations as an everlasting covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever, that in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested.**

**Amidah (“Standing” – Also known as the “Shemoneh Esrei” – many say this on a daily basis. This version is primarily in English)**

Eternal God, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your glory.

Praised be our God, the God of our fathers and our mothers: God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob; God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Leah and God of Rachel; great, mighty, and awesome God, God supreme. Ruler of all the living, Your ways are ways of love.

Sovereign God, how majestic is Your presence in all the earth! Blessed is the glory of God in heaven and earth.

You remember the faithfulness of our ancestors, and in love bring redemption to their children’s children for the sake of Your name.

You are our Sovereign and our Help, our Redeemer and Shield. We praise You, Adonai, Shield of Abraham, Protector of Sarah. Eternal is Your might, O God; all life is Your gift.

Great is Your power to save! With love You sustain the living, with great compassion You give life to all. You send help to the falling and healing to the sick; You bring freedom to the captive and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Who is like You, Mighty One? Who is like You, Source of Mercy? In compassion You sustain the life of Your children. We praise You, Eternal God, the Source of life.

We sanctify Your name on earth, even as all things, to the ends of time and space, proclaim Your holiness; and in the words of the prophet we say:

***Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, Adonai Tseh-vah-oht  
Meh-loh khol hah-ah-rets keh-voh-doh.***

Holy, Holy, Holy is The Lord of Hosts;  
The fullness of the whole earth is God's glory!

Source of our strength, Adonai alone is our God and our Creator, God is our ruler and our Helper, and in God's mercy Adonai reveals God in the sight of all the living: I am Adonai your God!

Adonai shall reign for ever; your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. HalleluYah!

To all generations we will make known Your greatness, and to all eternity proclaim Your holiness. Your praise, O God, shall never depart from our lips. Blessed is Adonai, the Holy God.

**Ahavat Olam** (Eternal Love)

***Ahavat Olam beit Yisrael am'cha ahavta Torah u'mitzvot,  
chukim u'mishpatim, otanu limadta. Al kein HaShem  
Elokeinu, beshach-veinu uvkumeinu nasi-ach bechukecha,  
venismach bedivrei toratecha uvmitzvotecha le-olam va'ed Ki  
heim cha-yeinu ve-orech yameinu, u'vahem neh-geh yomam  
valailah Ve-ahavat'cha al tasir mimenu le-olamim. Baruch  
atah Hashem, oheiv amo Yisrael. Amein***

With an eternal love have You loved the House of Yisrael, Your nation.  
Torah and commandments, decrees and ordinances have you taught us.  
Therefore Hashem, our God, upon our retiring and arising, we will discuss  
Your decrees and we will rejoice with the words of Your Torah and with  
Your commandments for all eternity. For they are our life and the length of  
our days and about them we will meditate day and night. May You not

remove Your love from us forever. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who loves His nation Yisrael. Amein.

**Adon Olam** (“Lord of Eternity”)

*Adon olam, asher malach, b'terem kol y'tzir nivra.  
L'et na'asah v'cheftzo kol, azai melech sh'mo nikra.  
V'acharey kichlot hakol, l'vado yimloch nora.  
V'hu haya, v'hu hoveh, v'hu yih'yeh b'tifara.  
V'hu echad, v'eyn sheni l'hamshil lo, l'hachbira.  
B'li reishit, b'li tachlit, v'lo ha'oz v'hamisrah.  
V'hu Eli, v'chai go'ali, v'tzur chevli b'et tzarah.  
V'hu nisi umanos li, m'nat kosi b'yom ekra.  
B'yado afkid ruchy b'et ishan v'a'irah.  
V'im ruchy g'viyati, Adonai li v'lo ira.*

Lord of Eternity, Who is King, He reigned before there was any universe. In the season of His pleasure, all things were created; and by His Name, the King, we call Him. After all shall cease, He will yet be a King to be feared.

For He was, for He is, and He forever more will be. He is one, and no second shares His nature or His unique unity, beginningless and unending. All strength is His, and all majesty. He is my God and my living Redeemer.

He is my Rock when sorrows prevail, my banner and my stronghold.

He is my cup when I call upon Him. Into His hand I entrust my soul when I sleep and when I wake. And though my spirit may forsake me, the Lord God is for me, and I shall never fear!

## The Priestly Benediction of Aaron (

***Yeh-var-rekh-kh-kha Adonai v'yeeshm'm'rekha.***

***Ya-ayr Adonai Pah-nahv Ay-leh-khah Vi-khoo-neh-kah.***

***Yee-sah Adonai Pah-nahv Ay-leh-khah***

***V'yasaym Lay-khah Shalom.***

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make His face to shine upon you  
and be gracious unto you,

The LORD lift up His countenance toward you  
and give you His Perfect Peace.

## **Havdalah** (“Separation” – End of Sabbath)

### **Opening Prayer for Havdalah**

Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and will not be afraid:  
for God the Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my  
salvation. Therefore with joy shall you draw water out of the wells of  
salvation. Salvation belongs to the Lord: Your blessing be upon your people,  
***selah!***

<pause & reflect>

The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge, ***selah!***

<pause & reflect>

Adonai, Master of legions, praised is the man who trusts in You. Adonai  
save! May the King answer us on the day we call. The Jews had light and  
joy and gladness and honor. So be it with us. I will lift the cup of salvation,  
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

### **Kiddush**

***Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, boray  
p'ree hagafen. Amayn.***

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

### **Prayer for the Spices**

***Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, boray  
miney b'sameem. Amayn.***

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who creates various kinds of spices.

### **Prayer for the Fire**

***Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam,  
boray morey ha'eysh. Amayn.***

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who creates the light of the fire.

### **Havdalah – The Prayer of Separation**

***Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha'mavdil  
bayn kodesh l'chol bayn or l'choshech bayn Yisrael  
la'ameem bayn yom hash-vi-i l'sheyset y'mey hama'aseh.  
Baruch atah Adonai, hamavdil bayn kodesh l'chol. Amayn.***

Blessed are you O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who makes a distinction between holy and profane, Between light and darkness, Between Israel and the nations, Between the seventh day and the six working days. Blessed are you, O Lord, Who makes a distinction between holy and profane.

### **Blessing after Extinguishing the Candle**

Our beautiful Shabbat is over. O Lord our God and God of our Fathers, Keep us safe through the week and bring us back To Your holy Shabbat with joy in our hearts To renew our connection with Your Shalom, Your perfect peace in our Messiah Yeshua. **Amayn.**

sing **Eliyahu HaNavi:**

***Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi***

***Eliyahu, Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi***

(2x)

***Bim heyrah v'yamenu yavo eleynu***

***Im mashiach ben David,***

***im mashiach ben David***

***Eliyahu hanavi, Eliyahu hatishbi Eliyahu,***

***Eliyahu, Eliyahu hagiladi***

Translation:

Elijah the Prophet, Elijah the Tishbite, Elijah, Elijah, Elijah the Gileadite. Come soon, bringing with you Messiah son of David, Messiah son of David

Say "**Shavua Tov**" (Good Week)

**Mi-Sheberakh** (“Who is a source of blessing,” Prayer of Healing)

***Mi-sheberakh avoteinu v'imoteinu, Avraham v'Sarah, Yitzhak  
v'Rivkah, Ya'akov, Rachel v'Leah hu y'varekh et***

<first name of patient>

***bar*** [son] or ***bat*** [daughter]

<patient's mother's first name>

***v'yavi aleihem refuat hanefesh u'refuat haguf yachad***

***im kol cholei amo Yisrael.***

***Barukh atah ADONAI, rofeh ha'cholim.***

***B'Shem Yeshua HaMashiach, Sar Shalom.***

***Amayn v'Amayn.***

May the One Who was a source of blessing for our ancestors, Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, & Leah, bring blessings of healing upon <patient's first name> son/daughter of <mother's name>,

a healing of body and a healing of spirit.

May those in whose care they are entrusted be gifted with wisdom and skill, and those who surround them be gifted with love and trust, openness and support in their care. And may they be healed along with all those of Israel and all others who are in need.

Blessed are You, Source of healing.

In the Name of Jesus the Messiah, Prince of Peace. Amen and Amen.

**Kaddish** (Mourning Prayer)

***Yitgadal v' yeetkadash sh'mey rabbah***

***B'almah dee v'rah kheer'utey v' yamleekh malkhutei,***

***b'chahyeykhohn, uv' yohmeykhohn, uv'chahyei d'chohl  
beyt yisrael, ba'agalah u'veez'man kareev, v'eemru: Amayn.***



***Y'hey sh'meh rabbah m'varach l'alam u'l'almey almahyah.  
Yeet'barakh, v' yeesh'tabach, v' yeetpa'ar, v' yeetrohmam, v'  
yeet'nasei, v' yeet'hadar, v' yeet'aleh, v' yeet'halal sh'mey  
d'kudshah b'reekh hoo.***

***L'eylah meen kohl beerkhatah v'sheeratah, toosh'b'chatah  
v'nechematah, da'ameeran b'al'mah, v'eemru: Amayn.***

***Y'hei shlamah rabbah meen sh'mahyah, v'chahyeem aleynu  
v'al kohl yisrael, v'eemru: Amayn.***

***Oseh shalom beem'roh'mahv, hoo ya'aseh shalom,  
aleynu v'al kohl Yisrael v'eemru, v'eemru: Amayn.***

Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He created according to His will. May He establish His Kingdom during your lifetime and during the lifetime of all the house of Israel, speedily, yes soon, and say, amen.

Let His great Name be blessed for ever and for all eternity.

Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled and honored, magnified and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though He is high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and songs which are uttered in the world, and say, amen.

May the prayers and supplications of all Israel be accepted by our Father Who is in heaven, and say, amen.

May there be peace in the heavenly realms, may He make peace for us and for all Israel, and say, amen.

He Who makes peace in the heavenly realms, may He make peace for us and for all Israel, and say, Amen.