

אֵמֹר

Emor/Speak Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1-24:23

Last week we talked at length about what it means to be **holy**. When יהוה (Yahwey) asks us to be **holy**, He is asking us to **separate ourselves** from anything that is **NOT holy**. That means we will have to act and do things in a certain way because **holiness is manifested through our behavior**. When we do **not keep** His commandments, we **profane the Name of Elohim**:

Vayikra 22:31 " Therefore you shall **keep My commandments, and perform them**: I *am* יהוה.³² "**You shall not profane My holy name**, but I will be regarded as **holy** among the children of Israel. I *am* יהוה **who makes you holy**,

The Hebrew word for **profane** is *chahal* (חָלַל), and it means not only to profane, but **to make common, defile, pollute, or to act against**. It appears **12 times** in our Torah reading this week, however, the **holy Name** of יהוה is used **81 times!**

We have looked at the general meaning of *chahal* (חָלַל), but it is interesting that it is also used in the context of a **dead body**:

Deuteronomy 21:1 "If *anyone* is found **slain** (*chahal* - חָלַל), lying in the field in the land which יהוה your Elohim is giving you to possess, *and* it is not known who killed him,

Death is the antithesis of life. יהוה is about **life** and **everything associated with life**. The realm of the **holy** is **distinctly different** than the world with its **imperfections and death**. However, יהוה provides a **way for holiness to operate in the world** as long as its **integrity is maintained**.

Vayikra 22:9 "They shall therefore **keep My charge**, so that they may not bear sin because of it, and die thereby because they **profane** it; I *am* יהוה who sanctifies them.

Why did יהוה set the nation of Israel apart? **Israel was to be an example** to all other nations of the existence of, the power of, the greatness of, and **the HOLINESS of יהוה**. When they lived according to His commandments, **their lives reflected His Holiness**. Their failure to maintain the covenant He made with them by keeping His commandments, **PROFANED His Name** and brought about their exile. Nevertheless, יהוה is above the weaknesses of mortals and thus will bring about the deliverance of His people **for the glory of His Name**. We call that – **RESTORATION**:

Ezekiel 39:7 "So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* **profane My holy name anymore**. Then the nations shall know that I *am* יהוה, the Holy One in Israel.

The **restoration plan** of the Almighty to **restore holiness to His Name** is laid out for us in the **festivals**. Keeping the festivals **reflects the holiness** of the Father. It is also a **connection** for us into the **realm of holiness**. The **revival of these festivals** in our world today is evidence that יהוה has once again begun to **act on behalf of His people in a prophetic way**. For hundreds of years, these festivals of Vayikra 23 have been known as “**Jewish festivals**”. Let’s take a look at **how the Bible truly describes them**:

Vayikra 23:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses, saying,² 'Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, **appointed seasons of יהוה**, which you proclaim, holy convocations, *are* these: **they are My appointed seasons**:

These feasts are declared to be “**the appointed seasons of יהוה**”. Nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures will you see these feasts that are listed here in Torah as belonging **only to the Jews**. In the book of John, **Passover** is referred to as **a Jewish feast**, because by then the Jews were **the ONLY tribe faithfully keeping the feast**. As a result of exile, **the other tribes of Israel** had been scattered into other nations where they had **lost their connection with Torah**. A handful of people from the various tribes continued to keep these special days, but **they identified themselves with the Jews**. Today **we owe a great deal of gratitude to the Jews** for continuing to keep these feasts **in obedience to Torah** and as **a light to the nations**.

יהוה is **holy**, but **holiness** is also imputed to persons, places, objects, and **special times**. The word for **appointed seasons** (moed - מועד) comes from a root which can mean “**to betroth**”. Today these **moed** are **memorials of past acts of Elohim**, and are **also prophetic of our future**. How **heartbreaking** to the Father that these festivals that **He instituted** and **commanded for us to keep in order that we would know the entire plan of redemption** have been replaced by **man made holidays!**

Today we look at these appointments as **wedding rehearsals** where we are able to gather in **unity as the body of Messiah**. While we are away from the land we may not be able to keep them as prescribed, but gathering together and learning of them is **great training for our future wedding!**

This is the first date mentioned:

Vayikra 23:3 'Six days shall work be done, but **the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest**, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it*; *it is the Sabbath of יהוה* in all your dwellings.

Is the **Sabbath** mentioned first because it is the **most important to the Father**? The **Sabbath** is the only feast date mentioned in the **Ten Commandments**:

Exodus 20:8 "Remember the **Sabbath** day, to keep it holy.

The **Sabbath** is also **the only feast day** for which there is the **penalty of death for failure to observe**:

Exodus 31:14 'You shall keep the **Sabbath**, therefore, for *it is holy* to you. **Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death**; for whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.¹⁵ 'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to יהוה'. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.

The Sabbath is the **sign of the covenant between יהוה and His people and it is forever**:

Exodus 31:17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days יהוה made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

Yeshua said:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Therefore, if I use a little common sense....**if I love Yeshua, then I will keep the Sabbath!** Because this is such an important concept, let's delve into it further. What is the point of keeping the commandments of Torah?

Romans 10:4 For Messiah is the goal of the Torah for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This is a much better translation than you probably have in your English Bibles. This is how it is normally translated:

Romans 10:4 For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

That's like saying to someone who is engaged, "**Marriage is the end of your relationship!**"

No, the **goal of Torah** and the **goal of keeping Sabbath** (and also all the other commandments) is **coming to know and love intimately our Messiah**. The commandment says that we are to "**remember**" the **Sabbath**. What is it we are to "**remember**" about the Sabbath?

The Sabbath was created as the seventh day. It is the **only day** in the Scriptures which has **an actual name**. It is the **only day** declared to be **holy**, or set apart from the others. And it is also the **only day** of the week **created without "evening and morning"**:

Genesis 2:2 And on the seventh day Elohim ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.³ Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and **made it holy**, because in it He rested from all His work which Elohim had created and made.

Because the Sabbath was created **without evening and morning**, it is a picture of the **timelessness** of יהוה. When we keep the Sabbath, we are able to participate in His timelessness with Him. On the seventh day, it is said that Elohim **created "rest"**. Therefore, **peace, harmony, tranquility and rest** are part of His **attributes**. In the words of **Yeshua**:

Matthew 11:28 "Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will give you rest**.²⁹ "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and **you will find rest for your souls**.³⁰ "For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Thus we are to **remember “to rest” on the Sabbath**. That is...to **cease from doing normal activities**, and to **seek the Author of tranquility and peace**. That is the thought behind, “**Shabbat Shalom**”! All other commandments require us to “**do**” something. Sabbath is a welcome reprieve. Here is a cute story I read recently:

A pastor was visiting a rabbi friend, when the pastor asked, “What do you believe heaven is like?” The rabbi responded, “Where the righteous dwell for eternity, one may study Torah all day long, without ever having need to stop for sleeping or eating or anything.” The pastor then asked, “And what do you believe hell will be like?” The rabbi responded, “The wicked will have to study Torah all day long, without being able to stop to rest or drink or anything.”

There are a few verses in the Apostolic Scriptures that some will use **to attempt to disprove the importance of Sabbath** (and other feast days):

Colossians 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,¹⁷ which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Messiah.

Friend, these words were penned because **some were judging former Gentile believers for keeping Sabbaths** and also the other feasts! Paul was encouraging these new believers **to keep them!** Doesn't that sound like a good word for us today?!!

The **seventh day Sabbaths** were therefore given by יהוה to His people as a **gift**. Vayikra 23 continues on with the rest of the feasts which are intended to be a **picture of the steps of redemption**, not only of the **individual** but also of the **unified body** which we know as the **Bride of Messiah**. Every one of them, and every detail of them **points to Yeshua**. The **spring feast** days point to **His first coming**. The **fall feast days** point to **His second coming** and on into **eternity**. There is not time to look at them all. Instead we will hop over them all and land on the **8th Day** which follows the **seven day Feast of Tabernacles**:

Vayikra 23:33 Then יהוה spoke to Moses, saying,³⁴ "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to יהוה'.³⁵ 'On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it*.³⁶ 'For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to יהוה. **On the eighth day** you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to יהוה. It is a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it*.

The **seven day Feast of Tabernacles** is a prophetic picture of the **7th millennium** when King Yeshua will reign on earth from His headquarters in Jerusalem. He will have defeated all of His enemies, and peace will reign on the earth. After that comes **the 8th Day**, also known as **Shemini Atzeret**.

Shemini Atzeret:

- **Eight** (Shemini) is the Biblical number of **new beginnings**
- **Eight** points to what happens **after man's 7,000 years** on this earth, which we refer to as **eternity**
- Pictures the **New Heavens and the New Earth** (Revelation 21 & 22)
- **Atzeret** is derived from **atzar**, meaning “**to collect or to store**”

- **8th Day** purpose – **to recap** and to **store** in our remembrance **everything we experienced** (during the Feast of Tabernacles) in order **to retain the spiritual elevation** we have achieved
- What **digestion** is to **eating**, the **8th Day** is to the **Feast of Tabernacles**
- This day is **Messiah's desire** for us **to remain behind with Him for yet one more day** (i.e. **eternity**)

The book of **Numbers** gives more details about the **offerings** made during the **Feast of Tabernacles** and the **8th Day Feast**. During the **Feast of Tabernacles**, **70 bulls** are sacrificed. On **Shemini Atzeret**, only **1 bull** is sacrificed. Why? **Seventy** is a number that represents the **nations of the world**. The **one bull** represents the **future**.... one bull represents all of the 70 nations who have **joined themselves to Israel**, the **bride** who will **enter into eternity** with her **Bridegroom on that 8th Day**. The following is a short story from the sages which reflects our **Bridegroom's desire**:

A king held a festival for seven days and invited all of the country's inhabitants (the nations of the world) to the seven days of feasting. **When the seven days of feasting were over**, he said to his friend (Israel), **"Let us now have a small meal together, just you and I."**

There is a story in the Apostolic Scriptures that happened on the **8th Day**. To give the context, we will look at another event that happened during the Feast of Tabernacles called **"The Rejoicing in the House of the Water Pouring"**. This event is not mentioned in the Torah, but it was **a tradition during the feast by the time of Yeshua**. The water pouring would occur with great **joy**. In fact the Talmud states, **"He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the water-drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life."**

The Feast of Tabernacles is actually the only feast where יהוה **commands us to be joy filled**:

Deuteronomy 16:13 "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. ¹⁴ "And **you shall rejoice** in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* within your gates. ¹⁵ "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to יהוה your Elohim in the place which יהוה chooses, because יהוה your Elohim will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, **so that you surely rejoice**."

The following description of **the water pouring ceremony** is a condensed and paraphrased version (some comments added) of what **Eddie Chumney** has written about in his book, **"The Seven Festivals of the Messiah:"**

During the water pouring ceremony, **waters were drawn** from the **Pool of Siloam**. This **water** was referred to as the **"waters of salvation (Yeshua)"**. The celebration was held every day of the Feast, with the exception of Sabbath and the first day. To perform the ceremony, **the priests were divided into three divisions**:

Division One – the priests on duty in the Temple who would **slay the sacrifices** as instructed in Numbers 29.

Division Two – these priests would go out to a valley where they would **cut willows**. The willows had to be **25 feet in length (wow!)**. Then they would **form a line**, each holding a willow...about 25 to 30 feet apart which would allow room for **swinging the willows**. They would form **several rows** like this leading from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple. When the signal was given, the priests would step to the side with their left foot and then their right, **swinging the willows back and forth**.

Division Three – these priests, **headed by the High Priest**, went down to the **Pool of Siloam** (John 9:7) where the High Priest had a golden vase and would draw the water known as **living waters (mayim chayim)**. His assistant held a **silver vase containing wine**.

Now picture this beautiful scene **during the days of Yeshua**. The road back to the Temple would be **filled with pilgrims** who were **in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast**. As the priest made their way back to the Temple, the second division priests also began their march back to the Temple **swishing their willows in unison**. Remember that the word for **spirit (רוּחַ)** in Hebrew means both **spirit and wind**. Thus it is an awesome picture of **the Spirit coming upon the city of Jerusalem**.

When the priests reached the gate, a man would begin to **play the flute**. He was called “**the pierced one**” and was **another picture of the Messiah**:

Psalm 22:16 For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. **They pierced My hands and My feet;**

Zechariah 12:10 then they will look on **Me whom they pierced**. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

The **flute player** led the procession, blowing and **calling for the wind and water to enter the Temple**. The priests with the willows circled the altar of sacrifice seven times. The priests who had slain the sacrifices then ascended the altar and began to lay the sacrifices on the fires.

The High Priest and his assistant ascended the altar as all the people of Israel were gathered into the courts. They began to sing the song **Mayim**, saying “**With joy shall you draw out of the wells of salvation**” (Isaiah 12:3).

The High Priest took his vase and poured its contents on one of the corners of the altar where the horns were. There were two bowls built into the altar. Each bowl had a hole in it. **The water and the wine were poured out over the altar** as the priests who had the **willows**, started laying them against the altar, **forming a sukkah** (booth or tabernacle).

Keep this picture in mind. **Yeshua** is about to make a **move from the midst of the crowd**. He breaks into what was probably a very **quiet and intense** moment with these words:

John 7:37 On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Yeshua stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink."³⁸ **"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."**

The disciple John writes of the **controversy** that occurred **as a result**. Some wanted to **seize Yeshua**, but the Father's hand of **protection** was on Him. The Pharisees did not see how this man could possibly fit in with **their interpretation of Torah**.

Now all of this information about the water pouring ceremony has been **context** for what happens next....**on the 8th Day**:

John 8:1 But Yeshua went to the Mount of Olives.² **Now early in the morning** He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

This is **the day following the last day of the Feast of Sukkot**. It is the **8th Day...Shemini Atzeret**. Look what happens on that day:

John 8:3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him **a woman caught in adultery**. And when they had set her in the midst,⁴ they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act."⁵ "Now Moses, in the Torah, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"⁶ This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But **Yeshua stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger**, as though He did not hear.⁷ So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."⁸ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Haven't you always wondered **what Yeshua was writing in the ground**? I know there are many theories, and I'd like to throw one more out there for you. The fact that **this event follows the water pouring ceremony** of the Feast of Tabernacles is very important to keep in mind. Check out this verse:

Jeremiah 17:13 **וְיְהוָה**, the hope of Israel, **All who forsake You shall be ashamed**. "**Those who depart from Me shall be written in the earth**, because they have **forsaken יְהוָה, The fountain of living waters**."

Don't forget that just the day before, **Yeshua had declared Himself to be the "fountain of living waters"** during the water pouring ceremony. Now He finds himself confronted by **Scribes and Pharisees**...the very people who would be familiar with these words in Jeremiah. **Object lessons that pointed you back to Scripture** were a **common form of Hebraic teaching**. Almost everything Yeshua said and did came straight from the **Torah, the writings, and the prophets**. Did they leave in **shame** after watching Yeshua **write their names in the earth**? Did they understand that **they had forsaken Him, the fountain of living waters**?

Read on to see what happened next:

John 8:12 Then Yeshua spoke to them again, saying, "**I am the light of the world**. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

There were also **Menorah lighting ceremonies** that occurred during the Feast of Tabernacles. So on the day after the Feast, **after moving ceremonies concerning living waters and light**, Yeshua claimed to be **BOTH!** How revealing for those who had **eyes to see** and who could make the connection that **He was their Messiah!**

In the days of **Solomon**, the **son of David** (a term often used for **Yeshua**), a prayer was given by the King on the **8th Day during the dedication of the Temple** (2 Chronicles 7:9). Though it is described in the Scriptures as **Solomon's prayer**, I think it points to the prayer of **THE Son of David**, our King and Messiah, and **reason** for celebrating the **8th Day....Yeshua, our Messiah and King**:

1 Kings 8:56 "Blessed *be יהוה*, who has **given rest to His people Israel**, according to all that He promised. There **has not failed one word of all His good promise**, which He promised through His servant Moses.⁵⁷ "May *יהוה* our Elohim be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us,⁵⁸ "**that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers.**"⁵⁹ "And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before *יהוה*, be near *יהוה* our Elohim day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of **His people Israel, as each day may require,**"⁶⁰ "**that all the peoples of the earth may know that *יהוה* is Elohim; there is no other.**"⁶¹ "**Let your heart therefore be loyal to *יהוה* our Elohim, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."**

Amen! May it be true also in our day!

Shabbat Shalom!

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