

# Sheepfold Gleanings

## **SHEMINI ATZERET / EIGHTH DAY ASSEMBLY**

### **A Day of New Beginnings**

Deuteronomy 14:22 to 16:17

Numbers 29:35 to 30:1

1 Kings 8:54-66

Revelation 21:1 to 22:21

### **The Feast of Sukkot**

The Feast of Sukkot / Feast of Tabernacles is a seven day feast. After the seven days, one extra day is given to Israel called the eighth day, or *Shemini Atzeret* in Hebrew. We are told “The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to YHVH by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to YHVH by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work” (Leviticus 23:35-36).

**Deuteronomy 16:13-17** “Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress:”

What is produced from *our* threshing floor and *our* winepress? Isaiah 5 is called “The Song of the Vineyard.” In verse seven it says, “The vineyard of YHVH Almighty is the House of Israel (Ephraim), and the men of Judah (House of Judah) are the garden of His delight. And He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.”

As the Two Houses of Israel, we have not cared for YHVH’s vineyard as He has asked us to. This chapter in Isaiah is very graphic about how Ephraim handled the vineyard and Judah handled the land. Yeshua used Isaiah 5 as the basis for one of His parables, again bringing graphic understanding of the way the vineyard had been handled by the people with whom it had been left in charge (Matthew 21:33; Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9). On the Feast of Tabernacles we will bring our produce in from our threshing floors and our winepresses. Remember that Ruth found Boaz on the threshing floor guarding the newly harvested grain from the threshed sheaves (Ruth 3). May we be a people who have an over abundance to bring to YHVH on this wonderful feast of Ingathering of all Nations.

**Deuteronomy 16:14-17** “Be joyful at our Feast-- you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns.” We are commanded to be joyful these seven days and all those who live among us! We are not to bring up things that make us sad or entertain things that would depress us, but are commanded to be joyful in thoughts and deeds bring that to others in our midst. This is to bless us.

“For seven days celebrate the Feast to YHVH at the place YHVH will choose. For YHVH will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.

Three times a year all your men must appear before YHVH at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before YHVH empty-handed: Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way YHVH has blessed you.” Selah

### **Shemini Atzeret**

**Numbers 29:35-38** “On the eighth day hold an assembly and do no regular work. Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to YHVH, a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bull, the ram and the lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering.”

Last week we studied the Feast of Sukkot and the wedding supper of the Lamb. This week we look at the last and eighth day of this feast called Shemini Atzeret. It is interesting that the scriptures given for the readings start in Deuteronomy 14:1-19, where we are brought back to the pattern of the Tabernacle and its function. The lesson begins with clean and unclean foods. This might seem like an unusual place to start, unless we have the understanding of our identity as a royal priesthood and holy nation. It starts with knowing the difference between clean and unclean and how to avoid defilement of the Tabernacle. At the Feast of Tabernacles we should be familiar with how to walk in holiness.

### **Clean and Unclean**

Today our bodies represent the Tabernacle/Temple. That is why the scriptures for the day start with the teaching of clean and unclean. The rabbit, camel and pig (i.e. pork and bacon), shrimp, lobster, octopus and crab, as well as any meat with *blood* and *fat* are all unclean (not considered as a food in Scripture), and can defile our bodies. Participating in such consumption would cause a priest to forfeit his service in the Holy Place, as nothing defiled enters the sanctuary. We can serve *man* in a type of “outer court ministry”, but serving *YHVH* in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle is for those who obey and walk in His ways, not their own. The eighth day, Shemini Atzeret, is considered to be a day of Most Holy Place ministry (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Why is this so important? The Levitical priesthood was set up by YHVH as a type of prophetic prefiguring of a future priesthood to show us YHVH’s order and how to pursue and approach a Holy God. Today, believers who walk in Yeshua’s ways are His priesthood. Yeshua is our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, from the tribe of Judah. There is a calling on our lives. Peter describes us as a royal priesthood and a holy nation who has stumbled over the (Yeshua’s) message – given at Mount Sinai - the Law of Moses (Exodus 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:5-13; John 5:46-47). The twelve tribes are presently returning to YHVH’s ways and are no longer stumbling over the message/the gospel but are instead embracing it and walking in it. We have received the same instruction as the Children of Israel did in the wilderness. As Jacob’s inheritors it is our possession and our wedding gift. We are coming home to serve in THE Tabernacle...and the food we consume is one of the foundations of His Kingdom.

### **The Tithe**

The next reading for Shemini Atzeret is Deuteronomy 14:22-29, about tithes. Again this is one of the main foundations of the Tabernacle’s management. Without tithes/offerings there would be

no Tabernacle in the wilderness. Ultimately it was the Israelite's tithe/offering that built the Tabernacle. Tithes also maintained it and sustained those who served in it – the priests. This is true today. Without tithes there is no functioning body of Yeshua. Not bringing the full tithe causes a breakdown of YHVH's plan and a prevention of blessings in our lives – not that YHVH failed, but that we failed in not attending to what He requires of us. Once the tithe is given to Him we no longer have rule over it, as it is our *sacred portion* to Him. Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the *sacred portion* for themselves. As a result, they died and were no longer part of the assembly (Deuteronomy 26:13; Acts 5:1-11; Re'eh: [www.sheepfoldgleanings.com](http://www.sheepfold gleanings.com)).

We are told in Leviticus 23:36, “On the eighth day you shall observe a sacred occasion and bring an offering by fire to YHVH; it is a solemn gathering: you shall not work at your occupations.” The equivalent Hebrew word for “solemn gathering” is Strong's # 6161/TWOT 1675c from the root word *atsar* meaning to restrain, limit, gather, and sum up.

The sacred assembly, called in Hebrew *miqra*, designates the weekly Sabbaths and the new moons (Leviticus 23:2; Ezekiel 46:3; cf. Isaiah 66:23). However, its most usual meaning is reserved for the seven special convocal Sabbaths in the course of YHVH's Feast days. The sacred assemblies included a formal summoning of people to worship by the blast of trumpets (Numbers 10:2, 10). Physical presence was mandatory for males on the three pilgrimage feasts: Passover, Shavuot and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14,17).

The eighth day/Shemini Atzeret is to be a solemn assembly. Stone's Edition Chumesh says, “A day of restriction (a day of non-work) much like a Sabbath. It is a requirement that the pilgrims remain in Jerusalem for an extra day. YHVH is saying, ‘Make a small banquet for Me so that I can enjoy your (exclusive) company.’ This can be likened to a king who ordered his servants to make a great banquet. When it was over, he asked his dearest friends to arrange a small meal where he, the king, could enjoy their intimate company. So, too, following the offerings for the nations, YHVH longs for the company of His own nation (bride) as she lingers this one extra day.” A day is as a thousand years to YHVH. May we linger with Him a thousand years. Those who keep this extra day enter into the millennial.

**2 Peter 3:8-12** “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With YHVH a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day (Reference to the eighth day/*Shemini Atzeret*). YHVH is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of YHVH will come like a thief (*Yom Teruah*). The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare (*Yom Kippur*). Since everything will be destroyed in this way, *what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.*”

### **The Eighth Day**

What else can we glean in Scripture about the eighth day? First, in Exodus 22:30 we are told that newborn animals could not be offered up for sacrifice until they were eight days old. Second, priests did not start their service to YHVH until the eighth day, after seven days of consecration (Leviticus 9:1). Third, circumcision for a male child happened on the eighth day (Leviticus

12:3). So too we see that people with skin afflictions and bodily discharges were unclean seven days; only after this period of separation were they able to re-enter the camp on the eighth day after their status change (Mikvah cleansing) (Leviticus 14:10, 23 and Lev.15). The days of the Passover observance, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Feast of Firstfruits combine for a total of eight days. The counting of the Omer is a seven-week count from Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Shavuot, whereupon they received YHVH's teaching and instruction at Mount Sinai on the eighth week. The Feast of Tabernacles is a seven-day feast with an extra day called the eighth day, eight signifying "new beginnings".

It is believed Yeshua was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and was circumcised on Shemini Atzeret when He was eight days old. "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Yeshua, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

In 2 Chronicles 7:1-10 / 1 Kings 8:54-66 Solomon dedicated the Temple in a celebration that lasted seven days. During this week period he consecrated the middle part of the outer court and dedicated the altar. Then Israel continued their celebration, entering right into the Feast of Tabernacles the following seven days. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles they held a solemn, closing assembly (Shemini Atzeret). *On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the seventh month (the day after the eighth day) Solomon sent the people home.*

Note: All through Scripture the eighth day appears to be a solemn or formal closing of the assembly. We also see in Solomon's dedication that on the ninth day the people were sent home.

Today, man has added his own customs onto YHVH's ordinances for the celebrations, including the Feast of Tabernacles. Last week we shared some of the added pagan roots of Christianity. This week we are going to look at some of the added pagan roots of the contemporary Jewish religion.

### **The History of Rabbinic Authority**

History tells us that the father of Rabbinic Judaism, Rabbi Akiba, was born in 40 CE as "Simeon ben Kosiba." Rabbi Akiba brought in a standard that changed the way Jewish people thought and how they saw their Scriptures. This resulted in the Babylonian Talmud, a written code of Jewish laws called *halakah*.

A method of *revisionism* was developed by Rabbi Akiba, a method did not change the text but changed the way the text was perceived. It is like placing an optical lens between the reader and the text. The lens refracts and / or colors the textural image that reaches the mind and heart. Once the lens is implanted, EVERYTHING must pass through it. The one who looks through the lens thinks that everything he sees is in the text. He does not know that the lens is there. In fact, if the lens were taken away, he would think that the true image he is seeing is a gross distortion. This is the effect the Talmud had on the written Word of God.

Akiba was the one who produced the framework and the justification for a comprehensive rabbinic religion. He presented the justification for the change from Tabernacle priesthood to

rabbinic authority. He compiled and edited *man's* written authority into a work called the Talmud, a declaration of rabbinic authority called the “oral Torah”.

Akiba himself stated that the oral law was/is a fence around the written Torah. The rabbis erected a safeguard for Scriptural Law. The Torah does not sanction these rabbinic actions. A fence protects by restricting access. What it surrounds can only be seen through the fence or approached by permission of the owner. When something is fenced in, someone is fenced out. The fence both obscures Torah and keeps the people from Torah. A fence dictates ownership. The Talmud put up the fence, and then increased the height. Akiba himself said the “tradition is a fence to Torah.” So was this rabbinic system beneficial...or detrimental?

In the system Akiba erected, no one else had the right to interpret Torah, not the priests, not the prophets, not the Sadducees, not the Qaumran Covenanters, not the disciples of Yeshua, or anyone else – not even God. This was the continuing theme of rabbinic writings. Only the rabbis could give the authorized interpretation.

The Temple in Jerusalem is where the priests performed their office. Everyone was required to support – through their tithes and offerings – the ministry of the priests and Levites in the Temple. During the time preceding the Babylonian exile, the priesthood was particularly corrupt. Consequently, Jerusalem and the First Temple were destroyed, “because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests.”

With no Temple, the priests were unable to fully perform their ministry. After seventy years of Babylonian captivity, a remnant returned to the land of Israel and sought to rebuild the Temple. With the rebuilding of the Temple, and the faithful tithing of the people, the priests were able to resume their duties.

After the Hasmonians, the Romans came into the land and made Herod the Great king of Judea. The high priesthood, which had been abused for a long time, was frequently held by people who were thieves, rather than given to the legitimate Zadokite house.

With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE the priests were again out of their element. In seventy more years, their authority would be in the hands of the rabbis. YHVH said of a faithful priest: “True instruction was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:6-7).

The priest was the one appointed by YHVH to make decisions in regard to purity and religious law. “They are to teach My people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. In any dispute, the priests are to serve as judges and decide it according to My ordinances. They are to keep My laws and My decrees for all My appointed feasts and they are to keep My Sabbaths holy” (Ezekiel 44:23-24).

YHVH rebuked Jerusalem because, “Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and

they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (Ezekiel 22:26). These were priestly functions.

After the destruction of the second Temple another change put the rabbis in the place of the priests. Akiba ruled that the tithe did not have to be brought in to the temple and grain was free from tithes (Mish. Ma’aserot 3:5, Sheni 4:8). These interpretations effectually abolished the whole Biblical system of tithes (*kilaim*), ultimately eliminating the livelihood of the priests and removing the priests as a competitor for authority. In this way, Akiba was able to firmly establish his own Judaism over that of the priests – “to make the Torah what it should have been.”

Other rulings introduced by Akiba: “The Rabbis pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice after Sinai. The authority to determine what is acceptable and what is not does not rest with YHVH, but rather with the majority of the leading rabbis. The rabbis will excommunicate anyone who will not submit to their decisions.” Each of these points constitutes a radical departure from the teaching of Torah. Each is part of Akiba’s quest for a rabbinic power.

Biblical prophecy is the result of a sovereign God speaking directly to men, through a man. These anointed prophets are sent by YHVH to deliver His message in the power of the Holy Spirit. The message might be a blessing or a curse, encouragement or rebuke. It might bring forgiveness or condemnation. From Moses to Malachi, YHVH spoke to Israel through His prophets.

It is recorded in Scripture that during Yeshua’s ministry one underlying issue gave rise to irreconcilable conflict: authority. Who was authorized by YHVH to interpret the Scriptures and thereby define the life that all Israelites should live? The Talmud and the gospels both make claims of absolute authority – mutually exclusive claims.

Yeshua and the rabbis both pointed to themselves as the supreme authority. One could not accept the claims of both. That is the reason for the intensity of the conflict presented in both the gospels and the Talmud. In Matthew 23 Yeshua pronounced the seven woes on these Pharisees and teachers of the law (Mat. 23:6-8,10,13,15-16,23-25,27-33).

The rabbinic designation for Yeshua became “Yeshu.” This name was used in the early centuries, retained throughout the Middle Ages, and is still used today. It is a parody of Yeshua. The three consonants y, s, v, with which the name of Yeshu was written, are explained as being the first letters of the three words “*Yimmach sh’mo w’zikhro*” meaning “May his name and his memory be blotted out!” In the eyes of the rabbis, that was necessary for the preservation of Israel. (Ref: the Toledoth)

After the destruction of the Temple, the synagogue grew in religious importance. Increasingly, the rabbis defined that importance. When Akiba gained control, the Academy at Yavneh became the legislative body for enacting rabbinic law and for controlling the membership of the Sanhedrin. The rabbis made the law. The Sanhedrin, or Beth Din (House of Judgment), which they controlled, became the means of enforcing it.

To qualify for the Sanhedrin, a rabbi had to be, literally, a master of sorcery. In other words, he had to be a master of what the Torah expressly forbids (Deut.18:10-12; cf Git.69a; Shab.61a-61b; Sanh.17a). The members of the Sanhedrin had to be familiar not only with Jewish law and tradition, but also with many languages and sciences (Sanh. 17a) (See Reference section).

“Let no one be found among you who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to YHVH, and because of these detestable practices YHVH will drive out those nations before you” (Deuteronomy18: 10-12).

The Second Temple was destroyed at the end of the Great Revolt of 66-70 CE. It was an unsuccessful attempt by Zealots to throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire. One million Jews died from starvation and violence. Others were led away into exile and slavery. The power of the priesthood drastically dissipated. (Ref: Josephus - *The Wars of the Jews*)

The Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 CE) against Roman rule in the time of the Emperor Hadrian equaled if not surpassed any previous destructions of the First or Second Temples in numbers who were killed, starved to death, or led into exile and slavery. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were still permitted to remain in the land. Following the Bar Kokhba Rebellion, Jews were forbidden to inhabit the land of Judea. That legal prohibition and the exile it mandated lasted for eighteen centuries. The Romans changed the name of the land to Palestine to demonstrate that it would never again be a Jewish land.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt also witnessed a final, violent split between the followers of Yeshua and the followers of the rabbis. It generated great hostility on both sides. The homeless wanderings of the Jews soon became the hostile reproach and incitement of an imperial Church. The Bar Kokhba Rebellion set the stage for what became an endless procession of Jewish suffering down to, including, and beyond the Holocaust.

The disaster was further compounded by the fact that Rabbi Akiba, the father of rabbinic Judaism, had proclaimed Bar Kokhba, the leader of the rebellion, to be God’s Anointed, the Messiah. Gone (until the coming of the Messiah) were the days when Israel was ruled by kings, priests, or prophets. Instead, by the sixth century CE, it was the early rabbis and their disciples who had propelled themselves to positions of communal authority throughout the Jewish world.

Rabbi Akiba was not immediately put to death at the end of the revolt. Initially, perhaps because of his age, he was not even imprisoned. The Romans, to further eradicate the causes of rebellion, imposed laws forbidding rabbinic teaching and practice. Rabbi Akiba did not obey Hadrian’s decrees. Consequently, he was then arrested and brought to trial. After being sentenced to death, Akiba was tortured by having the flesh torn from his body with an iron comb. He recited the Shema, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One...” Even in his death, Akiba laid out the pattern for rabbinic Judaism, the pattern of Kiddush ha Shem. His suffering and death, with the Shema on his lips, became the model for all later Jewish suffering. His death, like his life and teaching, shaped the religion and the future of his people. He left a very complete legacy. The more than eighteen hundred and fifty years of Jewish history since his death have followed the pattern of Akiba’s life, a pattern of conflict and martyrdom.

Akiba did not attribute the failure, suffering, and exile to sin. Rather he believed that, “Exile makes atonement for iniquity.” For Akiba, one’s own death also brings atonement. Akiba’s many ways of atonement stood in direct opposition to the message of the gospel, which says only God can atone for the sins of man. The blood of animals only covered the sin, while the people still carried the guilt of their sins. It was only YHVH who could atone for sin and remove it and our guilt forever.

The only means of atonement is through the death and blood of Yeshua, YHVH’s own Son who took on the sins of the world and became the sacrificial (Passover) lamb (John 3:16). Our own blood could never atone for our own sins. Akiba taught that YHVH’s atonement was unnecessary. Akiba’s martyrdom came as a result of sin and a failed Bar Kokhba Revolt which he had supported. The Torah and the prophets state that these destructions came about because of our sins.

After his death, Akiba’s disciples continued to seek his counsel and instruction. Even today, he is considered the greatest of Jewish spiritual heroes. He had supported, if not initiated, a rebellion against Rome. He had declared that the leader of that rebellion was YHVH’s Anointed. He had commanded all Israel to fight under a false Messiah in a war that he knew would end in disaster. Still, no blame was cast at him. The reasons for this: 1. Akiba had laid out the principle that an error by an expert carried no personal consequences. 2. Akiba taught that the Law was not in heaven, but entrusted to the rabbis. Even if God contradicted from heaven, Akiba maintained that God was in error. 3. The Law and the Prophets spoke of exile as a terrible judgment; Akiba spoke of it as a means of atonement. 4. Akiba’s teaching was still sought because there was no other Judaism left in Israel. He had defeated them all. By various means, he had overcome the Priesthood, the Scriptures, Divine Revelation, and the disciples of Yeshua. Akiba made a fence of legal bricks around the Torah and around Israel, making the laws of the rabbis the highest authority. Whether that law was right or wrong, no one was to depart from it to the left or to the right.

There is a common denominator to Akiba’s Judaism and Bar Kokhba’s battle plan. Bar Kokhba and his men told YHVH, “Neither help us nor discourage us.” Akiba and the rabbis told YHVH, “It is not in heaven.” Their declarations are one and the same: “We will do this without You.” Simeon ben Kosiba was very instrumental in the establishment of rabbinic authority. He was also very instrumental in leading Israel into one of the greatest, if not THE greatest disaster of all Jewish history. Rabbi Akiba’s declaration of Bar Kokhba as the Messianic King was consistent with the one consuming goal of his life: to bring Israel under the authority of the rabbis. To that end, his choice of Bar Kokhba was not a mistake. More than symbolically, it was the crowning touch. Bar Kokhba was Rabbi Akiba’s Messiah.

After the final revolt that exiled the Jewish people, the new leaning center was set up in Babylon. Rabbis, called Geonim in 6-11<sup>th</sup> century, continued Rabbi Akiba’s teaching and published the oral Torah into a book called the Talmud. It was then that they decided to change the Torah reading cycle from a three year to a one year with the turn of the yearly cycle right after Feast of Tabernacles. It was decided to “add” a day of celebration right after Tabernacles, and call it Simchat Torah, rejoicing in the Torah.

Simchat Torah is celebrated on the ninth day of the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month (Tishri 23), the day King Solomon sent the people home. On Simchat Torah, all the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark, and then paraded seven times around the bema (pulpit) area, hall or street. For Kabbalists, this provided an opportunity to represent the seven aspects or emanations of YHVH (that which make tangible contact with the world). They developed a separate dance along with prayers, songs and color banners for each circling. In effect these were incantations with the spirit world, not necessarily YHVH's world.

The seventh day of Sukkot, referred to as *Hoshana Rabbah*, was originally associated with the seasonal prayers for abundant precipitation in the approaching rainy season. Over the centuries, much of the original agricultural roots became virtually obliterated and took on a more mystical approach. The mythological poem "*piyut*," a dance to the Prince of Rain who forms clouds and mists that he empties and from which he pours water, added suspicion and mysticism from the Babylonian period. This poem is still used by many today.

Because of the add-ons to YHVH's celebrations, people became veiled to the Torah and the truth about celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. With the rabbinic authority adding extra celebrations and an extra day to the feast, YHVH's real purpose and focus faded behind man's traditions.

It was during the Feast of Tabernacles, while the priests were performing the water libation service, that the people cried out "Save us!" The priests were doing it in a righteousness way, but the people knew they needed *holiness*. It was at that time Yeshua answered, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him" (Isaiah 12:3; John 7:37-38).

The last day was the day YHVH wanted us to stay and linger, reflecting on all the events that had led to this wonderful day. It is a magnanimous day (representing a thousand years) – hidden by so many of man's traditions. I don't know about you, but those thousand years with Yeshua sound more exciting than all the prayers for rain and the changing of the Torah readings combined! May we be a people who do not forget what YHVH said about His feasts or forget how He asks us to celebrate them.

As we return to our Covenant and heritage in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, may we not be caught embracing other pagan roots on the journey home. Last week we shared about Christmas and December 25. On the other hand, there is the celebration of Hanukkah that occurs during the same season. We have a Hanukkah question. Was the story of the one-day supply of recovered Temple menorah oil lasting eight days true, or was it a fabricated story from those who wrote the Talmud and not true at all? Was the victorious celebration of the Maccabees, after winning the war and dedicating the Temple, more accurately a delayed celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles? What is the true history behind Hanukkah/Dedication? Could Judah (the Jews) and Christianity have traditions behind their winter celebrations that are not scriptural but man-made? Time to get out our Scriptures to read the truth for ourselves!

**Malachi 2:5-9** "My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. True instruction

was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin. "For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction-- because he is the messenger of YHVH Almighty. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says YHVH Almighty. "So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

**Revelation 21:1-4** "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from YHVH, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of YHVH is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and YHVH himself will be with them and be their YHVH. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

**Revelation 21:5-8** "He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.' "

**Revelation 21:9-14** "One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from YHVH. It shone with the glory of YHVH, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

**Revelation 21:22-27** "I did not see a temple in the city, because YHVH and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of YHVH gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

**Revelation 22:1-3** "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of YHVH and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be

any curse. The throne of YHVH and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.”

**Revelation 22:12-16** "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Yeshua, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the assemblies. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

**Revelation 22:17-19** “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, YHVH will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, YHVH will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

Shabbat Shalom  
Carl and Julie Parker

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*Rabbi Akiba’s Messiah* by Daniel Gruber Page 245: The Nature of the Sanhedrin

4. Sanh.17a [“R.Tam queried, What is the purpose of such meaningless mental gymnastics?’ Ramo, in responsum, explains...that this statement does not refer to the meaningless capacity for intellectual gamesmanship, nor does it seek only to insure the apt of judges with an impressive grasp of a great deal of knowledge. In fact, it establishes that a measure of additional sophistication regarding the inner workings of the halakhic process, including the ability to assess the implications of nonnormative possibilities and to utilize halakhic debate to shed light on the nuances of a topic which might have some normative impact, is a necessary precondition to a judicial appointment where the stakes are so high.” Kirschenbaum, Pp. 105-106 [Tosafot, Sanh.17a; R.Moses Isserles, Reponsa of Ramo, Jerusalem, 1977, no. 107]

5. Deuteronomy 18:10-12; cf Git. 69a for rabbinic use of magical words, and Shab.61a-61b for rabbinic use of magical amulets. מַּיִן יְפֻכָּהּ יֵלֵךְ [כֵּן is the wording for “a master of sorcery” in Sanh.17a

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