

“Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean”
The Gospel Message Revealed in Leviticus 12-15

Week 27 - Tazria (She Conceives) / Metzora (Infected One)
Leviticus 12:1–15:33; 2 Kings 4:42–5:19, 7:3–20; Matthew 8:1–4, 11:2–6; Mark 9:14–15

In last week’s Torah portion “Eighth” (Shemini), God commanded the kosher laws, identifying which animals were fit for consumption. It also discussed some of the laws of ritual purity, instructing the Israelites “to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean.” Leviticus 10:10

This week’s double portion of Scripture (Tazria-Metzora) continues with the laws of ritual purity (**tahorah**) and impurity (**tumah**).

God provides Moses with the **laws of purification after childbirth**. He also gives the **laws concerning afflictions of the skin**.

The name of this week’s Scripture reading, **Tazria**, (She Conceives), is related to the Hebrew root word **zarah** (זרע), meaning seed; therefore, an alternative translation of **Tazria** is **She Bears Seed** or **Bearing Seed**, rather than **She Conceives**.

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives (bears seed) and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean [tameh] seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean.’”
Leviticus 12:1–2

These questions regarding childbirth puzzle even Jewish scholars since being fruitful and multiplying is the very first of all commandments to humankind (28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it - Genesis 1:28), and a woman giving birth to a child is fulfilling this God-given **mitzvah** (commandment).

Explanation:

Genesis 3:14-17

14 The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. 15 I will put **enmity** (being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something) between you and the woman, **and between** your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel** (Messianic Prophecy).” 16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.

. . . the serpent in Genesis 3:1 has a specific function . . .

In discovering what that function is, we find some insight embedded in the original Hebrew letters of the word, which were pictorial. The Hebrew word for serpent is **nachash** (נָחָשׁ). If we look at the original word pictures for each of these letters, we can get some insight into the serpent’s mission and purpose.

- The picture for **nun** (נ) is a seed or fish and means life or activity.
- The picture for **chet** (ח) is a fence or wall and means separation or private.
- The picture for **shin** (שׁ) is teeth and means to destroy, consume, or sharpen.

In this light form of word study, we find that **nachash** can represent the fencing in of a life for the purpose of destroying it.

By luring Eve into disobedience, the *serpent* fenced in humanity, placing us in bondage to his world, and sentencing us to separation from God forever.

. . . We are told in Jewish literature that this serpent is none other than **satan**, the adversary angel.

Although in English we tend to make Satan a proper name by capitalizing it, in Hebrew, it is usually used as a common noun throughout the Tanakh (Old Testament) to mean “adversary.”

In the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) the Greek words **satanas** (satan) and **diabolos** (devil) are used to mean the same thing. **Diabolos** means slanderer, someone who falsely accuses another to malign and destroy them. Of course, lying about God is part of satan’s strategic success as well.

The Lord has a way of removing from our lives that which we desire more than Him.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring [seed/ zera] and her offspring [seed/ zera]. He will pound your head, and you will bite his heel.” **Genesis 3:15**

God first revealed the hope for all mankind against the adversary when he promised that Eve’s seed / offspring (**zera**) would pound or crush the head of the serpent.

It might seem that offspring could mean a lot of people, such as the nation of Israel or all humankind, and that has been the great debate among Jewish scholars for centuries. But God goes on to tell the serpent that “**he** will pound your head.”

Of course, Christians believe “he” refers to a coming Messiah - Jesus.

But who did Moses and other ancient Jewish sages say “he” is?

In 1300 BC, Moses wrote about the last days, which indicates that he likely understood a final deliverance and deliverer would one day arrive. (*Genesis 49; Numbers 24:14; Deuteronomy 4:30*)

“When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice.” Deuteronomy 4:30

During the days of Jesus, a translation of Genesis 3:15 (with added commentary) was read to the people in their common language of Aramaic.

This translation, known as Targum Yonatan, tells us that on one hand **we all are in a power struggle with the adversary in choosing to do good while resisting our selfish, evil desires.**

On the other hand, it affirms that we are waiting for the coming of King **Meshiha** (Messiah in Aramaic) to heal the wounds caused by the adversary when we sin, and to win us an everlasting freedom.

In the first and second century, a Rabbinic commentary (known as a *Midrash*) clearly defines the seed as Messiah:

“Rabbi Tanchuma said, in the name of Rabbi Samuel: Eve had respect to that seed (“offspring”) which is coming from another place. And who is this? This is the King Messiah.” (Midrash Genesis Rabbah 23:5)

A millennium later, Radak also seems to point to the seed as Messiah, writing:

“As You went forth for the salvation of Your people by the hands of Meshiha, the Son of David, who shall wound satan, who is the head, the king and prince of the house of the wicked...” (Commentary on Habakkuk 3:13)

“You went out for the salvation of your people,
for the salvation of your anointed.
You crushed the head of the house of the wicked,
laying him bare from thigh to neck.” **Habakkuk 3:13**

And yet, with all this evidence pointing to a single man, the Messiah, as the seed, some Bible translations have led us toward a very different understanding of “the seed.”

Fortunately, more recent translations of the Catholic Bible correct this error. The 1997 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2nd edition) also tries to correct it, stating:

“This passage in Genesis [3:15] is called the . . . “first gospel”: the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer, of a battle between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendant of hers.” (*Par. 410*)

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Ephesians 6:12

To do away with all doubt and confusion over the identity of the seed, we can go to the apostle John who clearly tells us who the victor of the adversary is:

“He that commits sin is of the devil [diabolos]; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

<https://free.messianicbible.com/feature/messianic-prophecy-genesis-315-jewish-christian-views/>

This was the original plan of God that is now unveiled, following Adam and Eve succumbing to temptation and Breaking Covenant, with God’s promise to give the Messiah to destroy the serpent and restore the relationship between man and God in Genesis 3:15:

¹⁵ I will put *enmity* (being actively opposed or hostile to someone or something) between you and the woman, *and between* your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel** (Messianic Prophecy).

Tazria (She Conceives) - Week 27
Leviticus 12 (Exodus 12:1-20; Ezekiel 45:16-46:18; Luke 5:12-15)

Purification After Childbirth

1. Jesus fulfills through his Birth
2. Jesus fulfills in the Circumcision of the Heart

Leviticus 12:1-8

Purification After Childbirth

¹The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. ³And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. ⁴Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed. ⁵But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days.

⁶“And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a **burnt offering** (This is the sacrifice of devotion or service and was performed twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening – taken in communion with God.), and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, ⁷and he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. ⁸And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall *take two turtledoves or two pigeons*, one for a **burnt offering** and the other for a **sin offering** (for offenses against God through ignorance – an offering to restore communion with God). And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”

The **burnt offering** (sacrifice of devotion or service – performed in the morning and evening each day – taken in communion with God) and the **sin offering** (for offenses against God through ignorance – an offering to restore communion with God) that are given following childbirth are seen as a means of **transitioning from a time of isolation back into the community by first drawing close to God**. It is a special moment of thanksgiving that both the child and the mother survived the pain and risk of childbirth.

This important juncture reminds us that transitions matter; as we move from one phase to the next in our lives, we should first draw close to God with thanksgiving.

Leviticus 15

Laws About Bodily Discharges

¹³“And when **the one** with a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes. And **he shall bathe his body in fresh water** (mikvah/baptize/spiritual rebirth) **and shall be clean**. ¹⁴And on the **eighth day he shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and come before the Lord to the entrance of the tent of meeting and give them to the priest**. ¹⁵And the priest shall use them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord for his discharge.

¹⁹“When **a woman has a discharge**, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. . . . ²⁷And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and **bathe himself in water** and be unclean until the evening. ²⁸But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. ²⁹And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ³⁰And the priest shall use one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for her unclean discharge.

³¹“Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst.”

³² **This is the law** for him who has a discharge and for him who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean thereby; ³³ also for her who is unwell with her menstrual impurity, that is, for anyone, male or female, who has a discharge, and for the man who lies with a woman who is unclean.

The parallel of the purpose a woman having to mikvah/baptize and our Spiritual Rebirth: The menstruating woman honors the egg that has been shed, which will never house a human soul, as she embraces a fresh potential for life that she can now bestow unto the world. This is the magic of the woman, “mother of all life” (Genesis 3:20), as her monthly cycle represents a lesson that even the highest of priests must model -- that we can honor the death of lost opportunities but treasure the life that our new choices create **And through the birthing process, we are Baptized when the water breaks and we must move through the conversion process, which is a separation, through the narrow path, of the Old life to the New Life, which is what we Celebrate Today.**

Far from being “dirty”, the woman's cycle is of the highest purity, for it reminds us that it is the cycles, changes, and opportunities of this physical life that defines our greatest spirituality. In other words, the spiritual rebirth of going to the **mikvah/baptism** is one of refocusing on life and fresh beginnings.

In the New Testament, we see that Miriam (Mary) observed this law after the birth of Jesus.

“When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary **took Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord** (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord’), **and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: ‘a pair of doves or two young pigeons.’” Luke 2:22-24**

The “TRUE” Christmas Story:

Based on Scripture, historical facts, the Biblical calendar and Jewish tradition I would like to present the following Christmas story as a plausible way in which the events surrounding Jesus’ birth occurred.

It is Saturday night, Kislev 25, in the Jewish year 3755. It is the first night of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Light, **December 6, 6 BCE**. The angel Gabriel comes to the Virgin Mary with a message from God. She will conceive in her womb, bear a son and name him Jesus (Yashua – Joshua – “I AM SALVATION”). The Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

Mary appropriately Hanukkahs (dedicates – first use for a holy purpose) her body to be the temple of God by saying, *“Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.”*

*The Holy Spirit impregnates Mary. She now has the Word of God, eternal life and the light of men dwelling in the darkness of her womb. As it is written: In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was **life**, and the **life** was the **light** of men. And the **light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it. (John 1:1-5)*

Interestingly, on the first night of Hanukkah many Jews quote this passage of Scripture, *“In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth. And 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.**” (Genesis 1:1-3)*

Coincidentally we are reminded by the Scripture in John 10:22-39, that Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God on Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication and Light in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Forty weeks (Forty weeks is the period of human gestation) after His conception Jesus is born. It is Friday night, Elul 9, in the Jewish year 3756. This corresponds to our Gregorian calendar date of September 9, 5 BCE. It is the beginning of the weekly Sabbath. The Jewish people have a particular name for every Sabbath and they read specific passages of Scripture on those Sabbaths. The one on which Jesus is born is called KiTeitzei, **“When you go out”**, Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19:

“When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive . . .”
Deuteronomy 21:10

On that Sabbath night Jesus goes forth from the womb. And the next morning in the Temple and in every synagogue **Isaiah 54:1-10** is read. It begins this way:

“Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman,” says the LORD.

On the following Sabbath, being the eighth day Jesus is circumcised. The Jewish people call this particular Sabbath, KiTavo, **“When you enter”**, Deuteronomy 26:1-29:9 (8):

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes
“When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it . . .”
Deuteronomy 26:1

On that day Jesus entered into the Mosaic Covenant through His circumcision. And in the Temple and every synagogue the prophet **Isaiah 60:1-22** is read. It begins this way:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the LORD will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you.

And in verse six of that passage of Scripture it prophesies the coming of the Magi to see Jesus. It reads this way:

A multitude of camels will cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba will come; they will bring gold and frankincense, and will bear good news (myrrh - a sweet smelling aroma) of the praises of the LORD.

Mary waited the prescribed 40 days for her purification (Read Leviticus 12:1-4) from the blood of childbirth before presenting her son, Jesus at the Temple. It was Thursday, Ethanim (Ethanim is the seventh month of God’s calendar. It falls within our September/October time frame. The Jewish people currently call this month Tishri.) 21, of the Jewish year 3756 or our October 23, 5 BCE. The Jewish people call the day Hossana Rabba or “The Great Day of Salvation”. It is the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (In Hebrew the feast is called Sukkoth, which is translated as tent, hut, tabernacle or booth and indicates a temporary dwelling.) (Sukkoth).

by Michael Gibson, Key2Changes.com

Note: because of the Lunar (lunar is a type of Messiah) Calendar cycles every 19 years, and there is an additional month added to seven of those 19 years to accommodate for a solar year, the actual fulfillment of Jesus’ 40 week gestation, from conception during Hanukkah to birth during the reading of “When you go out” (KiTeitzei) - Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19, could have only occurred during one of the 19 years of the lunar calendar cycle. Following are the dates of those above referenced Sabbath Readings:

Jesus' Birthday (“When you go out” - Ki Teitze - Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19) 2020: Friday, August 28th to Saturday, August 29th

“When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive . . .”
Deuteronomy 21:10

Jesus' Circumcision (“When you go in” - Ki Tavo - Deuteronomy 26:1-29:9 (8)) 2020: Friday, September 4th to Saturday, September 5th

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes
“When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it . . .”
Deuteronomy 26:1

Feast of Trumpets (Jesus' Future Return Feast) 2020: Friday, September 18th to Sunday, September 20th

Feast of Atonement (Beginning of Jesus' Future Millennial Reign Feast) 2020: Sunday, September 27th to Monday, September 28th

Feast of Tabernacles (Jesus' Future Millennial Reign – 7 Day/1,000 Year Wedding Feast) 2020: Friday, October 2nd to Friday, October 9th

The 8th Day ("The Great Day of Salvation" - Jesus' Dedication in the Temple - 40 Days following His Birth – Jesus' Future Final Judgement/New Heaven and New Earth) 2020: Saturday, October 10th

Adjustments and Leap Years

A year of 12 lunar months, however, is some 11 days shorter than a solar year. In order to ensure that the various seasonally based holidays in the Jewish calendar continue to occur at the correct season, the rabbis developed a system over time that allowed them to coordinate their lunar months with the solar year by inserting **a leap month at the end of the year seven times in every 19-year cycle**. This is now **fixed in the third, sixth, eighth, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years of the cycle**. Although this is traditionally ascribed to Rabbi Hillel II in the fourth century CE, it is probable that the system in use today developed slowly during the course of the mid-to-late first millennium.

In order to further fine-tune their calculations, the rabbis determined that the months of Nisan, Sivan, Av, Tishrei, and Shevat are always 30 days long. Iyyar, Tammuz, Elul, Tevet and Adar are always 29 days long. Heshvan and Kislev are either 29 or 30 days in length. In a leap year, there are two months of Adar. **When that occurs, Adar I is 30 days long, and Adar II 29**. A short Jewish year, therefore, consists of 353 to 355 days, while a leap year varies between 383 and 385 days.

Leviticus 12:3

Purification After Childbirth

³ And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Jew Defined:

Holds that YHWH, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the god of the Israelites, delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, and gave them the Law of Moses at biblical Mount Sinai as described in the Scriptures. As well as, God being understood as the absolute one, indivisible, and incomparable being who is the ultimate cause of all existence.

Our heritage as God's Chosen People, by Faith alone, is identified in the person of Jacob, born and known as “Deceiver”, who's destiny changed when God gave him a new name, “Israel” or “one who wrestles with God and man and prevails”, during one of his darkest times of anguish in reconciling his past, and having to wrestle with God, as read in (Genesis 32:28 and 35:10).

Therefore, Jewishness is not a matter of ethnicity or genealogy, but rather spiritual heritage, acquired by faith in a one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses, and the Hebrew prophets and by a life lived in accordance with Scripture (the Law and the Prophets):

Romans 2:28-29

²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

When the Jew is circumcised on the eighth day of life, he is completely unaware of the significance of what has occurred. **But this “non-experience” is precisely what circumcision means.**

With circumcision the Jew says: I define my relationship with God not by what I think, feel or do, but by the fact of my Faith, of setting oneself apart from the things of this world (mind, soul, spirit, and flesh) for the one to come – a fact which equally applies to an infant of eight days and a sage of eighty years.

Thus, the verse says, “On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised” – the flesh needs to be circumcised, but, spiritually, the Jew is always “circumcised”.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Repentance and Forgiveness

¹ “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you, ² and **return to the Lord your God**, you and your children, and **obey his voice in all that I command you** today, **with all your heart and with all your soul, ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you** (take up, gather together, assemble, to grasp; a type of rapture – snatch you suddenly) **again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.** ⁴ *If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you*, and from there he will take you. ⁵ **And the Lord your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And he will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.** ⁶ **And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.** ⁷ And the Lord your God will put all these curses on your foes and enemies who persecuted you.

1 Corinthians 7:19

¹⁹ For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, **but keeping the commandments of God.**

Galatians 5:6

⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only **faith working through love** (“**If you love me, you will keep my commandments,**” John 14:15).

Circumcision like Marriage, is a covenant, not just a ceremony or legally binding contract.

A covenant in its simplest terms is an **agreement** or **promise** between two or more parties. The origin of the word is derived from the *meaning to divide or cut in two*. It has come to mean, “**a coming together**” which signifies a mutual undertaking between two parties each **binding themselves to fulfill obligations**. It does not in and of itself contain the idea of joint obligation. It mostly signifies an **obligation undertaken by a single person, or as the Bible identifies this “single person” - “the two individuals become one flesh”**:

i.e. Genesis 15 - God's Covenant with Abram

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.”² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”³ And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.”⁴ And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”⁵ And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”⁶ And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

⁷ And he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?”⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.¹² As the sun was going down, a **deep sleep fell on Abram**. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him.¹³ Then the Lord said to Abram, “*Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.*”¹⁴ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.¹⁵ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a **smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces**.¹⁸ **On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram**, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,²¹ the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

And following was the sign given of the above Covenant, like a wedding ring in a Marriage Covenant, it is not the Covenant, but a Sign of the Covenant agreed upon, in which, like a Wedding Ceremony, there is an Exchange of a Name and an Exchange of a Destiny for the one who acquires the New Name/Identity. Ultimately, those who, by Faith, Choose to Follow the One True God, take on the name, character, and singularity of purpose of God, to be in a Covenant Relationship of Unity with God, and the full responsibility to giving up one's own individual name, character, and purpose for the things of God:

i.e. Genesis 17 - Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him,⁴ “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,¹³ both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant.¹⁴ Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Covenant is the way that God has chosen to enter into relationship with men.

Covenants have been used since the beginning of time as a way for people to come together. For example, **friends** would pledge their **friendship** forever and enemies would make peace and become **friends**.

The key word in all these covenant agreements is **friend**. Unfortunately, our modern-day usage of the word **friend** has been corrupted. In most cases we should be using the term, “acquaintance”. The word **friend** has its root meaning of, “**to love**”. A **friend** is one who is attached to another by esteem or affection, or one that is not hostile. *The most common form of covenant that people participate in today is marriage.*

*“No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends**, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.” John 15:15*

Covenants are entered into by representatives who become functionally one and are bound together in an unbreakable agreement. They are in fact **exchanging their lives with one another**.

Covenants are formally binding agreements much like our modern-day contracts, however they differ in five primary ways:

1. A **covenant** is initiated based on the concept of **friendship**, whereas a **contract** is initiated to achieve an **agreement**.
2. A **covenant** is based on **trust** between the parties. (i.e. “I know you care for me.”) A **contract** is based on **distrust** for one another.

3. A **covenant** is based on **unlimited responsibility**. (i.e. "I will do everything in my power to bless you.") A **contract** is based on **limited liabilities**.
4. A **covenant cannot be broken** if new circumstances occur, whereas a **contract can be voided by mutual consent**.
5. A **covenant** is made **before impartial witnesses**, whereas a **contract** needs only the **agreement of the two** participating parties.

God's Covenant Through Moses Exodus 19:1-9

The covenant that God made with Abraham was renewed with his son Isaac, in (Genesis 26:3); and then to Isaac's son, Jacob, God appeared at Bethel, in (Genesis 28:13-15); at the time Jacob may not have known that he would be going to Egypt *live out the remainder of the four hundred year prophecy, given to Abraham in Genesis 15, regarding his descendants . . . being slaves and that the promise would lie dormant until God confirmed it afresh with Moses.*

From Misery in Egypt to Mosaic Covenant

But God's ways are seldom our ways, and it was indeed his plan to carry his covenant people through the miseries of Egypt toward the promised land. That divine principle hasn't changed to this day: "*If we suffer with him, we will be glorified with him*" (Romans 8:17). But after a long dark night of Israel's soul, dawn breaks. God calls Moses, and with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God liberates his people from bondage. They cross the Red Sea on dry ground. They receive food from the sky and water from the rock. And . . . they arrive at Mount Sinai. Here God makes a solemn covenant with Israel to confirm and undergird the covenant he made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

What Are the Covenant's Promises and Conditions?

What are the divine promises and human conditions of this covenant? What does God commit himself to do? And what does he require of his covenant partner?

Five Divine Promises Within It

1. Israel Will Be God's Prized Possession – Exodus 19:5
2. Israel Will Be a Kingdom of Royal Priests – Exodus 19:6
3. Israel Will Be a Holy Nation – Exodus 19:6 (Leviticus 19:2)
4. God Will Defend Israel from All Her Enemies – Exodus 34:6-7 (Exodus 34:28)
5. God Will Be Merciful and Gracious and Forgiving – Exodus 23:22 (Exodus 34:10 – Exodus 19:5)

1 Peter 2:9

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Its Human Condition

Numerous Old Testament and New Testament passages say that the root of Israel's disobedience was her failure to trust God. **Therefore, the obedience required in the Mosaic covenant is the obedience which comes from faith.**

It's the same obedience required in the Abrahamic covenant when the Lord said to Abraham, "*By your descendants shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice*" (Genesis 22:18). And it's the same obedience required in the new covenant under which we live. (Hebrews 5:9) says of Christ that "*Being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*" The Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the covenant that Jesus sealed with his own blood are all various expressions of one great covenant of grace. And under all these covenants, expressed in many different ways, one thing is required of man in order to inherit the covenant blessings: "**faith working through love**" (Galatians 5:6), which that love is defined in Jesus own teaching in John 14:15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

How Can So Much Grace Come by This Covenant?

That brings us to **one last question** which the Mosaic covenant leaves unanswered. How can so much grace be dispensed under this covenant? . . . **the answer** lies in the future. *Isaiah* saw it most clearly, "*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all*" (*Isaiah 53:6*). **How could a just God, under the Mosaic covenant, be so gracious and forgive so freely? Answer:** he looked forward to the coming of his Son and the sacrifice that repairs all the injury done to God's honor through the disobedience of the elect. There could have been **no covenant with Abraham, no covenant with Moses, and no new covenant without the coming of Jesus Christ. What was freely given under Moses was purchased by Christ.**

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Metzora (Infected One) - Week 27

Leviticus 13:1-15:33; 2 Kings 4:42-5:19, 7:3-20; Matthew 8:1-4, 11:2-6; Mark 9:14-15
"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean"
The Gospel Message Revealed in Leviticus 12-15

Laws About Leprosy

Leviticus 13:1-15:33

1. Jesus fulfills through the Covenant of our Mouth - Faith

Leviticus 13:1-3

Laws About Leprosy

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²“When a person has on the skin of his body a swelling or an eruption or a spot, and it turns into a case of leprous disease on the skin of his body, then he shall be brought to **Aaron the priest** or to one of his sons the priests, ³ and the priest shall examine the diseased area on the skin of his body. And if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a case of leprous disease. **When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him unclean.**”

In Leviticus 13:45-46 we read:

⁴⁵“The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’ ⁴⁶He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.”

The Hebrew word that is translated leprosy, tzaraat, a spiritual condition that causes the afflicted to become impure, does not actually correspond to the modern day affliction of leprosy. Its origin is spiritual, but it obviously has a physical manifestation.

The condition is identified by a priest, not by a doctor.

Once a leper is healed, he or she then goes through the **purification process outlined in the Leviticus 14.**

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘This shall be the torah [instructions] for the leprous person for the day of his cleansing.’”
Leviticus 14:1-2

For the healing process to be complete, and the leper reintegrated into the community, a complex series of offerings are made, beginning on the first day with **two clean birds - one that is killed** and **one that is released**.

Although the leper may now return to the community, he must live outside his tent for seven days. On the seventh day, the leper shaves off all hair, including the eyebrows, and bathes in water.

As part of the ceremony, **on the eighth day of the purification process, the priest** places some of the **oil and blood** of the guilt offering (male lamb) **upon the tip of the right ear** of the one being cleansed, and **upon the thumb of his right hand**, and **upon the great toe of his right foot**. **Leviticus 14:10-14:**

¹⁰“And on the eighth day he shall take two male lambs **without blemish** (their “Best”), and one ewe lamb a year old **without blemish** (their “Best”), and a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, and one log of oil. ¹¹ And **the priest** who **cleanses** him shall set the man who is **to be cleansed** and **these things before the Lord**, at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹² And the priest shall take one of the male lambs and offer it for a **guilt offering** (or *Trespas*, an offering for offenses against others – an offering to restore communion with God), along with the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. ¹³ And he shall kill the lamb in the place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the place of the sanctuary. For the **guilt offering, like the sin offering, belongs to the priest**; it is most holy. ¹⁴ **The priest** shall take some of the blood of the **guilt offering**, and **the priest shall put it on the lobe of the right ear** of him who is to be cleansed and **on the thumb of his right hand** and **on the big toe of his right foot**.”

This represents atonement and cleansing of everything we hear, everything we do, and every path we take.

Read **Hebrews 10:12 & 14:**

¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Read **Hebrews 10:26 & 27-39:**

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For,

“Yet a little while,

and the coming one will come and will not delay;

³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,

and if he shrinks back,

my soul has no pleasure in him.”

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

The Cause of Leprosy

“Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.” Psalm 34:12–13

Matthew 12:36

³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,

Judaism considers gossip and slander a type of “moral leprosy,” and the rabbis regard leprosy as an affliction from God as punishment primarily for destructive communication, such as slander or gossip, although pride and self-centeredness may be at the heart of this sin.

Gossip and slander might be caused by the speaker's baseless hatred (literally hatred of their grace, beauty, or charm).

Moreover, evil communication leads others into hatred.

The account of Miriam's leprosy is evidence of **the connection between evil speech and leprosy**. After she and her brother Aaron dared to speak evil of their brother Moses and his Cushite wife, she was afflicted with leprosy.

“Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. ‘Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?’ they asked. ‘Hasn’t he also spoken through us?’ And the LORD heard this.” **Numbers 12:1–2**

God’s anger was kindled against Miriam, and He afflicted her with leprosy, saying to her:

“Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?” The anger of the LORD burned against [Miriam and Aaron], and He left them. When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam’s skin was leprous—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned towards her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease.” **Numbers 12:8–10**

This should be enough to give each of us a healthy fear of gossiping about or slandering anyone—especially those anointed of the Lord to serve Him in a position of public leadership or ministry.

i.e. Read:

2 Kings 5

Naaman Healed of Leprosy

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. ² Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. ³ She said to her mistress, “Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.” ⁴ So Naaman went in and told his lord, “Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel.” ⁵ And the king of Syria said, “Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel.”

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. ⁶ And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, “When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy.” ⁷ And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, “Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me.”

⁸ But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, “Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel.” ⁹ So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. ¹⁰ And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean.” ¹¹ But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, “Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. ¹² Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage. ¹³ But his servants came near and said to him, “My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” ¹⁴ So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

Gehazi's Greed and Punishment

¹⁵ Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, “Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant.” ¹⁶ But he said, “As the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.” And he urged him to take it, but he refused. ¹⁷ Then Naaman said, “If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the LORD. ¹⁸ In this matter may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.” ¹⁹ He said to him, “Go in peace.”

But when Naaman had gone from him a short distance, ²⁰ Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, “See, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not accepting from his hand what he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him.” ²¹ So Gehazi followed Naaman. And when Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and said, “Is all well?” ²² And he said, “All is well. My master has sent me to say, ‘There have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.’” ²³ And Naaman said, “Be pleased to accept two talents.” And he urged him and tied up two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants. And they carried them before Gehazi. ²⁴ And when he came to the hill, he took them from their hand and put them in the house, and he sent the men away, and they departed. ²⁵ He went in and stood before his master, and Elisha said to him, “Where have you been, Gehazi?” And he said, “Your servant went nowhere.” ²⁶ But he said to him, “Did not my heart go when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Was it a time to accept money and garments, olive orchards and

vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants? ²⁷ Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and to your descendants forever.” So he went out from his presence a leper, like snow.

Laws for Cleansing Lepers

1. Cleaning – Death and Resurrection of Jesus – the Birds
2. Baptism

Leviticus 14:1-9

14 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, ³ and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look. Then, if the case of leprous disease is healed in the leprous person, ⁴ the priest shall command them to take for him who is to be cleansed two live^[a] clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop. ⁵ And the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh^[b] water. ⁶ He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. ⁷ And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall let the living bird go into the open field. ⁸ And he who is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe himself in water, and he shall be clean. And after that he may come into the camp, but live outside his tent seven days. ⁹ And on the seventh day he shall shave off all his hair from his head, his beard, and his eyebrows. He shall shave off all his hair, and then he shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he shall be clean.

Jesus Cleanses 10 Lepers

In **Luke 17:11-19** we read:

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹ And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

Jesus upheld the process of purification found in this Reading/Teaching when He healed a leper, declaring him clean.

“Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Yeshua reached out His hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing,’ He said. ‘Be clean!’ And immediately the leprosy left him.” (*Luke 5:12-13*)

Keeping the Jewish law, Jesus told the man, “Show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”

What is this Sacrifice/Gift?

In **Matthew 8:1-4** we read:

When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. ² And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” ³ And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

The gift that the healed leper was told to give to the priest is mentioned in **Leviticus 14:1-4**:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “This shall be the law of the leprous person for the day of his cleansing. He shall be brought to the priest, ³ and the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall look. Then, if the case of leprous disease is healed in the leprous person, ⁴ the priest shall command them to **take (the gift: “offer the gift”)** for him who is to be cleansed **two live clean birds and cedarwood and scarlet yarn and hyssop.**

Leprosy is a picture of sin since it defiles, spreads, and destroys a person. The gift that was given to the priest is used for the judgment of sin and the cleansing of the leper. We see this in **Leviticus 14:5-7**:

And the priest shall command them to kill one of the birds in an earthenware vessel over fresh water. ⁶ He shall take the live bird with the cedarwood and the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, and dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. ⁷ And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed of the leprous disease. Then he shall pronounce him clean and shall let the living bird go into the open field.

There are beautiful pictures in these verses. The bird that was killed reminds us of what we read in **Hebrews 9:22**:

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

The shedding of blood cleanses us from the guilt of sin. The bird was killed over running water, which pictures the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse us from the defilement of sin, as the Lord Jesus described in **John 7: 38-39**:

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The **cedar wood** comes from a very tall tree, while **hyssop** comes from a plant that is close to the ground. However, both of these come from the same earth. This may **picture** that **God's judgment of sin involves all who are found in this world, whether they be high or lowly.** **Hyssop** is also a **picture of cleansing**, as we see from **Psalm 51:7**:

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Scarlet is a **picture of sin** in **Isaiah 1:18**:

"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson they shall become like wool.

The **cedar wood**, **scarlet**, and **hyssop** were dipped with the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over running water. The leper was then sprinkled seven times with the blood and pronounced clean by the priest. **The picture here is that the blood is applied through the power of the Holy Spirit, which cleanses the person from the guilt and defilement of sin. Being sprinkled seven times pictures the completeness and perfection of the cleansing.**

The **living bird** was then let loose into the open field. This **pictures Christ's resurrection and ascension**, as we read in **Ephesians 1:17-21**:

¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ **having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you**, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

When someone repents of their sins and trusts in Christ as their Savior, **Christ's death and resurrection, pictured in these two birds, are applied to that person.** *The Lord Jesus died in our place, took the judgment that we deserved, and rose again with glory and power!* **The released bird also pictures the freedom experienced by the leper and the freedom from sin that we all experience when we permit our wonderful Savior to fully cleanse us.**

<http://answersfromthebook.net/what-is-the-gift-that-moses-prescribed-the-leper-to-give-the-priests-as-proof-for-them-in-matthew-84/>

The parallel of the purpose a woman having to mikvah/baptize and our Spiritual Rebirth: The menstruating woman honors the egg that has been shed, which will never house a human soul, as she embraces a fresh potential for life that she can now bestow unto the world. This is the magic of the woman, "mother of all life" (Genesis 3:20), as her monthly cycle represents a lesson that even the highest of priests must model -- that we can honor the death of lost opportunities but treasure the life that our new choices create. **And through the birthing process, we are Baptized when the water breaks and we must move through the conversion process, which is a separation, through the narrow path, of the Old life to the New Life, which is what we Celebrate Today.**

Far from being "dirty," the woman's cycle is of the highest purity, for it reminds us that it is the cycles, changes, and opportunities of this physical life that defines our greatest spirituality. In other words, the spiritual rebirth of going to the *mikvah/baptism* is one of refocusing on life and fresh beginnings.

Leviticus 15:13-33

Laws About Bodily Discharges

¹³ "And when **the one** with a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes. **And he shall bathe his body in fresh water** (mikvah/baptize/spiritual rebirth) **and shall be clean.** ¹⁴ And on the **eighth day** he shall **take two turtledoves or two pigeons** and come before the Lord to the entrance of the tent of meeting and **give them to the priest.** ¹⁵ And the priest shall use them, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord for his discharge.

¹⁹ "When **a woman** has a discharge, and the discharge in her body is blood, she shall be in her menstrual impurity for seven days, and whoever touches her shall be unclean until the evening. . . . ²⁷ And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and **bathe himself in water** and be unclean until the evening. ²⁸ **But if she is cleansed of her discharge, she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.** ²⁹ **And on the eighth day she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons and bring them to the priest, to the entrance of the tent of meeting.** ³⁰ **And the priest shall use one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.** And the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for her unclean discharge.

³¹ "Thus you shall keep the people of Israel separate from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness by defiling my tabernacle that is in their midst."

³² **This is the law** for him who has a discharge and for him who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean thereby; ³³ also for her who is unwell with her menstrual impurity, that is, for anyone, male or female, who has a discharge, and for the man who lies with a woman who is unclean.

i.e. Leviticus 16:24

The Day of Atonement

²³ "Then Aaron (**the High Priest**) shall come into the tent of meeting and shall take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the Holy Place and shall leave them there. ²⁴ **And he (the High Priest) shall bathe his body in water** in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.

Leviticus 15:24-27, Leviticus 16:24: Most expressively, it turns out that original Hebrew wording of the verse in question was subtly but distinctively mistranslated. The Hebrew word used in this verse is not the word “unclean”, but the word which means “impure”. This is the same wording used in reference to the High Priest's need to go to the *mikvah* (Leviticus 21:4). This lack of purity has no unique connection with women, nor does it have anything to do with being physically dirty. Rather, the “purity” referenced in both places indicates a spiritual state (of impurity) that both the High Priest and the menstruating woman experience. **So what is the *mikvah* really about?**

Going to the mikvah is not about getting clean. It's about getting alive.

We see the **teaching and instruction** (Torah) of the Lord obsessing with "purity" because the **teaching and instruction** (Torah) of God of the Lord is obsessed with "life" itself. The spirituality of the **teaching and instruction** (Torah) of the Lord is anchored with "Keep my statutes...and *live* by them" (Leviticus 18:5)

The High Priest and the menstruating woman go to the *mikvah* when encountering “death” and embracing new “life”.

For it is not in death that we find the highest form of spiritual fulfillment. It is in the everyday struggle to do the right thing that you and I become "created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27).

Although the act described in these Old Testament passages was not specifically called “baptism”, it does highlight how important and holy ceremonial (and practical) cleansing is to God. The Lord taught the significance of baptism to the extent that He Himself was baptized by John the Baptist at the start of His ministry (Matthew 3:13-17, John 1:29-34, Mark 1:9).

John 1:29-34

Behold, the Lamb of God

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son^[a] of God.”

Matthew 3:13-17

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to **fulfill** (walk it out as it was intended to be walked out) **all righteousness**.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Mark 16:16

¹⁶ *Jesus said*, Whoever **believes and is baptized** will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

2 Corinthians 11:15

So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of **righteousness**. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in **righteousness**,

Hebrews 5:12-14

¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of **righteousness**, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

James 2:23

and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as **righteousness**”—and he was called a friend of God.

1 John 3:7

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices **righteousness** is righteous, as he is righteous.

1 John 3:10

By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice **righteousness** is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

Revelation 22

¹⁴ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

READ: Colossians 3:1-17 (Put On the New Self)

Colossians 3:1-17

Put On the New Self

¹If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶*On account of these the wrath of God is coming.* ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have put on the new self (a type of Baptism – the separation of two worlds – i.e. the Red Sea), which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom,** singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And **whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus** (third commandment – “Do not use the Lord’s name in Vain”), giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Acts 19:4 -7, ⁴Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

The New Testament clearly points out that the baptism of John was from God. It came from heaven (Matt 21:25). **It was administered for the spiritual purpose of proclaiming repentance and receiving forgiveness of sins** (Mark 1:4).

Requirements during use of a mikveh

Immersion in a mikveh is obligatory in contemporary Orthodox Jewish practice in the following circumstances:

- Women
 - Following the period after menstruation, prior to resuming marital relations
 - Following the period after childbirth, prior to resuming marital relations
 - By a bride, before her wedding
- Either gender
- Converts to Judaism are required to undergo full immersion in water.

Customary immersion in Orthodox Judaism

Immersion in a mikveh is customary in contemporary Orthodox Jewish practice in the following circumstances:

- Men
 - By a bridegroom, on the day of his wedding, according to the custom of some communities
 - By a father, prior to the circumcision of his son, according to the custom of some communities
 - By a High Priest prior to a service in which he will recite the priestly blessing, according to the custom of some communities
 - Before Yom Kippur, according to the custom of some communities
 - Before a Jewish holiday
 - Weekly before Shabbat
 - Every day, under Hasidic customs

Closing: Call for us Today – 2nd Passover – 2nd Chance

2nd Passover - Our Second Chance

Numbers 9:9-14

6pm Thursday, May 7th to 6pm Friday, May 8th, 2020

(30 Days from the Beginning of Passover every year)

Joshua 5

The New Generation Circumcised

¹As soon as all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the people of Israel until they had crossed over, their hearts melted and there was no longer any spirit in them because of the people of Israel.

²At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the sons of Israel a second time.” ³So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the males of the people who came out of Egypt, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵Though all the people who came out had been

circumcised, yet all the people who were born on the way in the wilderness after they had come out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶For the people of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished, because they did not obey the voice of the Lord; the Lord swore to them that he would not let them see the land that the Lord had sworn to their fathers to give to us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷So it was their children, whom he raised up in their place, that Joshua circumcised. For they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

⁸When the circumcising of the whole nation was finished, they remained in their places in the camp until they were healed. ⁹And the Lord said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.

First Passover in Canaan

¹⁰While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹²And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

The Commander of the Lord's Army

¹³When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” ¹⁴And he said, “No; but I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, “What does my lord say to his servant?” ¹⁵And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, “Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

The drink offering was never to be offered except in the land of promise. The instructions in Leviticus are prefaced with:
“When you enter the land which I am going to give to you.”

Ezekiel 45:16-17

¹⁶All the people of the land shall be obliged to give this offering to the prince in Israel. ¹⁷It shall be **the prince's duty (the prince here is the Messiah) to furnish the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings** (It concerns the pouring out of wine as an offering. It was brought in conjunction with burnt offerings (sacrifice of devotion or service – performed in the morning and evening each day – taken in communion with God) and peace offerings (sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise – brought anytime – taken in communion with God).), **at the feasts, the new moons, and the Sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel: he shall provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, to make atonement on behalf of the house of Israel.**

To arrive at the meaning and rationale for the **drink offering**, it is helpful, first, to note, . . . that **the drink offering was never to be offered except in the land of promise**. The instructions in Leviticus are prefaced with “when you enter the land which I am going to give to you” (Leviticus 14:34 and 25:2), as are the instructions in Numbers 15. If the sacrifices are God's food (literally, bread), then the **libations (drink offering)** are evidently God's drink. The law of the **drink offering**, therefore, tells us that God would not drink wine with His bread until His people entered the land.

This makes sense in terms of biblical theology. **Drinking wine is a sabbatical activity; it is a sign and a means of rest and celebration.** Specifically, the **libation (drink offering)** is a **sabbatical offering**, particularly as described in Leviticus 23. Only after the Lord had defeated the enemies of His people, and given His people a restful dwelling in the land, would He accept the wine of the libations.

This connection of victory and rest with the **drink offering** is highlighted by the context of the laws of Numbers 15. These laws were delivered immediately after Israel rebelled at Kadesh Barnea, and then rashly attacked the Amalekites when God was not with them. God punished the Israelites by leaving them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years (Num. 13-14). Immediately after this defeat, God gave Moses instructions on the drink offering. In the context, the **drink offering is a promise of eventual victory and settlement in the land.** It is a sign also of God's faithfulness to His covenant with Israel. Israel was to suffer in the wilderness for 40 years, restless and wandering; for 40 years, they were unable to eat and drink and rejoice before the Lord (Dt. 14:22-27). **If God's peculiar people were to be 40 years without wine, then God Himself would refrain from drinking wine for those same 40 years.** Wine is an **eschatological drink**: it requires time for it to reach its maturity. So, God fasted from wine until His people reached their **final event in the divine plan; the end of the world** (eschaton), the land where huge clusters of grapes grew. He wandered with His people, sharing in their sufferings, for the joy that was set before Him. Though the Israelites would wander for a generation, they could take comfort in the assurance that God was wandering with them.

Second, it should be noted that, even when the people of Israel entered into a conquered land, it was only God who was given the wine of the drink offering. True, the people were permitted to drink wine and strong drink at the sanctuary. But, unlike most of the animal and grain offerings — a portion of which were retained for the priests or the worshiper — the entire drink offering was poured out upon the altar of burnt offering. (. . . understanding two facts: first, the priests were forbidden to drink wine in the tabernacle [Lev. 10:9], and, second, the requirement that all sacrificial food be eaten in the tabernacle precincts [Lev. 6:16]). Thus, the **drink offering was a sign not only of God's victory and His entering into sabbath rest, but a sign of Israel's exclusion from full participation in that victory and rest.** . . . Therefore, we are given not only to eat of the flesh of our **peace offering** (sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise – brought anytime – taken in communion with God), but also to drink of the wine of the **libation (drink offering).**

“⁹So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:9-12

Third, the **drink offering**, like the grain offering, was symbolic of the works of the worshiper. This is a further reason why **libations (drink offerings) had to await entrance into the land**; entering the land not only brought rest from wandering and from enemies, but also brought a renewed demand for dominion. The fruits of that dominion over the land — grain, oil, and wine — were to be offered to the Lord.

This background can perhaps shed some light on Paul’s statement that he was being poured out as a **drink offering** (*Phil. 2:17*; 2 Tim. 4:6):

“¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a **drink offering** (It concerns the pouring out of wine as an offering. It was brought in conjunction with burnt offerings (sacrifice of devotion or service – performed in the morning and evening each day – taken in communion with God) and peace offerings (sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise – brought anytime – taken in communion with God).) upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.”

Philippians 2:17-18

Though often understood as a reference to his impending death, it is more likely that Paul understood the struggles and toils of his apostolic ministry as a **libation (drink offering)** upon the sacrificial service (persecution) of the churches among which he ministered . . . In the OT, the **libation (drink offering)** was offered as a portion of the fruits of the worshiper’s labor, so it is fitting for Paul to speak of his labor as a **libation (drink offering)**. His labor was offered up as **drink** for God, as wine to make His heart glad. But, as is appropriate to a better covenant, it is not only the Lord who drinks the wine of joy, but also the people: hence, Paul says that he shares the joy of his **libation-labor (drink offering-labor)** with the Philippians, and asks them to respond by **pouring their libations (drink offerings)** out upon him (2:17-18).

<http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-25-the-theology-of-the-drink-offering/>

Next Weeks Reading:

Week 28 - Acharei Mot (After the Death)
Leviticus 16:1–18:30; I Samuel 20:18–42; 1 Corinthians 6:9–20