

“Mother’s Day”

Why is it that we Long and Pursue “Unity”, but Celebrate “Individuality”. I do not want this word to fall on deaf ears, Moms are amazing all by themselves, but once we find their true identity, their individual amazingness is dwarfed when compared to the likeness or image of God, as He created man and woman. Unlike the males and females of the animal kingdom, who were created both male and female, man and woman were not created in like manner, otherwise, Adam would have found a suitable “Helpmate”, but did not:

“The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.” **Genesis 2:20**

It was in this manner that *woman* was created:

“So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

**“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”**

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and **hold fast** (firmly fix together) to his wife,
and **they shall become one flesh** (as they were originally created).” **Genesis 2:21-24**

If G-d desired mankind to comprised of both male and female, why did He not create them that way in first place – as He did with the other animals?

Because if they were to be originally and intrinsically two, each would be trapped in the exclusivity of his or her identity. Their encounter would be a “relationship” at best, a war at worst. Neither would have it in them to transcend the individuality into which they were born. The two would remain two, however integrated.

But neither did G-d desire man to be a singular being. As a single individual, man was without match, without challenge, and thus without potential for growth and creation. “It is not good that man be alone,” said the Creator; he requires a “helpmeet” and an “opposite”.

So G-d created them one, and then split them into two. Thus, man searches for woman and woman yearns for man. Thus, each has it within their power to reach within their splintered self and uncover their primordial oneness. Thus, man and woman cleave (firmly fix together) to each other and become one

...

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

... just as God is One, in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which we find illustrated in the “memorial name” of God, in Exodus 3:15:

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus, shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,
The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,
hath sent me unto you:
this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.”

... we to as man and woman are also identified as One, in three persons, man, woman, and child; a “Unity” of one (*“they shall become **one flesh**,”* Genesis 2:24) and not “Divided” as two.

It is with this revelation that we learn that one is not greater than another, but all function together as “One”; yet at the same time, identifying each ones unique characteristics, which is seen as a whole, the woman, in their unique characteristic as a “Mother”, is characterized as “a helper” or “helpmate” has the same attributes and characterization as the Holy Spirit in the Godhead:

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper** (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor - Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), to be with you forever,” **John 14:16**

“But the **Helper** (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor - Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He **will teach you all things**. And He **will help you remember everything that I have told you**,” **John 14:26**

“And He, when He comes, will **convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**.” **John 16:8**

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” -

¹⁰ **these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.** ¹¹ **For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**” **1 Corinthians 2:9-11**

And it is therefore in this likeness that we identify the “Mother” or “Woman” as “United” as One, fixed firmly together, with the man, and not as individually unique or “Divided” from the man. Ask any Follower of God if they can do this Life without the Holy Spirit, and you will find unanimously that none of them will say they can.

In summary, there is no “Wo” without the “man”, which in the reverse is also true, man alone has no “Wo” in and of himself, but together they do as “One”, “Father” and “Mother”, whose unique identities and characterizations are fully realized when they create together “One Flesh”, a child, one together, and in the image of “One” together.

So, when we Celebrate “Mothers”, let us Celebrate the “Unity” of the “One” together and find God, as we were created in the likeness to represent, and move away from Celebrating “Individuality” which divides and does not “Unify”, creating one greater than another, rather than exalting the Greatness of God as our Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor, Strengthened, Standby, One who Remembers Everything, and One who convicts the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, and One who searches everything, and makes known the depths and thoughts of God, which has been prepared for those who love him.

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

Transition: If we will not honor our parents, we unable to honor our Heavenly Father.

Our Challenge as Mothers: *(as we have been forced to see over the course of these past 8 weeks, liking it or not; but truly discovering our true calling, as God created us to)*

Deuteronomy 6

The Greatest Commandment

“Now this is the commandment - the statutes and the rules - that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

⁴“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

¹⁰“And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you - with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant - and when you eat and are full, ¹²then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹³It is the Lord your God you shall fear, Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you - ¹⁵for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God - lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

¹⁶“You shall not put the Lord your God to the **test** (*questioning God's involvement and existence in our lives*), as you **tested him at Massah** (*testing*).

“tested him at Massah”:

Exodus 17:1-7

Water from the Rock

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the **wilderness of Sin** (*associated to the identity of God's peoples 'missing the mark' through their grumbling and complaining*) by stages, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² *Therefore the people quarreled with Moses* and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “*Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test (to challenge one's origin, purpose, and nature of their creation) the Lord?*” ³ But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” ⁴ So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” ⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the name of the place Massah (*testing*) and Meribah (*quarreling*), because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “***Is the Lord among us or not?***”

¹⁷ You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and his statutes, which he has commanded you. ¹⁸ And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers ¹⁹ by thrusting out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has promised.

²⁰ **“When your son asks you in time to come, ‘What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?’”** ²¹ *then you shall say to your son, ‘We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.* ²² *And the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes.* ²³ *And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers.* ²⁴ **And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day.** ²⁵ **And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.’**

Question: “What does it mean that the tongue is a fire (James 3:6)?”

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.” James 3:6

Answer: James 3:6 compares our tongues to fire. To understand this metaphor in context, we need to begin in verse 5: “Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.” Fire can be either constructive or destructive depending upon its containment. So it is with the tongue.

Fire is one of God's greatest gifts to humanity. With fire we cook food, heat our homes, and destroy garbage that would otherwise overwhelm us. Likewise, the gift of speech is of great benefit. With our tongues we communicate information, express affection, and praise God. A tongue under control can spread life and truth into our world (“*Death and life are in the power of the tongue.*” Proverbs 18:21), bless and discipline our children, and transfer the wisdom God has given us. But, like fire out of bounds, our tongues can also do great damage.

James 3:9–10 says, “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.” A tongue out of control can tear down self-worth, destroy relationships, and order the execution of evil plans. Like a grassfire touched by a sudden breeze, our words can take off, spreading far and wide in ways we never imagined. Gossip, slander, cursing, and lies are all symptoms of a wildfire tongue (Exodus 23:1; Leviticus 19:16; Proverbs 16:27; 2 Corinthians 12:20). One has but to witness the rapid spread of a scandalous rumor to see that the tongue is like a fire.

James 3:8 warns that the tongue’s fire easily becomes unmanageable: “No human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.” So what are we to do? If the tongue cannot be tamed, how are we to control it? The fruit of the Spirit includes self-control (Galatians 5:22–23), which is exactly what we need to put out the fire of the tongue. Colossians 4:6 says, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.” When we consider the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13), we know that our tongues belong to Him. Bitter words, hateful words, and foul words must be crucified with the flesh (Galatians 2:20; 5:24), or they will dominate our speech. Our flesh does not have the power to tame the tongue; only the Holy Spirit can.

Whatever good gift God creates, Satan perverts. The tongue is one such area Satan has corrupted, which is why the Bible says the tongue has been “set on fire by hell” (James 3:6). We defy Satan’s evil attempts to destroy our lives through the tongue when we commit ourselves daily to the lordship of Jesus. We can offer ourselves every day as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), and we can specifically focus on giving our tongues over to the Lord. “Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3). We can ask the Lord to make us more conscious of the words we speak and quickly repent of any comment that dishonors Him.

Our tongues can be compared favorably to fire when we use our words to warm hearts, spread truth, and destroy lies. To keep our tongues under control, we can start every day with the prayer David prayed: “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14).

<https://www.gotquestions.org/the-tongue-is-a-fire.html>

Review of Last Weeks Message:

The Book of Jude (Yehudah) speaks of the judgment of Yahuwah as prophesied by Enoch, the seventh from Adam.

¹⁴ **Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Master is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones¹⁵ to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."**

Since Jude cited the Book of Enoch as a reliable source for teaching, we will consider its information, too. Interestingly, we do have what is believed to be the Book of Enoch and it reads essentially the same as Jude quoted him. Enoch reads:

Behold, he comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done, and committed against him. (Enoch 2:1)

This same Book of Enoch also speaks of Azazel. Here is an excerpt from the Book of Enoch about Azazel (rendered "Azazyel" in the translation of Enoch I am referencing):

Moreover Azazyel taught men to make swords, knives, shields, breastplates, the fabrication of mirrors, and the workmanship of bracelets and ornaments, the use of paint, the beautifying of the eyebrows, the use of stones of every valuable and select kind, and all sorts of dyes, so that the world became altered. Impiety (sinfulness) increased; fornication multiplied; and they transgressed and corrupted all their ways. (8:1-2)

Our Reading and Teaching came out of **Leviticus 16**, which was the instruction of God to keep the Appointed Feast of “*The Day of Atonement*”:

⁶ “Aaron shall offer the **bull** as a sin offering for himself and shall make *atonement* for himself and for his house. ⁷ Then he shall take the **two goats** and set them before the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ⁸ And Aaron shall cast lots over the **two goats**, one lot for the Lord and the other lot for **Azazel**. ⁹ And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and use it as a sin offering, ¹⁰ but the goat on which the lot fell for **Azazel** shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to **Azazel**.

¹¹ “Aaron shall present the **bull** as a sin offering for himself, and shall make *atonement* for himself and for his house. He shall kill the **bull** as a sin offering for himself.

1. The high priest faces east towards the people while the **bull** and two goats face west towards the temple.

bull - **The Antichrist** - *And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names.* **Revelation 13:1**

2. One of the two **goat(s)** is chosen “for Yahuwah” and a scarlet cloth is tied around its throat. **(the one sacrificed) goat(s)** - **The False Prophet** - *And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.* **Revelation 13:11**

²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the **false prophet** who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. **Revelation 19:20**

3. One of the two goats are chosen “for **Azazel**” (the **Scapegoat**) and a scarlet cloth is tied around its horn. The high priest returns to the bull and lays his hands on its head and confesses his sins and the sins of the priesthood. Then he kills the bull and drains its blood.

Azazel - Satan - The Book of Enoch states that **Azazel** was one of the angels who rebelled against God in the time of Jared. “He taught men to make swords, knives, shields, and breastplates. He made metals known to man and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and color tinctures. **To him all sin is ascribed.**”

***Azazel** (/əˈzeɪzəl, ˈæzəˌzɛl/; Hebrew: אֲזַזֵּל; Arabic: عَزَازِيل, translit. ‘Azāzīl) is a fallen angel; he was sent a scapegoat bearing the sins of the Jews during Yom Kippur. In the Bible, he only appears in association with the scapegoat rite. During the Second Temple period, **he appears as a fallen angel** responsible for introducing humans to forbidden knowledge.

Cultural Representation

In Judaism

Azazel (literally “strong one against God”) was a very real force of evil.

In Christianity

Azazel is a less well-known figure among Christians, since the Latin and English versions of the Bible translated his name as “scapegoat” or “wasteland.”

In Islam

Muslim tradition takes the story of Azazel even farther back, to the days *when he ranked among the good angels*. Some scholars believe that he was among the most wise and noble angels and that he fought against the **jinn** (in Arabian and Muslim mythology - an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angels, able to appear in human and animal forms and to possess humans) who lived on earth before humans. Others believe that he was a **jinn** (an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angel) who, as a reward for fighting against other **jinn** (an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angel), was allowed to enter heaven and be called an angel.

This annual ritual of confessing all the sins of the nation onto the head of the goat is a prophetic picture of the judgment of Satan, when he will be held to account for his rebellion and corruption of the universe. Though Messiah died as a substitute payment for the transgression of all who confess and repent of their sins, Satan will still bear the blame for all sin and will be judged for his primary role in the rebellion. This will occur at the appointed time of “The Day of Atonement”.

4. **One of the Themes of this season is a reminder and acknowledgement that God REMEMBERS to punish the wicked and reward the good.** The concept is that **this day serves as a warning for people to Repent.** It is said that on this day God opens three books (Ex. 32:32-33; Daniel 7:9-10, 12:1-3, Malachi 3:16-18, Rev. 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 15, 21:27):

5. **Closing The Gate**

Just prior to nightfall a hushed congregation prepares to observe the last service of Yom Kippur called **Ne’ilah**, which means, “**closing the gate**” (A person could not have atonement and forgiveness without entering the temple courts before the gate was closed.).

When the last notes of the chant have died away, a long blast, Tekiah Gedola is sounded on the shofar and the Day of Atonement comes to an end. This **last trump** proclaims the **year of Jubilee*** every fiftieth year.

***Year of Jubilee:** Now, using Ezra’s decree as the starting point (457 B.C.), if we count forward 483 years we will arrive at **27 A.D.** (There is only one year between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D.) According to the translator of Josephus, the Jewish new year that began in the fall of 27 A.D. marked the beginning of the last Jubilee Year that the Jews enjoyed in the land before their worldwide dispersal by the Romans in 70 A.D. This is most likely the year that **Jesus began His public ministry.** This is hinted at in **Luke 4** where it says that when Jesus launched His ministry at the synagogue in Nazareth, He did so by reading a passage from Isaiah 61 about the way in which the Messiah would fulfill the spiritual essence of the Jubilee. After finishing the reading, Jesus proclaimed, **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” Luke 4:21.**

(<https://christinprophecy.org/articles/daniels-70-weeks-of-years/>)

Putting the next Jubilee Year around 2027 to 2030, starting around 2021-2022 or 2022-2023, of the last seven years prior to the fulfillment of the Last Jubilee of the Messiah’s Return.

***Year of Jubilee**

Word to the Church (summarize: “a Call to Revival in the Church, before a Great Revival in the Earth, as the Last Harvest”)

Week 30 - Emor (Say)

Leviticus 21:1–24:23; Ezekiel 44:15–31; Luke 14:12–24

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Say [emor] to the priests, the sons of Aaron...’” Leviticus 21:1

“Each of us are held to a high standard of morality when interacting with the world and each other.”

In last week’s double Torah reading, Parasha Acharei Mot–Kedoshim, we discovered our capacity to live holy lives.

In this week’s Torah reading, **Emor**, which means say, God gives Moses instructions regarding rules of purity for the priests (**כֹּהֲנִים, Kohanim**). They are to be held to a stricter standard than the general population.

Leviticus 21:1-9

Holiness and the Priests

21 And the Lord said to Moses, **“Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, No one shall make himself unclean for the dead among his people,² except for his closest relatives, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother,³ or his virgin sister (who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may make himself unclean).⁴ He shall not make himself unclean as a husband among his people and so profane himself.⁵ They shall not make bald patches on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts on their body.⁶ They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. For they offer the Lord’s food offerings, the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.⁷ They shall not marry a prostitute or a woman who has been defiled, neither shall they marry a woman divorced from her husband, for the priest is holy to his God.⁸ You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for I, the Lord, who sanctify you, am holy.⁹ And the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by whoring, profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.**

In this context we are speaking about Spiritually Dead, in Sin:

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

2 Corinthians 6:14

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

1 Corinthians 15:33

Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.”

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

1 Corinthians 5:11

But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

Proverbs 13:20

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

Proverbs 22:24-25

Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.

2 Thessalonians 3:6

Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

Romans 16:17

I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.

Psalms 1:1-4

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

2 Thessalonians 3:14

If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed.

Matthew 16:6

⁶Jesus said to them, “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Matthew 7:15-20

¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Leviticus 21:10-22:33

¹⁰“The priest who is chief among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil is poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not let the hair of his head hang loose nor tear his clothes. ¹¹He shall not go in to any dead bodies nor make himself unclean, even for his father or for his mother. ¹²He shall not go out of the sanctuary, lest he profane the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him: I am the Lord. ¹³And he shall take a wife in her virginity.^[a] ¹⁴A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin^[b] of his own people, ¹⁵that he may not profane his offspring among his people, for I am the Lord who sanctifies him.”

¹⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁷ “Speak to Aaron, saying, None of your offspring throughout their generations who has a blemish may approach to offer the bread of his God. ¹⁸ For no one who has a blemish shall draw near, a man blind or lame, or one who has a mutilated face or a limb too long, ¹⁹ or a man who has an injured foot or an injured hand, ²⁰ or a hunchback or a dwarf or a man with a defect in his sight or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles. ²¹ **No man of the offspring of Aaron the priest who has a blemish shall come near to offer the Lord's food offerings; since he has a blemish, he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. ²² He may eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy and of the holy things, ²³ but he shall not go through the veil or approach the altar, because he has a blemish, that he may not profane my sanctuaries, ²⁴ for I am the Lord who sanctifies them.”** ²⁴ So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the people of Israel.

22 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to Aaron and his sons so that they abstain from the holy things of the people of Israel, which they dedicate to me, so that they do not profane my holy name: I am the Lord. ³ Say to them, ‘If any one of all your offspring throughout your generations approaches the holy things that the people of Israel dedicate to the Lord, while he has an uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from my presence: I am the Lord. ⁴ None of the offspring of Aaron who has a leprous disease or a discharge may eat of the holy things until he is clean. Whoever touches anything that is unclean through contact with the dead or a man who has had an emission of semen, ⁵ and whoever touches a swarming thing by which he may be made unclean or a person from whom he may take uncleanness, whatever his uncleanness may be— ⁶ the person who touches such a thing shall be unclean until the evening and shall not eat of the holy things unless he has bathed his body in water. ⁷ When the sun goes down he shall be clean, and afterward he may eat of the holy things, because they are his food. ⁸ He shall not eat what dies of itself or is torn by beasts, and so make himself unclean by it: I am the Lord.’ ⁹ They shall therefore keep my charge, lest they bear sin for it and die thereby when they profane it: I am the Lord who sanctifies them.

¹⁰ “A lay person shall not eat of a holy thing; no foreign guest of the priest or hired worker shall eat of a holy thing, ¹¹ but if a priest buys a slave^[d] as his property for money, the slave^[e] may eat of it, and anyone born in his house may eat of his food. ¹² If a priest's daughter marries a layman, she shall not eat of the contribution of the holy things. ¹³ But if a priest's daughter is widowed or divorced and has no child and returns to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food; yet no lay person shall eat of it. ¹⁴ And if anyone eats of a holy thing unintentionally, he shall add the fifth of its value to it and give the holy thing to the priest. ¹⁵ They shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, which they contribute to the Lord, ¹⁶ and so cause them to bear iniquity and guilt, by eating their holy things: for I am the Lord who sanctifies them.”

Acceptable Offerings

¹⁷ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁸ “Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourners in Israel presents a burnt offering as his offering, for any of their vows or freewill offerings that they offer to the Lord, ¹⁹ if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. ²⁰ **You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.** ²¹ And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it. ²² Animals blind or disabled or mutilated or having a discharge or an itch or scabs you shall not offer to the Lord or give them to the Lord as a food offering on the altar. ²³ You may present a bull or a lamb that has a part too long or too short for a freewill offering, but for a vow offering it cannot be accepted. ²⁴ Any animal that has its testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut you shall not offer to the Lord; you shall not do it within your land, ²⁵ neither shall you offer as the bread of your God any such animals gotten from a foreigner. Since there is a blemish in them, because of their mutilation, they will not be accepted for you.”

²⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ “When an ox or sheep or goat is born, it shall remain seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable as a food offering to the Lord. ²⁸ But you shall not kill an ox or a sheep and her young in one day. ²⁹ And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. ³⁰ It shall be eaten on the same day; you shall leave none of it until morning: I am the Lord.

³¹ **“So you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the Lord. ³² And you shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel. I am the Lord who sanctifies you, ³³ who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am the Lord.”**

Matthew 5:17-26

Christ Came to Fulfill the Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ **Therefore whoever “RELAXES” one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever “DOES” them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Here we learn that the priests are not to make themselves ceremonially unclean through contact with a person who had died, unless that person was a very close relative such as a father or mother, or son, or daughter.

The priests also have to carefully adhere to strict laws of holiness; for example, a priest cannot marry a prostitute or a divorced woman. The **Kohen Gadol** (High Priest), who had been anointed with the holy anointing oil, is compelled to even higher standards: he must marry only an Israelite virgin.

“The woman he marries must be a virgin. He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, so that he will not defile his offspring among his people. **I am the LORD, who makes him holy.**”
Leviticus 21:13–15

The high priest could not even show traditional signs of mourning, such as allowing his hair to become unkempt (uncovering his head) or tearing his garments, not even for his mother or father.

The New Testament reveals that, like priests, some of us will be judged by a stricter standard than others; for example, teachers of the Word of God.

“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow Believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”
James 3:1

Why? Teachers are leaders, and with that calling comes greater responsibility. A teacher may have a wider circle of influence—for good or for evil—than the general population since they teach others not only by their words, but by example. A teacher may be looked up to by his or her students; therefore, **those who teach God’s Word are to live an exemplary life—a sobering challenge.**

For all of God’s People, He is holding us to a Higher Standard of Living:

*“¹²For 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.**”*

Hebrews 5:12-14

“All things are legitimate [permissible—and we are free to do anything we please], but not all things are helpful (expedient, profitable, and wholesome). All things are legitimate, but not all things are constructive [to character] and edifying [to spiritual life].”

1 Corinthians 10:23

*“Strive for . . . **holiness** without which no one will see the Lord.”*

Hebrews 12:14

*“You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am **holy** and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.”*

Leviticus 20:26

*“You therefore must be **perfect**, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

Matthew 5:48

*“For you are a **people holy** to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”*

Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18

*“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.”*

1 Peter 2:9

The truth is that as Believers in Jesus, we are His ambassadors, royal family, and priests—we represent Him; therefore, each of us are held to a high standard of morality when interacting with the world and each other.

Adonai is not the only one holding us to this high standard; **the world especially holds us to a higher standard.**

Biblically, we are called to sanctify God’s holy name:

*“Do not profane My holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. **I am the LORD, who made you holy.**”*
Leviticus 22:32

In Judaism, **this is considered the most important commandment of the 613 commandments in the entire Torah.** Our behavior must exemplify our relationship with God.

In this way, we can be lights shining in the darkness.

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”
Matthew 5:15

While we are all His representatives, **each of us has a unique role in God’s plan. When we strive for greatness in whatever purpose God has given us in that Divine plan, and work on developing all of our God-given gifts and qualities, then we can bring honor to Him and light to the world.**

God’s Plan Revealed in His Appointed Meeting Times

*The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the **appointed** (fixed festivals) **feasts** (an exact divine appointment) of the Lord that you shall **proclaim** (attract the attention of and detain (someone) in conversation) as **holy** (set apart for a most holy thing) **convocations** (rehearsal, assembly, reading); they are my appointed feasts.*

Leviticus 23:1–2

³Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. ⁵And when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. ⁶Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. ⁷Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. ⁸You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ ⁹And it shall be to you as a **sign on your hand** and as a memorial **between your eyes**, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth.

For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰**You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed** (fixed festivals) **time** (an exact divine appointment) **from year to year.**

Exodus 13:3–10

In addition to instructing the priests on how to meet with and serve Him, God gave the Israelites instructions about observing the special meeting times and festivals (moadim).

Leviticus 23:1-44

Feasts of the Lord

23 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, These are the appointed feasts of the Lord that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts.

The Sabbath

³“Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your dwelling places.

The Passover

⁴“These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, the holy convocations, which you shall proclaim at the time appointed for them. ⁵In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight,^[1] is the Lord's Passover. ⁶And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ⁸But you shall present a food offering to the Lord for seven days. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work.”

The Feast of Firstfruits

⁹And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰“Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, ¹¹and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. ¹²And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord.¹³ And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah^[2] of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin.^[3] ¹⁴And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Weeks

¹⁵“You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. ¹⁶You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the Lord. ¹⁷You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the Lord. ¹⁸And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. ¹⁹And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. ²⁰And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. ²¹And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. ²²“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.”

The Feast of Trumpets

²³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. ²⁵ You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the Lord.”

The Day of Atonement

²⁶ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁷ “Now on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be for you a time of holy convocation, and you shall afflict yourselves^[l] and present a food offering to the Lord. ²⁸ And you shall not do any work on that very day, for it is a Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. ²⁹ For whoever is not afflicted^[l] on that very day shall be cut off from his people. ³⁰ And whoever does any work on that very day, that person I will destroy from among his people. ³¹ You shall not do any work. It is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. ³² It shall be to you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict yourselves. On the ninth day of the month beginning at evening, from evening to evening shall you keep your Sabbath.”

The Feast of Booths

³³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁴ “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month and for seven days is the Feast of Booths^[k] to the Lord. ³⁵ On the first day shall be a holy convocation; you shall not do any ordinary work. ³⁶ For seven days you shall present food offerings to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall hold a holy convocation and present a food offering to the Lord. It is a solemn assembly; you shall not do any ordinary work.

³⁷ “These are the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim as times of holy convocation, for presenting to the Lord food offerings, burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its proper day, ³⁸ besides the Lord’s Sabbaths and besides your gifts and besides all your vow offerings and besides all your freewill offerings, which you give to the Lord. ³⁹ “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the produce of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the Lord seven days. On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. ⁴⁰ And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. ⁴¹ You shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. ⁴² You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All native Israelites shall dwell in booths, ⁴³ that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

⁴⁴ Thus Moses declared to the people of Israel the appointed feasts of the Lord.

These include the following:

- **Shabbat** (Sabbath) on the seventh day;
The Sabbath (will be fulfilled following the millennial reign of Christ on Earth, 8th Day of “The Feast of Booths”, New Heaven)
- **Pesach** (Passover) for seven days beginning at sundown on the 14th day of the first month of Nissan;
The Passover (Spring Feast - fulfilled in Messiah ben Joseph’s (Yeshua) First Coming, “Yeshua’s Death on the Cross”)
The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Spring Feast - fulfilled in Messiah ben Joseph’s (Yeshua) First Coming, “Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Death on the Cross”);
- **Bikkurim** (Firstfruits) on Nisan 16;
The Feast of First Fruits (Spring Feast - fulfilled in Messiah ben Joseph’s (Yeshua) First Coming, “Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Resurrection”);
- **Shavuot** (Feast of Weeks) fifty days after Pesach ends;
The Feast of Weeks (Spring Feast - fulfilled in Messiah ben Joseph’s (Yeshua) First Coming, “Out Pouring of the Ruach Hako’desh” (Holy Spirit));
- **Rosh Hashanah** (New Year) on the first day of the seventh month (Tishrei);
The Feast of Trumpets (Fall Feast – will be fulfilled in Messiah ben David’s (Yeshua) Second Coming, “The Feast Messiah ben David’s (Yeshua – Jesus) will Return On”);
- **Yom Kippur** (Day of Atonement) on the 10th day of the seventh month; and
The Day of Atonement (Fall Feast – will be fulfilled in Messiah ben David’s (Yeshua) Second Coming, “The Feast the Books are Sealed and the Beginning of Messiah ben David’s (Yeshua - Jesus) Millennial Reign”);
- **Sukkot** (Tabernacles) for eight days beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month.
The Feast of Booths (will be fulfilled at the conclusion of the Millennial Reign of Messiah ben David’s (Yeshua - Jesus) on Earth, “The Wedding Feast of the Lamb”).

God introduces these appointed meeting times with the Shabbat—a holy day reminding us that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. It testifies to the fact that God is still actively involved with His creation and sustaining it. That is the starting point for faith.

Since the Israelites are commanded to keep **the Shabbat** *“in all your dwelling places (Leviticus 23:31),”* the Shabbat forges a link between the Creator and every *God fearing* household.

Hebrews 4:1-13, “Therefore, since the promise of entering his **rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it . . .** ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it *“Today”*: . . . *“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts (“ . . . harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,” Hebrews 3:8)’ . . .* ⁹ There remains, then, a **Sabbath-rest** for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God’s **rest** also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ **Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their** (*“those who left Egypt led by Moses,” Hebrews 3:16) example of disobedience. ¹² *For the word of God is alive and active.* Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight.*

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

New Heaven Sabbath

²² *“As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, ‘so will your name and descendants endure.*

²³ *From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me,’ says the LORD.”*

Isaiah 66:22-23

The other appointed times above are sometimes referred to as the *Feasts of Israel* but, in actuality, God says they are the appointed times *of the Lord* - His **moadim**.

These **moadim** were not merely meant to be remembrances of times past; **each one gave the Israelites clues to God’s future plan of redemption for them and the world.** That is, **each of these moadim or appointed feasts points to the Messiah in profoundly spiritual ways.**

Note: It is here in **Genesis 1:14**, that we learn that God put the *“Redemption of Mankind”* in the sings and seasons (sun, moon, stars, and seasons), *“The Appointed Times”*, of his creation, Day 4, a number symbolizing “Rest & Refreshment”, before He had even created man, and even before man had even fallen, and needed God’s Redemption. God had a perfect plan and purpose He created from the beginning of time for the Redemption and Salvation of all things (Matthew 5:8, Ephesians 1:10). This also speaks of God being the Author and Finisher (Hebrews 12:2, John 1:1-4), the Beginning and the End (Revelation 22:13), and the focus and goal of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

“You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

Luke 12:56

We are privileged to see how Jesus has either already fulfilled these feasts in His first appearance on earth or will fulfill them at His Second Coming.

Jesus fulfilled the festivals of Pesach (the Passover sacrifice of a lamb on Nisan 14) with His final sacrificial/atoning death on Nisan 14 as the unblemished Lamb of God. (*Isaiah 53; John 1:36; Hebrews 9:11–14, 22–24*)

Jesus became our Bikkurim (Firstfruits) of the barley harvest held on Nisan 16 when He resurrected on Nisan 16 as the first of all who will rise from the dead on the Last Day. (*Psalms 16:8–11; Acts 2:24–28; 1 Corinthians 15:20–23*)

Shavuot (Pentecost) is a celebration of the giving of the Torah. **On this same day (Sivan 6), Jesus poured out Holy Spirit onto His Believers. The Spirit wrote the Torah on their hearts,** empowering the Believers to live holy lives. (*Joel 2:28; Jeremiah 31:31–33; Acts 2*)

The Fall festivals of Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets or New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) will be fulfilled when the shofar blows and Jesus returns for the second time to establish His reign on earth. It will happen this way:

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet [shofar]; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” 1 Corinthians 15:52

Be Kept Burning Regularly:

Leviticus 24:1-16

The Lamps

24 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² *“Command the people of Israel to bring you **pure oil** (holy) from **beaten olives** (set apart) for the lamp, that a light may **be kept burning regularly.** ³ Outside the veil of the testimony, in the tent of meeting, Aaron shall arrange it from evening to morning before the Lord regularly. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations. ⁴ **He shall arrange the lamps on the lampstand of pure gold before the Lord regularly.***

Bread for the Tabernacle

⁵ *“You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah^[m] shall be in each loaf. ⁶ And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold^[n] before the Lord. ⁷ And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the Lord. ⁸ Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the Lord regularly; it is from*

the people of Israel as a covenant forever. ⁹ And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and **they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the Lord's food offerings, a perpetual due.**”

Punishment for Blasphemy:

Punishment for Blasphemy

¹⁰ Now an Israelite woman's son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, ¹¹ and the Israelite woman's son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. ¹² And they put him in custody, till the will of the Lord should be clear to them.

¹³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵ And speak to the people of Israel, saying, **Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin.** ¹⁶ **Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death.** All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

BLASPHEMES: (STRONG'S NO. 988 – blasphemía): “switches” right for wrong (wrong for right), i.e. calls what God *disapproves*, “right” which “exchanges the truth of God for a lie” (Ro 1:25 - “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie”; **Isa 5:20** - “**you who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.**”). Literally, slow (sluggish) to call something *good* (that *really is good*) – and slow to identify what is truly bad (that really is evil). (THAYER'S GREEK LEXICON – βλασφημία, railing, reviling): *a. universally, slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name.*

i.e. **Mark 3:28-29** - ²⁸ “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹ but whoever **blasphemes** against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin” —

Matthew 12:31-32 - ³¹ **Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.** ³² **Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.**

Luke 12:10 - ¹⁰ **And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.**

i.e. “Mislead” / “Fall Away”: (STRONG'S NO. 4624 – Skandalizó): **to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense; to entrap (apostasy** (defection - revolt) – literally, “**a leaving, from a previous standing**” - (make to) offend).

COGNATE (related definition): properly, *set a snare* (“*stumbling-block*”); (figuratively) “to hinder right conduct or thought; *to cause to stumble*” – **literally, “to fall into a trap”**. **See 4625** (Skandalizó - properly, the trigger of a trap (the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim); (figuratively) an *offense*, putting a *negative cause-and-effect relationship* into motion (ex. “the stick in the trap that springs and closes the trap when the animal touches it”).

b. “to cause a person **to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away,**” and in the passive, **to fall away** (**John 6:61; Matthew 13:21; MATTHEW 24:10; Matthew 26:33, Mark 4:17, Mark 14:29; John 16:1**).

i.e. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-17** (*Paul re-enforces Jesus' Teaching on this same Event*) - **The Man of Lawlessness** - ¹ Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion (apostasia (646) - apostasy) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God . . . ⁷ For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹ **The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,** ¹⁰ and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹ **Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false,** ¹² **in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness . . .** ¹⁵ So then, brothers, **stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.**

Leviticus 24:17-23

An Eye for an Eye

¹⁷ “Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. ¹⁸ Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. ¹⁹ If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, ²⁰ fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. ²¹ Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. ²² You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the Lord your God.” ²³ So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the Lord commanded Moses.

Luke 14:12-24

The Parable of the Great Banquet

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers^[a] or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

¹⁵ When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” ¹⁶ But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant^[b] to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ ¹⁹ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ ²⁰ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ ²¹ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ ²² And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ ²³ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you,^[c] none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

The Call to God’s People Today:

Ezekiel 44:15-31

Rules for Levitical Priests

¹⁵ “But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept the charge of my sanctuary when the people of Israel went astray from me, shall come near to me to minister to me . . . ¹⁶ They shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge . . . ¹⁹ And when they go out into the outer court to the people, they shall put off the garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers. **And they shall put on other garments, lest they transmit holiness to the people with their garments . . .** ²³ **They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.** ²⁴ In a dispute, they shall act as judges, and they shall judge it according to my judgments. **They shall keep my laws and my statutes in all my appointed feasts, and they shall keep my Sabbaths holy.** ²⁵ They shall not defile themselves by going near to a dead person. However, for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister they may defile themselves. ²⁶ After he has become clean, they shall count seven days for him. ²⁷ And on the day that he goes into the Holy Place, into the inner court, to minister in the Holy Place, he shall offer his sin offering, declares the Lord God.

²⁸ “This shall be their inheritance: **I am their inheritance:** and you shall give them no possession in Israel; **I am their possession** . . .

Next Weeks Reading:

Week 31 - BEHAR (On the Mount)

Leviticus 25:1–26:2; Jeremiah 32:6–27; Romans 6:1–23