



Parasha Yitro

January 22, 2022

Torah: Exodus 18:1-20:23

Haftarah: Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6

Ketuvim Shlichim: Matthew 3:1-12

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! Our parasha this week is Yitro, Hebrew for Jethro. Moses' father in law Jethro, the priest of Midian, arrived at the Israelite camp opposite Mount Sinai bringing Moses' wife and two sons to him. Seeing Moses sitting with the people all around him each day, Yitro gave him some very good advice by suggesting that Moses appoint other leaders to assist him in settling the disputes of the people and Moses accepted it. Moses went up on the mountain to ADONAI and He told him that if they would keep His covenant that they would be to Him a kingdom of kohanim, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Moses relayed these words to the people and they responded by saying, "Everything that Adonai has spoken, we will do." On the third day, all Israel was assembled at the base of the mountain which was shrouded in smoke and the mountain quaked. The sound of a shofar grew louder and ADONAI spoke. Moses went up to the top of the mountain to meet Him. ADONAI sent him back down to warn the people not to approach the mountain and to bring Aaron back with him. Then ADONAI spoke the Ten Words saying, "I am ADONAI your G-d, do not worship idols, do not take My name in vain, keep the Shabbat, honor your father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness and do not covet." In fear, the people begged Moses to go and hear ADONAI's words and to repeat them to them.

Our message today is "Yeshua, Our Jewish Messiah, Part 4." One underlying theme of this series is that the Bible is a completely Jewish book and that we cannot properly understand it without recognizing that is what it is. In that same regard, Yeshua is our Jewish Messiah and He cannot be properly understood without seeing Him in His full Jewish context. Last session, we introduced Yochanan the Immerser, John the Baptist, as Yeshua's cousin and forerunner, the Elijah figure of the 1st century. We also examined some of the details surrounding Yeshua's immersion at the Jordan River. Today, we are continuing with more about Yeshua's time at the Jordan and other words of John about Him.

When some Judean leaders, priests and Levites from Jerusalem, came to the Jordan and questioned John, he told them three things. He said: that he was not the Messiah, that he was not Elijah and that he was not the Prophet. But, referring to Yeshua, he added: 26 ... "Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie." (John 1:26b-27 TLV). On the surface, John's comment about Yeshua's sandals seems to be just an offhand comment. But, it was much more than that. Of course, it meant that Yeshua was greater, but it is suggestive of Yeshua as being the goel, the kinsman redeemer of Israel. I'll explain in a moment.

To begin today's discussion, we go to the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. This was an annual atonement for the sins of Israel. From the time of the first Yom Kippur in the wilderness, Yeshua was pictured in each of the three sacrifices, a bull and two goats. But now, in the year 30 CE, He was no longer a picture, but the actual sacrifice. It happened at Passover that year when Yeshua died on the cross as our Passover Lamb. Is there a connection between Yeshua as the Passover Lamb and the Day of Atonement? There is, and you will see why in a few moments. The Book of Hebrews (10:1-4) tells us that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and

goats, the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, to take away sins. That is why the animal sacrifices on that day had to be repeated year after year. Their blood could provide limited atonement, a covering for one year, but not a complete removal of sin. Those annual sacrifices were but a shadow of the reality which was to come, ADONAI's perfect sacrifice, Yeshua. We will learn why He is the fulfillment of the Yom Kippur sacrifice and also how He is our Kinsman Redeemer.

The answer regarding the kinsman redeemer can be found in the way that legal ownership was determined in ancient Israel. It was through the principle of the go'el, גֹּאֵל. In English, it is "redeemer" and by definition it means "a person who is the nearest relative of another." From this, we get the term "kinsman redeemer." The way that it functioned is described in the Book of Ruth. In that story, we learn how Boaz, a resident of Bethlehem, redeemed the property of his deceased relative Chilion, but in the process he also got Chilion's widow Ruth, as his wife. Through the "kinsman redeemer principle," a legal method of transaction in ancient Israel, that new couple, Boaz and Ruth, became the ancestors of our Messiah Yeshua, Boaz, a Jew, and Ruth, a Moabite Gentile. This marriage is also a beautiful picture of ADONAI's eternal plan to redeem the people of the nations of the earth, the Gentiles, through His chosen nation, Israel, the Jews. In the ancient principle, the redemption could only be made by the closest relative. Then, after it was determined who that individual was, another question had to be answered. Would this person be willing to accept the position of go'el, redeemer?

In Boaz's situation, we learn that there was a closer relative to Ruth's deceased husband, who had to first be considered, but he declined to redeem the property. Please read the four short chapters of the Book of Ruth. It's a great story and will help you to better understand. 6 The kinsman said, "Then I cannot redeem it for myself, or else I might endanger my own inheritance" (Ruth 4:6a TLV). His refusal placed Boaz in the position of being the legal redeemer. The closer relative said: 6...."You take my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it" (Ruth 4:6b).

The redemption always took place in front of witnesses who would sign the document in a manner similar to witnesses on a deed today. In this case, the witnesses were the elders of the town of Bethlehem at the city gate, the place where much business took place. This whole affair seems cut and dried and legal and emotionless, but I would have to believe that Boaz was in it because he loved Naomi, not that love was a requirement for redemption. But, all of his actions showed that he loved her. He allowed her complete access to his fields for gleaning and he even encouraged her not to glean in anyone else's field. He gave her food and water and watched over her. I have to believe that there was more in Boaz's motive than gaining property. And, we cannot forget the inspiration of the Ruach, the Holy Spirit. Did ADONAI guide Boaz to this decision and was love a part of that marriage? I believe that the answer is yes to both questions. It was ADONAI's plan for a Jew and a Gentile to become the ancestors of our Jewish Messiah, a picture of Messiah's love for all of the people of His creation.

Here is how the redemption system was carried out. 7 Now in the past in Israel, one removed his sandal and gave it to another, in order to finalize the redemption and transfer of a matter. This was a legal transaction in Israel. 8 So the kinsman said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," then took off his shoe. (Ruth 4:7-8 TLV). The closer relative declined to redeem Ruth's husband's property. By taking off his shoe and handing it to Boaz, he signified that he gave up his legal claim to the lands of Ruth's deceased husband, lands which Boaz could now redeem by marrying Ruth. The closer relative initially wanted to redeem the property, that is, until he found out that to get it he also had to marry Ruth. But, for Boaz, marrying Ruth was not a problem. He gladly accepted his relative's shoe, the action which declared him the go'el, the kinsman redeemer. Boaz redeemed the property, married Ruth, and the rest is history.

Their marriage produced King David and his line, the kings of Israel and his descendant, the rightful, eternal King, Yeshua.

What does this type of redemption have to do with Yeshua? There is no information about this subject in the writings of Yeshua's followers. But, knowing about the ancient kinsman redeemer principle, there is a tiny hint in one place. John was Yeshua's cousin. We learn about this in the story about Miryam, Yeshua's mother, who travelled to visit her relative Elizabeth, John's mother. Read about it in Luke chapter 1. Elizabeth was married to Zechariah, a man from the Tribe of Levi, who was a kohen, a priest of Israel. Their son John was also a kohen, but he had rejected his role of serving in the Temple to be in the wilderness and to proclaim ADONAI's message of repentance. We know John as John the Baptist, Yochanan Hamatbil in Hebrew, John the Immerser.

John said: 26 ... "Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie." (John 1:26b-27). Word had gotten back to Jerusalem that some man was immersing people in the Jordan River and preaching repentance. These officials from Jerusalem wanted to know who this man was. But, John said "no, I'm not the Messiah, I'm not Elijah and I'm not the Prophet" and told them about another one, one who did have the authority about which they were inquiring. By saying that he was unworthy of untying Yeshua's sandals, he said to them that he, a close relative of Yeshua, was "not" the kinsman redeemer. We can paraphrase what John said in this way: "Yeshua is the owner of the sandal of the go'el and He has the right to redeem Israel; He is the Kinsman Redeemer. He is the Redeemer who is the Messiah." The redemption was spiritual, not physical. It involved no real property, but it did involve the souls of every Israelite. By dying as a sacrifice for their sins, Yeshua redeemed His kinsmen.

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz's relative's words were: "Buy it for yourself". As the only possible redeemer of all Israel, Yeshua, the rightful descendant of King David, had the right to redeem Israel, to "buy" their salvation with His own blood. Isaiah prophesied: 20 "But a Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression." It is a declaration of Adonai." (Isaiah 59:20 TLV). Isaiah said: a goel will come Zion, to Israel. ADONAI's Goel, whom we know is Yeshua, has come to Zion and the people of Israel, the Jews. But, He has also come to all who call upon His name. Sha'ul, speaking of the Messiah, said: 13 "For "Everyone who calls upon the name of Adonai shall be saved." (Romans 10:13 TLV). John, Yeshua's cousin, was a kohen, a priest of Israel and the Elijah figure calling people into repentance in the 1st century. But, he had no legal right to redeem Israel. His action of calling them to repentance was a step toward their redemption, but he was not the redeemer. As he said, he was not worthy to untie Yeshua's sandal. Yeshua was and is the Goel, the Redeemer of Israel.

The next day John saw Yeshua coming toward him and said: 29 ..., "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b TLV), a direct reference to Yeshua as the Passover Lamb. But, what is the spiritual significance of the Passover lamb? How could an animal that was killed, cooked and then eaten take away the sin of the world? It couldn't. The lamb of Passover was not a sacrifice. In order for John to know this about Yeshua, he also would have known that it would be through Yeshua's death. I believe he saw the sacrificed Lamb of God with His blood on the cross, the fulfillment of the shadow, the picture, provided by the lamb in the Egyptian Passover. Just as the blood of the lamb in Egypt when placed on the doorframes of their houses, caused the Destroyer to pass over the houses and spare the first born sons, so also, Yeshua's blood when applied to the hearts of the people of Israel and all our hearts can prevent Death from separating us from ADONAI. This happens because Yeshua is our sacrifice for sin, but not as a Passover Lamb sacrifice. The actual Passover lamb

itself when killed and eaten provided no forgiveness of sin. ADONAI's, G-d's, plan of salvation is very specific and He has very precisely laid it out.

In our confession of faith which we made this morning, Yeshua is pictured as an actual sacrifice. From Isaiah 53, we read: "Despised and rejected, acquainted with grief, He bore the sins of Israel. All we like sheep have gone astray, turned everyone to his own way." He is Yeshua. Regarding Him, verse 10 says: 10 "Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of Adonai will succeed by His hand." (Isaiah 53:10 TLV). This verse says that Yeshua is an asham, a guilt offering, which makes us His offspring if we accept His sacrifice. An asham was one of the offerings made at the altar during Tabernacle and Temple days. Here, Yeshua is pictured as an actual offering.

His life as a sacrifice is also pictured in another place, in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, through the goats of Yom Kippur. ADONAI, G-d, has a Tabernacle in heaven which was the pattern for the Tabernacle which Moses constructed in the wilderness. Speaking of the priests, we read: 5 "They offer service in a replica and foreshadower of the heavenlies—one that is just as Moses was instructed by God when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For He says, "See that you make everything according to the design that was shown to you on the mountain." (Hebrews 8:5 TLV). The replica was on earth, but the real Tabernacle was in heaven. As our High Priest, our Kohen Gadol after the order of Malkitzedek, Yeshua ministers in that heavenly Tabernacle as the Great High Priest of an everlasting priesthood. As the Book of Hebrews says, if He was ministering on the earth, He wouldn't be a priest at all because He is from the Tribe of Judah and not the Tribe of Levi.

On ancient Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the high priestly descendants of Aaron would sacrifice a goat in the Temple as atonement for the sins of the people of Israel and its blood would cover their sins for one year. But, Yeshua did something much, much better. He atoned for our sins forever by taking His own blood into the Tabernacle in heaven and placing it on the mercy seat of the Holy Ark there. By doing this, He fulfilled the sacrifice of the Yom Kippur goat for ADONAI. In Hebrews 9 it says: 11 "But when Messiah appeared as Kohen Gadol of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect Tent not made with hands (that is to say not of this creation), 12 He entered into the Holies once for all—not by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12 TLV). As High Priest, Yeshua entered the greater and more perfect Tent, the Tabernacle in Heaven with His own blood. His atonement is a perfect atonement, a complete and permanent forgiveness of our sins. Yeshua, our great High Priest, fulfilled the requirement of Leviticus 17:11 which says: 11 "For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life." (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). That requirement had never been changed. Blood is required to make atonement. Yeshua made atonement for us by sprinkling His own blood on the mercy seat of the Ark in heaven. In the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it was the blood of an innocent one which covered sin, a covering mirroring what happened in the Tabernacle in heaven. The sacrifice to be offered in the Tabernacle on earth was a picture of sinlessness offered in the place of another, one who had sinned. ADONAI, the Father, cannot look upon sin and it is the blood of the sinless sacrifice which covers us and shields us from the wrath of a Holy G-d. We no longer have an earthly Temple, but we don't need one, because Yeshua's blood which He placed in the heavenly Tabernacle covers our sin. We are all sinners and as sinners we are separated from G-d by our sins. Yeshua's blood covers our sins when we come to Him in repentance and accept His sacrifice.

There is one more aspect of Yom Kippur regarding Yeshua. In the Tabernacle on earth, each Yom Kippur there was a second goat called "Azazel, the Scapegoat." On Yom Kippur the

High Priest would put both of his hands into a wooden case and remove two lots in the form of two golden plates. One was inscribed “for יהוה (YodHehVavHeh)” (for ADONAI) and the other “for Azazel.” Holding the plates in the order in which he drew them, the High Priest laid his hands on the heads of the two goats and proclaimed, “A sin-offering to יהוה,” speaking ADONAI's actual name aloud. Today, the pronunciation of the Hebrew YHVH is uncertain and we do not attempt to pronounce it. But, in that time it was spoken on Yom Kippur but at no other time. The goat chosen for ADONAI by lot, later had the people's sins confessed over it and was sacrificed followed by the High Priest sprinkling its blood on the Ark in the Holy of Holies. This goat and its blood was the sacrifice which Yeshua fulfilled by sprinkling His own blood on the Ark in the heavenly Tabernacle. But before the earthly High Priest sacrificed the goat for ADONAI, the goat for Azazel also had the people's sins confessed over it and was then led out into the wilderness by a priest. Leviticus 16 tells us that this goat was to be presented alive to ADONAI: 10 “But the goat upon which the lot for the scapegoat fell is to be presented alive before Adonai, to make atonement upon it, by sending it away as the scapegoat into the wilderness.” (Leviticus 16:10 TLV).

What does Azazel represent and why might we think that “the Scapegoat” represents Yeshua? One reason is because this event occurred on the Day of Atonement which is itself a prophetic picture of Yeshua. On Yom Kippur, this goat had the sins of the people placed upon it and it provided atonement as Leviticus 16 says. It was to be presented alive to ADONAI, but at some point in time the priests began pushing it off a cliff to its death. That this goat died did not change the fact that ADONAI said that it was to be presented alive as an atonement. The scapegoat, taken outside the camp, provided atonement for Israel on Yom Kippur along with the sacrifice of the goat for ADONAI. Both of them had the sins of the people of Israel confessed over them, a picture of Yeshua, who carried our sins. Year to year atonement was provided by these goats up until Yeshua's death on the stake. But, then it stopped. Years later, the rabbis noticed something strange. The Talmud, the writings of the rabbis, explains what they saw. Mishnah Yoma, a section of the Talmud, says that on Yom Kippur the High Priest would take a crimson thread, cut it in half and attach one portion to the Temple door and the other to the Scapegoat's horns. It goes on to say that the cord nailed to the Temple door would always turn white when ADONAI accepted the Scapegoat as a sacrifice in the wilderness. But, at a certain point in time, the Talmud states that the crimson thread on the Temple door no longer turned white and that this change began forty years before the Temple was destroyed. The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 CE. In the year 30, the crimson thread stopped turning white, the very year that Yeshua died on the stake for our sins. After the year 30, the year that Yeshua died as our Yom Kippur sacrifice and as our Pesach Lamb, Temple sacrifices ceased to provide atonement. From the time of Yeshua's death forward, the Yom Kippur sacrifices and all of the sacrifices offered by the earthly priests were ineffective. They no longer provided atonement. The crimson thread on the Temple door never again turned white. And, it was because that in the middle of the week, on Passover, in the year 30 CE, Yeshua's sacrificial death ended the effectiveness of Levitical sacrifices in the earthly Temple forever.

Some 600 years earlier, Jeremiah had prophesied a new covenant which ADONAI would make with Israel. ADONAI said: 30 “Behold, days are coming” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”— (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). The night before His death on the stake, Yeshua celebrated Passover with His disciples. He explained to them how the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah would be placed in effect. 26 Now while they were eating, Yeshua took matzah ; and after He offered the bracha, He broke and gave to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 And He took a cup; and after giving thanks, He gave to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the removal of sins”

(Matthew 26:26-28 TLV). Yeshua's blood was the blood of the New Covenant, the blood which when shed, made it effective. In ancient days, it was common for two parties to make a covenant with each other, in effect, a binding contract regarding something they had agreed upon. In actuality, they would "cut a covenant" with each other, a blood covenant, a ceremony which could contain a number of different elements. The central act was the "cutting." An animal was killed and cut in two and the two halves laid opposite each other. The two men would walk between the two halves while saying "may G-d do this and more to me if I break this covenant." Then each would cut the palm of their hand and clasp hands allowing the blood to mingle. Sometimes they would exchange names, adding a part of the other's name to their own name and they would state the terms of the covenant before a witness, pledging their assets to the other. If something happened to you, your covenant partner would see that your wife and children were taken care of. Sometimes, a memorial meal with bread and wine was eaten. We see that symbolism, the covenant meal, as Yeshua ate the Passover with His disciples.

Yeshua's cutting of the covenant for us does not exactly follow these ancient elements, but does in principle establish the covenant rights. ADONAI's cutting of the covenant for Abraham in Genesis 15 also had some of these traditional elements. Since it was a custom of his time, Abraham was familiar with the ritual of cutting a covenant and ADONAI used something familiar to him to make an eternal promise. Through His covenant with Abraham, ADONAI promised the land of Israel to his descendants forever. The same was true with Yeshua's cutting of the covenant. The shedding of His blood was the act of cutting of the covenant. Some of these elements were there. But, there was one major difference between the cutting of a covenant between two men and ADONAI cutting a covenant. In a human covenant each person had covenant responsibilities, but in the Abrahamic Covenant, nothing depended on Abraham. Everything depended on ADONAI, who promised to be faithful to His covenant. The same is true for the New Covenant. It is guaranteed by ADONAI and sealed by His Son Yeshua's blood. All we have to do is accept it. And the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all testify that the New Covenant is an everlasting covenant.

That was what Yeshua explained to His disciples at His last Passover Seder as He invited them to symbolically partake of His body and blood, something which would put the New Covenant into effect the next day. And, the next day, the covenant was cut with Yeshua's own body and blood. The Passover lamb that died and was eaten for their seder meal was a symbol of the Passover lamb in Egypt whose blood on the doorposts of their homes caused the Death Angel to pass over them. In the same way, Yeshua is the Passover lamb, whose blood when applied to our hearts as an acceptance of His sacrifice, will cause eternal death, eternal separation from ADONAI, to pass over us. It gives us eternal life. But, the more specific action of atonement regarding Yeshua's blood had to do with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Yom Kippur as a prophetic picture of Yeshua was fulfilled when He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven taking His own blood into the Tabernacle there and placing it on the Holy Ark. Yeshua entered the original Tabernacle, the one in heaven which was made without hands and placed His blood on the mercy seat as an atonement for our sins, past, present and future. He did this as ADONAI's anointed High Priest and in doing so, eternally paid the sin price. He only had to do it once and it became eternally effective, an everlasting covenant.

As Matthew chapter 1, verse 1 clearly shows, Yeshua is King David's legal descendant and heir to his throne, the throne of Israel. It says: 1 The book of the genealogy of Yeshua ha-Mashiach, Ben-David, Ben-Avraham: (Matthew 1:1 TLV). "The book of the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, Son of David, son of Abraham." As Son of David, He is the Goel, the Kinsman Redeemer of Israel. Redeem means "to gain or regain possession of something in exchange for payment." Love was not a requirement to be an ancient kinsman redeemer, but it was certainly

the motivation for Yeshua, who redeemed us, His bride whom He loves. Yeshua redeemed the people of Israel and everyone who calls upon His name with the payment of His body and blood. As the Lamb which takes away the sin of the world, Yeshua causes the Death Angel to pass over our houses, our earthly bodies, providing us eternal life when we accept His sacrifice. As the Scapegoat, He is our atonement and as the sacrificed goat for ADONAI of Yom Kippur, He obtained eternal atonement for us by placing His own blood in the heavenly Tabernacle.

ADONAI's plans for us, the people of His creation, are detailed and specific. As disciples of Yeshua, it is our job to know these things so that in addition to our own eternal security, we may also be witnesses of this to others. As our Jewish Messiah, Yeshua perfectly fulfilled all that was required of Him, first as an individual Jew, second as the Goel, third as the Passover Lamb and fourth as the goats of Yom Kippur. It was His love for us which caused Him to lay down His life for us. With open arms, He welcomes each of us to come to Him. He said: 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28 TLV). Shabbat Shalom!