



Parasha *Shemini*

March 26, 2022

Torah: Leviticus 9:1-11:47

Haftarah: 2Samuel 6:1-7:17

Ketuwim Shlichim: 1Peter 1:13-21; 2:9-10

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! Our *parasha* today is *Shemini*, meaning “eighth.” ADONAI commanded Aaron and his sons to remain in the Tabernacle during the seven days of their consecration. This *parasha* begins on the 8th day, the day after their consecration was completed when ADONAI appeared to Israel. After the offerings were placed on the altar, fire came forth from ADONAI and consumed them. That was when *Nadav* and *Avihu*, Aaron's sons, decided to take it upon themselves to offer fire before ADONAI. *Torah* says they: *1 ... offered unauthorized fire before Adonai—which He had not commanded them.* (Leviticus 10:1b TLV). That same holy fire from ADONAI which had just consumed the offerings now came forth from Him again and consumed them. The *rabbis* suggest that they were drunk when they did this. Or, did they use common fire from the kitchen fire? Did they enter the Holy of Holies with their incense? There are a number of other possibilities, but Scripture doesn't tell us more. But, there is a lesson from *Nadav* and *Avihu*? It is the same lesson that we learn from our *haftarah* reading today (2Samuel 6:1-7:17). *Uzzah* died because he innocently touched the Ark of the Covenant to steady it when the oxen stumbled. But, the fault was King David's who took it upon himself to do holy work which ADONAI had only given to the *kohanim*. We should not do something that we "think" that ADONAI would like for us to do. We must be sure that what we do is in agreement with His Word. We are not exempt from His judgment because of good intentions and *Uzzah* is a perfect example. Failure to follow ADONAI's specific instructions is also what kept Moses out of the Promised Land. Because he did not speak to the rock at *Meribah*, but out of frustration with the people, struck it, he was denied the privilege of entering the Land. By striking the rock, Moses misrepresented ADONAI, the same sin which his nephews *Nadav* and *Abihu* and David had committed.

Also in this *parasha*, we have the “kosher laws,” what is to be eaten and what is not to be eaten by those who accept ADONAI's covenant for themselves. Only mammals which have a split hoof and chew the cud may be eaten. Among things which live in water, only fish with fins and scales may be eaten. Certain insects and certain birds may be eaten but not the unclean animals and birds which are listed.

The messages of the last eight weeks have contained a lot of information, information which we need in order to make informed decisions about how we serve ADONAI. The message today is primarily exhortation. We have the information. We know what to do, but we need to be encouraged to do what ADONAI has commanded us to do. This is a message of exhortation for the whole body of Messiah, a group which in recent years has withdrawn further and further away from following ADONAI.

I'm not a prophet and don't claim to be, but I am exhorting you today just as Jeremiah exhorted Judah during their time of great sinfulness before their deportation to Babylon. *1 The word that came to Jeremiah from Adonai, saying: 2 Stand in the gate of Adonai's house and proclaim there this word and say: "Hear the word of Adonai, all you of Judah that come through these gates to worship Adonai. 3 Thus says Adonai-Tzva'ot, the God of Israel; mend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you live in this place. 4 Do not trust in deceptive words and say 'The Temple of Adonai, the Temple of Adonai, the Temple of Adonai!' 5 "No, if you truly mend your ways and your deeds—if you are doing justice between a man and his neighbor, 6 not oppressing the sojourner, orphan and widow nor shedding innocent blood in this place, nor going after other gods to your own ruin— 7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever. 8 Look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are empty. 9 Will you steal, murder, and commit adultery and perjury, and offer incense to Baal and walk after other gods whom you have not known— 10 and then come and stand before Me in this house that bears My Name, saying, 'We are saved!'—so that you may keep doing all these abominations? 11 Has this House, which bears My Name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Look, even I have seen it!" It is a declaration of Adonai.*" (Jeremiah 7:1-11 TLV). The people of Judah did not respond to Jeremiah's exhortation. Today, when the world is growing darker and darker, Yeshua's body is also growing further and further away from Him. Many within His body now determine their own righteousness by interpreting ADONAI's Word as they wish it to be. As a group, we are very much like King Saul who was commanded to completely destroy the Amalekites and all their possessions. But Saul, took it upon himself to decide what to do and brought the Amalekite king and the choicest flocks back. Because of this ADONAI ripped the kingship from him and his family. *22 Samuel said: "Does Adonai delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Adonai? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay heed than the fat of rams."* (1Samuel 15:22 TLV).

Our *parasha* deals with some of the responsibilities of the *kohanim*, the priests. They had multiple responsibilities and had to carry out ADONAI's instructions precisely or there were serious consequences. It seems strange today that ADONAI would create a world and people and then have them kill animals in order to honor Him. Why would he have a separate group of people, the priests, to carry out His instructions? Why are some foods clean and some not clean? These are all questions which people ask today. There is no simple answer and the truth is that we don't know the complete answer. But, one thing we do know. ADONAI separates the holy and the common. He tells us what is holy and we must respect it as holy. And, He has appointed His *kohanim* to instruct the people, to show them the difference between the holy and the common.

We no longer have a Tabernacle or offer sacrifices, but the lessons that we learn from the things which ADONAI commanded to take place there are shadows of what He requires of us today. ADONAI is holy and we must treat Him as holy. He says this: *45 "For I am Adonai who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. Therefore, you should be holy, for I am holy."* (Leviticus 11:45 TLV). Being holy means that ADONAI is absolutely pure, unstained by sin and evil and is perfect in every way, good all the time. If we are to have the relationship with Him which He desires, we are told that we, too, must be holy. Because He is holy, those of us in relationship with Him must be holy. The usual definition for holy is to be set apart. If we are to be holy, we must be set apart from the common things, the things which are not holy. A person doesn't have to be holy. It's a choice. He can choose not to follow ADONAI. We are not forced to love Him and follow Him. But, if we do choose

to follow Him, there are requirements for us, requirements which keep us spiritually clean and set apart for Him, separate from the common things, things which He has called sin.

Aaron, the High Priest, and his sons were for many years a foreshadowing of that which was to come, ADONAI's perfect High Priest, His Son Yeshua. Then, the perfect came and Aaron's descendants became High Priest in name only. ADONAI's plan had been fulfilled: His Son Yeshua was sacrificed and in rising from the dead, became the High Priest of Israel. But, the picture which we see in Aaron and his sons is still important, important because it teaches us what our responsibilities are as *kohanim*. *Shimon Kefa*, writing to Jews in the diaspora, said: 9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9 TLV). *Kefa* said to them: "You Jews are a royal priesthood, a fulfillment in Yeshua of ADONAI's words to Israel as they stood before Mount Sinai:" 6 So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of *kohanim* and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6 TLV). Those same words now also apply to the people of the Nations who have trusted Yeshua and are fellow covenant members of ADONAI's New Covenant with Israel. *Shimon Kefa's* words tell us that we, the covenant members, have now assumed the responsibilities of the *kohanim*, the Tabernacle priests. Yeshua, our *Kohen Gadol*, has very clearly laid out our responsibilities to Him as His *kohenim*. Are those of us in His body following what He has laid out for us to do?

For us, *Yeshua's kohenim*, there is no physical Temple, but there definitely is a structure which we serve. It is the perfect Tabernacle in heaven from which Yeshua ministers as *Kohen HaGadol*. All who have trusted Him are His *kohanim*, His priests. Among those who say they serve Him, there are those who say yes Lord and then continue to live their old lives. They say the magic words, "I have faith," believing that's all they are to do. Continuing in their sin, they never actually serve as *kohanim*. Yeshua is their judge. There are others of us who sincerely believe, but refuse to do all of the work of a *kohen*. We want to go directly into the Holy of Holies and to spiritual things. We refuse to shovel the dung of the sacrifices, clean up the blood and take it all out and burn it outside the camp. A true *kohen* of Yeshuadoes it all and willingly.

One of the first commands ADONAI gave was for Israel to assemble themselves. He established the pattern when He commanded Moses to build a Tabernacle just like the one in heaven, a place where the people would assemble before Him to worship Him. But, Israel rebelled and went their own way. They profaned the Temple as Jeremiah said. They used the Temple for their own purposes and turned away from ADONAI. Then, in captivity in Babylon, they began to make *teshuvah* and return to ADONAI. There, without a Temple, they met in homes which became the synagogues, "little sanctuaries" as described by early sages. As the years went on and the Temple was rebuilt, the synagogues became more and more important. They were places of worship in the localities of the people.

ADONAI's command to assemble had never changed. He said: 3 "Work may be done for six days, but (1) the seventh day is a Shabbat of solemn rest, (2) a holy convocation. You are to do no work—it is (3) a Shabbat to Adonai in all your dwellings." (Leviticus 23:3 TLV). There are three important points in this verse, but we're only speaking of two of them, 2 and 3, today. What is a "holy convocation?" The Hebrew words are *mikrah kodesh*, מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ. What is a convocation? The dictionary says it is: 1. A formal assembly of people. 2. The action of calling people together for assembly. In proclaiming this verse, ADONAI calls us, Israel, to assemble ourselves before Him. The seventh day of the week is a holy convocation. We are

to assemble ourselves before Him in group worship. It is holy, set apart from the common days of the week. The seventh day is to be observed in all of our dwellings, wherever they are on the earth. It's ADONAI's Sabbath no matter where we are.

In the 1st century, Yeshua's followers were being persecuted and even killed by the Sadducees and Pharisees who opposed them. What was the level of commitment of Yeshua's *kohanim*, the saved Jews of Judea, during the years before the Temple was destroyed? The disciples and those who responded to their salvation message had been very fruitful in their evangelism in the thirty-odd years since Yeshua's death. When *Sha'ul* made his last visit to Jerusalem, he said: *17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters welcomed us gladly. 18 On the next day, Paul went in with us to Jacob; all the elders were present. 19 After greeting them, he reported to them in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his service. 20 And when they heard, they began glorifying God. They said, "You see, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jewish people who have believed—and they are all zealous for the Torah."* (Acts 21:17-20 TLV). In this short period of time since Yeshua died on the stake, there were myriads of Jewish believers, tens of thousands of them. And, they were all zealous for the *Torah*, zealous to observe what ADONAI had commanded. Yeshua's brother *Ya'acov* had said a few years earlier: *21 "For Moses from ancient generations has had in every city those who proclaim him, since he is read in all the synagogues every Shabbat."* (Acts 15:21 TLV). To be zealous for the *Torah* also meant that they faithfully attended the synagogues.

The book of Acts comments on *Sha'ul's* worship practices. It tells us that he went into the traditional synagogues each *Shabbat* and taught them about Yeshua. When he was no longer welcome in a particular synagogue, he met with groups of believers in other places—on *Shabbat*. During this same time, we don't find much about synagogue worship regarding the believers in Judea and what they did on *Shabbat*, but we do find some information in history. We learn that they didn't rush out and form Messianic synagogues either before or after the destruction of the Temple. They worshipped in the existing synagogues. And, there were plenty of them around. As *Ya'acov* said, one in every city. But, in Jerusalem, Josephus reported that there were some 400 synagogues. Yeshua's followers worshipped with the non-believers in the traditional synagogues. They were called to be obedient to *Torah* and to be witnesses. And, this went on for years, even after the Temple was destroyed in the year 70.

But, there was continuing contention between the two groups, the Messianic Jews and the rabbinic Jews, and eventually the rabbinic Jews sought a way to get rid of the Messianic Jews. *HaTefillah*, "The Prayer," had been prayed daily in the synagogues from about a generation before Yeshua. It was through an addition to it that the rabbinic Jews hoped to discourage Yeshua's followers from attending synagogue. According to the *Talmud*, this effort was directed by *Gamliel* II, the grandson of *Sha'ul's* teacher *Gamliel*, sometime around the year 80. *Amidah* means standing and is also referred to as "the Standing," a reference to the way that the prayer is prayed. Another name for it, *Shemoneh Esrei*, means "eighteen." Initially, "The Prayer" had eighteen benedictions, but *Gamliel* II added a nineteenth. It was against informers and heretics and was inserted as the twelfth prayer. It became known as the *Birkat HaMinim*, the blessing on the heretics. It was not a blessing, but a curse and was used as a test to see if Yeshua's followers would pronounce a curse on themselves. Even in the face of this opposition, many Messianic Jews persisted in their worship in the synagogues for another fifty years, up until the arrival of *Bar Kochba* around the year 130. Proclaimed to be the Messiah by *Rabbi Akivah*, that ended it for Yeshua's followers. They could not worship him as Messiah and left the synagogues. But, the end of the Second Jewish Revolt

in 135 also ended it for all synagogues because the Roman Emperor Hadrian, who defeated *Bar Kochba's* forces, made some changes. He destroyed Jewish Jerusalem and rebuilt it as a Roman city, banning all Jews from Jerusalem and Israel.

The Messianic Jews could not follow *Bar Kochba* because Yeshua had taught them: 8 “*But you are not to be called rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man on earth your father; for One is your Father, who is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Messiah.*” (Matthew 23:8-10 TLV). But, Yeshua was not referring to the title “rabbi,” but to whom you worship. I don’t think that any of you worship me. I’m not your Messiah, just your exhorter. You honor me with the title, rabbi, but Yeshua was not referring to the title. He was referring to the person whom they followed. In the first century a group of disciples followed Rabbi *Shamai* and a group followed Rabbi *Hillel*. And, there were other rabbis with their followers. Yeshua said, “don’t follow them as your Messiah. There is only One Messiah.”

We have had quite a few “false Rabbis” since the 1st century. *Bar Kochba* was one and there have been many more. We’ve also had some in recent years. One was Jim Jones, a supposed minister of the Gospel. After his church in California came under public scrutiny, he led his flock to the nation of Guyana where they formed a colony. Congressman Leo Ryan of California, who had gone down to investigate what was going on, was murdered by Jones’ men. Jones then orchestrated a group suicide and his followers drank cyanide laced Kool-Aid and 900 men, women and children died. “Rabbi” Jones shot himself and his messiahship ended.

In the 1980’s, a cult leader from India, Rajneesh, formed a community and eventually a city in northern Oregon. With around 7,000 followers doing his dirty work, Rajneesh carried out bioterrorism to influence elections and to try to take over the local government. His followers infected the salad bars of ten restaurants with salmonella so that on election day, there would be a reduced voter turnout and his followers would win. They didn’t. They also attempted to kill the US attorney who was investigating them. Finally, accused of numerous crimes, “Rabbi” Rajneesh was put in jail and eventually deported to India where he soon died. And, all of his disciples dispersed.

In the late 1980;s, David Koresh, whose real name was Wayne Howell, took over the leadership of the Branch Davidians, an offshoot of the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists. He claimed to be its final prophet and his teaching on the Book of Revelation and the Seven Seals attracted a number of followers. He used his position to physically and sexually abuse a number of women and children. In 1993 Koresh blockaded his group inside their compound outside Waco, Texas after some of his followers had killed four ATF agents. Eventually, after a 51 day standoff, the building was rushed by ATF agents. Somehow, it caught fire and 79 people burned to death. David Koresh died from a gunshot wound to the head. “Rabbi Koresh,” who took his name from Koresh, Cyrus the Great, the Persian king who freed the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, ended as all other false messiahs have, being exposed for what they were.

I could have used “Father” or “Teacher” in my examples, but you get the point. Yeshua wasn’t talking about the titles rabbi, teacher or father. He was talking about the person elevating himself to a position of receiving worship from his followers, essentially becoming a messiah figure. Yeshua said that there is only One Rabbi, One Father and One Teacher.

Men and women are not to elevate themselves and gather followers. We must follow only Yeshua.

I believe that the message that I've brought today is urgent. It has been on my heart for some time. After deciding to give it and with 95% of it already completed, I got a text yesterday afternoon from one of you *mishpacha*. What was in the text confirmed to me that this is ADONAI's message for today. Please watch this video. (Jonathan Cahn news release-new movie. Fathomevents.com).

Jonathan's message to our nation is very clear. The action required in *The Harbinger* series is on a personal level. Jonathan's message and mine are the same. It's a message to the body of Messiah. We are giving warning. Yeshua has called each of us to be His *kohenim* and *talmidim*, priests and disciples. But, to what extent have we accepted that calling? This is a message to every follower of Yeshua. We can all be better *kohenim* and *talmidim*. How are we different from Yeshua's 1st century *talmidim* who were so zealous for the *Torah*? Are we more enlightened now and therefore don't need to be as zealous anymore? To be zealous for the *Torah* is to be zealous for the Living *Torah*, Yeshua, the author of *Torah*, walking faithfully as He has commanded us.

Jonathan has exhorted us since 2011 when *The Harbinger* was published. I can't believe that it's been eleven years! But, during these eleven years, Yeshua's body has not drawn closer, but further away. Jonathan is the Jeremiah of our day. We have been warned. It is the eleventh hour. We must respond now or it will be too late. *Sha'ul* said: 5 "Test yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Examine yourselves! Or don't you know yourselves—that Messiah Yeshua is in you? Unless of course you failed the test." (2Corinthians 13:5 TLV). Each of us must examine his own life. Yeshua said: 24 "..., "If anyone wants to follow after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24 TLV). We must lay down our personal selfish desires and take up His commands. He taught us: "Call no one rabbi." We are not going to follow a Jim Jones or a David Koresh. There is very little danger that we will be deceived in that way. The very real danger is that we will follow ourselves. We have called ourselves "rabbi" and put ourselves in the place of Rabbi Yeshua by ignoring His commands and instituting our own commands. Call no man rabbi except the One true Rabbi, Yeshua, and return to Him, zealous for His *Torah*! Pray that Yeshua's body in the United States will respond to the Harbinger message and judgment will not come upon us. *Shabbat shalom!*

