



Pesach VIII

April 23, 2022

*Torah:* Deuteronomy 14:22-15:17; Numbers 28:19-25

*Haftarah:* Isaiah 10:32-12:6

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Luke 24:13-27

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* Yes, we have no bananas! We have no bananas today! I may have sung that for you before. It was first sung by Frank Silver and was a major hit and number 1 on the Hit Parade for five weeks in 1923. All of that was to say that “yes, we have no *parasha* today.” The rabbis have not seen fit to give us one today. We use the actual Hebrew calendar, the calendar controlled by rabbinic authorities, because we believe that ADONAI has given the Jews the authority to make the official calendar. But, we don’t agree with everything in it, especially if it does not line up with *Torah*.

That is what we have today and had last *Shabbat*. This is not to say that the rabbis cannot use the *Torah* portions as they see fit and where they see fit. In this case, they have seen fit to add an extra day to the festival in the diaspora, those outside Israel. But, the problem for us is that there is no *Pesach* I as in last *Shabbat* and no *Pesach* VIII, as in today. According to *Torah*, there is only one day of Passover, *Nisan* 14, and then seven days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, *Chag HaMatzot*, *Nisan* 15 through 21. The seven days ended yesterday, Friday, with the Festival day of *Shabbat*, a *Shabbaton*, the seventh day of *Chag HaMatzot*, the Festival of Unleavened Bread. There are no eight days of *Pesach*. You can check it out in Leviticus 23, verses 5 and 6. But, we are a part of Israel and Israel is a part of us, so we do the best we can. Yes, we have no *parasha*, we have no *parasha* today!

We continue today in our study of *Sha’ul*, *Sha’ul* the Messianic Jew, trying to understand what he as a *shaliach*, an Apostle, has taught us. As we said in our last session, he was not a Christian in the sense of the Christianity of today, but was a very faithful Messianic Jew. What is a Messianic Jew? In *Sha’ul’s* case, it was one faithful to *Torah* observance. We clearly showed that last session with Romans chapters 2 and 3 and also his own confession. But also, being called to minister to the Gentiles, *Sha’ul* identified with them. In 1Corinthians 9:19-23, he described how he had made himself a slave to all in order to win more of them. To the Jew, he identified as a Jew, to those under *Torah*, he became like one under *Torah*, even though he said that he, himself, was not under *Torah*. This is what was explained last session. Being under *Torah* meant that some Jews of that day believed that along with being a part of the Jewish people, keeping *Torah* was their means of salvation. As a follower of Yeshua, *Sha’ul* recognized the importance of following *Torah*, but not that it could save you. He identified with those outside *Torah*, the Gentiles, and also with the weak, those *Torah* observing followers of Yeshua who could not bring themselves to eat kosher meat which had been offered to idols. *Sha’ul* had taught that there was nothing wrong with eating it; except when it made your brother stumble. He concluded by saying: 22 ... “*I have become all things to all men, so that by all means possible I might save some.*” (1Corinthians 9:22b TLV).

This does not mean that he did the things that these others did, far from it. He identified with them where they were in order to bring them to salvation through Yeshua. After salvation was when the teaching began. In Athens, he identified with the Greeks there by saying: 22 ..... “Men of Athens, I see that in all ways you are very religious. 23 For while I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an Unknown God.’ Therefore what you worship without knowing, this I proclaim to you.” (Acts 17:22b-23 TLV). Then, he proclaimed the Gospel to them. Some scoffed, but a few met with him later for further instruction.

Romans chapter 7 is another difficult chapter to understand. *Sha’ul* begins by saying: 1 Or do you not know, brothers and sisters (for I speak to those who know law), that the law is master over a person as long as he lives? (Romans 7:1 TLV). *Sha’ul* said this to those who knew the law, the *Torah*. Of Yeshua’s followers of today, we here at *Beit Shalom* must certainly should know the law. He goes on to give the example of a married woman. If she has relations with another man, the *Torah* condemns her as an adulteress. But, if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning him and is free to marry again: 3 .... But if her husband dies, she is free from the law—so she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. (Romans 7:3b TLV). She is not an adulteress because she is now married (emphasis on now married) to another man. Some make the mistake of emphasizing “the law,” in this verse believing that it means “all of the law.” But, in *Sha’ul*’s example, the woman is only free from the law which would make her an adulterer if her husband were living. *Torah* allows her to marry after her husband dies. But, she will still be a violator of the law as an adulteress if she engages in sex outside of her new marriage.

So, in that regard, she is not completely free from that law. What *Sha’ul* was doing here was making a *midrash*, a method of biblical interpretation. His point is that we are delivered from the “condemnation” of the *Torah*. *Torah* condemns us if we try to keep it for justification before ADONAI, something we are not doing. The death he referred to is an allusion to Yeshua’s death, which freed us from the condemnation that comes when one tries to follow the Law outside of faith. Did you catch that? It’s alright to try and follow the law after you have come to faith. In fact, you should! Even when we have trusted in Yeshua, the law still has a purpose. If we violate it, it condemns us as sinners. *Yochanan*, John, said: 4 *Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness—indeed, sin is lawlessness.* (1John 3:4 TLV). The Complete Jewish Bible makes it even clearer. *4 Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah — indeed, sin is violation of Torah.* (1John 3:4 CJB).

*Sha’ul* comments further about “*Torah keeping*” in his closing blessing to the Book of Romans. Referring to the mystery of the Gospel, he said: 26 .. but now is revealed and through the Writings of the Prophets has been made known to all the nations, according to the commandment of the eternal God to bring about obedience of faith— 27 to the only wise God, through Yeshua the Messiah, to Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 16:26-27 TLV). What is underlined here means: “Through Yeshua, ADONAI has commanded that the Nations be faithfully obedient.” But, obedient to what? The obedience “of faith” means that because we trust in Yeshua for our salvation, we will be obedient to His commands. As we know, He is the author of all *Torah*, and we are to obey His commands, that is, those commands which can apply to us today. We are here today, keeping the *Shabbat*, because Yeshua commanded us to do it. Have you ever thought about that? Every commandment which we either keep or violate was commanded by Yeshua, the author of *Torah*. The Complete Jewish Bible makes it even clearer: 26 but now manifested through the prophetic writings, in keeping with the command of God the Eternal, and communicated to all the Gentiles to promote in them trust-

grounded obedience. (Romans 16:26 CJB). Nations in the TLV means the same as Gentiles in the CJB. Gentiles are to follow *Torah*. This one statement is a summary of the whole theme of Romans. *Sha'ul* said that this was to the Gentiles. This is for the majority of you sitting in this room. As Gentiles, we are to obey *Torah*, not because we think it will save us, but because of our trust, our faith, in Yeshua. *Sha'ul* was writing to a mixed group of people, both Jews and Gentiles, believers and seekers, but he emphasized *Torah* to the Gentiles.

Some may say that this is too complicated for the average follower of Yeshua to grasp. But, the people to whom the different letters of the *Ketuvim Shlichim*, the Writings of the Apostles were written had no formal education, not even what we would consider the high school level today. Some of those that were Jewish may have had some education within the synagogue and some training in the Hebrew language. Don't forget that although these letters were written in Greek, the underlying language and thought was Hebrew. But, what about the poor Gentile? Most of them were former idol worshippers and who knows what their educational level was. How did they grasp what *Sha'ul* and the other letter writers were writing about? They grasped it by study. They had to want it. What is *it*? It is truth. And, the truth which *Sha'ul* wrote was difficult to understand. *Shimon Kefa*, Peter, said: *15 Bear in mind that the patience of our Lord means salvation—just as our dearly loved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom given to him. 16 He speaks about these matters in all of his letters. Some things in them are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist (as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures)—to their own destruction.* (2Peter 3:15-16 TLV). The most serious thing about this is found in the last statement, "twist- to their own destruction." *Sha'ul's* words are being twisted today. If his words were difficult to understand for those who were right there in the culture in that day, how much more difficult is it for the follower of Jesus today? It's very difficult to understand *Sha'ul*. He trained at the feet of the Pharisee, *Gamli'el*, the grandson of *Hill'el*, and was the equivalent of a PhD in *Torah* and he was communicating to those who were comparatively, grammar schoolers. Then, how hard is it for us who are 2000 years removed and in a completely different culture? It's very hard and most in Yeshua's body have not understood *Sha'ul*.

Truth is what we are all seeking. Or, at least, we should be. If you are satisfied with what you already know about the faith which you have professed, I hate to say it, but you are stagnant water. Water that can't flow eventually becomes stagnant. *Mayim chayim*, living water, the water of the Spirit given to us by Yeshua, is flowing water, water which is alive and not stagnant. And, while we may think we already have all truth and don't need any more, that is a complete falsehood. Several days ago, I heard a man make a series of statements which I believe to be profound truth. He said that "the Holy Spirit was constantly moving him." He said: "He, the Spirit, doesn't change, but He was constantly moving him." His meaning was that while the Spirit doesn't change, He is constantly opening his eyes to more truth. You have to go back to the origin if you want to get the best answers. Truth is what we're about, not just for the sake of truth, but so that our actions will be in line with the truth.

You have all seen a cartoon of a guru sitting on a mountain top. People go up to ask him "the meaning of life." Picture this one: The guru is sitting there and a man with a backpack and climbing ropes has just reached the top and is standing before the guru. The guru says: "You better have a seat. People tend to fall down the mountain when I tell them the meaning of life!" What is the meaning of life? How many will "fall down the mountain," fall down before the feet of Yeshua, when they learn the real truth of what *Sha'ul* was teaching? How many of us today don't understand what Yeshua is saying to us and what

His disciples are trying to teach us through their written words? There are many, many within the body who don't understand and many of those are satisfied with what they know. We cannot be satisfied with where we are. We have learned "more" of ADONAI's truth and we can't go back to where we were. You have to want it! You have to want truth! But to find it, you have to continually be a student.

*1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the law of sin and death.* (Romans 8:1-2 TLV). Some people interpret this to mean that faith in Jesus has set us free from keeping the Law. But, that could not be further from the truth. The law of sin and death is the complete opposite of the Law in the faith of Yeshua. Some of the difficulty in understanding *Sha'ul* is that there was only one Greek word which he could use to communicate two different words. *Nomos* is the word. According to Strong's Concordance, it means "that which is assigned, hence usage, law." In *Sha'ul's* writings, he sometimes meant "*Torah*," but the only way he had to say it was "*Law*," *nomos*. The Greek language doesn't have a word that conveys the meaning of *Torah* as meaning teaching and instruction and that is the situation in these verses.

We could better understand this as: "For the *Torah* of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the *torah* of sin and death." They are two completely opposite things. Ezekiel prophesied about the first *Torah*, the *Torah* of the *Ruach*, the Spirit: 27 "*I will put My Ruach within you. Then I will cause you to walk in My laws, so you will keep My rulings and do them.*" (Ezekiel 36:27 TLV). Both *Sha'ul* and *Yekez'kel*, Ezekiel, were prophesying about the *Torah* of the *Ruach*, the "Spirit of Life in Messiah Yeshua." ADONAI said that He would place His Spirit within us and cause us to follow His *Torah*. In this verse, the word translated "laws" means ADONAI's statutes. The word translated rulings means ADONAI's judgments. These are two of the different types of ADONAI's laws along with the third type, witnesses. Because ADONAI has placed His Spirit in us, we are to walk in obedience to His statutes, His judgments and His witnesses. For those of us who have trusted in Yeshua and become covenant members of the New Covenant, these laws are written on our hearts as it says in Jeremiah: 32 "*But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days*" —it is a declaration of Adonai— "*I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people.*" (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV).

Here is a brief refresher regarding these three types of *mitzvot*, commandments. At this point, some may be thinking, "why is he constantly talking about *Torah* and Law?" Can't he ever talk about anything else? Yes, I can, but there are two reasons why we are talking about *Torah* today. First, all of you know about Yeshua's sacrifice and the eternal life that comes with it. You know that if a person accepts Yeshua's sacrifice by faith through ADONAI's grace, he has the promise of salvation. You know how to be saved, and as far as I know, all of you sitting out there, those that I personally know, have accepted Yeshua. But, more importantly, today we are studying *Sha'ul* and the Book of Romans and *Torah* is just about all that he writes about in it. As we stated a few minutes ago, in concluding the Book of Romans in 16:26, *Sha'ul* prayed to ADONAI. In essence he said that the mystery of the Gospel as revealed by the prophets had been communicated to the Gentiles according to ADONAI's command to bring about in them trust-grounded obedience. He was talking about bringing about obedience to the commandments by the Gentiles who have trusted in Yeshua by faith, that is, those commandments which are active for us today. *Sha'ul* taught that

those who are saved should follow *Torah*, but today most of His Gentile followers believe the exact opposite; that the Law has been done away with.

*Mishpat*, plural *mishpatim*, meaning judgments, is the Hebrew term which includes ADONAI's moral and ethical laws. They fundamentally deal with what is right or wrong such as prohibitions against murder, robbery, covetousness, adultery, etc. Some of these are in the Ten Commandments, but there are also others throughout the *Torah*. *Edah*, plural, *edot*, is Hebrew for "witnesses" and these commands refer to ADONAI's festivals such as *Shabbat*, *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, and the others. One of these, *Shabbat*, is in the Ten Commandments. *Choq*, plural *choqim*, meaning statutes, is Hebrew for all of ADONAI's commands which have no apparent explanation. The dietary laws are among these. Israel is commanded to eat or not eat certain things even though ADONAI doesn't explain why. We obey because our Father has commanded it. Why is this important? It is important because *Sha'ul* has taught us that we are to have trust-grounded obedience to the *mitzvot*, ADONAI's commands, and that implies that we also need to know what they are. But, more importantly, we need to know which are active for us today as Yeshua's followers living outside the land of Israel.

We began this segment of our discussion with this verse: *2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the law of sin and death.* (Romans 8:1-2 TLV). ADONAI proclaimed the law of the Spirit through Ezekiel and Jeremiah. It is that ADONAI's *Torah*, the *Torah* of Moses and the additional *Torah* which Yeshua proclaimed during His life on earth has been written on our hearts. *Sha'ul* says that this was done: *4 so that the requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Ruach.* (Romans 8:4 TLV). If we have the Holy Spirit, ADONAI's commandments have been written on our hearts. The requirement of the *Torah* is that those in Messiah must be obedient; we must have trust, faith grounded obedience. This means that after we trust in Yeshua, there are things required of us. And, we are not putting ourselves under the curse of the law by keeping commandments.

The opposite of "the *Torah* of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua," "the *torah* of sin and death," is easier to explain. Understanding that *torah* means teaching and instruction, the *torah* of sin and death is the instruction, the desires of our old nature. Without Yeshua, we follow a *torah* of sin and death provided by our old nature. There is no redemption in it. We sin and when we die, that's it. The sin nature is our inheritance from our father Adam. ADONAI created us sinless and good, but because of our ancestor's sin, sin entered the life of every human being and every person today has a natural inclination to sin. Keeping *Torah*, obeying laws, without Yeshua in our lives, cannot save us. *Sha'ul* said: *3 For what was impossible for the Torah—since it was weakened on account of the flesh—God has done. Sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, He condemned sin in the flesh—* (Romans 8:3 TLV). When we accept Yeshua, we get a new nature, but we don't lose our old nature, our sin nature. It's still in there somewhere, but most of the time for followers of Yeshua, our new nature, strengthened by the *Ruach*, the Holy Spirit, living in us, suppresses it. But sometimes, it manages to cause us to sin. Too many times, really! In Romans 7:15-25, *Sha'ul* describes his struggle with his sin nature. He was a man who had a direct communication with Yeshua, but he still struggled with his old nature. Scripture teaches us that the ability to sin remains in us. We will struggle with our old nature as long as we live. The *torah* of sin and death remains a part of our lives, but, praise ADONAI, we have the Comforter, the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Spirit of God, living in us and He supplies the strength we need to overcome the pull of the sin nature in us.

What is Israel's role in ADONAI's plan? *Sha'ul* wrote: *27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of B'nei-Israel be as the sand of the sea, only the remnant shall be saved. 28 For Adonai will carry out His word upon the earth, bringing it to an end and finishing quickly." 29 And just as Isaiah foretold, "Unless Adonai-Tzva'ot had left us seed, we would have become like Sodom and resembled Gomorrah."* (Romans 9:27-29 TLV). This is another mystery. Why did those who were first given the Messiah not receive Him? Yes, in the 1<sup>st</sup> century just before the destruction of the Temple, we are told that there were tens of thousands of Judeans who had trusted in Yeshua and they were all zealous for the Torah (Acts 21). They are an example for us today. We should all be zealous for the Torah. But, why are there not more Jews as followers of Yeshua today?

*30 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness—that is, a righteousness of faith. 31 But Israel, who pursued a Torah of righteousness, did not reach the Torah. 32 Why? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were from works. They stumbled over the stone of stumbling,...* (Romans 9:30-32 TLV). Israel, the Jews of today, the religious Jews, did not get the full and complete meaning of ADONAI's intention for the Torah because they pursued it from the standpoint of legalism and trusting in their status as children of Abraham that they would be declared righteous. And, they stumbled over the stone of stumbling, Yeshua. *Sha'ul* continued: *33 just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him shall not be put to shame."* (Romans 9:33 TLV). He was quoting Isaiah 28:16. Israel has stumbled, primarily over Jesus, but they will regain their footing. We will talk about that in an upcoming message. ADONAI has declared that "all Israel shall be saved!"

We are citizens of the United States and inhabitants of the earth, but we also have other citizenship. *Sha'ul* said: *20 For our citizenship is in heaven, and from there we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.* (Philippians 3:20 TLV). We are citizens of heaven, but how? What *Sha'ul* meant is that we are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The word "heaven," *shamayim*, is a substitution for the word "G-d," in Hebrew, *Elohim*. They mean the same, just as our substitution of the word ADONAI refers to our Father, whose Hebrew name is rendered by the letters יְהִי, *Yod Heh Vav Heh*. The Kingdom of Heaven is the kingdom of our Messiah Yeshua and includes not only the earth, but the whole universe. He rules and reigns His kingdom from the right hand of His Father's side in heaven until He returns to establish it on the earth.

Yeshua spoke quite a bit about the Kingdom of Heaven. In one of His parables, He said: *45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. 46 Upon finding a pearl of great value, he went out and sold all that he had and bought it.* (Matthew 13:46 TLV). We, who have trusted Yeshua, are a part of His kingdom, citizens. But, have we valued "this pearl" as much as the merchant? Our citizenship is even better than *Sha'ul's* Roman citizenship. In Jerusalem, he told the Centurion that he was a Roman citizen. *28 The commander answered, "I bought this citizenship for a large sum."* Paul said, "But I was born so." (Acts 22:28 TLV). Our citizenship in heaven is even more valuable than that and just like *Sha'ul's* Roman citizenship, we were born to it, "born again to it." Our King is the King of Kings and L-rd of L-rds, but how much do we value our citizenship in His kingdom? We have "the pearl of great price," but have we thrown it into a dresser drawer rather than place it in the place of prominence which it deserves?

Not only is Yeshua our King, but He is also our *Cohen HaGadol*, our High Priest. He is the mediator of our faith and He intercedes for us before the Father day and night. Under

Him, we are *kohenim*, priests, who are proclaiming His kingdom until He comes again. As His *kohenim*, our ordination, our *s'micha*, requires that we be obedient to Him. *S'micha* is the laying on of hands for ordination. We have had hands laid upon us by His Holy Spirit and we are ordained just as Moses laid hands on Aaron and his sons. Are we obedient to Him? We have been taught, but what do we do with what we have been taught? Do you call yourself a believer? Yes, I do too. But, *HaSatan* is also a believer. He knows that Yeshua is the “seed of the woman,” the Son of David, who will one day crush his head. He knows it, but because of his completely sinful nature, he can’t stop what he is doing.

We must go beyond being a believer and be a *talmid*, a disciple. The word disciple comes from the Latin *discipulus*, meaning student. Discipline, a related word is from the Latin, *disciplina*, meaning, guess what, teaching and instruction? Isn’t that a coincidence? *Torah* means “teaching and instruction” and discipline means “teaching and instruction.” If you are a disciple, a student of Yeshua, are you willing to allow yourself to be disciplined by Him? If you say yes - . “Be careful now!” If you say yes, you are saying that you will follow His commands. We have been taught, but what do we do with what we have learned? Do we put it in a drawer as some have done with the Pearl of Great Price? No, we don’t. Through our faith and through ADONAI’s grace, we will walk in in His commandments and we will proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is here! *Shabbat shalom!*