



Parasha Acharei Mot

April 30, 2022

Torah: Leviticus 16:1-18:30
Haftarah: Ezekiel 22:1-19
Ketuvim Sh'lichim: Romans 10:9-13

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *Torah* portion today is entitled *Acharei Mot* meaning “after the death.” The death was the death of *Nadav* and *Avihu*, *Aharon*’s sons, which occurred three *parshiot* ago in *Parasha Tazria*. ADONAI killed them because they brought unauthorized fire before Him. The Hebrew says “*zarah* fire,” literally “another fire.” It wasn’t fire taken from the holy altar, but from their own fire source. It was rebellion, choosing to follow their own spirits. It’s also possible that they entered and offered their incense in the Holy of Holies. At the time that this happened, the construction and consecration of the Tabernacle had just been completed and ADONAI had not yet given specific directions as to how and when the *Kodesh HaKodeshim*, the Holy of Holies, was to be entered. In this *parasha*, ADONAI gave those instructions. In Leviticus 16:1-2, He told Moses to tell Aaron not to enter the holiest place at just any time and gave the instructions for when he could enter the Holy of Holies. He was not to enter except on one day each year, the 10th of *Tishrei*. That day would be *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement for the nation of Israel.

In our *Torah* service last *Shabbat* we read about Yeshua’s walk to the town of Emmaus with some of His disciples after He had died on the stake. After hearing their comments about His death and His missing body from the tomb, we read this: *27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them the things written about Himself in all the Scriptures.* (Luke 24:27 TLV). In the *Yom Kippur* service of Leviticus 16, we see the spiritual foreshadowing of Yeshua in the goat for ADONAI, the sin offering, and also in *Azazel*, the Scapegoat. We covered this in detail in one of our recent lessons entitled, “Yeshua Our Jewish Messiah.” As you read the *parasha* each week, I encourage you to look for Yeshua in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, and to see for yourself what Moses and the prophets said about Him.

Our study continues today with “*Sha’ul the Jew*” part 3. Before we begin, I want to emphasize again to whom I am teaching. These lessons are for our congregation and for whomever else that watches and can receive it. These words would be considered to be hard words by many, words which are diametrically opposite to what is being taught in the Church. But, we have not been called to teach the Church or to tell the Church how they are to interpret the Word of G-d. Yeshua has given all of His followers the Keys to the Kingdom, the right to bind and loose, to forbid and permit what they will teach and how they will interpret Scripture (Matthew 16).

Although we see things differently, we are commanded to have a love relationship with our fellow members of Yeshua’s body and we do strive to have this relationship with our fellow followers of Yeshua in our community and beyond. We are not in any way judging those who don’t receive this teaching. In what is called His high-priestly prayer following His

last Passover *seder*, Yeshua prayed: 20 *“I pray not on behalf of these only, but also for those who believe in Me through their message, 21 that they all may be one. Just as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You, so also may they be one in Us, so the world may believe that You sent Me.”* (John 17:20-21 TLV). We will be one. Our coming spiritual unity will convince the world, those who don’t believe, and many more will believe. Each of us in Yeshua’s body is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, unites us. It is our human spirit, our old nature, which divides us. It is not necessary that we all believe exactly alike to have the unity of Spirit. It is not even humanly possible, but it is possible through ADONAI. Yeshua said: 26 ..., *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (Matthew 19:26b TLV). He wasn’t talking about spiritual unity. He was talking about how hard it is for a rich man to get to heaven. But, all things are all things and I sincerely believe that not only will the spiritual unity of Yeshua’s body grow stronger as we draw nearer to His return, but also will our unity of belief be strong. *“Oh, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity”* (Psalm 133). We will be a body without spot or wrinkle.

Sha’ul wrote: 1 *Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for Israel is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have zeal for God—but not based on knowledge. 3 For being ignorant of God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.* (Romans 10:1-3 TLV). He really had a great burden for his brother and sister Jews. In Romans 9 (1-4), he went so far as to say that his sorrow was so great, that he would accept a curse banishing him from Messiah if it would save his people. We Jews and Gentiles who are a part of the Messianic Jewish Movement, have that same type of anguish, maybe not as much as *Sha’ul*, but a great desire for their salvation. In my opinion, the number one reason that ADONAI re-established the Messianic Jewish Movement in the End Times was to bring all Israel to His promised salvation. And He is using the firstfruits of the Jews and Messianic Gentiles to do it. That is why correct understanding of the *Ketuvim Shlichim* is so important. Our understanding is for the Jews. While they may not agree with our every point, they know that *Torah* has not passed away and if they’re seeking, the only place that they will find Yeshua in a format which they can accept is in Messianic Judaism.

Sha’ul continues: 4 *For Messiah is the goal of the Torah as a means to righteousness for everyone who keeps trusting.* (Romans 10:4 TLV). The context of the first eight verses is that they are referring to Jews. *Sha’ul*’s great sorrow was that not more of his fellow Jews had trusted in Yeshua. In this verse, what he meant was: *“Messiah pictured in the Torah is a means of salvation through faith for the Jew who is seeking.”* Yes, the same is also true for the Gentile who sees Yeshua foreshadowed in the *Tanakh*, but right here, *Sha’ul* was specifically speaking about Jews. This is borne out by the next verse: 5 *“For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on Torah, “The man who does these things shall live by them.”* (Romans 10:5 TLV). Incidentally, this statement is in our *parasha* for today. *Sha’ul* attributes it to Moses, but he was actually just the messenger. ADONAI was the one who said it: 4 *“You are to obey My ordinances and keep My statutes and walk in them—I am Adonai your God. 5 “So you are to keep My statutes and My ordinances. The one who does them will live by them. I am Adonai.”* (Leviticus 18:4-5 TLV). And, it was true at that time. ADONAI had just given the instructions concerning *Yom Kippur* and was in the process of delivering all of his statutes to Israel during this time. But, it was not true at the time when *Sha’ul* was writing Romans. ADONAI had already cut a New Covenant with Israel with His Son’s own blood. And, *Sha’ul* wanted his fellow Jews to know that there had been a change in the way of salvation. Now, there was a new way, the only way, salvation by ADONAI’s

grace through faith. There is a heresy going around called Unrecognized Mediation. It is a theological concept which states that some unspecified number of traditional Jewish people are saved by Yeshua and are walking in that salvation without knowing it or having had a conscious personal relationship with the Messiah. They have never consciously received Him by faith. This is false and it is leading some Christian leaders astray causing them to stop evangelizing Jews. There is only one way – through Yeshua.

Sha'ul continues: 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" —that is, the word of faith that we are proclaiming: 9 For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart it is believed for righteousness, and with the mouth it is confessed for salvation. (Romans 10:8-10 TLV). That is just how simple it is. But, you really have to believe. If you say you believe and you don't, you've gained nothing and have a false hope. And, it is very important that we confess it with our mouths, not only at the time of salvation, but continually in our daily lives as a testimony.

Next, *Sha'ul* makes it clear that this is also for Gentiles: *12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all—richly generous to all who call on Him. 13 For "Everyone who calls upon the name of Adonai shall be saved."* (Romans 10:12-13 TLV). It is very important that Gentiles understand that verse 4 is Hebrew thought expressed in Greek. Here it is again: *4 For Messiah is the goal of the Torah as a means to righteousness for everyone who keeps trusting. (Romans 10:4 TLV).* *Sha'ul* again has the problem of only having the word *nomos*, meaning law, available to use. But, he was thinking "*Torah*" instead of law. Also, the Greek word *telos* translated here as goal does mean end as it is translated in many Christian Bibles, but also in the sense of end goal. I examined 21 Christian Bible translations and they all essentially say: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." In one way of looking at it, that is true. Yeshua did end the righteousness which *Moshe* proclaimed in Leviticus 18:5: *5 "So you are to keep My statutes and My ordinances. The one who does them will live by them. I am Adonai."* (Leviticus 18:4-5 TLV). Yes, we agree with those Bibles that salvation is only through Yeshua, but the point that they are missing is that *Torah* has not been done away with and continues to picture, to foreshadow and to announce Yeshua and His salvation throughout it, a salvation which can only be obtained by faith. Jews and Gentiles can readily see Yeshua proclaimed in all the Scriptures by Moses and the prophets just as He said on the way to Emmaus.

17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah. (Romans 10:17 TLV). The word translated "by" is the Greek *dia*. It also means through, on account of or because of. This means that we must first hear the *besorah*, the gospel, the "good news," specifically the message about Yeshua's death for our salvation and His divinity as revealed by His resurrection. It's the "message" about Messiah. Speaking of the Jews, *Sha'ul* goes on to say that they did hear, but questions if they understood. *18 But I say, have they never heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."* *19 But I say, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, with a nation empty of understanding I will vex you."* (Romans 10:18-19 TLV). This says that the Jews did understand, but chose not to obey. Again, it was Moses who relayed it, but it was ADONAI who said: *21 "They made Me jealous with a non-god. They vexed Me with airy (foolish) idols. So I will make them jealous with a non-people. With a foolish nation I will vex them."* (Deuteronomy 32:21 TLV). Israel continued to vex ADONAI with their worship of non-gods, idols. *Sha'ul* continued: *21 But about Israel He says, "All day long I stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and contrary*

people.” (Romans 10:21 TLV). He is quoting Isaiah 65:2 which says: *2 I have stretched out My hands all day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own thoughts.*” (Isaiah 65:2 TLV). *Sha’ul* concludes that Israel has heard but that Israel is rebellious, a people who follow their own ideas. That is why he was so concerned about his brother and sister Jews. He knew how ADONAI viewed them- as rebellious, maybe just like Nadab and Avihu.

This discussion has been much about faith. What is this “faith” that comes by hearing from the Word of G-d (10:17)? Habakkuk said: *4 Behold, the puffed up one— his soul is not right within him, But the righteous will live by his trust.* (Habakkuk 2:4 TLV). He was writing, prophesying, to the sinful people of Judah just before the Babylonian invasion. The puffed up one was the people of the Kingdom of Judah. The word trust is used interchangeably here with faith. The underlying Hebrew word is *b’emunato*, בְּעִמּוּנָתוֹ which comes from *emunah*. According to Strong’s Concordance, *emunah* means firmness, steadfastness, fidelity. *B’emunato* means “by firmness, or by steadfastness or by fidelity. Fidelity means faithfulness. From this, we can conclude that faith or trust also means faithfulness. The author of Hebrews wrote: *1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of realities not seen.* (Hebrews 11:1 TLV). The Greek word here, *pistis*, means faith, belief, trust, confidence; fidelity, faithfulness. This incorporates the idea of belief or trust with longevity, that is, with faithfulness. As we read *Sha’ul’s* letter to the Roman congregation, we are learning to think like a Hebrew. We have to stop thinking of faith only in the old way as only mental assent or belief. *Sha’ul* used “faith” to show action: *31 Do we then nullify the Torah through faithfulness? May it never be! On the contrary, we uphold the Torah.* (Romans 3:31 TLV). Faithfulness means action, the action of obedience. The word faithfulness is from *pisteōs*, which is from *pistis*, meaning both faith and faithfulness. Because we have faith in Yeshua, *Sha’ul* does not tell us that we are not to walk in *Torah*. On the contrary, he says that we uphold such a walk. In fact, the primary idea of faith in Judaism is linked to action. And, action is what we are called to have after we have trusted in Yeshua.

Yeshua’s brother, *Ya’acov*, says it in a stronger manner: *17 So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself.* (James 2:17 TLV). He said that if you only have belief, only a mental assent and not works, your faith is dead. A faith without works is dead by itself. It is a faith worth nothing. It’s dead. If you only have belief and nothing else, your faith is dead. That’s strong! But, it’s true. *Ya’acov* also said: *26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.* (James 2:26 TLV). That’s saying the same thing a different way. There’s no doubt that a body without its spirit is dead. Faith without faithfulness is dead faith. It is the failure to follow the instructions of ADONAI, the *Torah*, teaching and instruction, wherever it is found in Genesis through Revelation. We don’t just stop with the five books of Moses. Teaching and instruction sprinkled liberally with commands, is imparted to us in every book of the Scriptures.

We agree. Faith without works is dead! But what are works? How can we understand it? The underlying Greek word is *ergon*. According to Strong’s it means: work, task, employment; a deed, action; that which is wrought or made, a work. It’s doing something. To be a “work” requires action. *Sha’ul and Ya’acov both agree.* Faith without works is dead. They are exhorting us! Making soup for your sick neighbor is works. Honoring your father and mother is works. Giving an offering to the needy is works. Gathering ourselves together on *Shabbat* is works. Loving our neighbor as ourselves is works. But, we don’t get to choose which works we will do. As the author of *Torah*, Yeshua has determined that for us. And,

we must be “zealous.” *Sha’ul* reminds us: *11 Do not be lagging in zeal; be fervent in spirit. Keep serving the Lord,...* (Romans 12:11 TLV). The tens of thousands of Judeans who had trusted Yeshua during the time of *Sha’ul’s* last visit to Jerusalem are our example. They were zealous for the *Torah* (Acts 21). The one who reported this very zealousness to *Sha’ul* was none other than *Ya’acov*, the *nasi*, the leader of the Jerusalem congregation, Yeshua’s brother, the same one who said “faith without works is dead.” Zealous for the *Torah* and faithfulness are one and the same. We are to have zeal matching that of the modern-day Haredi, the ultra-orthodox, but for a different reason. Our faithfulness begins with trusting faith in Yeshua as ADONAI’s sacrifice for our sins and continues as faithfulness, works. Love, mercy and kindness are all parts of it, but so also are all of the other commands which are applicable to us.

1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He knew beforehand. Or do you not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? (Romans 11:1-2 TLV). *Sha’ul’s* thoughts have now returned to disobedient Israel which we read about a few moments ago. He said that they understood, but disobeyed. Even though they disobeyed, G-d has not rejected them and in the next verse *Sha’ul* quotes Elijah in 1Kings 19 who thought that he was only faithful one left in the fight against Ahab and Jezebel. But, ADONAI revealed to him that there were 7,000 faithful who had not bowed their knee to *Ba’al*. *Sha’ul* understood that the very same thing was true now, during his time: *5 So in the same way also at this present time there has come to be a remnant according to God’s gracious choice.* (Romans 11:5 TLV). There was a remnant in *Sha’ul’s* day just as there was in Elijah’s day. A question arises from this statement. Does “according to G-d’s gracious choice” mean that G-d actually chose those who were to be saved? No! Absolutely not. This is just another way of saying what *Sha’ul* wrote a few chapters ago: *29 For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.* (Romans 8:29 TLV). Predestined means that ADONAI foreknew, knew in advance, what was in their hearts and what they ultimately would do. He knew before the foundation of the earth that *Sha’ul* and *Kefa* and *Ya’acov* and *Yochanan* and all the other tens of thousands in the 1st century would trust Him. But, ADONAI didn’t cause them to trust Him. If He did, it would mean that we don’t have free will. We read this just a few moments ago: *9 For if you confess with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* (Romans 10:9 TLV). You have to do it; take the action! We have to do it! We have to confess. It is our willing action. G-d doesn’t cause us to do it. But, because He loves us so much, He wants us all to be saved. *9 The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you—not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance.* (2Peter 3:9 TLV). We have to overcome our own stubborn, old nature and submit to G-d by repenting. On the day of *Shavuot*, *Shimon Kefa* said: *38 ..., “Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Messiah Yeshua for the removal of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Ruach ha-Kodesh.”* (Acts 2:38b TLV). Repenting is the first step in trusting in Yeshua. But, *Sha’ul* makes it clear that our salvation is by grace, ADONAI’s grace, His loving kindness and mercy toward us: *6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer by works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.* (Romans 11:6 TLV). Salvation is by grace, but afterward comes works, the works of a living faith and not a dead one.

Referring to Israel who understood but disobeyed, *Sha'ul* said: *8 just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes not to see and ears not to hear, until this very day."* (Romans 11:8 TLV). We are now beginning to understand why "all Israel" is still in disobedience. ADONAI's still has a tremendous love for His people whom He foreknew, but He chose to overcome their stubbornness by making them jealous. Quoting ADONAI in Deuteronomy 32:21, he said: *19 But I say, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, with a nation empty of understanding I will vex you."* (Romans 10:19 TLV). Those of us who are Gentile are that non-nation prophesied by ADONAI Himself while Israel was still in the wilderness. ADONAI's vexing is coming to its fulfillment, now, in the Last Days. Vexing mean annoying. ADONAI is annoying Israel with Gentiles who understand and follow *Torah*. Is your personal *Torah* witness contributing to ADONAI's vexing?

Sha'ul goes on to say that this situation is not a permanent thing: *11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their false step salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy.* (Romans 11:11 TLV). We are the provokers, the Gentile followers of Yeshua who are fulfilling the righteous requirement of the Law: *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— 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 8:3-4 TLV). The Greek actually says "the righteousness of the Law." The Law is righteous when it is observed in faith, something that "all Israel" has not done. They continue to follow *Torah* without righteous faith in Messiah Yeshua. But, then *Sha'ul* says: *15 For if their rejection leads to the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?* (Romans 11:15 TLV). They have rejected Yeshua so that we Gentiles could be reconciled to ADONAI, but their acceptance which is coming soon, will be spiritual life, eternal life, for "all Israel," those whose faith was dead. And, it will also be a wonderful thing for everyone else in Yeshua's body. We will rejoice with them as we see revival break out among the unbelieving Gentiles of the world.

Having a Hebraic mindset is very important if you wish to have the best understanding of the Scriptures, especially the writings of *Sha'ul*. We now have a pretty good handle on some of the deeper, more difficult to understand things. But, we must not be satisfied because there is much more that we need to understand. It is important that we begin to think like *Sha'ul* in trying to understand. We need to read with a Hebraic mindset. But in "serving," Yeshua is our example. We must think like Yeshua. *5 Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua,...* (Philippians 2:5 TLV). The word translated attitude here is *phroneó* (fron-eh'-o), meaning "to have understanding, to think." Others translate it as "mind," referring to how Yeshua thinks; what is important to Him. *Sha'ul* goes on to explain how Yeshua thinks: *6 Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped. 7 But He emptied Himself— taking on the form of a slave,...* (Philippians 2:6-7 TLV). We never expect to be equal to G-d. It is the second part of this statement that we are to emulate. We are to seek to have the "mind of Messiah Yeshua" Who took on the form of a slave. We must be the "slaves," the servants, of Yeshua and in being His slave, we are also slaves, servants, to others.

It all seems quite complicated. *Shimon Kefa* said that *Sha'ul* is difficult to understand, so generally, we are prepared not to understand him. But, the answers have always been there. Once we step away from an antinomian mindset, that Law is bad, it becomes clear.

Sha'ul has never taught that we are not to follow *Torah*, but rather that we must follow it for the right reason. We are to follow it as our grateful response to Yeshua for His sacrifice for our salvation. Likewise, faith has never been difficult to understand when examined through Jewish eyes and particularly *Sha'ul's* and *Ya'acov's* eyes. Faith is belief in Yeshua which becomes action. It is faith which is alive rather than dead, alive because it is faithfulness to all of the things which our Messiah has called us to do. Yeshua, the Living Word, the Creator of everything, has plainly told us that *Torah* is active for us and that it will never pass away before heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:17-19). As His disciples, we must have *emunah chayim*, living faith. Living faith is characterized by action, a faith which is not passive or inactive.

We have the Holy Spirit living inside us and it motivates us to do what is right. *Sha'ul* said: *18 But if you are led by the Ruach, you are not under law.* (Galatians 5:18 TLV). Through the Book of Romans, he has taught us that this means that we are not under law, but we follow *Torah* after our salvation. This is the same confirmation in Galatians. You may remember the story from our Galatian's study. The Galatians accepted Yeshua and the right way of serving through *Torah* from *Sha'ul*. But now, some Jewish "influencers" have showed up there to try and convince them to return to the complete Judaism of that day by being circumcised and going back under *Torah* as a means of salvation, just as we read in Deuteronomy earlier. *Sha'ul* said to them, "If you been given the Holy Spirit, you are not under law," meaning- you were saved by grace and you are to follow *Torah*, but not for salvation. Just reading English words will only get you confused. You must understand the Jewish background of what is happening. You can't get to heaven by keeping *Torah*, but you can get there and follow *Torah* if you first trust in Yeshua. *Sha'ul* concludes with this: *22 But the fruit of the Ruach is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control—against such things there is no law.* (Galatians 5:22-23 TLV). Walking in the Spirit and bearing good fruit is a testimony of our love for Yeshua and our faithful walk. *Shabbat shalom!*