



## **Parasha Kedoshim**

May 11, 2024

*Torah:* Leviticus 19:1-20:27

*Haftarah:* Amos 9:7-15

*Shlichim:* 1Peter 1:13-21

*Shabbat Shalom Mishpacha!* Our *parasha*, this week, *Kedoshim*, meaning “Holy Ones,” focuses on ADONAI’s words: “*You shall be holy ones, for I, ADONAI your G-d, am holy.*” To be holy is one of the foundational truths of our faith. The Hebrew, *kadosh*, קָדוֹשׁ, “holy” in English, is defined by *Strong’s Online Concordance* to mean: sacred, holy. *The Oxford Dictionary* defines it as “Dedicated or consecrated to God for a religious purpose; sacred.” ADONAI has called His citizens of Israel to “be holy.” What does that mean for us? It means that as citizens of Israel, there are principles which define our holiness, foundations of our faith which we must understand and follow.

Holiness is the perfect subject for today following our last two sessions, sessions in which we discussed the fallacy of Dispensationalism and the millennium. What was presented is our opinion. We all see through a glass darkly, definitely not a clear understanding of everything in the Scriptures and we present it with fear and trembling. Because we see through a glass darkly, we are careful not to follow the example of the ancient Gnostics and make our perceived knowledge more important than it actually is. Yes, we must understand these things because they show where we are in ADONAI’s timetable, but they are not the focus of our faith. ADONAI has given us foundations for our relationship with Him to set us on an even keel, balancing our knowledge with our devotion to Him and to Yeshua.

“Righteousness” is one of them. Abraham is our best example. ADONAI spoke to him, saying to him that even at his advanced age, a descendant would come from his body whose children would be as numerous as the stars of heaven: *5 He took him outside and said, “Look up now, at the sky, and count the stars—if you are able to count them.” Then He said to him, “So shall your seed be.” 6 “Then he believed in Adonai and He reckoned it to him as righteousness”* (Genesis 15:6 TLV). Abraham’s belief in ADONAI was credited to him as righteousness. That’s the first thing we must do, believe that ADONAI exists and that He is the Creator of everything. We recognize the Hebrew behind the English word, righteousness. It’s very familiar to us, because we have it pictured here in our sanctuary on our *Tzedakah* Box. *Tzedakah*, תְּצַדַּק, means righteousness. In the case of the box in which we place our tithes and offerings, it is called that because in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, giving to the poor was equated with righteousness. But, giving is only one aspect of righteousness. In Abraham’s case, righteousness was much deeper. It meant that he had established a relationship of right standing with ADONAI and as such, is the perfect example for each of us whose desire is to have a deep relationship with our G-d. We must have a strong belief that ADONAI is and believe what He says. Yeshua addressed righteousness. He said: *20 “For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees and Torah scholars, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven!”* (Matthew 5:20 TLV). This was about their hypocrisy and being ostentatious, teaching one thing and living another way. This emphasized what He said later: *21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 7:21 TLV). Understanding Yeshua’s words makes it imperative for us that we not only know ADONAI’s will, but do it.

“Faith is another.” It was by faith that Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. He had faith in ADONAI even to the extent that he would sacrifice his own son. The writer of Hebrews confirms this: 17 *“By trusting, Avraham, when he was put to the test, offered up Yitz’chak as a sacrifice. Yes, he offered up his only son, he who had received the promises, 18 to whom it had been said, ‘What is called your ‘seed’ will be in Yitz’chak.’”* 19 *For he had concluded that God could even raise people from the dead! And, figuratively speaking, he did so receive him”* (Hebrews 11:17-19 TLV). Trusting is a synonym for faith. The last sentence, *And, figuratively speaking, he did so receive him*, tells us that Abraham believed ADONAI would raise him and actually received Isaac back from the dead. In Abraham’s mind, Isaac was “already dead,” the reality of the situation, because he fully intended to kill him. But, having passed the test, the Angel of ADONAI called from heaven to stop Abraham’s hand with the knife. Some two thousand years after Abraham, Yeshua, Who was foreshadowed in both Isaac and the ram, told the crowd around Him: 56 *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; he saw it and was thrilled”* (John 8:56 TLV). ADONAI allowed Abraham to look forward into time to see his descendant Yeshua and the salvation which He would bring. In his vision which followed Isaac being spared, Abraham saw the future and ADONAI said to him: 18 *“In your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed—because you obeyed My voice.”* (Genesis 22:18 TLV). Yeshua told a group of Judean leaders that Abraham rejoiced when he heard this. *Sha’ul* explains it: 6 *“Just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ 7 know then that those who have faith are children of Abraham. 8 The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News to Abraham in advance, saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed through you.’”* (Galatians 3:6-8 TLV). That’s what Genesis 22:18 was about, advance knowledge of the promise of the *Besorah*, the Good News. What we understand from this is that Abraham received his atonement by trusting in his descendant Yeshua, someone he saw in a vision. In these actions, Abraham exhibited faith, the deep trust in ADONAI that each of us is expected to have, without which, it is impossible to please ADONAI. (Hebrews 11:6). Through Abraham’s faith, we Gentiles have received our faith.

“Obedience is also one.” Righteousness and faith are not all that *Avraham Avinu*, our Father Abraham, teaches us. In his greatest test of commitment, he was told to sacrifice his son, the event called in Judaism, the *Akedah*, the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:2-14). When ADONAI gave this instruction, Abraham quickly moved to obey, taking his son Isaac to the appointed place and preparing to offer him as a sacrifice. There was no hesitation or foot-dragging by Abraham. That is real obedience, something which is out of favor with many in Yeshua’s body today. Humanistic principles and looking for the easy way out has led to many divergent interpretations of ADONAI’s Word. Our different doctrines today are not always just semantics. Some are clearly changing the primary meaning of ADONAI’s Word. We see this in the several main-line churches which have fallen into apostasy by re-interpreting ADONAI’s Word with regard to marriage and sexuality. But, in these days, the *Acarit Hayamim*, we expect to see this kind of hypocrisy, just as we are not surprised by our president’s withholding of aid from Israel and the United Nation’s vote recognizing Palestine as a nation qualified for membership. Jeremiah’s words to pre-captivity Jerusalem seem to fit what is happening here in our nation and around the world today: 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?* (Jeremiah 7:8-10 TLV). Many of these deviations are clearly abominations in ADONAI’s eyes. This is the hypocrisy, saying: “we are saved,” but continuing to do the abominations. While we disagree with what they are doing, we love

them with G-d commanded love, praying and grieving for their return. Today, with regard to Yeshua's body of believers, the lines are blurred. Are they brothers and sisters or are they idolaters? ADONAI knows and Yeshua is their judge. We are called to pray for their return to right standing with ADONAI.

How do these things relate to ADONAI's command, "Be holy, for I am holy!" For us, being holy should be just as natural as breathing. We shouldn't have to stop and think about being holy every day, because it should already be deeply ingrained within our spirits. There is a choice for Yeshua's followers. They can take ADONAI's words to heart or ignore them. But, taking them to heart is not a religious thing. And, it's not about legalism. It's also not about following rules you don't agree with out of fear. It's about a love relationship. We obey ADONAI because we love Him and we love Yeshua and obedience is our love response. Today, we said the *Shema*: "You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength." These are not just words to us and when we recite the *Shema* we really mean what we say. But, we are a little shy about saying we are "holy." We are uncomfortable with it because we don't want to be perceived as "goody two shoes." However, when we understand the concept of holiness through Scripture, we come to realize that being holy is just the evidence of our separation from the wickedness of the world, rather than some weird form of spirituality. This understanding allows us to embrace the label of being holy with greater ease.

We should want to be called holy, set apart from things which are opposed to ADONAI's nature. We should want to be set apart from the things He commanded us not to do. We should want to be set apart for the things which He has commanded us to do. As followers of Yeshua, our lives are based on ADONAI's standards and not on the world's standards. He is calling us to be perfect, even as we know we cannot be perfect. But we are to try. In His Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua said: 43 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'* 44 *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,* 45 *so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.* 46 *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don't they?* 47 *And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than anyone else? Even the pagans do that, don't they?* 48 *Therefore be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.* (Matthew 5:43-48 TLV). We are to live according to His standards and distinct from the standards of the world. In making His last statement, Yeshua affirmed what ADONAI said in Leviticus 19:2: "Therefore be holy, just as your Father in heaven is holy."

Looking back from our vantage point in the future, we see the Binding of Isaac as a foreshadowing of what ADONAI Himself would do two thousand years later, when He sacrificed His own Son, Yeshua, who was also bound, bound to the cross as atonement for our sins. The sacrificial system of the Tabernacle given to Israel at Mount Sinai was a picture which revealed that for their sins, every person deserved the punishment of death. (Verified in Romans 6:23). The holiness of ADONAI is so great that He cannot even look upon sin. There had to be a way to bridge the gap between sinful humans and the holiness of ADONAI. At Sinai, He gave Israel a way. An innocent one could die in their place and its blood would cover their sins, shielding them from ADONAI's wrath. The sacrifice of Isaac, which was not carried out, replacing him with a ram, was a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of animals in the Tabernacle. The *Akedah* and the Tabernacle sacrifices were both fore-shadows of the sacrifice of Yeshua, ADONAI's Son. *Sha'ul* wrote: 8 *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us"* (Romans 5:8 TLV). He explained it further: 23 *"For sin's payment is death, but God's gracious gift is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our Lord"* (Romans 6:23 TLV). While we no longer have a Tabernacle or

Temple in which to offer sacrifices, the atonement provided by Yeshua's blood is so much greater than animals ever provided. Today, the acceptance of His death and shedding of His innocent blood will provide atonement to every person whom ADONAI created. Even today, we know that blood atonement is necessary to cover our sins so that we can approach the most holy G-d. ADONAI Himself said this is true: 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). This is a major truth which we pray for our traditional brother and sister Jews to understand. There are no longer Temple sacrifices, but ADONAI still requires blood to cover our sins. Yeshua’s blood is the only *kaparah*, the only atonement, available for sin today. Without His sacrifice within the framework of the New Covenant, we would all die in our sins with no hope of the resurrection.

There have always been and will continue to be those who seek ways other than G-d’s way. But, ADONAI, the G-d of Israel, does not require that we sacrifice our children as the ancient pagans did. In today’s *parasha*, in one aspect of their holiness, Israel was commanded not to offer their children to the false god, *Molech*. Regrettably, this is something which many women readily do today, not understanding the spiritual implication of what they have done. Years after Abraham’s time, the Prophet Micah gave his explanation of the holiness which ADONAI requires: 6 *“With what shall I come before Adonai? With what shall I bow myself before God on high? Shall I present Him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves? 7 Will Adonai be pleased with thousands of rams, with hordes of rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my belly for the sin of my soul? 8 He has told you, humanity, what is good, and what Adonai is seeking from you: Only to practice justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God”* (Micah 6:6-8 TLV).

That is what these foundational principles, “righteousness, faith, and obedience,” portray. Acting justly is acting righteously. One part of our righteousness is being obedient to ADONAI’s commands. This is something which we freely do as our love offering to the Father and to Yeshua and not as a law code or set of laws. Obedience, law keeping, will not save us, because it has never been a means of salvation. Some erroneously reject obedience because they believe that keeping laws after salvation will put one “back under the Law.” But, the truth is the exact opposite; we are commanded to obey. Then, we are to love mercy. In our mercy, we must be quick to forgive and quick to ask forgiveness, both to ADONAI and those we have offended. Yeshua’s brother *Ya’acov* wrote: 13 *For judgment is merciless to the one who does not show mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.* (James 2:13 TLV). In other words, ADONAI will judge us for not having mercy. In loving mercy, something which results in our being merciful, we must also love grace. Understanding grace, we know that ADONAI is gracious to us and that His love extends to us many benefits which we do not deserve, especially the grace which we receive through Yeshua’s gift of salvation. We must walk humbly with our G-d. Walking in purity, we are to be holy before Him, set apart, separated from the sinful things of the world, even as we are set apart for His *Torah*, His teaching and instruction. Walking in purity also means that we must continually be in a forgiven condition before Him. Through Yeshua, we have ready forgiveness from our sins and ADONAI desires that we make *t’shuvah*, repent frequently. *Yochanan* encourages us: 1 *“My children, I am writing these things to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Intercessor with the Father—the righteous Messiah Yeshua.”* (1John 2:1 TLV). Our King Messiah, Yeshua, sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven interceding on our behalf. Through our sincere confession, we will be forgiven: 9 *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us”* (1John 1:9-10 TLV). We all sin. Even after we trust Yeshua, we sin. ADONAI knows our feet are clay. We are imperfect

human beings. But, knowing our limitations, He encourages us not to sin and that should be our goal.

Micah wrote that we are *“to practice justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God.”* To walk in this understanding, it must be clear in our belief system that Yeshua is the only way to the Father. We cannot give in to the liberal, humanistic philosophies which we see today in so many of our faith based, formerly conservative colleges and universities and their sponsoring churches. Many of these colleges which are being racked by anti-Semitic and demonic protests right now, were founded on and faithfully taught Christian principles for several hundred years. But, their faith has become humanism. There are also many other inconsistencies in the theologies within Yeshua’s body. One is the theology which teaches that Israel has been replaced by the Church. Replacement Theology or Supersessionism, is in itself anti-Semitic. The reality today is that greater than fifty percent of Yeshua’s body holds to it. This belief is a denial of ADONAI’s Scriptural truth: 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). That Israel has been replaced by “the Church” in effect, changes the covenant cut with Yeshua’s blood with Israel to being a covenant made with the Church. It is a bold lie which will face Yeshua’s scrutiny at judgment. It is of utmost importance that the members of Yeshua’s body understand that ADONAI’s New Covenant, the covenant currently in effect, is specifically made with Israel. The truth is that many don’t know this. Yeshua’s identity is also of immense importance. It is essential for us to know the fact that Yeshua is the unique Son of God, acknowledging the genuine spiritual experience we had with him. But, it’s actually *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, who makes this a reality. Upon trusting Yeshua and having faith in Him, the Holy Spirit joins with our spirit, giving us the assurance of eternal life and the expectation of being raised from the dead. Thomas questioned Yeshua: 5 ..., *“Master, we don’t know where You are going. How can we know the way?”* (John 14:5b TLV). Yeshua answered: 6 ..., *“I am the way, the truth, and the life! No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* (John 14:6b TLV). This is another question with which our Jewish brothers and sisters have difficulty. However difficult it is to understand, it is truth, truth which identifies Yeshua as the anointed Son of David, the *Mashiach*. That promise is also found in today’s *Haftarah*. Speaking of the day of Yeshua’s return, Amos prophesied: 11 *“In that day I will raise up David’s fallen sukkah. I will restore its breaches, raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in days of old”* ... (Amos 9:11 TLV). David’s fallen *sukkah* is the Davidic Kingdom. When Yeshua returns, the kingdom begun by David will be ruled over by his descendant, Yeshua. Even though ADONAI’s truth that *“Yeshua is the only way,”* is a difficult word for some to understand, it is administered with the mercy of a loving G-d. We also understand that even before we individually trusted Yeshua, the Holy Spirit had drawn us. Yeshua said: 44 *“No one can come to Me unless My Father who sent Me draws him—and I will raise him up on the last day”* (John 6:44 TLV). ADONAI loves everyone He created. *Shimon Kefa* wrote: 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). This means that He draws everyone, something which can be verified by a seeker by simply asking Him and then listening for His reply. *Sha’ul* concurred: 4 *He desires all men to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth.* (1Timothy 2:4 TLV). All who come to Yeshua have His promise that ADONAI will raise them up. He will raise us up in this way as *Sha’ul* told us: 16 *“For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God’s shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one*

*another with these words*” (1Thessalonians 4:16-18 TLV). Daniel was watching night visions and reported what he saw: 13 .... *“Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven.”* (Daniel 7:13b TLV), possibly a vision of what *Sha’ul* described. That day is coming soon. We don’t know when, but the signs of the times tell us that it is near. Even as we celebrate the Nation of Israel’s 76<sup>th</sup> birthday this coming Tuesday, we know that we are near. If the nation of Israel is the fig tree about which Yeshua spoke (Matthew 24:32-36), we are very near the end of its first generation.

*Avraham Avinu*, our Father Abraham, has shown us the way that we are to be in relationship with ADONAI. As we believe with true faith in Yeshua our Messiah, we establish our own eternal, righteous relationship with ADONAI. It is then up to us to live a holy life before Him. And, once we have made and are walking in these commitments, we must exercise the other part of faith. The Hebrew word *emunah*, אֱמוּנָה, means both faith and faithfulness. If our faith, our belief, is important (Romans 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38), how much more important is our faithfulness (Matthew 25:21; Galatians 5:22). For all our days upon the earth, we are to be faithful to the commitment we have made to ADONAI and Yeshua.

The condition of the world is deteriorating both physically and spiritually, but most especially spiritually. *Sha’ul* wrote to Timothy: 1 *“Now the Ruach clearly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, following deceitful spirits and teachings of demons 2 through the hypocrisy of false speakers—whose own conscience has been seared”* (1Timothy 4:1-2 TLV). We have seen in recent years that many in the Body of Messiah have fallen away from the faith and that many are even knowingly and unknowingly following the guidance of demons in their lives. Next week, there will be a gathering of witches in Israel, a gathering to teach how to incant spells and how to seek other gods – right there in ADONAI’s own nation, a nation also filled with thousands of homosexuals and women who have thousands of abortions each year. Here in the United States, the city of Salem, Massachusetts, of witch trial fame, now markets witchcraft with practicing witches running businesses there. Witches now have clubs within our children’s schools, influencing them to follow those ways. How many thousands worldwide are following the instructions of demons? *HaSatan* has made much headway since his release from the abyss. We also have false teachers in the body, those who speak and teach for impure reasons. They are in the news weekly. In the face of everything going on in the world today, it is imperative that we stand up as faithful witnesses for ADONAI and Yeshua.

The *Torah* is clear in its teaching (Genesis to Revelation), we must be holy as ADONAI is holy. *Shimon Kefa* encourages us: 14 *Like obedient children, do not be shaped by the cravings you had formerly in your ignorance. 15 Instead, just like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in everything you do. 16 For it is written, “Kedoshim you shall be, for I am kadosh.”* (1Peter 1:14-16 TLV). David asks the questions: 3 *Who may go up on the mountain of Adonai? Who may stand in His holy place?* (Psalm 24:3 TLV). Then, he answers: 4 *One with clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully. 5 He will receive a blessing from Adonai, righteousness from God his salvation.* (Psalm 24:4-5 TLV). Our walk of faith is upheld by Yeshua because He cares for us. (1Peter 5:7). He hears our discouragements, our disappointments and our difficulties in life and He cares for us. We encounter challenges in our lives, yet as overcomers (Revelation 3:21; 21:7), we are set apart. Holiness was not just for ancient Israel, but is relevant for us today as well. Follow the example of *Avraham Aveinu*. Be holy! *Shabbat shalom!*