



Parasha Tazria/Metzorah

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Torah: Leviticus 12:1-15:33

Haftarah: 2 Kings 4:42-5:19; 2 Kings 7:3-20

Ketuvim Shlichim: Hebrews 8:7-13

Shabbat shalom, Mishpacha! Last *Shabbat*, we discussed the covenant, including the relationship between the Sinai Covenant and the New Covenant, with particular attention to the “curse of the *Torah*.” The very good news is that Yeshua took the curse for us and that the curses detailed in Deuteronomy 27 no longer have any effect under either covenant. If you didn’t hear that message, you might wish to check it out.

We also mentioned the “seemingly” limited knowledge among Yeshua’s followers in His greater body regarding the New Covenant, specifically that it entails obligations. A biblical covenant is a formal, binding relationship between ADONAI and some segment of humanity. We are not going to get into great detail here, except to point out that all covenants have requirements. The Abrahamic Covenant was made by ADONAI with Abraham and his descendants. It promised them the Land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. And while circumcision was the sign of the covenant, it also had requirements, most notably, that Abraham was to command his sons and household after him to keep the way of ADONAI by doing righteousness and justice. (Genesis 18:19). The Abrahamic Covenant is found in Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 17. We will refer to the Sinai Covenant, also called the Mosaic Covenant, as the First Covenant because it was the first to include redemptive elements, and it remains partially in effect. Made between ADONAI and Israel, it had very specific requirements based on Tabernacle worship and included many other commands regarding morality, justice, and civil life. The basic covenant is found in Exodus 19-24 with specific laws throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The New Covenant is between ADONAI and Israel, and retains many of the same elements as the Mosaic Covenant. But where is it to be found? It is not as neatly packaged as the Abrahamic and First Covenants, which also may make it more difficult to

understand. But Yeshua requires us to be *talmidim*, disciples who are students. He said: 40 “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40 TLV). As our Master’s students, we should be able to put together the various Scripture passages that make up the New Covenant. The primary passages relating to the New Covenant are: 1) Jeremiah 31:30-33 (Christian Bibles say 31-34), 2) Hebrews chapters 8, 9, and 10, and 3) the Gospel accounts of Yeshua’s last Passover (Matthew 26:17–30, Mark 14:12–26, Luke 22:7–30, and John 13–17). We will examine some of these verses to understand their requirements.

Why are we pursuing our current line of teaching? It’s because we must be prepared for our role in the days leading up to Yeshua’s return. His followers hear many sermons, but often not what they need to hear. ADONAI said through Hosea: 6 *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.* (Hosea 4:6 TLV). Hosea prophesied in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, which was ultimately destroyed because they rejected the knowledge of ADONAI. Solomon said, 10 *The fear of Adonai is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* (Proverbs 9:10). The knowledge of ADONAI leads us to spiritual understanding. As His disciples, we must seek it because Yeshua has commanded us. He has told us to be His disciples and to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), but few take Him at His word. He said: 31 ..., “*If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!*” (John 8:31b-32 TLV). Understanding His Word is our most difficult challenge, and all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is His Word. His most difficult saying for us to respond to and follow is: 38 *And whoever does not take up his cross and follow after Me isn’t worthy of Me.* (Matthew 10:38 TLV). He calls us to die to self and to follow Him, but many are unwilling. To learn what Yeshua calls us to do means that we must also put it into action. We all do random acts of kindness, but we can do much more. Studying Scripture benefits the individual. The rabbinic Jewish concept asserts that when we study the *Torah*, we worship ADONAI. As we sit as *talmidim* (disciples) at Yeshua’s feet, our study is worship, which becomes knowledge, which becomes wisdom, and wisdom becomes action.

Last *Shabbat*, we introduced *Sha’ul’s* Letter to the Congregation in Rome with these verses: 4 He (**Yeshua**) was appointed *Ben-Elohim* in power according to the *Ruach* of

holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. He is Messiah Yeshua, our Lord. 5 Through Him we **(those who trusted in Yeshua)** have received grace and the office of emissary (**Sha'ul as apostle**), to bring about obedience of faith among all the nations (**Gentiles**) on behalf of His name (**Yeshua**). (Romans 1:4-5 TLV). The Complete Jewish Bible calls “the obedience of faith,” “trust-grounded obedience.” We understand this to mean that Gentiles who interpret these two verses in this way should obey ADONAI’s commands applicable to us today, just as Messianic Jews do. However, the Church must make its own determination of what this means. But it is clear from his letters that *Sha'ul* was sent to teach the Gentiles about the *Torah*. Or perhaps we should call what we are a part of “ADONAI’s Messianic Jewish Renewal,” since we believe that what we are taking part in today is closely related to the faith of Yeshua’s 1st-century disciples. Our understanding of the *Torah*, as was theirs, is that the New Covenant cut with Yeshua’s blood, is ADONAI’s only active redemptive covenant and that those who are part of it have commands to obey. The Book of Hebrews contains essential information for Yeshua’s disciples to understand the New Covenant. In this letter, we not only come to understand Yeshua’s role as the High Priest of the New Covenant but also the changes ADONAI made to His First Covenant with Israel. A disciple of Yeshua likely wrote the Book of Hebrews, either *Sha'ul* or Luke, around 64 CE, about six years before the Temple’s destruction.

Why, today, is there no Temple and no sacrifices? We are explicitly given the answer in the Book of Hebrews and are also provided with one additional clue, but it is not apparent, and many miss it. It is overlooked for two primary reasons: 1) Many hold a fixed mindset about the antinomian nature of ADONAI’s covenant, and 2) many Bibles inaccurately translate a specific verse (the clue). Antinomianism holds that, under the New Covenant, the Law no longer applies to covenant members. We will consider the clue verse in a moment.

The answer to our question about why there is no Temple and sacrifices is simple. It is “because of Yeshua, they are no longer necessary.” The author of Hebrews tells us: 6 *But now Yeshua has obtained a more excellent ministry, insofar as He is the mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted on better promises.* (Hebrews 8:6 TLV). As our כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), Yeshua’s service as a priest is in the Heavenly Tabernacle,

not the Temple on earth. Because He is the perfect one-time sacrifice, multiple animal sacrifices are no longer needed, and that portion of the First Covenant has been rendered inactive. There is now no need for Levitical priests or a building in which to offer sacrifices. The author of Hebrews clarifies the current status of the First Covenant by stating, *7 For if that first one had been faultless, there would not have been discourse seeking a second.* (Hebrews 9:7 TLV).

There was a fault in the First Covenant, and because of that failure, ADONAI implemented His plan for a second covenant, the New Covenant. What was the fault? It was not something ADONAI did. He is faultless! The next verse gives us the answer: *8 For finding fault with them, ...* (Hebrews 8:8a TLV). I have underlined “them.” It was Israel. There was no fault in ADONAI’s covenant itself; the fault lay with them, the people. ADONAI found fault with the actions of the people of Israel. Verse 8 entirely: *8 For finding fault with them, He says, “Behold, days are coming, says Adonai, when I will inaugurate a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not remain in My covenant, and I did not care for them, says Adonai.”* (Hebrews 8:8b-9 TLV). What fault did ADONAI speak about? Verse 9 tells us. They, Israel, did not remain in His covenant. ADONAI cannot make a covenant that has a fault? A perfect G-d cannot make mistakes.

Jeremiah chapter 31, which the writer of Hebrews references in this verse, further explains Israel’s fault. ADONAI said: *31 ... “For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them.” It is a declaration of Adonai.* (Jeremiah 31:31b TLV). They broke His covenant by repeatedly violating His laws, but to ADONAI, it was more than that. It was spiritual adultery. He remained faithful in His role as *בָּעַל Ba’al*, the husband of Israel, *כַּלָּה Kallah*, His bride. It was the people of Israel, but not just the people. According to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets, the High Priests and the ordinary priests also broke His covenant. Their disobedience began in the wilderness and continued through the centuries, reaching a climax just before Jerusalem was destroyed, and Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity. Because the people of Israel broke ADONAI’s First Covenant, He said He would cut a New Covenant with them. He knew, when He established the First

Covenant, that they would break it, and the climax occurred just before Israel's deportation to Babylon and exile.

Because Israel violated ADONAI's First Covenant so flagrantly, He instituted a New Covenant with a new priesthood, a priesthood without human failures. Here is what Hebrews chapter 8 is primarily about: *1 Now here is the main point being said. We do have such a Kohen Gadol (High Priest), who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. 2 He is a priestly attendant of the Holies and the true Tent—which Adonai set up, not man. 3 For every kohen gadol is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary for this One also to have something to offer.* (Hebrews 8:1-3 TLV). We now have a new High Priest, Yeshua, seated in heaven at the Father's right hand. He has something to offer in the heavenly Tabernacle. Just as the Levitical High Priests offered animal blood in the earthly Temple, Yeshua offered His own blood, the perfect sacrifice, once for all in the Tabernacle in Heaven. (Hebrews 9:11-12). We are told, *4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a kohen at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Torah.* (Hebrews 8:4). On earth, Yeshua would not be a priest because He is from the Tribe of Judah, the tribe from which the kings came, not from Levi, the tribe from which the priests came. Because His service is in the Tabernacle in heaven, that is another reason an earthly Temple is unnecessary. We don't need one. Yeshua's priesthood is eternal. It is pictured in Genesis by *Melechizedek*, the King of Salem and Priest of the Most High G-d. (Genesis 14:18-20). Yeshua is spoken of by His ancestor David: *4 Adonai has sworn, and will not change His mind: "You are a Kohen forever according to the order of Melechizedek."* (Psalm 110:4 TLV). While the priests descended from Aaron individually died, and their priesthood was eventually ended, Yeshua lives forever, and His priesthood lasts forever.

Yeshua described the coming New Covenant at His last Passover, the night before He died for our sins. At the *Seder*, He said: *15 ... , "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will never eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* (Luke 22:15b-16 TLV). Then, in the context of the *Seder* representing the Passover deliverance from Egypt, Yeshua told them how the New Covenant would be cut: *19 And when He had taken matzah and offered the bracha, He*

broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body, given for you. Do this in memory of Me.” 20 In the same way, He took the cup after the meal, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:19-20 TLV). We have a New Covenant, cut by Yeshua’s blood, but many of His followers in it also believe that the First Covenant has completely passed away. Is that true, and is there Scriptural evidence to clarify it? It is not true, and there is definitely evidence to prove otherwise.

Jeremiah prophesied: 30 “Behold days are coming” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”— (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). The Hebrew reads: בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה (*B’rit Chadasha*), and it is indeed a New Covenant, no doubt about that. It’s new because it was ADONAI’s new agreement with the whole House of Israel, established with Yeshua’s blood rather than the blood of animals. However, it can also be seen as partially renewed because portions of the original covenant remain in effect, albeit with changes. Regardless of what some say, ADONAI did not do away with all of the elements of the First Covenant, just some of them. There are two primary changes: 1) a better sacrifice (Yeshua) and 2) a new and better priesthood (Yeshua).

Do people have a valid point in saying that the First Covenant was fulfilled by Jesus and is no longer in effect? They do not! Saying that He fulfilled it is usually based on an incorrect understanding of this verse: 17 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17 TLV). Some believe that although Jesus didn’t abolish the *Torah*, by fulfilling it, He rendered it void and no longer in effect. But that is not what these words mean. Abolish and fulfill are Hebrew idioms meaning “to incorrectly interpret” and “to correctly interpret.” Yeshua came to correctly interpret the *Torah* for us, but this verse refers to the *Torah*, not the First Covenant.

But parts of the First Covenant must still be in effect today because it is an everlasting covenant, and we can confirm this in Jeremiah. Referring to the people of Israel and Judah returning from Babylonian captivity, he prophesied: 5 *They will ask about Zion, the way— here are their faces! Come! They will join themselves to Adonai in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.* (Jeremiah 50:5 TLV). When did they join themselves

to ADONAI in a בְּרִית עוֹלָם *b'rit olam*, an everlasting covenant? It was when the Jews returned to Israel from their punishment in Babylon. They re-dedicated themselves to ADONAI and to His everlasting covenant, the only Covenant in effect at that time, the Covenant made at Sinai. A *B'rit Olam* is an eternal covenant that will never pass away. Through Jeremiah, ADONAI refers to His First Covenant, the covenant that was in effect then. ADONAI said, "It will never be forgotten." Yeshua, the Mediator and High Priest of the New Covenant referred to the commands of the First Covenant during His Sermon on the Mount, stating, 18 "Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass." (Matthew 5:18). The First Covenant is everlasting and is the foundation for the New Covenant, which is also everlasting. (Hebrews 13:20).

We have already answered the question of why there are no sacrifices, but another verse helps explain it. Its meaning isn't immediately obvious. Many have missed it because they believe the New Covenant has entirely replaced what they call "the Old Covenant." They also miss it because translators with the same mindset have added a word to the verse we call "the clue" to fit their theology. As it is currently written, this verse, Hebrews 8:13, is incorrect in most Bibles. If you have the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, the King James Bible, the New King James Bible, or many others, this verse is incorrect in your Bible. The New American Standard Bible states: 13 *When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.* (Hebrews 8:13 NASB). A translator's theology is written into this verse, and the translator effectively states that "the first covenant is obsolete." If you read this verse in your Bible, what would you think? There is an enormous problem here. The problem is that the word "covenant," *διαθήκη diatheke*, (dee-ah-THAY-kay), is not found in the Greek manuscript of the Book of Hebrews but was added by the translators. Strong's Online Concordance's direct translation of the Greek correctly reads: "In saying new, He has made obsolete the first, and that then growing old and aging is near vanishing." This is rendered correctly in the Tree of Life Version of the Bible: 13 *In saying new, He has treated the first as old; but what is being made old and aging is close to vanishing.* (Hebrews 8:13 TLV). The Greek text is accurately represented,

and the word “covenant” is absent. What, then, was Hebrew’s author considering “new” and what “first”? This verse in the four Christian Bibles mentioned is that way because their translators have an antinomian theology, a theology “against Law.” They are biased against the *Torah* principle of the First Covenant and the idea that ADONAI’s laws apply today, to the point that they are willing to add to ADONAI’s Word. Believing that G-d’s Laws have no further importance in the life of a follower of Yeshua, they have made a theological statement supporting that belief by adding the word “covenant” to verse 13. They believe that “first” refers to what they call “the Old Covenant” and that it was “growing old and ready to disappear” in favor of the “new,” the New Covenant. As we discussed in Matthew 16, Yeshua has given His followers the authority to make theological determinations, just as He has given us. We affirm their authority to do so, but we hold the opposite view. If verse 13 referred to the covenant itself, it would not be in the process of disappearing in 44 CE, the approximate year Hebrews was written, but would have disappeared long before this letter was written, at Yeshua’s death on the cross. Their translation of Hebrews 8:13 suggests that the Old Covenant was still in force in 64 CE but was diminishing. But, if “the Old Covenant” was to disappear, wouldn’t it have disappeared when Yeshua died on the cross and instituted the New Covenant in the year 30 CE, thirty-four years earlier?

The truth is that verse 13 is not about the entire “First Covenant” but specifically about the section on the priesthood, and that is what all of Hebrews chapter 8 is about. The word “new” in verse 13 refers to “new priesthood,” Yeshua’s priesthood. The word “first” refers to the “first priesthood,” the Levitical priesthood, which was still operating at this time. The first verse of this chapter reads: *1 Now here is the main point being said. We do have such a Kohen Gadol, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.* (Hebrews 1:1 TLV). We have a High Priest, not a descendant of Aaron, but Yeshua, and the verses that follow are about Him as the High Priest. Chapter 8 is primarily about the priesthood. In verse 13, the reason the first priesthood was “aging and close to vanishing” in the year 64 and would soon pass away was that the Temple would soon be destroyed, eliminating both the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices. The author of Hebrews had this insight from the Holy Spirit, but the people had no idea

the priesthood and sacrifices would disappear in six short years. When this verse was written, the Levitical priests still offered sacrifices, and the Temple stood. However, about six years later, the Romans destroyed the Temple, leading to the end of the Levitical priesthood and the cessation of animal sacrifices, just as the writer of Hebrews prophesied. During the 40 years from 30 CE, when Yeshua died on the cross, to 70 CE, the year the Temple was destroyed, the “first priesthood,” the Levitical priesthood, was aging as Aaron’s descendants continued to offer sacrifices, even while the New Covenant was in effect. During this time that the Levitical Priesthood and Temple remained, Yeshua’s disciples continued to honor the *Torah* of the First Covenant, following it, except for the sin sacrifice. For example, *Sha’ul*, as Yeshua’s disciple and emissary, paid the expenses for four men to undergo Nazirite vows in the Temple. He clearly followed the commands of the *Torah*. But in 70 CE, the Romans destroyed the Temple, and the “first” system of priests completely vanished, along with the associated commands. What did not vanish were the commands that ADONAI said He would write on the hearts of those under the New Covenant: 32 ... *“I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. (Jeremiah 31:32b TLV).*

Sha’ul wrote: 26 *Therefore, if the uncircumcised keeps the righteous decrees of the Torah, will not his uncircumcision (of the flesh) be counted as circumcision (of the heart)? (Romans 2:26 TLV).* What are the “righteous decrees of the *Torah*?” *Sha’ul* began his letter to the Romans by stating that he was directed to teach Gentiles to follow the “obedience of faith” (Romans 1:4-5), which he calls in 2:26, the “righteous decrees of the *Torah*.” While Jews are generally expected to keep the *Torah*, this verse tells us that Gentiles are also to keep its righteous decrees. A decree is “an official order issued by a legal authority.” ADONAI issued the decrees, and we understand that He has the authority. Now, we must determine which commands are His “righteous decrees.” What happened in 70 CE made the final determination regarding ADONAI’s decrees. With the destruction of the Temple by the Roman army and the subsequent disappearance of the Levitical priesthood, every *Torah* command that required officiation by those priests or needed to be carried out in a Tabernacle or Temple became inactive. They are still in the *Torah*, “still on the books,” but inactive. Hebrews 8:13 and the words “aging and close to vanishing” pointed to this. The righteous decrees of the *Torah* today are those commands that remain. They’re not just

the “Ten Commandments” but also many others. It is the responsibility of every follower of Yeshua who understands that the *Torah* is for today to know what they are and follow it. We, like Timothy, are commanded to: *15 Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth.* (2 Timothy 2:15 TLV). The G-d of Abraham, who chose Israel, is also the G-d of the New Covenant. Because of His love for Israel, ADONAI gave the Jews the New Covenant. We read this earlier. He said, “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah”— (Jeremiah 8:30). That’s one reason why *Sha’ul* said “to the Jew first.” (Romans 1:16). The covenant was made with the Jews.

Sadly, well over 50% of Yeshua’s body today follows the doctrine of “supercessionism,” or replacement theology. These doctrines, held by many major denominations, state that ADONAI divorced the Jews and that the Church is now Israel. Generally, those who hold the belief that ADONAI remains faithful to Israel and that Israel has not been replaced are the Dispensationalists. But that is another problem because the majority of their theology is based on false works (the writings of two Jesuit priests) and an incorrect understanding of Daniel 9:27. But ADONAI knows all this, and He will bring about the required changes in His time. It is unlikely that we, as individual Messianic followers of Yeshua, will have any effect on the long-held doctrines of major denominations. You can look up which ones they are. This means that our effectiveness as witnesses for the truth must be person-to-person. However, we can firmly establish that Israel has not been divorced from ADONAI. Immediately following His plan to create a New Covenant, ADONAI said: *34 Thus says Adonai, who gives the sun as a light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars as a light by night, who stirs up the sea so its waves roar, Adonai-Tzva’ot is His Name: 35 “Only if this fixed order departs from before Me”—it is a declaration of Adonai— “then also might Israel’s offspring cease from being a nation before Me—for all time.” 36 Thus says Adonai: “Only if heaven above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then also I will cast off the offspring of Israel—for all they have done.” It is a declaration of Adonai.* (Jeremiah 31:34-36 TLV). None of these things has changed. This means that Israel is still a nation before ADONAI, the recipient of the New Covenant.

But this message is not just for us. Through Isaiah, ADONAI said: *18 “Come now, let us reason together,”... (Isaiah 1:18a TLV).* These words are to the Jews of the world. This is His message to them, urging them to stop and reflect on their spiritual lives. He goes on, *18... “Though your sins be like scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they will become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18b TLV).* While this was ADONAI’s call to the people of Judah of Isaiah’s day, it is His plea today to the Jews of the world, His chosen people. Understanding ADONAI’s covenants and who Messiah Yeshua is will open the door to their salvation. What we have just discussed may answer some of their questions regarding the Messiah. Understanding these things, they will be able to see Yeshua and His blood on the stake, He, who came to earth and died, so they might have a share in the *Olam Habah*, the World to Come, Eternal Life. Because of His love for us, Yeshua became the perfect and eternal sacrifice for our sins. Even though there is no Temple, ADONAI still requires blood for atonement. *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).* Pray that many Jews today would understand that ADONAI is a covenant-keeping G-d and that His active covenant is the New Covenant. I believe that any questioning Jew who sincerely prays to ADONAI and asks to be shown whether Yeshua is the *Mashiach* will receive an answer. Don’t be afraid to ask. *Shabbat shalom!*