

Sheepfold Gleanings

SHEMINI ATZERET / EIGHTH DAY ASSEMBLY

Deuteronomy 14:22 to 16:17
Numbers 29:35 to 30:1
1 Kings 8:54-66
Revelation 21:1 to 22:21

Part Two: The Feast of Tabernacles

Leviticus 23:34-36 “The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the *Feast of Tabernacles* for seven days to Yahweh. On the **first day** there shall be a holy convocation [*High Holy Day/Sabbath*]. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. On the **eighth day** [*Shemini Atzeret*] you shall have a holy convocation [*High Holy Day/Sabbath*], and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.”

Shemini Atzeret is a type and shadow of our heavenly Bridegroom saying to His bride, “After all the guests (Nations) have returned home, let us (the twelve tribes of redeemed Israel) linger one more day and savor the remembrance of our wedding celebration together.” That one day is as a thousand years and is when the Bride enters the millennial kingdom/eternity with the King. It is a *solemn* Shabbat celebration of thankfulness.

The whole of the New Testament/*Brit Chadasha* is framed through the lens of the eighth day of the *Feast of Tabernacles/Sukkot*, which in Hebrew is called *Shemini Atzeret*, and which is written to the Bride of Yeshua - His priesthood. It is they who are found honoring the *Eighth Day*....

Deuteronomy 16:15-17 "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast [*of Tabernacles*] to Yahweh your God in the place which Yahweh chooses, because Yahweh your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice. Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks [*Shavuot/Pentecost*], and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your God which He has given you.”

The Threshing Floor and the Winepress

Deuteronomy 16:13-17 “Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days *after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress:*”

Sukkot is the culmination of all that the Bride has embraced in Yahweh's Vineyard/Covenant throughout the past year. Deuteronomy says that if we follow Yahweh we will be His people and we will have an over abundance to bring to Him on this wonderful *Feast of Ingathering* for all Nations. *Sukkot* is also known as the wedding celebration (reception) after the wedding day (Yom Kippur), where those believers (unwise virgins) who had not been found walking in the holiness that Yahweh desires of His Bride and who were not part of the Bridal party, joined the wedding guests from the nations (Matthew 25:1-11; Zechariah 14:16-21).

“Now it shall come to pass, *if* you diligently obey the voice of Yahweh your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that Yahweh your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, *because you obey the voice of Yahweh your God*:

- ✠ *Blessed* shall you be in the city, and *blessed* shall you be in the country.
- ✠ *Blessed* shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.
- ✠ *Blessed* shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.
- ✠ *Blessed* shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.
- ✠ *Yahweh will* cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.
- ✠ *Yahweh will* command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which Yahweh your God is giving you.
- ✠ *Yahweh will* establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of Yahweh your God and walk in His ways.
- ✠ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh, and they shall be afraid of you.
- ✠ And *Yahweh will* grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which Yahweh swore to your fathers to give you.
- ✠ *Yahweh will* open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.
- ✠ And *Yahweh will* make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.” (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)

What is produced from *our threshing floor and our winepress*? Isaiah chapter Five is called *The Song of the Vineyard*. In verse seven it says, “The vineyard of Yahweh Almighty is the House of Israel [Ephraim], and the men of Judah [House of Judah] are the garden of His delight. And He looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.” (Isaiah 5:7).

The House of Israel and the House of Judah historically have not cared for Yahweh's vineyard, and this chapter in Isaiah clearly describes how poorly Ephraim handled the vineyard and how poorly Judah handled the land. As a result they were scattered to live among the nations. Yeshua used Isaiah chapter Five as the basis for one of His parables, again bringing graphic understanding to the way His Vineyard has been handled by vinedressers (priests) with whom He left it in charge. This parable is about our hearts.

Mark 12:1-10 "Then He began to speak to them in parables."

- ✚ 'A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, *that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers*. And they took him [the servant] and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.
- ✚ Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated.
- ✚ And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.'
- ✚ But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.'" (Matthew 21:33; Luke 20:9).

We, who follow Yeshua in the Spirit filled *Mosaic* Covenant, are instructed to bring the produce from our *threshing floors and winepresses* just *before* the Feast of Tabernacles. Remember that Ruth found Boaz at the threshing floor guarding the newly harvested grain from the threshed sheaves (Ruth 3).

As we follow Yahweh's instruction booklet called Torah, its Principles are seeds that are planted within our hearts to produce a harvest that we come to offer to our King at the threshing floor and the winepress. Where is our harvest of grain and grapes to do this? According to the *Abrahamic* Covenant we are a people of substance, so if we are lacking a *harvest* to present at the threshing floor and the wine press, it is because we have either innocently or knowingly dishonored Yahweh's Torah principles by not sowing into our lives its instruction. We can only reap a harvest from what we have sown in our field and in our vineyard. We need to make this right before we can expect to take the *increase* of our labors to the threshing floor. The scriptures above are very graphic about the immorality, wickedness and dishonesty that resulted from those who poorly handled His Vineyard (Yahweh's Marriage Covenant/Torah principles).

What have we done with our threshing floor? What type of wine is being pressed? If our hearts are clean the *harvest* will be abundant. If our hearts are not right before Yahweh we will be chaff

that blows away. The threshing floor of our hearts will be empty and the wine press dry. (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

“Do not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like other peoples, for you have played the harlot against your God. You have made love for hire on every threshing floor. *The threshing floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her.* They shall not dwell in Yahweh’s land, but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and shall eat unclean things in Assyria. They shall not offer wine offerings to Yahweh, nor shall their sacrifices be pleasing to Him. It shall be like bread of mourners to them; all who eat it shall be defiled. For their bread shall be for their own life; it shall not come into the house of Yahweh. What will you do in the appointed day, and in the day of the feast of Yahweh [*Shemini Atzeret*]?” (Hosea 9:1-5).

In Yeshua, not only are we called to fulfill the duties of priests and kings, but we are compared to vinedressers who have leased Yahweh’s Vineyard. Will we be vinedressers of integrity by answering the call by walk in obedience to His principles? Being a priest or caretaker of His fields and vineyards, is conditional upon us fulfill the Marriage Covenant (His Vineyard) and teaching this Gospel to Yahweh’s people so they may become a holy nation before Him.

Afflict our Souls before Yom Kippur

On the *tenth day* of the seventh month we are called to come before the King on the *Feast of Yom Kippur*, our Wedding Day. But on the *ninth day*, in preparation, we are to *afflict our souls*, to remove what has made us unclean in His eyes. What afflicts our souls is the fruit of our own evil inclinations which are the impure thoughts and deeds of our hearts when we turned our backs on our Marriage Covenant with Yahweh. We have contaminated our altar by allowing the evil fruit of bitterness, unforgiveness, anger, retaliation, jealousy etc. to reside in our hearts. Before our wedding day, Yahweh asks us to take responsibility and repent for having entertained any of these inclinations. He asks us to place them on the brazen altar as an offering made by fire to circumcise our hearts as they caused dishonor before Him. Now when approaching the *Feast of Tabernacles* the Bride will have an abundance to share at the *threshing floor and winepress* that has been produced from her heart (Leviticus 23:27).

Having completed repentance/*tishuva* the day *before* her wedding (*Yom Kippur*), the Bride is now *set apart* (from the common, unclean and unholy realms) prepared to stand before her Bridegroom in pure spotless wedding garments. Yahweh responds to the Bride by opening His Kingdom to her, going before her preparing the way. She is now ready to step into a season of *new beginnings – eternity* on the eighth day called *Shemini Atzeret* – the day after their wedding reception (*Sukkot*).

The Resurrection of the Dead

Yom Kippur is not about repenting over and over again for the guilt of *past sins* to appear before the Bridegroom as a downcast Bride awaiting judgment on what should be the most joyous day of her life. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is about the *resurrection* of Yeshua.

Yom Kippur it is about the Bride's *resurrection* as she approaches the Bridegroom in full preparedness, eager to praise and glorify Him for all He is doing - and for His forgiveness of any *future* dishonoring that she might commit over the next fifty-two weeks. On *that Day of Yom Kippur*, the Bride stands before her Lord, declaring the truth and acknowledging, *as one/Echad*, His resurrection life within her.

1 John 2:15-17 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

Restoration of the Threshing Floor

Deuteronomy 15:12-15 "If your *brother*, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; you shall supply him liberally from your flock, *from your threshing floor, and from your winepress*. From what Yahweh has blessed you with, you shall give to him. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today."

Micah 4:11-13 "Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they do not know the thoughts of Yahweh, nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the *threshing floor*. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to Yahweh, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth."

The Season of Our Joy

Deuteronomy 16:14 "And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates."

Having chosen to return to Yahweh's original pattern given at Mount Sinai, we **do** see abundance that comes forth from our threshing floor and our winepress (hearts/spirits), and so we have cause for great joy during the *Feast of Sukkot*. Yahweh's great provision and His ever present faithfulness to His Promises in our lives have produced sanctification and holiness.

Even when times are challenging and there does not seem to be enough of a harvest to offer at the threshing floor or at the winepress, we are commanded to praise and thank Him. The threshing floor separates the wheat from the chaff and the winepress crushes the grapes to produce the sweet wine. We are commanded to present our *praises* for that whole precious week before Him and in doing so our earthly obedience releases a Heavenly response!

Philippians 4:4-9 “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus/*Yeshua HaMashiach*. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

Clean and Unclean - Holy and Unholy

It is interesting that the scriptures for the eighth day *Shemini Atzeret* begin in Deuteronomy 14:1-19 where we are brought back to the pattern of the Tabernacle and its function. This may seem unusual but it is because the Bride is a priest and it is the priest's role to care for the Tabernacle/Temple, the dwelling place of the Bridegroom. Thus, it is vital she understands the functions of His Kingdom.

“Thou son of man [*Bride*], shew the *house* [Strong's #H1004 בַּיִת ; *bayith*] [*representing Yahweh's Kingdom principles and plan*] to the house of Israel, that they [*the priest/Bride*] may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, shew them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof: and write it in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. This is the law of the house; upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house.” (KJV Ezekiel 43:10-12)

Knowing the difference between clean and unclean and how to avoid defilement within ourselves is important today as our bodies represent the Tabernacle/Temple – Yahweh's house/Kingdom. This is why the scriptures for the *Feast of Shemini Atzeret* start with the teaching of clean and unclean. The rabbit, camel and pig (i.e. pork and bacon), shrimp, lobster, octopus and crab, as well as any meat with *blood* and *fat* are all unclean (not considered by Yahweh as a food in Scripture), and can defile our bodies. Participating in such consumption would cause a priest/Bride to forfeit their position as High Priest/Bride, as nothing defiled enters His sanctuary. We can serve *man* in a type of *outer court ministry*, but serving Yahweh *in the Holy Place* of the Tabernacle is for those who obey and walk in His instructions. Yahweh's dietary laws are foundational and our value of them demonstrates our heart towards our King. Either our hearts will choose obedience to what He desires or worship after our own lusts. The eighth day, *Shemini Atzeret*, is considered to be a day of *Most Holy Place ministry* (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Why is this so important? The Levitical priesthood was set in place by Yahweh as a type of prophetic prefiguring of a *future priesthood* to show us Yahweh's order and how to pursue and approach a Holy God. Today, believers who walk in Yeshua's ways, through the *Mosaic* and *Davidic* Covenants, are His firstfruits and His priesthood. Yeshua from the tribe of Judah is our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. Peter describes us as a *royal priesthood and a holy nation* who has stumbled over the (Yeshua's) message – **given at Mount Sinai** - the Principles of Yahweh taught us through Moses. The principles of Yahweh are *learned* in the *Mosaic* covenant, but when the principles are *applied* one has been *translated* into the *Davidic* covenant. It is the doers of the word who keep His principles. (Exodus 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:5-13; John 5:46-47).

Bride, Do You Love Me?

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. He who has My commandments [*Torah/Marriage Covenant*] and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; John 15:10, 14).

1 John 2:8-11 “Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

1 John 2:3-6 “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

Those in Yeshua who are returning to Yahweh's ways are no longer stumbling over His Gospel, the Mosaic marriage covenant, but are learning to embrace it in *power* of the Spirit and in the *authority* of His Word/Truth. We have received the same instructions as the Children of Israel in the wilderness. As Abraham's seed/covenant flows into his son Isaac and his seed flows into his son Jacob, we have received Jacob's seed, and the Torah is our possession and our wedding gift from Yeshua. We are coming home to serve in *THE Eternal Tabernacle* on earth as priests and the food we consume is one of the key foundations of His Kingdom. (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14)

Psalms 119:97-104 “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day. You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. I have more

understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.”

The Tithe

Besides our heart issues, the threshing floor also has to do with Yahweh’s *land*; His *city* - Jerusalem; and His *people* that He is ingathering. So to produce grain from the threshing floor we need to follow His basic principles of clean and unclean *and* the principle of the tithe.

The second reading for *Shemini Atzeret* is Deuteronomy 14:22-29 about tithing. Again this is one of the main foundations of Tabernacle’s management.

- ✚ The tithe is the Bride’s/priest’s responsibility as it is what builds and sustains the earthly Priesthood.
- ✚ Without tithes/offerings we cannot sustain His House, which includes His Bridal Chamber.
- ✚ Without tithes there is no functioning first fruits priesthood of Yeshua on earth.
- ✚ Without the tithe there is a breakdown of Yahweh’s plan and a hindrance of blessings in our own lives – we failed in rebellion to what He requires of us.
- ✚ The tithe separates the wise from the unwise virgins
- ✚ The tithe demonstrates a circumcised heart, as we realize that we are only stewards of our finances and abundance that He gives to us.
- ✚ The offering of the tithe reflects a heart that does not worship mammon

“Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?”(Isaiah 66:1).

Once the tithe is given we no longer have ownership over it as it is our *sacred portion* to Him. Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the *sacred portion* for themselves. As a result, they died and were no longer part of the assembly (Deuteronomy 26:13; Acts 5:1-11; Re’eh: www.sheepfoldgleanings.com).

Numbers 18:26-31 “Speak thus to the Levites [*those who look after My Vineyard*], and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to Yahweh, a tenth of the tithe. And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the ***threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress***. Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to Yahweh from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give Yahweh's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest. Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to Yahweh, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them.' Therefore you shall say to them: '*When you have lifted up the best of it, then the rest shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress*. You may eat it

in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting.”

Shemini Atzeret – A High Holy Sabbath

The eighth day/*Shemini Atzeret* is to be a solemn assembly. Stone’s Edition Chumesh says, “A day of restriction (a day of non-work) a Sabbath. It is a requirement that the pilgrims (Bride) remain in Jerusalem for an extra day. Yahweh is saying, ‘Make a small banquet for Me so that I can enjoy your (exclusive) company.’ This can be likened to a king who ordered his servants to make a great banquet. When it was over, he asked his dearest friends to arrange a small meal where he, the king, could enjoy their intimate company. So, too, following the offerings for the nations, Yahweh longs for the company of His own nation (Bride) as she lingers this one extra day.”

A day is as a thousand years to Yahweh. May we linger with Him a thousand years. Those who keep this extra *eighth* day enter into the millennial - eternity.

2 Peter 3:8-12 “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With Yahweh a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day [*reference to the eighth day/Shemini Atzeret*]. Yahweh is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of Yahweh will come like a thief [*reference to the sighting of the New Moon and Yom Teruah*]. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements [*our sinful nature*] will be destroyed by fire [*upon our repenting*], and the earth [*the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*] and everything in it will be laid bare [*at the Feast of Yom Kippur*]. Since everything [*that which is not of Yeshua and His Kingdom*] will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives *as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.*”

More Eighth Day

- ✚ In Exodus 22:30 we are told that newborn animals could not be offered up for sacrifice until they were eight days old.
- ✚ Priests did not start their service to Yahweh until the eighth day, after seven days of consecration (Leviticus 9:1).
- ✚ Circumcision for a male child happened on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3; Luke 2:21).
- ✚ People with skin afflictions or bodily discharges were unclean seven days; only after this period of separation were they able to re-enter the camp on the eighth day after their status change (Mikvah cleansing) (Leviticus 14:10, 23 and Lev.15).
- ✚ The days of the Passover observance, Feast of Unleavened Bread and Feast of Firstfruits combine for a total of eight days.
- ✚ The counting of the Omer is a seven-week count from Unleavened Bread to the Feast of Shavuot, whereupon they received Yahweh’s teaching and instruction at Mount Sinai on the eighth week.

- ✿ The Feast of Tabernacles is a seven-day feast with an extra day called the eighth day, eight signifying “new beginnings.”
- ✿ It is believed Yeshua was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles and was circumcised on *Shemini Atzeret* when He was eight days old. “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Yeshua, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.” (Luke 2:21).
- ✿ Solomon dedicated the Temple in a celebration that lasted seven days. During this week long period he consecrated the middle part of the outer court and dedicated the altar. Then Israel continued their celebration, entering right into the *Feast of Tabernacles* the following seven days. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, *Shemini Atzeret*, they upheld a Sabbath rest closing assembly “On the 23rd of the seventh month [*the day after the eighth day*] Solomon sent the people home.” (2 Chronicles 7:1-10; 1 Kings 8:54-66).

The Vinedresser: The History of Rabbinic Authority

Man has added his own customs to Yahweh’s Marriage Covenant. Last week we shared some of the added pagan roots of Christianity. This week we look at some of the added pagan roots of the contemporary Jewish religion through a book by Daniel Gruber called *Rabbi Akiba’s Messiah: The Origins of Rabbinic Authority*.

“History tells us that the father of Rabbinic Judaism, Rabbi Akiba, was born in 40 CE as “Simeon ben Kosiba.” Rabbi Akiba brought in his own standard that changed the way Jewish people thought and how they saw their Scriptures. This resulted in the Babylonian Talmud, a written code of Jewish laws called *halakah*.

A method of *revisionism* was developed by Rabbi Akiba, a method did not change the text but changed the way the text was perceived. It is like placing an optical lens between the reader and the text. The lens refracts and / or colors the textural image that reaches the mind and heart. Once the lens is implanted, *everything* must pass through it. The one who looks through the lens thinks that everything he sees is in the text. He does not know that the lens is there. In fact, if the lens were taken away, he would think that the true image he is seeing is a gross distortion. This is the effect the Talmud had on the written Word of God.

Akiba was the one who produced the framework and the justification for a comprehensive rabbinic religion. He presented the justification for changing the Tabernacle priesthood to rabbinic authority. He compiled and edited *man’s* written authority into a work called the Talmud, a declaration of rabbinic authority called the “oral Torah”.

Akiba himself stated that the oral law was/is a fence around the written Torah. The rabbis erected a safeguard for Scriptural Law. The Torah does not sanction these rabbinic actions. A fence protects by restricting access. What it surrounds can only be seen through the fence or approached by permission of the owner. When something is fenced in, someone is fenced out. The fence both obscures Torah and keeps the people from Torah. A fence dictates ownership.

The Talmud put up the fence, and then increased the height. Akiba himself said the “tradition is a fence to Torah.” So was this rabbinic system beneficial...or detrimental?

In the system Akiba erected, no one else had the right to interpret Torah, not the priests, not the prophets, not the Sadducees, not the Qaumran Covenanters, not the disciples of Yeshua, nor anyone else – not even God. This was the continuing theme of rabbinic writings. Only the rabbis could give the authorized interpretation.

The Temple in Jerusalem is where the priests performed their office. Everyone was required to support – through their tithes and offerings – the ministry of the priests and Levites in the Temple. During the time preceding the Babylonian exile, the priesthood was particularly corrupt. Consequently, Jerusalem and the First Temple were destroyed, “because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests.”

With no Temple, the priests were unable to fully perform their ministry. After seventy years of Babylonian captivity, a remnant returned to the land of Israel to rebuild the Temple. With the rebuilding of the Temple, and the faithful tithing of the people, the priests were able to resume their duties.

After the Hasmonians, the Romans came into the land and made Herod the Great king of Judea. The high priesthood position, which had been abused for a long time, was frequently held by people who were thieves, rather than given to the legitimate Zadokite house.

With the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE the priests were again out of their element. In seventy more years, their authority would be in the hands of the rabbis. Yahweh said of a faithful priest: “True instruction was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many back from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 2:6-7).

The priest was the one appointed by Yahweh to make decisions in regard to purity and religious law. “They are to teach My people the difference between the holy and the common and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean. In any dispute, the priests are to serve as judges and decide it according to My ordinances. They are to keep My laws and My decrees for all My appointed feasts and they are to keep My Sabbaths holy” (Ezekiel 44:23-24).

Yahweh rebuked Jerusalem because, “Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them” (Ezekiel 22:26). These were priestly functions.

After the destruction of the second Temple another change put the rabbis in the place of the priests. Akiba ruled that the tithe did not have to be brought in to the temple and grain was free

from tithes (Mish. Ma'aserot 3:5, Sheni 4:8). These interpretations effectually abolished the whole Biblical system of tithes (*kilaim*), ultimately eliminating the livelihood of the priests and removing the priests as a competitor for authority. In this way, Akiba was able to firmly establish his own Judaism over that of the priests – “to make the Torah what it should have been.”

Other rulings introduced by Akiba: “The Rabbis pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice after Sinai. The authority to determine what is acceptable and what is not does not rest with Yahweh, but rather with the majority of the leading rabbis. The rabbis will excommunicate anyone who will not submit to their decisions.” Each of these points constitutes a radical departure from the teaching of Torah. Each is part of Akiba’s quest for a rabbinic power.

Biblical prophecy is the result of a sovereign God speaking directly to men, through a man. These anointed prophets are sent by Yahweh to deliver His message in the power of the Holy Spirit. The message might be a blessing or a curse, encouragement or rebuke. It might bring forgiveness or condemnation. From Moses to Malachi, Yahweh spoke to Israel through His prophets.

It is recorded in Scripture that during Yeshua’s ministry one underlying issue gave rise to irreconcilable conflict: authority. Who was authorized by Yahweh to interpret the Scriptures and thereby define the life that all Israelites should live? The Talmud and the gospels both make claims of absolute authority – mutually exclusive claims.

Yeshua and the rabbis both pointed to themselves as the supreme authority. One could not accept the claims of the other. That is the reason for the intensity of the conflict presented in both the gospels and the Talmud. In Matthew 23 Yeshua pronounced the seven woes on these Pharisees and teachers of the law (Matthew 23:6-8, 10, 13, 15-16, 23-25, and 27-33).

The rabbinic designation for Yeshua became “Yeshu.” This name was used in the early centuries, retained throughout the Middle Ages, and is still used today. It is a parody of Yeshua. The three consonants y, s, v, with which the name of Yeshu was written, are explained as being the first letters of the three words “*Yimmach sh'mo w'zikhro*” meaning “May his name and his memory be blotted out!” In the eyes of the rabbis, that was necessary for the preservation of Israel. (Ref: the Toledoth)

After the destruction of the Temple, the synagogue grew in religious importance. Increasingly, the rabbis defined that importance. When Akiba gained control, the Academy at Yavneh became the legislative body for enacting rabbinic law and for controlling the membership of the Sanhedrin. The rabbis made the law. The Sanhedrin, or Beth Din (House of Judgment), which they controlled, became the means of enforcing it.

To qualify for the Sanhedrin, a rabbi had to be, literally, a master of sorcery. In other words, he had to be a master of what the Torah expressly forbids (Deut.18:10-12; cf Git.69a; Shab.61a-61b; Sanh.17a). The members of the Sanhedrin had to be familiar not only with Jewish law and tradition, but also with many languages and sciences (Sanh. 17a) (See Reference section).

“Let no one be found among you who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to Yahweh, and because of these detestable practices Yahweh will drive out those nations before you” (Deuteronomy 18: 10-12).

The Second Temple was destroyed at the end of the Great Revolt of 66-70 CE. It was an unsuccessful attempt by Zealots to throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire. One million Jews died from starvation and violence. Others were led away into exile and slavery. The power of the priesthood drastically dissipated. (Ref: Josephus - *The Wars of the Jews*)

The Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-135 CE) against Roman rule in the time of the Emperor Hadrian equaled if not surpassed any previous destructions of the First or Second Temples in numbers who were killed, starved to death, or led into exile and slavery. After the destruction of the Second Temple, Jews were still permitted to remain in the land. Following the Bar Kokhba Rebellion, Jews were forbidden to inhabit the land of Judea. That legal prohibition and the exile it mandated lasted for eighteen centuries. The Romans changed the name of the land to Palestine to demonstrate that it would never again be a Jewish land.

The Bar Kokhba Revolt also witnessed a final, violent split between the followers of Yeshua and the followers of the rabbis. It generated great hostility on both sides. The homeless wanderings of the Jews soon became the hostile reproach and incitement of an imperial Church. The Bar Kokhba Rebellion set the stage for what became an endless procession of Jewish suffering down to, including, and beyond the Holocaust.

The disaster was further compounded by the fact that Rabbi Akiba, the father of rabbinic Judaism, had proclaimed Bar Kokhba, the leader of the rebellion, to be God's Anointed, the Messiah. Gone (until the coming of the Messiah) were the days when Israel was ruled by kings, priests, or prophets. Instead, by the sixth century CE, it was the early rabbis and their disciples who had propelled themselves to positions of communal authority throughout the Jewish world.

Rabbi Akiba was not immediately put to death at the end of the revolt. Initially, perhaps because of his age, he was not even imprisoned. The Romans, to further eradicate the causes of rebellion, imposed laws forbidding rabbinic teaching and practice. Rabbi Akiba did not obey Hadrian's decrees. Consequently, he was then arrested and brought to trial. After being sentenced to death, Akiba was tortured by having the flesh torn from his body with an iron comb. He recited the Shema, “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One...” Even in his death, Akiba laid out the pattern for rabbinic Judaism, the pattern of Kiddush ha Shem. His suffering and death, with the Shema on his lips, became the model for all later Jewish suffering. His death, like his life and teaching, shaped the religion and the future of his people. He left a very complete legacy. The more than eighteen hundred and fifty years of Jewish history since his death have followed the pattern of Akiba's life, a pattern of conflict and martyrdom.

Akiba did not attribute the failure, suffering, and exile to sin. Rather he believed that, “Exile makes atonement for iniquity.” For Akiba, one’s own death also brings atonement. Akiba’s many ways of atonement stood in direct opposition to the message of the gospel, which says only God can atone for the sins of man. The blood of animals only covered the sin, while the people still carried the guilt of their sins.

The only means of atonement is through the death and blood of Yeshua, who took on the sins of the world and became the sacrificial (Passover) lamb (John 3:16). Our own blood could never atone for our own sins. Akiba taught that Yahweh’s atonement was unnecessary. Akiba’s martyrdom came as a result of sin and a failed Bar Kokhba Revolt which he had supported. The Torah and the prophets state that these destructions came about because of our sins.

After his death, Akiba’s disciples continued to seek his counsel and instruction through his writings. Even today, he is considered the greatest of Jewish spiritual heroes.

- ✚ He had supported, if not initiated, a rebellion against Rome.
- ✚ He had declared that the leader of that rebellion was Yahweh’s Anointed.
- ✚ He had commanded all Israel to fight under a false Messiah in a war that he knew would end in disaster. Still, no blame was cast at him. The reasons for this:
 - Akiba had laid out the principle that an error by an expert carried no personal consequences.
 - Akiba taught that the Law was not in heaven, but entrusted to the rabbis. Even if God contradicted from heaven, Akiba maintained that God was in error.
 - The Law and the Prophets spoke of exile as a terrible judgment; Akiba spoke of it as a means of atonement.
 - Akiba’s teaching was still sought because there was no other Judaism left in Israel. He had defeated them all. By various means, he had overcome the Priesthood, the Scriptures, Divine Revelation, and the disciples of Yeshua. Akiba made a fence of legal bricks around the Torah and around Israel, making the laws of the rabbis the highest authority. Whether that law was right or wrong, no one was to depart from it to the left or to the right.

There is a common denominator to Akiba’s Judaism and Bar Kokhba’s battle plan. Bar Kokhba and his men told Yahweh, “Neither help us nor discourage us.” Akiba and the rabbis told Yahweh, “It is not in heaven.” Their declarations are one and the same: “We will do this without You.” Simeon ben Kosiba was very instrumental in the establishment of rabbinic authority. He was also very instrumental in leading Israel into one of the greatest, if not THE greatest disaster of all Jewish history. Rabbi Akiba’s declaration of Bar Kokhba as the Messianic King was consistent with the one consuming goal of his life: to bring Israel under the authority of the rabbis. To that end, his choice of Bar Kokhba was not a mistake. More than symbolically, it was the crowning touch. Bar Kokhba was Rabbi Akiba’s false Messiah.

After the final revolt that exiled the Jewish people, the new leaning center was set up in Babylon. Numerous Rabbi’s, called Geonim in 6-11th century, continued Rabbi Akiba’s teaching and

published the oral Torah into a book called the Talmud. It was then that they decided to change the Torah reading cycle from a three year to a one year with the turn of the yearly cycle right after Feast of Tabernacles. It was decided to “add” a day of celebration right after Tabernacles, and call it Simchat Torah, rejoicing in the Torah. (*End of Daniel Gruber’s Rabbi Akiba’s Messiah*)”

Other Celebrations

Simchat Torah meaning *rejoicing in the Torah* is a man made celebration. In Israel, *Shimini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah* are celebrated on the same day, Tishrei 22. Outside the land of Israel, *Simchat Torah* is a two day celebration which includes *Shimini Atzeret*. Both days are considered *Simchat Torah*. With the added celebration of *Simchat Torah* and its added liturgy, Yahweh’s *Shemini Atzeret* pales in comparison fading behind man’s traditions. This is happened also to the *Feast of Yom Teruah*, which fades behind the manmade celebration of *Rosh HaShannah*.

On *Simchat Torah*, all the Torah scrolls are taken out of the Ark, and then paraded seven times around the bema (pulpit) area, hall or street. This day is the turning around of the Torah cycle where the last Torah portion in Deuteronomy is read with the first Torah portion in Genesis declaring that the Torah is never ending.

Kabbalist used mysticism, which is their substitution for the Holy Spirit of Yahweh, in their believe that *Simchat Torah* provided an opportunity to represent the seven non biblical emanations of Yahweh that desire to make tangible contact with the physical world. They developed a spiritual dance, along with prayers, songs and color banners for each of the seven circles which represent the emanations, invoking the spiritual entities they communicate with in their mysticism. These are all incantations communicating with the forbidden spirit world that is in opposition to Yahweh Yeshua and His instructions given to us found in Genesis to Revelation.

The seventh day of Sukkot, referred to as *Hoshana Rabbah*, was originally associated with the seasonal prayers for abundant precipitation in the approaching rainy season. Over the centuries, much of the original agricultural roots became virtually obliterated and *Hoshana Rabbah* took on a more mystical approach. The mythological poem “*piyut*,” a dance to the Prince of Rain who forms clouds and mists that he empties and from which he pours water, added suspicion and mysticism from the Babylonian period. This poem is still used by many today.

It was on *Hoshana Rabbah*, while the priests were performing the water libation service that the people cried “Save us!” and Yeshua cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (Isaiah 12:3; John 7:37-38).

As we return to our Marriage Covenant and heritage in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, may we not be caught devaluing or replacing Yahweh’s feast days with manmade celebrations nor be found embracing other pagan roots on our journey home. In the last parsha commentary we shared about the pagan Christian feast on December 25, Christmas. In Judaism there is the

celebration of Hanukkah that occurs during the same season. Hanukkah is the rabbinical story of the one-day supply of recovered Temple menorah oil that lasted eight days. Is this a true story or was it a fabricated story from those who wrote the Talmud? Was the victorious celebration of the Maccabees after winning the war and dedicating the Temple, more accurately a delayed celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles? What is the true history behind Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication? Could the Jews and Christians have traditions behind their winter celebrations that are not scriptural but manmade? Time to get out our Scriptures to read the truth for ourselves...

The Bride – The Royal Priesthood and Holy Nation

Malachi 2:7 “For the lips of a priest [*Bride*] ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction-- because he is the messenger of Yahweh Almighty.”

Isaiah 66:18-24 “For I know their works and their thoughts. It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: to Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles [*Nations*]. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to Yahweh out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says Yahweh, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh. And I will also take some of them for *priests* and *Levites*," says Yahweh. “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says Yahweh, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one *New Moon* to another, and from one *Sabbath* to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says Yahweh. “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.”

Revelation 22:12- 16 "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha/*Aleph* and the Omega/*Tav*, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the *tree of life* and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. I, Yeshua, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the assemblies. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

Revelation 22:17-19 “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, Yahweh will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, Yahweh will take away from him his share in the *tree of life* and in the holy city, which are described in this book.”

Shabbat Shalom
Carl and Julie Parker

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4. Sanh.17a ["R.Tam queried, What is the purpose of such meaningless mental gymnastics?' Ramo, in responsum, explains...that this statement does not refer to the meaningless capacity for intellectual gamesmanship, nor does it seek only to insure the apt of judges with an impressive grasp of a great deal of knowledge. In fact, it establishes that a measure of additional sophistication regarding the inner workings of the halakhic process, including the ability to assess the implications of nonnormative possibilities and to utilize halakhic debate to shed light on the nuances of a topic which might have some normative impact, is a necessary precondition to a judicial appointment where the stakes are so high." Kirschenbaum, Pp. 105-106 [Tosafot, Sanh.17a; R.Moses Isserles, Reponsa of Ramo, Jerusalem, 1977, no. 107]

5. Deuteronomy 18:10-12; cf Git. 69a for rabbinic use of magical words, and Shab.61a-61b for rabbinic use of magical amulets. מַּיִן יְפֻכָּהּ יֵלֵךְ is the wording for "a master of sorcery" in Sanh.17a

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