

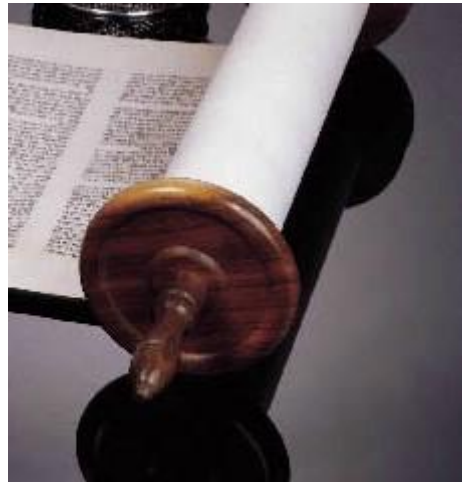
Beth Tephila Messianic Jewish Congregation
(Under same management for over 5778 years)

SHABBAT SERVICE

August 25th -- Lolo Community "Synagogue"

10:00 AM Shabbat Service

12:30 PM Oneg Shabbat & Interactive Torah Study



כִּי־תֵצֵא לַמִּלְחָמָה

ki-tetse la-milchamah

When you go out to war....

וְרָאִיתָ בַּשְּׁבוּיָה אִשָּׁה יְפַת־תּוֹאֵר וְחָשַׁקְתָּ בָּהּ וְלָקַחְתָּ לָךְ לְאִשָּׁה:

Vera'ita bashivyah eshet yefat-toar vechashakta vah velakachta lecha le'ishah.

and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife (for yourself)...

Parsha Ki Tetse (when you go out) -- Deuteronomy 21:10 - 25:19



"When you go out to battle...and see among the captives a beautiful woman...and would take her as a wife

Worshipping God as His Distinct People Through Social & Family Laws

In the Torah portion this week, we find a number of social and family laws that God expected His people, Israel, to keep. They will provide social order for His people, when they come into their "promised land." By keeping these laws "just because God says to do so," God's people honor Him and show themselves to be His distinct people among all the people groups of the world. Some of these laws only pertained to Israel as they lived in the land of their inheritance. Others are also found in the **B'rit Hadasha** (the New Testament) and are therefore also applicable for us today as well. God's people remained a distinct people even while surrounded by other people groups, who worshipped cultic deities. Today we learn that by keeping God's social and family laws, we, too, show ourselves to be God's people.

Social Order Preserved in Battle & Family Situations Chapter 21 - continued

When the army of Israel approached cities outside the land of their inheritance in battle (Deuteronomy 20:10-15), there would be women prisoners. The common practice of men, yielding to the "evil inclination" by raping and pillaging was not allowed by God. A social order of decency that would preserve the dignity of women prisoners was God's commandment. Gentile women were allowed to become the wives of Jewish men with all the rights and standing of Jewish wives. They were given time to mourn their family, who may have died in battle, and put away the vestiges of their former lives. They were allowed to embrace a Jewish husband and the God of Israel. Rabbinic thought was that the reason for 30 days of mourning, while shaving her head, trimming her nails, and putting on the clothes of Jewish women was so that she might not look so attractive to impulsive men, who, given time to reflect, might not want to marry them. After marriage, if the man was not pleased with the former captive woman (perhaps she could not accept him or the God of Israel), she would be allowed to go free. If there were children produced through marriage, the children of the first-born wife would have the expected double portion of inheritance, even if the mother was unloved and

displaced in favor of another wife. (One should note that polygamy in scripture is never seen in a positive light.) Therefore the divorced wife would have additional resources through her children. The principle of beginning a new life with God remains today. One should totally remove all vestiges of the former life that would "call" the person to return to it. Then one should take the time to "count the cost" and release their former life. Only then can the person be incorporated into fellowship in the body of believers. Last week we saw that God "detests" syncretistic worship, the worship of Him along with the worship of other gods (Deut. 16:20-21;17:1-5), so new believers must first put away all vestiges of pagan worship from their former lives. The newly incorporated person is a "first-class citizen" in the body of believers, having been adopted into fellowship through the same finished work of Messiah as all the rest of us.

Within the home, God's social order was to be preserved. A "stubborn and rebellious son" was not allowed to plant seeds of continuing disobedience and disrespect within the camp of Israel. By flagrant violation of God's 5th Commandment to obey his father and mother, the son removed himself from the covenant of Israel with God. The parents bring him to a public forum (city gates), where the administering elders investigate and pass sentence. In most cases the witnesses would cast the first stone (Deuteronomy 17:7), but due to the sensitivity of the parents as witnesses, they were not the initiators of the death of their son. Evil could not be allowed to exist in the camp of Israel, where God dwelt. The deterrence of capital punishment would prevent other sons from entering into the same behavior. If the corpse is displayed as a warning to others, it must be buried the same day, so as not to defile God's land. Additionally Ephesians 6:1-3, states, "children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother...that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth."



Showing Ourselves To Be God's Distinct People in Our Daily Lives
Kedusha, the separated and holy life that shines God's presence

Chapter 22

Rabbi David Friedman reminds us, “**Deuteronomy 4:5-8** relays the Holy One’s goals in bringing our ancestors into the Land: “Look, I taught you logical instructions and holy judgments, ones that **Adonai** my God commanded me, to be carried out in the Land that you are entering, in order to inherit it. Then you will guard them and do them because it is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the peoples that will hear all these instructions. And they will say: ‘These people are really a wise and enlightened nation.’ What other great nation has God so close to them, as **Adonai** our God is, every time that we call to Him? And what great nation has logical instructions and righteous judgments as all of this Torah that I am giving you today? Only as Israel lived this way, according to Torah, could the light of God shine both *within* Israel, and *outwardly* to the nations.”

By obeying God's laws as they relate to living in society, we show our distinctiveness as God's people to all those with whom we come into contact. It is not so important that we fully understand the motives of God for instituting each separate law. It is most important, however, that the world views our faith in God through our obedience to Him in our daily lives.

A common flaw in today's business world is the notion, "your loss is my gain.....and the greater my gain the better." Given that the basic character of man has not changed much since the days of Moses, one could postulate that the same notion prevailed then. In the agricultural society of Moses, one's animals were one's wealth. Therefore by returning the straying animals and property of one's neighbor and helping him in a crisis, the man of God showed the out-working of **Leviticus 19:18** (repeated many times in the **Brit Hadashah**), "you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Using a **Kal VaChomer** argument (from the lesser to the greater), if you see a fellow believer over-loaded with what he or she is carrying, it is a **mitzva** to help out. Furthermore, if you are approached by a fellow believer who offers to help you carry some of your packages, you should allow him/her to help you, rather than the typical, "It's okay, I've got it." It allows your burden to be eased, while the other person does a **mitzva**. Each person benefits, and God is pleased.

In the days of Moses and today, transvestism, wearing the clothes of the opposite sex promoted homosexuality, which God calls "detestable" or "abominable." It could also have played a role in Canaanite worship practices. The Hebrew is even more detailed. A man should not wear the clothes of a woman, and a woman should not wear male "things;" things perhaps other than clothing that would be masculine. This would be in conflict with God's order in the creation of male & female.

Today it is the custom of many to be "environmentally friendly," practicing resource management, but this was not the usual case in the days of Moses. God's law, allowing the mother animal to go free while taking the young, preserved the food supply for future animal harvest. Others would see God's people forsaking short-term profit in favor of long-term gain.

In the days of Moses many maximized the space in their houses by utilizing their flat roofs as a place to dry some of their harvested crops. There were no OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) laws back then to govern building safety into their homes. However, God's people practiced safety by building railings around the roofs of their homes in obedience to God's law.

Some of God's laws against mixtures in this section of our Torah portion and as found in Leviticus 19:19 do not seem to us to have a rational purpose. Rabbis have said that mixtures violate God's laws of creation, creating each species "after its kind." Yet we know today that cross-breeding within their species allows for the best traits of each animal. Clothes made with different types of threads can also produce the best of each type of material. Today we frequently breed hybrid plants and animals within their species. Yet in the days of Moses, God's people were told not to do so. Trying to plow a furrow with two different animal types cannot produce a straight furrow. In some cases God's laws against mixtures produce better results, while in other cases they do not. Still, by keeping God's laws, His people were observably distinct from others. Today we also are called to show our separation from the world's standard by not being "bound together with unbelievers" (**2nd Corinthians 6:14-16**).

Another outward, observable reminder that God's people are a distinct people is the law that required them to make tassels, "g'dilim," (literally, "twisted braids") consisting of 613 separate cords on the four corners of their garments as a reminder to keep all 613 of God's commandments, statutes,

and ordinances. This law may also be found in Numbers 15:37-41. Many Orthodox Jews still keep this mitzvah.

The chapter concludes with God's laws regarding sexual purity. Women under their father's control must be kept sexually pure until marriage.

If a man makes false charges against the virginity of his new wife to the administrative elders of the city, the woman's parents must bring "evidence" of her virginity to the elders. The elders will publicly flog the man, fine him twice the bride price, and prohibit him from ever divorcing his wife. However, if the elders find the charges of immorality to be true, the woman will be stoned to death to "purge the evil" from Israel.

Adultery with a married woman or an engaged woman, who engages in consensual sex, results in the death of both people. But if a man rapes the engaged woman, only the man is put to death. However, the rape of a virgin forces the man to pay her father the bride price, and the man to marry the woman without the ability to ever divorce her. Incest between the father's wife (possibly a divorced step-mother) and his son is prohibited, also seen in **1st Corinthians 5:1**. Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers that..."the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst." The admonition of God through Moses still remains to "purge the evil" from among us. Today, sexual sin is so prevalent in our society that one must continually guard himself (herself) against participation.

God Dwells Among Us Chapter 23

Most of us are not consciously aware that God "dwells in our midst" each and every day. We become so thought-centered on our plans, our daily schedule, and what we are doing at the moment that we forget ..."the Lord God walks in the midst of your camp...and he must not see anything indecent among you... (23:14).

Moses wanted to be sure that his people did not try to imitate Canaanite worship practices, some of which involved emasculation. God would not allow one so involved to enter the "assembly" "kahal" into tabernacle or temple worship at the regular festival celebrations. Although "assembly" is the correct translation from the Hebrew, some feel that the eunuch was merely excluded from marriage, since he could produce no children. Leviticus 21:17-23 states that God did not allow a priest with a physical defect to approach Him to perform priestly duties, leading others to speculate that eunuchs could not enter into worship festivities. Isaiah 56 indicates that eunuchs were not excluded from the covenantal privileges of God's people, even though they could produce no children. In Acts 8:27 the Ethiopian eunuch came to Jerusalem to worship. The context of this chapter is that God's people must be observably distinct by not deforming themselves and worshipping cultic deities.

God also excluded from the assembly those who were the children of those who practiced cultic worship..."even to the 10th generation." Included in the ban were the incestuous descendants of Lot, Ammonites and Moabites. They were "illegitimate," "mamzer" and could not enter into the assembly of the Lord. Thus we see that God makes a distinction between those who belong to Him, who have the privilege of worshipping Him, and others who worship cultic deities. Yet when one from these excluded groups, Ruth for example, embraces the God of Israel (Ruth 1:6), she is fully included in Israel. The moral for us today is that faith and worship of God alone can transform the detestable into the beloved.

CIVILIZATION, NATIONS & EMPIRES THAT HAVE TRIED TO DESTROY THE JEWISH PEOPLE					
Nation	Status	Nation	Status	Nation	Status
Ancient Egypt	X-GONE	Greek Empire	X-GONE	Nazi Germany	X-GONE
Philistines	X-GONE	Roman Empire	X-GONE	Soviet Union	X-GONE
Assyrian Empire	X-GONE	Byzantine Empire	X-GONE	Iran/Hamas	???
Babylonian Empire	X-GONE	Crusaders	X-GONE	The Jewish People -- the smallest of nations, but with a Friend in a High Place So ... BE NICE!	
Persian Empire					

God is with us everywhere we go

When men and women leave their parents' home and go off to college or enter the armed forces, some feel they are on their own and can do anything they wish. Most military bases have nightclubs just outside the base. Bars are also common outside the campuses of Universities. People are not consciously aware that God is with them wherever they go, and demands that they keep His rules. Moses tells those in the army that God is there fighting for them, and therefore He should not see any indecency in them. Since he lives in their midst, even in the army camp, He requires them to keep the same rules, as when they are home. His people keep His commandments wherever they go!

God's people were not allowed to be either common prostitutes nor temple prostitutes. Nor were they allowed to contribute towards God's ministry any ill-gotten wages. **Matthew 27:6** describes the hypocrisy of the high priests, who were in conspiracy to kill Messiah, but could not receive the return of the ill-gotten 30 pieces of silver from Judas because it was "not lawful."

God Protects His People

In most countries the rich dominate the poor, and the strong dominate the weak. But God's people, who follow His law were observably different. They were not allowed to profit from those fellow Jews, who were less fortunate. They were allowed to charge interest to "foreigners," however. Again we see that God makes distinctions between His people and others. God's people were instructed to help their fellow Jews.

If they made a vow to the Lord, they would have to fulfill it. But if they were hungry, they could enter the private property of a fellow Jew and eat from his field. They could not horde, but they could eat what they needed to satisfy their hunger.

Protection in Various Phases of Life Chapter 24

A woman was given a certificate of divorce and allowed to remarry, even if she exhibited some "indecency." The Hebrew words translated "indecency" are "ervah davar." The meaning is literally, "something unclean, shameful, or disgraceful." Whatever the actual meaning was, it was not something punishable like adultery or something that would prohibit another from marrying her. The only prohibition was against her husband, who was prohibited from remarrying her, even if her new husband died or divorced her.

A newly married man is given an exemption from army duty to "give happiness to his wife." It would be important to produce children for reasons of inheritance and as support for his wife in case he died in battle. God understood that a newly married man would be distracted and not be able to give his whole heart to battle. In chapter 20, God listed other exclusions from battle because of personal distraction. When God dwells among His people and fights for them, all that is need is their

whole heart. Numbers of men are not as important as is their commitment. Therefore a newly married man is given an army exemption to make his wife happy.

Kidnapping for reasons of violence or profit was punishable by death. God protected the public health of His people via the priests administration of God's laws against the spread of infectious skin diseases. The livelihood and dignity of a borrower and the wage earner was protected. The lender cannot take away the wage earner's ability to work nor cause him discomfort or embarrassment. The wage earner must be paid on time.

A father was protected from capital punishment for the misdeeds of his son. Individual responsibility for sin was established. Even the corporate punishment for the sin of disbelief at Kadesh-Barnea can be viewed as a composite of individual disbelief.

The widow, the orphan, the alien, and the poor are not to be persecuted. Justice is to be even-handed for everyone. Special provision is made so that even the most needy among God's people does not go hungry. Besides allowing the hungry to take and eat crops from their neighbors' fields (23:24), crop owners must leave a portion of their crop unharvested. Those in need may utilize the unharvested crops, as they have need. One remembers that Ruth was the alien, who was the beneficiary of "gleaning" in Ruth, chapter 2. God's law of gleaning allows those in need to be fed, while keeping their dignity. They worked for their food, rather than being given food.

Protection of Righteous Justice and Posterity

Chapter 25

All disputes are adjudicated so that the righteous are justified, and the wicked are condemned. Yet the wicked were not subject to abuse or degradation beyond what was indicated by God's law. For example, if flogging was indicated, no more than 40 lashings could be given. So as not to exceed the maximum amount by miscounting, Jews gave no more than 39 lashings.

Not muzzling an ox, while it is threshing indicates that God is concerned that the worker is worthy of his hire. Paul used this law to illustrate that ..."the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops" (**1st Corinthians 9:9-10**). He also stated, "The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops" in **2nd Timothy 2:6**.

The so called "law of the levirate" is God's protection on the posterity of each family. If one brother dies without leaving a son to inherit and continue his name, his surviving brother has a duty to provide his sister-in-law with a son. If he refuses to do so, he is publicly humiliated...thus losing "his good name" in society. This law is not negated by Yeshua, when asked about it in **Matthew 22:24-30**. Continuing the family name is so important that if a woman attempts to extinguish a man's ability to procreate, she is severely punished.

Protecting one's "good name" by having only honest dealings in business also observably illustrates the distinctiveness of God's people to the rest of the world. Protecting God's posterity by keeping His law and His directives is illustrated with the instructions of Moses to remember that the Amalekites had shown themselves to be treacherous enemies of the Jewish people by trying to destroy them, when God's people were weak. Their punishment would be that their name would be extinguished by the very people they sought to destroy. Living a life beyond reproach in today's society is the way we protect both our own and God's name and live in an observably distinct manner as His people.

SHABBAT SHALOM

