

## **#27 Tazria – Leviticus12:1-13:59 and #28 Metzora Leviticus14:1-15:33**

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- \* God is bigger than false doctrines. They think they are going somewhere.
- \* Wearing fancy clothes does not mean someone teaches truth. Their clothes are just baubles, worthless junk.
- \* Ridiculous attire does not qualify someone for ministry; those who follow the true God are equipped to serve others.
- \* Don't follow man; follow God. That is where we will find true light and be at true peace.

This week is a double portion, Tazria and Metzora. Tazria means “she conceives.” If a woman conceives a boy, he is to be circumcised on the eighth day. Shaul (Paul) taught that male babies should be circumcised (Galatians 5:11). Adults didn’t have to be circumcised because of the extreme danger involved. Yeshua said that saving life supersedes other commandments (Luke 14:5). The people of Shaul’s time who were telling men they should be circumcised were putting new believers at risk and people were dying.

The woman is to have a 40 day period of purification if it is a boy, 80 days for a girl and make a sacrifice for her purification. Often people are anxious about resuming activities. Why not be patient and listen to God. When someone has a skin sore, boil, burn, or sore on their head or under their beard that could turn tzara'at (leprosy), they are to be examined by the Cohen (Priest) and the Cohen is to determine if they are leprosy or not. The person can be isolated for seven day periods to determine if they are leprosy. Being bald does not make a person unclean. People with tzara'at must identify themselves by wearing torn clothes and by voice, and live outside the camp. The Cohen will also examine clothing for tzara'at (leprosy) and if it is infected the garment must be burned up.

We see God’s protection over women in the purification period for women following childbirth giving her time to recover. Also, there were many instructions given for watching out for leprosy. It shows us that the commandments of God are there to protect us and help us. We can learn from this that it is appropriate to not to spread disease and the idea of quarantine is biblical. We should always remember that God is for us and cares about people and we should care about others too.

Back in the 1950s, quarantine was still practiced in order to protect others. Now it seems that some people think that their rights are being infringed on by quarantines. Be glad that our nation is willing to enact some biblical principles. God wants us to protect life and each other. Who wouldn’t save the life of someone in their family if they could? Be patient and thoughtful. We keep quarantines to protect others and protect life. Wearing a mask during the COVID 19 crisis can be a small way to protect life and it is not foolish.

A note about leprosy and speaking evil. Myriam, Moshe’s sister, was saying bad things about Moshe and ended up with leprosy. When she repented, she was healed. We know there is a connection between speaking evil and emotional problems. Often people who focus on the negative become sick or emotionally sick. For this reason, the ancient Rabbis saw a connection between speaking evil (lashon harah) and sickness. They said that is it wrong to commit lashon harah (have an “evil tongue”). Shaul said, “If there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things,” Philippians 4:8 NKJV. He also must have believed that lashon harah (an evil tongue) was wrong. So, watch what you say. This is an important correctly applied biblical law.

Metzora means “leper.” This portion begins with the purification rights and offerings for someone who has been healed of leprosy. It then talks about a possible infection being in the walls of a house and what to do if they find an infection in the house. Part of the house may be removed or if it is a contagious

tzara'at (leprosy) then the house must be destroyed. People who were in the house also need to be observed for signs of leprosy. If the tzara'at is removed and the house is now clean then a purification ceremony is observed.

The portion next talks about anything or anyone coming in contact with someone who has a discharge from their body and what to do about it; they are also unclean. Also, it talks about what a person is to do if the discharge stops; they are to make an offering. The portion talks about what to do if a seminal emission occurs, bathing after sexual relations, and a woman having her period. If a woman's discharge of blood lasts longer she will be unclean during that time and in both cases, it talks about how that makes other people or things unclean. An offering must be made for an extended time of niddah (discharge of blood). This is done so that they will not die for defiling the Mishkan (the Tent of Meeting in the desert, the Tabernacle). Also, we could again see God's protection regarding these laws.

In this portion, God again makes provision for the protection of the people from disease. It is obvious that people with leprosy or a discharge could be contagious and cause others to be sick. We should remember that God intends good for us and not evil. His rules were never intended to burden us. Also, the Mishkan (the Tabernacle) was to be a carefully guarded and revered place and no one with anything contagious was to come near it. It was a spiritual picture to Israel for them to be a holy people. This can also be spiritual picture of us guarding our lives and our spiritual walk so that it is pure and free from sin. Just like the Temple was a special place, Shaul (Paul) tells us to glorify God because the Holy Spirit is in those who believe in Yeshua. We are temples of the Holy Spirit with the Holy Spirit in us.

The Haftarah for Tazria is 2 Kings 4:42-5:19. This portion begins with the school of the prophets being miraculously fed. Then the captain of the armies of Aram, Na'aman, is healed of tzara'at (leprosy). Na'aman went to king of Israel first and the king was despondent, but Elisha heard about it and told the king to send Na'aman to him. Elisha tells him to dip in the Jordan 7 times and he did so and was healed. Elisha took no reward, but his servant disobeyed Elisha and Geichazi asked for the reward and he and his descendants ended up with the tzara'at after he did that. We should remember that God wants obedience for our benefit. We should note that after Na'aman swallowed his pride, he received healing from God.

The Haftarah for Metzora is 2 Kings 7:3-20. This portion tells the story of 4 lepers who said 'why should we sit here until we die' and they went into the camp of the army of Aram and found it deserted because God had caused the army to flee with fear. They went back and reported it to the gatekeepers of the city. The king found that the army of Aram had fled and the people went and ransacked the camp. The man who had scoffed at Elisha's prediction was trampled to death at the gate.

This story should remind us that God can use anyone if they are willing to start doing something for the kingdom. Shaul compares the believers to a body whose parts function together as they serve each other and the Messiah Yeshua. Also, we should be careful to have good attitudes about God. The man who had a negative attitude about what God's prophet said ended up being trampled to death. We need and want truth or we will end up with wrong ideas and wrong doctrine. Wrong doctrine will lead to our eternal demise which is a whole lot worse than being trampled to death.

God is bigger than false doctrines. False teachers think they are going somewhere, but they are not. This portion talks about leprosy. Those that teach false doctrines are like lepers who spread disease. Shaul (Paul) said in 1 Timothy 6:3-4 CJB, **"If anyone teaches differently and does not agree to the sound precepts of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and to the doctrine that is in keeping with godliness, he is swollen with conceit and understands nothing."**

Some people think they have sound precepts and doctrine, but they are far from God. If they are not teaching others to do what is right and be godly, they are just big swollen “wind bags” (swollen with pride) that don't understand a thing it says. A wind bag is someone who has a lot to say, but what they say is worthless, just a lot of air. Think about it; if what they teach lacks understanding and truth, then what they have to say is worthless.

Wearing fancy clothes does not mean someone teaches truth. Their clothes are just baubles. Anyone can wear a funny hat and some ridiculous outdated attire from ancient times. There are so called Christians who wear red hats and clothes and call themselves cardinals. Their attire comes from a pagan cult that used to dance around a fire with red clothes on. Perhaps they think they are birds. Ridiculous costumes do not qualify someone for ministry; those who follow the true God are the true people who are equipped to serve others. Don't follow man; follow God. So, what is true doctrine?

What the Bible says is true doctrine.

2 Timothy 3:14-4:3 NKJV

3:14-15 “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

In verses 14 and 15, Shaul (Paul) says to Timothy to continue in what he learned since he was a child. He was to continue in the Holy Scriptures. His mother was Jewish (“And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed;” Acts 16:1). She would have taught him the Old Testament. **Since there was no New Testament at the time**, Shaul has to be talking about the Old Testament.

3:16-17 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

So then Shaul says that the Old Testament was, “Given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work;” 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV. Therefore, the people that say the Old Testament is done away with are and aren't keeping the properly applied commandments “understand nothing.” Again, 1 Timothy 6:3-4 CJB, “If anyone teaches differently and does not agree to the sound precepts of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and to the doctrine that is in keeping with godliness, he is swollen with conceit and understands nothing.”

What is so bad about doing what is right? Don't we all want that? Evidently, some just want to be foolish. The Bible says that those who don't want to do good (keep God's commandments), think they know everything, but in fact they know nothing (doing good in Jewish thought is keeping God's commandments).

4:1-3 “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.”

It says that Yeshua will judge us so preach with urgency, “Convince, rebuke, exhort.” This doesn't sound like the all you have to do is love mumbo jumbo, wishy washy, and the anything goes lies we here about.

It's true isn't it; people aren't teaching God's laws and commands from the Old Testament or the New Testament. There are some 1,050 laws in the New Testament that have come from interpretations of the Old Testament. I'm not talking about misapplied man-made laws. For example, the Old Testament says to have honest weights and measures. If we didn't have that as part of our law, our country would fall apart.

Remember the example of the evil tongue and what Shaul taught in Philippians 4:8; that is an applied law from the Old Testament. When people read the New Testament without the context of the Old Testament, they don't understand the purpose of the scriptures being taught. There is depth to what Shaul is teaching. He is also saying, "Watch your attitude!" God's laws are intended to help us; why not keep them; God is God and we are not.

Some people think they can do what they want, but someday they will have to stand before God. Jude 1:4 NKJV says, "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness." These false teachers think they can teach whatever they want instead of teaching people to keep God's commandments and do what is right. It says they turn the favor (grace) of God into sinful disgusting behaviors. These false teachers say it doesn't matter if we keep what it says in the Old Testament. Again, it says about the Old Testament scriptures in 2 Timothy 4:1-3 NKJV, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

God will judge those who don't keep the Old Testament. Shaul tells Timothy to teach the Old Testament all the time because there will be a time when people will not keep the Holy Scriptures; they will not keep sound doctrine. I know that I shared this before; but we need to understand these scriptures, Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV says, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

God will judge His people for the wrong they have done. It is talking about believers, so get with it. It is through the truths of the Holy Scriptures from the Old Testament that we will find true light and be at true peace. Yeshua said in Matthew 5:17 NKJV, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets." So, quit making excuses. "I didn't know," will not work with God at the judgment. Hebrews 12:14 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and **holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.**" Without being a holy separate people who keep God's commandments, we will go to another place where we won't see God. I don't know about you, but I want to be on God's good side. Instead of spreading the leprosy of sin and hate, be a messenger of truth and blessing.

God gave us the laws in the Old Testament portion to protect us. The quarantine practices in the Old Testament still apply today. When we do what God tells us, we can be blessed by God. When we serve others, God can use us for His purposes just like He used the lepers who discovered the invading army had left without taking their supplies with them. False doctrines are of no consequence to God. Just because someone wears weird clothes, it doesn't qualify them to teach about the true God. Timothy was taught the Holy Scriptures from the Old Testament and God wants us to live by the truths He gave us. We will find true light and peace through God's holy scriptures.