



#27 Tazria - #28 Metzora Leviticus 12:1- 15:33

Torah Teaching By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
 in the Greek means to be smudged
 Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name
 Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
 Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
 Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah
 (We also use transliterations from Hebrew)

The portion for this week is a double portion, Tazria and Metzora. Tazria means "she conceives." The portion Tazria begins by talking about circumcision. Abraham, the Gentiles circumcised was to circumcise his children. Genesis 17:10 NKJV says, "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised." The word covenant means agreement. Those who want to live in agreement with God should circumcise their male babies. Shaul (Paul) taught circumcision; Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution?"

Circumcision of adults was dangerous, and the Old Testament commandments teach us that life is to be protected. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." So, the issue back in Shaul's time was the loss of life due to the circumcision of adult males. Those who were preaching circumcision of adults were Torah breakers. Circumcision was not done away with according to Shaul. Moshe had his sons circumcised before the Torah was given. He knew that believers were to be circumcised. Those who say it is just for the Jews are teaching false doctrine.

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.

Last week, we talked about how some teach that Yeshua broke the Sabbath and taught others to do so. Keeping the Sabbath is the 4th commandment.

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 NKJV says,

If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

We are not to follow anyone who teaches others not to keep God's commandments. A false prophet will tell us not to keep God's commandments. Was Yeshua breaking the Sabbath? As I have said many times, no one would have believed in Yeshua if He was telling the people to not keep God's commandments. The fact that Yeshua said that He will reject those who do not keep the law speaks for itself. Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!**'" Yeshua also said in Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law." Unfounded conjectures aside, Yeshua does not say specifically the law is done away with but appears to say that the law will never be done away with until, "heaven and earth pass away." We can safely assume that at present, the earth still exists. So, Yeshua taught that we are to keep God's commandments and those that teach we are not to keep God's Old Testament commandments are the false prophets.

Also, no one would have accepted what Shaul (Paul) had to say if he was teaching the people to not keep God's Old Testament commandments. Acts 24:14 NKJV says, "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." Shaul believed in the Law, kept the Law, and taught others to keep the law. Shaul said in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "We establish the law." So, it makes sense that those who say he did away with the law are the false teachers. We are not supposed to listen to them.

Let's continue to talk some more about Yeshua and the Sabbath. Remember, the real Sabbath is our Friday night to Saturday evening. It says in Exodus 20:11 NKJV that they were to keep Shabbat for, "In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." This is quoting Genesis 2:3 from the time of creation; Shabbat was meant for all believers for all of time.

Shabbat is not just an agreement between Israel and God. Since the creation, mankind knew that God rested on the seventh day (which is our Friday night and Saturday during the day) and they observed Shabbat; for example, Abraham kept God's law. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." It is emphatic by repetition. The word "laws" is the word Torah which refers to the first 5 books of the Bible. Also, the Bible says we are to imitate God. Leviticus 20:26 NKJV says, "And

you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine." Yeshua said in Matthew 5:48 NKJV, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." God rested on the 7th day and made it holy. We are to keep God's holy days.

The 7th day is not Sunday; the day of rest was changed by a pagan to honor the s-u-n god. " On March 7, 321, however, Roman Emperor Constantine I issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating: all judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun." I found this at wikipedia.org under, "Sabbath_in_Christianity."

The Sabbath was made for man scripture, Mark 2:27.

Let's look at the scripture that says the Torah was made for man. This part of the story from Matthew 12 was not in Matthew 12. We learned from Matthew 12 that there is an order of importance that is maintained regarding Sabbath law. Yeshua used an argument concerning the Temple sacrifices and said that the priests are excused from the work they do there on Shabbat. The Temple service supersedes the commandment not to work. We also learned that saving a life according to the Jewish writings and the scriptures allude to the importance of saving life. Saving a life even allows for the interruption of the Temple service! Again, Yoma 85b says, "To preserve a life, e.g., if the priest can testify to the innocence of one who is sentenced to death, one removes him even from on top of My altar, even while he is sacrificing an offering." We learned that Yeshua said that some had condemned people who were not guilty. Matthew 12:7 NKJV says, "You would not have condemned the guiltless.?" Yeshua said in Hosea 6:6 NKJV, " For I desire mercy and not sacrifice." So, saving the life of an innocent person overrides even the Temple sacrifice. We saw that Yeshua is referring to an order regarding the Sabbath. Just like the priests can work on the Sabbath, we are to have mercy on the innocent on the Sabbath.

**Mark 2:27 NKJV says,
"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."**

What can we understand from the additional wording in Mark that the Sabbath was make for man? First of all, the Sabbath is on the 7th day. That begins at sunset on our Friday night and goes until sunset on Saturday. It was a logical way to end and begin days. The ancient days began at sunset and not at midnight. Genesis 1:5 NKJV says, "So the evening and the morning were the first day." Also, someone in the 18th century went around the world to see if all Jews were keeping the Sabbath on the same day and they were. Jews knew when the Sabbath was because in the desert, they got manna on 6 days of the week and not on the 7th day for some 40 years.

God made the day holy at the time of creation. Genesis 2:2-3 NKJV says, "And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Exodus expounds more on the Sabbath:

Exodus 20:8-11 NKJV says,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The command to rest on the Sabbath is based on what God did at the time of creation, so it is conceivable that believers for all of time kept the true Sabbath. In Deuteronomy it tells us that it is also a commemoration for Israel's freedom from slavery to pagan Egypt and therefore from pagan sin.

Just like God set Israel free so they could be free from pagan sin, the believers in Messiah are no longer to be slaves to sin. Romans 6:6 NKJV says, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." We are no longer to be slaves to sin but be free from the slavery of sin and keep God's commandments.

The Sabbath is a day to remember our deliverance from darkness and sin. Acts 26:18 NKJV says about those who receive the Messiah: "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." We have been set free from demonic powers through God's commandments and the Messiah. 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NKJV says, "In humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

We should also consider the Sabbath to be a day that we remember what the Messiah did for us through His helper, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38-39 NKJV says, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Believers in the Messiah are supposed to ask to receive God's gift of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:9-13 NKJV says,

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

People often think of the law not to work on the Sabbath as a restriction. Consider this. People in ancient cultures often worked 7 days a week, so they got no guaranteed weekly rest. Slaves in particular worked 7 days a week. So, the Sabbath points to us being a free and privileged people. The commandment also says that everyone is to benefit from this day of rest, even the animals! So it is truly to be a day of blessed rest. It points to God being the creator because God made it holy at the time of creation, therefore those who do not keep the Sabbath, do not honor God as the creator.

God says those who keep the Sabbath are blessed. Isaiah 56:2 NKJV says, "Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." So, God gave us the Sabbath to bless mankind. Isn't this great! Isaiah 58:13 NKJV says, "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words." On the Sabbath, we stop work or doing just any work that we want to do ("your own pleasure"). It is not talking about not enjoying the day. It is to be a day of delight, a true day of rest. We are to make it a holy day. The word holy means separate. We are to separate the Sabbath from doing just any work we desire ("your pleasure"). We are to not even talk about work or perhaps anything stressful, so making it a true day of rest that includes mental rest. We honor God by keeping the Sabbath.

God has done so much for us including giving us a day of rest. What has God done for us? God has provided for all on the earth and what mankind needs for life. Many people realize how complex life is and that there must be a God based on that. Atheists try to minimize this concept and say that mankind and all that exists just happened by chance. Every creature is complex and all that is needed for life is complex. It cannot have happened just by chance.

Psalms 104:10-24 NKJV says,

He sends the springs into the valleys; they flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart. The trees of the LORD are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, where the birds make their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high hills are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers. He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows its going down. You make darkness, and it is night, in which all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their food from God. When the sun rises, they gather together and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are Your works!

In wisdom You have made them all.

God made us in His image with unique abilities like the ability to create, decide, think, be kind, be good, and so much more. Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image,

according to Our likeness." Did all how God created mankind just happen by chance? Again this points to a creator.

God gave us directions for life, after all, He is the creator and knows what is best for us. God pleads with us to accept His good ways. Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" God gave us special days to observe and rest on, and God gave us His commandments and the Messianic gift of the Holy Spirit through the Messiah to help us in life. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever the Spirit." Shaul says we are to desire the Messianic gifts that are associated with the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts. Yeshua said that the gift of the Holy Spirit is good. Believers need to accept God's good gift. It is part of our Messianic heritage. Again, Luke 11:13 NKJV says, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

There is light even among darkness.

Sometimes we think that everything is backwards and evil, and no one wants what is good. Just because the prevailing attitudes are far from God, it does not mean there are no people who keep God's commandments. There are many among Jews, Christians, and Messianic Jews that keep God's commandments.

At various times, Old Testament believers have committed idolatry. Idolatry is the worship or prayer to anyone or anything other than the true God. Exodus 20:3-6 NKJV says, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Even at times where the majority were making terrible mistakes with their lives there were still believers around. 1 Kings 19:18 NKJV says, "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." So, take heart. You can be among those who keep God's commandments and if you are now living in sin, you can repent, and God will forgive you. Repentance means that you change how you are living and rebuke the sinful ways you were doing and decide not to do those things ever again. Psalms 103:12-13 NKJV says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him."

It is a shame that good believers have to share in the problems created by those who do what is wrong. In the case of Israel at one time, the nation was defeated, and many good believers were taken captive to Babylon. Many kept their faith though and some of those exiled were able to return to their homeland.

Keep your heart and mind attached to God. It is not hard.

Sometimes we think that following God is difficult, or we have been told that following God is difficult. For the most part it is actually the opposite because doing what God says is a productive and good way to live.

The Bible says that what God commands us is not too difficult to do. Deuteronomy 30:11 NIV says, "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." All the extra man-made commands can make it difficult to follow God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Read your Bible and start following what God tells us to do. There are many religions that just follow what people have made up. God's word in the Bible was given to us by God.

This scripture is talking about the Old Testament scriptures because there was no New Testament at the time. 2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV says, "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The Bible and not what mankind has made up are the scriptures that came from God. People may say that they believe is their culture, but man-made culture is not from God.

Test what people are teaching. If they are teaching murder, they are contradicting how the Bible says to live. If they are kidnapping people, the Bible says that kidnappers are to be put to death. Kidnapping is wrong. Read the Bible. The Bible says that men are not to dress like women and women are not to dress like men.

Those that teach otherwise are wrong. 2 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." Noah taught people to do what is right. That is what righteousness means. See Deuteronomy 6:17-18 where it says that we are to keep God's commandments and do what is "right and good." Those that live in sin and preachers who teach others that it is okay to do what is wrong are according to 2 Peter 2:17 NKJV, "Wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Your man-made ideas will cause you extreme eternal pain. God is a good God and He must judge those who bring evil into the world, or He would not be a just and good God.

God's ways bring His presence and goodness. The ways of mankind do not work. (Although they think they do).

I sometimes talk about that if nations would start following God's commandments to not murder, and not covet and steal we would have fewer wars. They self-justify their behavior and cause terrible atrocities. False religions justify murder and taking what belongs to others. The Bible does not teach murder, stealing, or coveting.

God is good and His commandments are good. Psalms 119:68 NKJV, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes." Psalms 106:1 NKJV says, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." God forgives those who are truly sorry for their sin and those who are determined to live right. Psalms 86:5 NKJV says, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You."

God wants what is best for us, He is upright. Those who are humble, who want God's truths, learn His good commandments. God's ways are the true and good way to live. Psalms 25:8-10 NKJV says, "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth."

People are paying for the darkness they desire. They think their wrong ideas and lies do not matter.

They may think ideas and ideals are relative. Namely, that each person has their own preferences and there is nothing wrong with these even if the Bible says they are wrong. The creator of the universe is right, and they are wrong. There is a saying that you reap what you sow. It means that a person will often receive the corresponding consequences for their behavior. Isaiah 40:26 NKJV says, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing."

Nothing is hidden to God. Do not think that your evil will not catch up to you. Remember the darkness for eternity scripture in 2 Peter 2:17. God knows what is going on. Numbers 32:23 NKJV says, "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out." Not keeping the commandments of a good and caring God is evil and separates people from God because God wants us to do good and not evil. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you."

Sometimes we think that the world is backwards, and no one wants what is right and good. Stay true to God's good commandments. Learn them and grow spiritually. Keep your heart and mind where it belongs. Stay strong and do what is right. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." God is good and His commandments bring goodness into the world instead of the pain and consequences that come with evil. You reap what you sow, so sow what is right and good. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you."

Torah Study

This week is a double portion, Tazria and Metzora. Tazria means "she conceives." Its Hebrew root is *zarah* which means to sow. In Genesis 3:15 the same root is used and translated seed

which is a prophecy about the Messiah overcoming the devil through the seed of the woman, namely one of the offspring of Eve some day in the future.

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." Yeshua the Messiah has given us power over the suggestions of the devil. James 4:7-8 NKJV says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Even in Yeshua's time they understood that the devil was at the cause of some sin.

The portion Tazria begins with laws concerning the birth of a baby boy. If a woman conceives a boy, he is to be circumcised on the eighth day. Shaul (Paul) taught that male babies should be circumcised in Galatians 5:11 NKJV; he says, "I still preach circumcision."

The issue of circumcision.

Adults do not have to be circumcised because of the danger involved. That was the issue for new Gentile believers in the Messiah Yeshua in that era. Yeshua said that saving life supersedes other commandments. Luke 14:5 talks about saving life even though it is Shabbat, a day of rest. The Old Testament commandments even say that they are to help animals at risk. What about people? Deuteronomy 22:4 NKJV says, "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." The people of Shaul's time who were telling adult men they should be circumcised were putting new believers at risk, and people were dying because it was dangerous to do at that time. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." We are to protect life. Shaul taught circumcision of male babies. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision."

You may find this interesting. Circumcision was an agreement made with Abraham that he believed in God (see Genesis 17:10-14). It included everyone associated with Abraham. Those who do not circumcise their males have broken the agreement between themselves and God. The agreement was to be practiced forever. Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV says, "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." Remember the word righteousness means that he did what was right. Abraham and all those associated with Abraham circumcised their males and kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." He did what was right. He was righteous.

Since we are sons through Abraham, we are required to not only keep God's commandments but to practice the circumcision of male babies. Genesis 17:14 NKJV says, "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

The portion continues. The woman is to refrain from marital relations for 7 days if she has a boy and for 14 days if she has a girl. There is a 40-day period of purification if she has a boy, 80 days for a girl and she is to make a sacrifice for her purification. Often people are anxious about resuming activities after having a child. Why not be patient and listen to what God says.

When someone has a skin sore, boil, burn, or sore on their head or under their beard that could turn tzara'at (leprous), they are to be examined by the Cohen (Priest) and the Cohen is to determine if they are leprous or not. The person can be isolated for seven-day periods to determine if they are leprous. 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 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. Who wouldn't save the life of someone in their family if they could? I remember being in quarantine for a sickness I had when I was young. I didn't like it, but that is the right thing to do. Be patient and thoughtful in your approach to life. Years ago, some of the guys I worked with did not like wearing eye protection. If I had not been wearing eye protection, I would have lost an eye. A large piece of hot metal hit my eye protection hard.

I often went along with my friends who did not keep the safety rules that protected me, but I am glad I had safety glasses on that day. These things were instituted to help protect life, so do not scoff at them. I was talking to my uncle one day and he said that another person at work had just died because of carelessness. They were showing their equipment to someone, and they turned on the power while someone was working on the equipment. We now have lockout rules that prevent someone from turning on the electricity while someone is working on it.

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 and even physical problems.

Often people who focus on the negative become sick or emotionally sick. The ancient Rabbis saw a connection between speaking evil (lashon harah) and sickness in the Bible. 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 your attitude and what you say. I am not saying to be a Pollyanna and think everything is great when it is not.

The Haftarah for the portion Tazria is 2 Kings 4:42-5:19. This portion in 2 Kings 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 the 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. After Na'aman put off his pride, he received healing from God. So put off your pride and do what is right and keep God's commandments. God knows what is best for us.

This week is also the Torah portion Metzora. 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. This could be referring to gonorrhea and that is what the rabbis think. Those with gonorrhea are unclean until they are healed, and they must also make a sin 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 should again see God's protection in these commands.

In this portion, God again makes provision for the protection of the people from disease and can be applied to other areas of life. 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 a 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 with the Holy Spirit in us. First of all, note the context, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God;" 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV. Then in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV it says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." The Temple was to be an especially pure place and so should the believers in the Messiah Yeshua.

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 in the Messiah to a body whose parts function together as they serve each other and serve the Messiah Yeshua. Also, we should be careful to have good attitudes about God. The man who had a negative attitude about what God was about to do ended up being trampled to death. Those who have a critical spirit about God and the Bible often bring trouble on themselves. This is why it is necessary to teach a strong message. We need and want truth, or we will end up with wrong ideas and wrong doctrine and be left out of God's future kingdom. Shaul said, "Do not be deceived."

Wrong doctrine will lead to our eternal demise. Some people think they can do whatever they want. Shaul said in Galatians 5:21 NKJV, "Just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." And in Galatians 6:7 NKJV, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked." Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Unbelievers may mock God for now, but they will have to stand before God for their evil. Warnings like these are loving and caring reminders to always do what is "right and good."

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

Male babies are to be circumcised. The people of Shaul's time who were telling adult men they should be circumcised were putting new believers at risk, and people were dying because it was dangerous to do at that time. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." We are to protect life. Shaul taught circumcision of male babies. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision." We are to keep all of God's commandments and not just some of them. Some say we are children of Abraham by faith. Abraham kept God's commandments (see Genesis 26:5). All those who are of Abraham including the foreigner are required to keep God's commandments and have their male babies circumcised (see Genesis 17:9-14). God said to Abraham in Genesis 17:14 NKJV, "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." Genesis 17:13 NKJV says, "It is an everlasting covenant." It is not done away with.

There is a ritual uncleanness after a woman has children. She is not to eat of the sacrifices. She is not to have sexual relations for 7 days if it is a boy, and for 14 days if it is a girl. She is to give a sacrifice at the end of her uncleanness, 41 days for boy and 81 days if she has a girl. Leviticus 12:2-8.

A person with a skin condition is unclean and it must be determined if it is leprosy or not. Leviticus 13:2-6.

Hair is not to be shaved from a discoloration of the skin. Leviticus 13:33-34.

A leper is to live outside the camp, to keep their hair long, and tear their clothes. Cloth also needs to be inspected to see if it is leprous. Leviticus 13:47-50. Quarantine to stop the spread of a dangerous disease is a proper application of the commandment to live outside the camp.

These are the directions for restoring the purity of a leper. Leviticus 14:2-32.

A house can be unclean and what must be done. Leviticus 14:34-38.

A man with gonorrhea remains unclean and what to do about it. Leviticus 15:1-8.

A man healed of gonorrhea is to present a burnt offering and a sin offering. Leviticus 15:13-14.

A man having a discharge of semen while not having intercourse is unclean and what to do. Leviticus 15:16.

A woman during her menstruation or when bleeding is unclean and what she is to do for irregular bleeding. Leviticus 15:19, 25, 28-30.

In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

We need to explain why we use God's real name in the Aaronic blessing. Some believe we are not supposed to use God's name, but they are mistaken. ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name. Won't you also honor God's name and use His true name with respect at times. The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. Over 2,000 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh.

Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה).

Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people. It is a commandment to put God's name on His people and by not using God's name, some are not keeping this commandment. What an honor it is to be a people of the creator and true God.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיַחַנֶּנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשָּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.