



Parasha Yitro

February 13, 2024

Torah: Exodus 18:1-20:23 (26)

Haftarah: Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6

Ketuvim Shlichim: 2Peter 3:3-4; 9-13

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *parasha* today is *Yitro*, Jethro in English. It is the name of *Moshe's* father in law, whom we see in other verses by the names of *Ru'el* or *Hobab*. He is described in *Torah* as the Priest of Midian. His purpose in coming was to bring Moses's wife and two sons to him. Jethro's visit to the Israelite camp seems to have been led by ADONAI because he gave Moses some very important advice. Up until now, Moses had been sitting all day judging and resolving disputes among the people. The advice was about dividing up the responsibility of judging the people. *Yitro* told him that he should certainly teach them *Torah* and the way that they should walk, but that he should also appoint judges over thousands, fifties, hundreds and tens and then only judge the more difficult cases himself. This was excellent advice and Moses accepted it, advice which kept him from "wearing himself out" as *Torah* says. But, Jethro, for some reason, decided not to remain with *B'nei Yisra'el*, and returned to his home in Midian.

Last *Shabbat*, our message was concluded with Israel in the vicinity of Mount Sinai. ADONAI said that He would stand upon a rock, which when struck by Moses, would produce water. He said that the rock was in Horeb (17:6), another name for Sinai, the mountain, not the peninsula. Then, the Amalekites came and fought with Israel (17:8), presumably in the same area. In our *parasha* today, Israel is camped at the base of Mount Sinai. No more travel has been indicated, so they must have been very near it when ADONAI brought water from the rock.

In our *parasha*, ADONAI has brought Israel to Mount Sinai for a purpose. They are His chosen people and have been since He cut His covenant with Abraham some 400 years earlier. (Genesis 15). But now, ADONAI will be much more specific with Abraham's descendants. He has just delivered them from Egyptian slavery after giving them instructions about how to keep the Passover. What do you call what ADONAI did for Israel? You call it grace. Israel's deliverance from Egypt is just as much grace, ADONAI's unmerited favor, as is His gift of salvation through Yeshua. But, why did He deliver them? These next verses answer the question: *3 Moses went up to God, and Adonai called to him from the mountain saying, "Say this to the house of Jacob, and tell Bnei-Yisrael, 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you listen closely to My voice, and keep My covenant, then you will be My own treasure from among all people, for all the earth is Mine. 6 So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation.'* These are the words which you are to speak to Bnei-Yisrael." (Exodus 19:3-6 TLV). Israel, ADONAI's chosen nation whom He loves (Isaiah 43:5), was not only chosen to be special in His eyes, but were also chosen for a purpose. Israel was called by ADONAI to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, a nation which would represent

Him to all the nations of the world. Israel not only was, but still is, a “*goy kadosh*,” a holy nation, holy because they have kept His covenant.

That they have kept His covenant is a bold statement, but it’s true. Initially, the people of Israel kept the covenant which ADONAI cut with them at Mount Sinai, but then they began to break it. Even before they entered the Promised Land, He told them that in days to come, they would forsake Him and break His covenant. But, He was longsuffering and gave them hundreds of years of grace. Eventually, He said “enough” and stated that He would make a new covenant with the House of Israel and Judah. 30 *“Behold, days are coming” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-”* (Jeremiah 31:30). He said that it was because they broke His covenant, the covenant which He made with them at Mount Sinai. 31 ... *“For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them.” it is a declaration of Adonai.”* (Jeremiah 31:31b). The covenant, the New Covenant, was first promised and then, 600 years later, made with Israel. The covenant was cut by Yeshua with His own blood. *Yeshua benYosef benDavid* is ADONAI’s Son and our Messiah, the Mediator and High Priest of the *B’rit Chadasha*, ADONAI’s New Covenant. At His Passover *seder* the night before He died, Yeshua said: 20 ..., *“This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you.”* (Luke 21:20b TLV). He died on the cross the next day, the day on which lambs were to be slaughtered for Passover: 6 *“You must watch over it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to slaughter it at twilight.”* (Exodus 12:6 TLV). Yeshua died on the 14th day of the month of *Nisan*, a picture of G-d’s lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8). I believe that the year was 30 CE. ADONAI’s *B’rit Chadasha*, the New Covenant, has been active and in effect since Yeshua’s death. Now that ADONAI’s New Covenant is in effect, it is the active covenant and Israel, the Jews who are covenant members, are the nation about whom ADONAI spoke at Mount Sinai. They were set apart, made holy for this purpose, by the Creator of the universe and are actively in covenant with Him today. At Mount Sinai, ADONAI said: 5 *“Now then, if you listen closely to My voice, and keep My covenant, then you will be My own treasure from among all people, for all the earth is Mine.”* (Exodus 19:5 TLV). The people of Israel broke the covenant ADONAI made with them at Mount Sinai, but the people of Israel today who keep His New Covenant have not broken His covenant. They are righteous Israel, the remnant which is a *“mamlechet kohanim v’goy kadosh,”* a holy nation: *“6 So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation.”* (Exodus 19:t TLV). The righteous remnant of Israel is the *goy kadosh* which is set apart and knows G-d for the purpose of introducing all the other nations to Him. They are joined by all of Yeshua’s Gentile followers who also are a part of the *goy kadosh*, the holy nation.

This is not to discount all of the rest of Israel, the Jews of the world, because they are still ADONAI’s chosen people, the apple of His eye, and He loves them. But right now, they are not in an active redemptive covenant with Him. Redemptive is the key word. The Temple was destroyed and the Levitical Priesthood was dispersed almost two thousand years ago and the only active redemptive covenant today is the New Covenant. All Israel, every living Jew, is in covenant with ADONAI through the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant which He made with Abraham, the covenant giving them the Land of Israel. They have the right to have a nation and to exercise authority over its land, but in my opinion, they are not righteous Israel, priests to the nations. But, they will be soon. (Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 11:25-27). That day is coming.

This brings up an interesting point. Some of you attended the National Day of Prayer and Repentance in Washington, DC, online this past Wednesday (January 31st). It was an amazing event. One of the topics addressed was the five red heifers which are currently in *Shiloh*, Israel. According to information given by the orthodox rabbi from Israel who was on the program, at least one, possibly more, has passed all rabbinic requirements for being slaughtered and burned into ashes to be used as “water of purification from sin.” (Numbers 19:9). The *Torah* of the Red Heifer is found in Numbers 19:1-10 and only states: 2 ... *a flawless red heifer on which there is no blemish and on which has never been a yoke.* (Numbers 19:2b). There have been other requirements added by the rabbis which are found in Tractate *Parah* of the *Mishnah* and include such things as age, number of discolored hairs that can be present and the location of the place of slaughter. *Mishnah Parah* states that: “The heifer is to be brought to the “*Mount of Anointment*,” a specific place on the Mount of Olives, a spot which is opposite the eastern gate of the Temple Mount.” According to the rabbi, the Israeli government has provided the place for this to take place. A picture with an arrow pointing from the place on the Mount of Olives to the eastern gate of the Temple Mount was shown. It was told that the age of the cattle required by the *Mishnah* will be reached in just a few weeks and the plan is to slaughter a heifer and prepare its ashes. Since the very first red heifer which was killed in the wilderness by Aaron’s son Eleazar, tradition says that there have been a total of nine red heifers, the last one killed more than two thousand years ago. According to the speakers (the rabbi and the man who provided the cattle), the purpose of this is to lead to the construction of a third Temple which will be built over the foundation stone on the Temple Mount, a place for prayer for all nations, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and others. ADONAI said: 7 “*these I will bring to My holy mountain, and let them rejoice in My House of Prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar. For My House will be called a House of Prayer for all nations.*” (Isaiah 56:7 TLV). From the verse before, those to whom ADONAI is referring are: 6 “*Also the foreigners who join themselves to Adonai, to minister to Him, and to love the Name of Adonai, and to be His servants— all who keep from profaning Shabbat, and hold fast to My covenant—*” (Isaiah 56:6 TLV). Perhaps the speaker meant former Muslims and former Buddhists and other former worshippers of false gods. It is clear that ADONAI’s Temple will be a place to worship Him only. Currently, the Islamic Dome of the Rock covers that stone. Will ADONAI allow a heifer to be slaughtered at this time? I don’t know the answer. The medieval *rabbi Maimonides (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, 1128-1204)* prophesied that the tenth red heifer would be slaughtered by the Messiah. Clearly, the return of Messiah is approaching. We must be expectant.

Regarding the sin sacrifices offered in the Temple and the Red Heifer, the author of Hebrews wrote: 13 *For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Messiah—who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God—cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* (Hebrews 9:13-14 TLV). Speaking regarding the sin sacrifices of the Temple, he said: 10 “*We have an altar from which those serving in the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals—whose blood is brought into the Holies by the kohen gadol as an offering for sin—are burned outside the camp*” (Hebrews 13:10-11 TLV). The sin sacrifices on *Yom Kippur* had their blood sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, but the rest of their bodies were taken outside of the camp and burned. The offerings, other than sin offerings, could be eaten by the priests and those who offered them. *Torah* says: 27 “*The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp, and their hides, their flesh, and their dung burned with fire*”

(Leviticus 16:27 TLV). These are the atonement sacrifices made on *Yom Kippur*. The bull for the sin offering was for the High Priest and his family while the goat for the sin offering was for the sins of the people of Israel and both of these sacrifices are pictures of Yeshua. Similarly, the Red Heifer was burned outside the camp. Its ashes purified from spiritual death and is a picture of Yeshua. This is shown in the next statement by the writer of Hebrews: 12 *“Therefore, to make the people holy through His own blood, Yeshua also suffered outside the gate”* (Hebrews 13:12 TLV). Yeshua was killed outside the gate because He was considered an unclean criminal. The water of purification made from the ashes of the Red Heifer, itself slaughtered outside the gate, are a picture of Yeshua’s sacrificial death outside the camp: 9 *.... They are to be for the community of Bnei-Yisrael to use as water of purification from sin.* (Numbers 19:9b TLV). Yeshua took the place of the *Yom Kippur* goat and became the sacrifice for our sins, an atonement for us. In doing this, He became unclean for us in the uncleanness outside of the city gate. 12 *Therefore, to make the people holy through His own blood, Yeshua also suffered outside the gate.* 13 *So let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His disgrace.* 14 *For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come.* (Hebrews 13:12-14 TLV). As unclean criminal sinners, we go to Yeshua outside the camp and return washed clean of our sins by His holy blood and with the realization that our time on this earth is temporary as we await our reunion with Him in the heavenly Jerusalem, a picture of eternity.

To be able to take advantage of what Yeshua is offering us we have to be willing to go outside the camp to receive it. We must go beyond reason. We have to be willing to be ridiculed. We have to be willing to be considered feeble-minded. Today, for being obedient to ADONAI’s Word, we are called haters. Not only are we ridiculed by those of the far left whose voices and sins have become so loud, but also are beginning to be sanctioned by our own government. But, those who rely only on their intellect don’t understand the things of faith. Paraphrasing and quoting Isaiah 29:14, *Sha’ul* said: 18 *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* 19 *For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the intelligent”* (1Corinthians 1:18-19 TLV). Today, there are many groups which oppose G-d. We have associations of atheists, organized humanists and many other organizations and just individuals who exist to oppose the constitutional right of the people of the United States to worship G-d.

The ashes of the *parah adumah*, the Red Heifer, are a paradox. It is that the person performing the spiritual cleansing is himself rendered unclean by something which makes clean. Everyone involved in the preparation of the ashes of the red heifer or in the sprinkling of the ashes and water is made unclean. In order to cleanse us, Yeshua conquered the unclean. In order to deliver us from death, He died. For us, Yeshua took the curse of hanging on a tree upon Himself. (Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 5:14). He passed through death for us, so that we might be freed from death. But, death had no hold on Him and He rose on the third day. According to *Torah*, nothing is as contaminating as a dead body. (Numbers 31:19). Yeshua was Himself briefly a dead body. He came into contact with the uncleanness found in humanity by virtue of His human birth. He came into contact with human uncleanness by conducting His healing ministry in the midst of Israel. He came into contact with the uncleanness, the iniquity, the transgression and the sin of Israel in order to cleanse them and to cleanse those of us who call upon Him today. In order to heal the unclean, He laid His hands upon them. He came into contact with death and conquered death itself, the most contaminating source of uncleanness, in order to cleanse us. Because He conquered uncleanness, when we trust in Him, we are made clean.

It is clear that ADONAI established both the Sinai Covenant and the New Covenant even before “the foundation of the earth” and His plan to send His Son to redeem us was made simultaneously. The writer of Hebrews alludes to this: *3 “For we who have trusted are entering into that rest. It is just as God has said, “So in My wrath I swore, “They shall never enter My rest,” even though His works were finished since the foundation of the world.”* (Hebrews 4:3 TLV). He refers to the first generation of Israelites who died in the Wilderness (Numbers 14:21-23; Psalm 95:11), but the final phrase is what we are looking for: *“even though His works were finished since the foundation of the world”*. The evidence that ADONAI had already planned to cut both covenants and to send His Son is clearly found throughout the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible for anyone who looks for it.

I believe that the National Day of Prayer and Repentance this past Wednesday was a defining day, an actual beginning of sincere repentance by the people of Yeshua’s worldwide body of followers. For five hours, hundreds of people including U. S. Representatives, U. S. Senators, Ministers, Rabbis and people from all walks of life repented for their own sins and called for the people of our nation to repent. Rabbi Jonathan Cahn was the first to speak and he highlighted information from his book, *The Return of the Gods*, setting the tone for repentance. Pastor Jack Hibbs of Calvary Chapel of Chino Hills, California, stated that many pulpits have become a “show” rather than the source of spiritual nourishment and truth that they ought to be. His statement that “no revival comes without repentance” is one that we all must take to heart. Without repentance, there will be no revival and right at this moment, it seems that many in Yeshua’s body in the United States are either unaware, unwilling, or don’t see the need to repent.

What is repentance? It is a declaration by a person that they are sorry for their behavior which falls short of the standard set for us by ADONAI. It is a confession of sin and a sincere return to what is right and a new relationship with Yeshua and ADONAI. There is no one who does not need to repent. Declaration is only the first part of repentance. Repentance is also return, action. Each of us must take the action needed to restore full relationship with Yeshua and then remain in that renewed relationship. Many people worship in their homes and apart from a congregational body. Repentance can begin in the home, but it can’t remain there. Every follower of Yeshua who is serious about repentance and sincerely wants revival should be in a congregation worshipping G-d. If they are called to be Christian, they should be in a church on Sunday. If they are called to be a Messianic follower of Yeshua, they should be in a synagogue on *Shabbat*. Every follower of Jesus, Yeshua, should be a part of a congregation. The Holy Spirit will lead you to where He wants you to be. You don’t have to agree with everything which the pastor or the rabbi says. There is no perfect congregation. You will be salt and light and encouragement to the local body just by your presence. If you are no longer a part of a congregation, begin attending the fellowship of believers to which the Holy Spirit directs you. And, be there regularly. Along with loving ADONAI our G-d with all our heart, soul and strength, Yeshua commanded us to “love our neighbor as ourselves.” (Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27). But then, He gave us a new commandment: *34 “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you must love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (John 13:34-35 TLV). We show our love for each other by assembling together and respecting each other’s sincere faith even if we interpret Scripture slightly differently. We should assemble ourselves to worship ADONAI regularly as the author of Hebrews exhorts us: *25 Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching..* (Hebrews 10:25 Berean Standard Bible). It says, “all the more as you see

the Day approaching.” What is the Day? It is the Day of ADONAI which is drawing nearer and its nearness should cause us to take these words to heart and be in our place of worship every time the doors are open. The signs are all around us. Take ADONAI’s warning to heart. Listen to the prophet. The time of his warning is here. *1 Blow the shofar in Zion! Sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all living in the land tremble—for the day of Adonai is coming—surely it is near!* (Joel 2:1 TLV). “Blow the shofar in Zion, Zion! Sound the alarm on My holy mountain! Blow the shofar in Zion, Zion! Sound the Alarm!” (Original says “Blow the trumpet.” Author, Craig Terndrup). These words which we sing each *Shabbat* morning to open our service are from Joel 2:1 and as we sing, we are calling for the Day of ADONAI, a day of destruction of evildoers and a day of deliverance for ADONAI’s righteous. The Day of ADONAI is: *2 A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as blackness spreads over the mountains.* (Joel 2:2a TLV). Tremble before ADONAI’s army: *11 Adonai utters His voice before His army. For His camp is very vast—for mighty is it that carries out His word. For great is the day of Adonai—very terrifying! Who can endure it?* (Joel 2:11 TLV). Listen to ADONAI as He calls for us to repent: *12 “Yet even now”—it is a declaration of Adonai— “turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, weeping and lamenting.” 13 Rend your heart, not your garments, and turn to Adonai, your God. For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abundant in mercy, and relenting about the calamity due.* (Joel 2:11-13 TLV). The Day of ADONAI is near. Turn back to your first love with all your heart so that ADONAI’s revival might come. Repentance must come first and we must all fall on our faces before the awesome Creator of the Universe. He is merciful and His love for His chosen people will soon be shown by the pouring out of His *Ruach* on “all Israel” and they will turn to their brother Yeshua and enter into His New Covenant. Yeshua said: *14 “This Good News of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” 20 The One giving testimony to these things says, “Yes! I am coming soon!” Amen! Come, Lord Yeshua!* (Revelation 22:20 TLV).
Amen, amen!