



Parasha Metzora

April 20, 2024

Torah: Leviticus 14:1-15:33

Haftarah: 2Kings 7:3-20

Ketuwim Sh'lichim: Romans 6:9-23

Shabbat shalom mishpacha. What a week! A miraculous deliverance from 350 drones, rockets and missiles and then return fire into Iran. *Barukh HaShem!* Do you doubt that we are living in the last of the last days? There are so many signs pointing us toward our being there, what the rabbis call *Ikvot Mashiach*, the Footsteps of Messiah. There are no specific Scriptures which direct us to a beginning of the last days, but realistically, the re-establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948 is a logical time to consider. Isaiah wrote: 8 *Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children.* (Isaiah 66:8 TLV). The word the TLV has translated as “land” is *goy*, גוי, meaning people or nation. The nation of Israel is a *goy*, a nation, just as is the people of Israel, a *goy kadosh*, a holy nation. I have no doubt when ADONAI was speaking through Isaiah that He was referring to the future restoration of the nation He founded and allowed to be controlled by unholy nations for more than two thousand years. Zion, the spiritual center of the nation of Israel, gave birth to her sons and daughters in just one day. It happened on May 14, 1948, 76 years ago next month. It would not be beyond the realm of possibility that the last days began 76 years ago.

It was a matter of ADONAI’s timing and the unfolding of His eternal plan. The verse before speaks to that, something which needed to happen before Israel would become a nation again: 7 *Before she was in labor, she gave birth. Before her pain came, she delivered a male child.* (Isaiah 66:7 TLV). Yeshua is the male child, the long awaited *Mashiach*. What was the woman’s, Israel’s, pain? Could we say that Israel’s pain to come was the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people and the Aaronic priests? I believe we can. This major event, the defeat of Israel by the Romans, continued the domination of the Jewish people by the *goyim*, other nations. They were followed by the Byzantines (Eastern Roman Empire), various Caliphates (Muslims), Crusaders, Mamluks (Muslims), Ottomans (Muslims) and finally, the British.

Referring to the birth of the nation, Isaiah continued: 9 *“Will I bring the moment of birth, and not give delivery?” says Adonai. “Will I who cause delivery shut up the womb?” says your God.* (Isaiah 66:9 TLV). And His answer was no. He did not shut up the womb, but gave birth to His nation in one day, a day which very possibly was the beginning of the time of the end. Isaiah’s very next words are for us and others like us: 10 *Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her. Rejoice for joy with her all you who mourned over her.* (Isaiah 66:10 TLV). The Jews had been mourning over her, Jerusalem, for hundreds of years and now were rejoicing. When was this? I believe it was 19 years later in 1967. On June 6, 1967, there was rejoicing because Israel was once again in control of her ancient capitol, Jerusalem, something she had not had since the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BCE, some 2,024 years earlier. It was a fulfillment of Yeshua’s prophecy. Speaking on

the Mount of Olives regarding the dispersion of Israel at the coming destruction of Jerusalem (in 70 CE), He said: 24 *“They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations.”* (Luke 21:24a TLV). This is the pain spoken of by Isaiah in 66:7, the pain which came after the birth of Yeshua in the year 70 CE. Then Yeshua said: 24 *“Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* (Luke 21:24b TLV). And, it was another 1,937 years before His words came to pass. But, come to pass they did, and according to Yeshua’s words, if before 1967 was “the times of the Gentiles,” we are now living in “the times of the Jews.” And, it has been 57 years since that happened. Not coincidentally, that same year ADONAI was restoring Messianic Judaism around the world and particularly in the United States. The re-establishment of the Jewish rule of Jerusalem coincided with the re-emergence of Messianic Jews, something not seen since about the 4th century CE. All this was a prelude to what we are seeing today, right now!

Our *parasha* today is *Metzora*. Leviticus 14:2 says: *“This is the Torah of the one with tza’arat,”* in Hebrew: *“hametzora,”* “the *metzora*.” *Metzora* is the name for a person with *tza’arat*, leprosy, an infectious skin disease prevalent in the early history of Israel. This *parasha* also deals with body emissions. Leviticus 15:2b says: *“When any man has a fluid discharge from his body,..”* “Fluid discharge” is translated from the Hebrew *zab*. We sum up the *parasha* this way: chapter 14 deals with the physical and spiritual cleansing of *tza’arat* and chapter 15 deals with the physical and spiritual cleansing of *zabot*, emissions. We don’t have to deal physically with these things today because ADONAI has chosen to make these *mitzvot* inactive. There is no Temple and no Levitical priesthood in which to carry out the requirements. But, there are spiritual lessons for us here.

A person ritually impure from *tza’arat* was called a *tumah* (טִמְאָה) and was said to be *tamei* (טָמֵא), ritually impure. A person with normal, ritual cleanness was called *taharah*, (טְהוֹרָה) and was said to be *tahor* (טָהוֹר), ritually pure. We don’t have Biblical *tza’arat* today, but we do have what could be called, “spiritual *tza’arat*.” While the spiritual impurity in days of the *Torah* was manifested in the physical, spiritual impurity today can also be physical, but mental as well. Are some of the things which we think about sin? Yeshua said yes.

In Matthew 15, Yeshua was talking with His disciples about eating with unwashed hands. Certain Pharisees had asked Him why His disciples did not follow the traditions of the elders regarding ritual handwashing. After exposing their hypocrisy regarding important points of *Torah* which they ignored, He said to the crowds: 11 *“It’s not what goes into the mouth that makes the man unholy; but what comes out of the mouth, this makes the man unholy.”* (Matthew 15:11 TLV). He said: 19 *“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander. 20 These are the things that make the man unholy; but to eat with unwashed hands does not make the man unholy”* (Matthew 15:19-20 TLV). What does it mean to be unholy? Other Bible versions say: “these are the things that defile.” The Greek word translated defile or unholy is *koinoi* (koinoy) which comes from *koinoó* (koino-o), meaning to make unclean, pollute or desecrate. We could also translate it as “these are the things that make unclean,” the spiritual application of clean and unclean which we saw in Leviticus. But, in saying this, Yeshua was not referring to the ritual purity of the *Torah*. Here’s another point. Even though *Torah* observance was not His subject here, He upheld it. The Temple was still present at that time and He was not saying that ritual purity according to *Torah* had been done away with. In His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:17-18, He said that those words would remain in *Torah* until heaven and earth pass away and they’re still there today, but as we know, presently inactive without

Temple and priesthood. In these words (Matthew 15:11; 19-20), Yeshua was adding to *Torah* and speaking about things which can come from the heart.

We need to understand about the Traditions of the Elders and its difference from *Torah*. Yeshua's disciples continued to follow *Torah*, ADONAI's *mitzvot*, as long as the Temple stood, but they did not follow the traditions of the elders. The "Traditions of the Elders" is what we know as Oral Torah. The Pharisees promoted Oral Torah as having been orally passed down through the years from mouth to ear from Moses and equivalent in authority to written *Torah*. But, in reality, there is no evidence that it existed until sometime after the return of Israel from Babylonian captivity and it may have even originated there. In Yeshua's day, it was oral and continued to be oral for another two hundred years when it was written down as the *Mishnah*. From that point, it had the discussions of the rabbis, called the *Gemara*, added to it, with the final result being the two *Talmuds*, one from Babylon and one from Jerusalem. The rabbis called the Oral Torah, *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, the torah of the mouth and the written *Torah*, *Torah SheBiktav*. As Messianic followers of Yeshua, we only follow *Torah SheBiktav*, the written *Torah*, which for us includes all of the books of the Bible, Genesis to Revelation. Neither do we follow the traditions of man, but only ADONAI's written Word.

What Yeshua was speaking about to the crowds was something entirely different. Certain Pharisees had asked Him: 2 "*Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not do the ritual handwashing when they eat bread.*" (Matthew 15:2 TLV). Yeshua's answer was that "eating without ritual handwashing, a law added to *Torah* by the Pharisees, doesn't make a person unclean." He said: 11 "*It's not what goes into the mouth that makes the man unholy; but what comes out of the mouth, this makes the man unholy.*" (Matthew 15:11 TLV). He said that the spiritual things, the wicked thoughts and wicked actions coming out of a person's heart do make a person *koinoó* (koyno-o), unclean! Yeshua said that evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander are the things that can make a person *koinoó*, spiritually unclean. The Complete Jewish Bible puts it this way: 11 "*What makes a person unclean is not what goes into his mouth; rather, what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him unclean!*" (Matthew 15:11 CJB). Unclean is what the leper had to cry out in order to keep other people away. Unclean! Unclean! Leviticus 13 says: 45 "*The one with tza'arat who has the plague-mark shall wear torn clothes, the hair of his head is to hang loose, he is to cover his upper lip and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'*" (Leviticus 13:45 TLV). *Tamei! Tamei!* Eating without ritual handwashing doesn't make a person unclean, but the wicked thoughts and wicked actions coming out of a person's heart do!

Yeshua listed a number of things which can cause us to be unclean, things coming out of the heart. The first thing He mentioned was wicked thoughts. Thoughts are a problem for those of us who follow him today. What you think can spiritually defile you. Yeshua's disciple Yochanan wrote: 15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the boasting of life—is not from the Father, but from the world.* (1John 2:15-16 TLV). The world represents the desires of the flesh. Yeshua said that these things begin in our minds as "wicked thoughts." 19 "*For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander.*" (Matthew 15:19 TLV). Every evil thing begins in the heart as a thought. What we think about can hurt us and can lead us into greater sin. *Sha'ul* wrote: 5 *We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah— 6 ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.*

(2Corinthians 10:5b TLV). We must deal with our thoughts and make them obedient to the will of Yeshua for He is seeking complete obedience from us.

Let's look again at the *Torah* of *tza'arat*. After saying that we don't follow the *Mishnah*, I am going to quote it. According to the *Mishnah* in Tractate *Nega'im*, the rabbis suppose that there are seven sins which would have caused a person to receive the specific punishment of *tza'arat*. They are: behaving miserly, theft, excessive pride, forbidden sexual intercourse such as homosexuality or with animals, a vain oath, murder and *lashon hara*, "the evil tongue," or gossip. Yeshua's list of wicked thoughts corresponds very well with the *Mishnah's* list. It is interesting that the last thing listed in Yeshua's list and the last in the *Mishnah* are the same. Yeshua said: slander. The *Mishnah* says *lashon hara*. While we don't consider the *Mishnah* or *Talmud* authoritative for us, we can learn from it. The ancient rabbis focused on *lashon hara*, tale bearing or speaking evil of others, as the primary cause of *tza'arat*. They derived this from a pun which they saw in Leviticus 14:1. *Parasha Metzorah* opens with the verse *zot tihyeh torat haM'tzarah*, which means, "this will be the law concerning the one who has *tza'arat*." This phrase is phonetically connected to *motzi shem ra*, which means "one who brings forth evil speech." Today, we don't have widespread physical manifestation of *tza'arat*. But consider this question: If one form of spiritual *tza'arat* is *lashon hara*, the evil tongue, that is, gossip and tale bearing, is the spiritual condition of *tza'arat* prevalent in the Body of Messiah today? I think that we would all agree that it is. Even though we don't have the physical manifestation of *tza'arat*, we do have its spiritual manifestation within the body of Messiah. It is a condition of the heart, something also prevalent in Yeshua's day. Referring to a group of hypocritical Pharisees, Yeshua said: 8 "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." (Matthew 15:8 TLV). This is an important word for us today! We must examine our hearts and make them near to Yeshua.

We are told that our hearts must be circumcised. Moses said to Israel: 16 "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart therefore, and do not be stiff-necked anymore." (Deuteronomy 10:15 TLV). Jeremiah wrote: 4 "Circumcise yourselves to Adonai and remove the foreskins of your heart, men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Else My wrath will break out like fire and blaze, with no one to quench it, because of your evil deeds!" (Jeremiah 4:4 TLV). The men of Jerusalem didn't circumcise their hearts and were sent into captivity. But, ADONAI circumcised the hearts of all who truly trusted in Yeshua, something He also promised through Jeremiah. ADONAI said: 32 "But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—it is a declaration of Adonai—"I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people." (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV). Writing His *Torah* on our hearts is a part of our heart circumcision. But, the reality is that our flesh continually wars against our spirits and that is why we must continually take every thought captive.

Sha'ul reflected on this. Referring to actual, male Jews in the congregation at Rome, possibly even thinking about what Jeremiah had spoken to the male Jews of Jerusalem, he wrote: 28 For one is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something visible in the flesh. (Romans 2:28 TLV). His meaning was that even though Jewish males are physically circumcised in their flesh, according to ADONAI, that physical condition is not what makes them Jews. Continuing, he said: 29 Rather, the Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart—in Spirit not in letter. His praise is not from men, but from God. (Romans 2:29 TLV). In context, this verse is not about "spiritual Jews," but actual Jews. But, this did not mean that it only applied to males. Circumcision of the heart also applies to Jewish females as

well as non-Jewish males and non-Jewish females. We all are to have circumcised hearts, and if we have trusted in Yeshua, our hearts are circumcised. But, we have to continually be on our guard because of our flesh.

Sha'ul had that same problem. He wrote: *22 For I delight in the Torah of God with respect to the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in my body parts, battling against the law of my mind and bringing me into bondage under the law of sin which is in my body parts.* (Romans 7:22-23 TLV). He essentially said that his circumcised heart delighted in following ADONAI's *Torah*, something which was written on his heart, but that his body, particularly his mind, was trying to place him back under bondage to the "law of sin." *Sha'ul's* flesh, his mind, was trying to get him to return to his original state of sin, the place where he was before he trusted in Yeshua. It is the same with us. It's just like that cartoon, the one with a little devil on one shoulder and a little angel on the other. Each is trying to get you to take their suggestion. We know that the voice we must listen to is that of the *Ruach*, ADONAI's Spirit.

Sin begins in the thoughts, wicked thoughts, according to Yeshua. If we apply the term "spiritual *tza'arat*" to today's sinful thoughts, what is its cure? The cure for *tzara'at* is repentance, return to righteousness. How we look at repentance is a big divide in the body of Messiah today. Some say that after your initial repentance, there is no need to repent again because Yeshua has forgiven all your sins. There is no question that our sins are forgiven when we trust in Yeshua. *Sha'ul* wrote: *14 He wiped out the handwritten record of debts with the decrees against us, which was hostile to us. He took it away by nailing it to the cross.* (Colossians 2:14 TLV). This, in my opinion, refers to sins committed before we trusted in Yeshua and not every sin, forever. John makes that clear for us. Speaking to people who had been purified of their sin by Yeshua's blood, he wrote: *8 If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.* (1John 1:8 TLV). This means that human beings continue to sin after they trust in Yeshua. Regarding this, *Sha'ul* said: *1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may abound? 2 May it never be! How can we who died to sin still live in it?* (Romans 6:1-2 TLV). *Yochanan* continued: *9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.* (1John 1:9-10 TLV). Confession is repentance. Repentance is turning, *t'shuvah* in Hebrew. We must turn away from the evil things in our hearts and make every thought captive. As *Sha'ul* wrote: *5 ... We are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Messiah—* (2Corinthians 10:5b TLV). We must make our thoughts obedient to Yeshua.

Speaking of a *metzarah*, a person with *tza'arat*, *Torah* says: *46 All the days during which the plague is on him he will be unclean. He is unclean. He is to dwell alone. Outside of the camp will be his dwelling.* (Leviticus 13:46 TLV). That's where we all were before we knew Yeshua as our Messiah. We were unclean and outside His camp of holiness. When we trusted in Yeshua we were brought into the camp and given access to holy things. But, Yeshua, the Son of G-d, Himself completely holy, went outside the holy camp into the unclean, unholy place where we were. And by His sacrifice there, Yeshua cleansed us from our "uncleanness" and brought us into the camp. *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.* (Hebrews 13:12-13 TLV). Outside the camp was a place of defilement, uncleanness, corruption, condemnation, rejection and punishment. Hebrews says that Yeshua was outside the camp. Was Yeshua spiritually a leper? No. The holy Son of G-d, He could not have been, but He was perceived in that way. In the Babylonian *Talmud*,

Sanhedrin 98b we read: “The Messiah --what is his name?...The Rabbis say, The Leper Scholar, as it is said, ‘surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted...’” The ancient rabbis recognized the suffering Messiah in Isaiah 53 although they did not know that He was Yeshua. Yeshua, although He was the Son of G-d, willingly accepted the condition of “leper” and bore these afflictions. We are told in Hebrews 13:13: *So let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His disgrace.* What does it mean for us; to go outside the camp to Him? To trust in Yeshua, we had to go outside the camp to a place of uncleanness to become clean. To share His disgrace means that we must go to where He is in order to receive spiritual healing. He is outside the camp in disgrace, “struck by God, and afflicted,” as it says in Isaiah 53:4. But, it is there that we find our spiritual healing. This is a paradox. Yeshua became our sacrifice outside the camp and that is where we must go to identify with Him. Even though the *metzora* of ancient days was outside the camp and unclean, today it is reversed. We go outside the camp to Yeshua in order to become clean. Do we have the spiritual sicknesses of *wicked thoughts, murder, adultery and other kinds of sexual immorality, theft, lies, and slanders* that Yeshua described in Matthew 15? We do! The whole Body of Messiah is at a critical place, especially in light of the times, and we must all examine ourselves. Pray for a spirit of introspection to come upon Yeshua’s body.

Do you have any doubt that we are in the last of the last days? Yeshua said: 32 *“Now learn the parable from the fig tree. When its branch becomes tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, at the door. 34 Amen, I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things happen.”* (Matthew 24:32-34 TLV). When tender leaves appear on a fig tree, we know that summer is near. In the same way, when ADONAI’s chosen nation puts forth shoots and begins to bear fruit, we know that the end is near. The generations from 1948 and 1967 are aging, 76 years and 57 years, respectively. When will it be? We don’t know, but it is near. Yeshua said: 36 *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven nor the Son, except the Father alone.”* (Matthew 24:36 TLV).

Yeshua’s words have never been clearer than they are today. When He spoke on the Mount of Olives, He was speaking to His disciples, to Jews. That is the context. The whole thing was spoken to Jews. He said; 9 *“Then they will hand you over **(the Jews)** to persecution and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of My name.”* (Matthew 24:9 TLV). That is exactly what is happening today and the hatred of Jews is being expressed more strongly each day, hatred by the “nations,” the *goyim* of the earth.

Today, the “onus” is upon us, the body of Messiah. Onus means responsibility and obligation. Our lesson today details but one small part of our responsibility as Yeshua’s disciples. There is more that we must be faithful to, living up to the obligation which we took on by trusting in Yeshua. Not everyone who has called on Yeshua’s name will see His coming victory over the evil forces of the world. He said: 21 *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!’”* (Matthew 7:21-23 TLV). We must know ADONAI’s will and also be obedient to it. There is a day coming when Yeshua will return for us and take us with Him. Read 1Corinthians 15:50-54 and 1Thessalonians 4:16-18. We want to be in that number. But, we all have fallen short of the glory of G-d. Even though we know Yeshua as Messiah, many of us have un-repentant sin.

Pray for Yeshua's body, that they would examine themselves. And, let each of us examine ourselves just as King David did when he was confronted by the Prophet Nathan regarding his sin with *Bat Shevah*. David wrote: *3 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your mercy. According to Your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 4 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 5 For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. 6 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. 7 Behold, I was born in iniquity and in sin when my mother conceived me. 8 Surely You desire truth in the inner being. Make me know wisdom inwardly. 9 Cleanse me with hyssop and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.* (Psalm 51:3-7 TLV). As we acknowledge our own spiritual condition, may we seek cleanness and that we may be healed from spiritual *tza'arat*, a very prevalent spiritual disease in our generation. Yeshua is waiting for our sincere repentance and desires to forgive us. Our goal must be to be spiritually clean before Him every day, examining ourselves daily repenting and praying for forgiveness. David continued his prayer saying: *19 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.* (Psalm 51:19 TLV). That is what Yeshua wishes of us, that we would be men and women after G-d's own heart like David. His desire for us is that we would have clean and contrite hearts, broken spirits before Him. Yeshua expects this and knows that it will be so: *27 Messiah did this (immersed the body in the Word, verse 26) so that He might present to Himself His glorious community—not having stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but in order that she might be holy and blameless.* (Ephesians 5:27 TLV). Yeshua has immersed us in His Word that we might know ADONAI's will and be obedient to it. (Matthew 7:21-23). We will be His body without spot or wrinkle! *Shabbat shalom!*