

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries

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Message 4-18-09
Shemini-Eighth
Leviticus 9:1-11:47
2 Samuel 9:1-11:47
Revelation 4:8-11

Introduction

The portion Shemini deals with the sudden and mysterious deaths of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu.

Leviticus 10:8-11

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: **9** "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, **10** "that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, **11** "and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

This command from the Lord to Aaron comes on the heels of the death of Aaron's two sons Nadab and Abihu. Some of the rabbinical commentaries try to turn the deaths of Nadab and Abihu into them being too righteous. There was nothing righteous, from what I see in the text, about what the two of them had done. They violated the sanctity of the Almighty and disobeyed Him and for that they paid with their lives. They were part of the generation that God sentenced to death in the Wilderness and they demonstrated why God did what He did.

Leviticus 10:1 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. **2** So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

They disobeyed God. This should be a warning to all of us what lies ahead for those who refuse to bend the knee before the Holy One of Israel. Many people express their love for God in different ways but when you bring strange fire before the Lord you had better be ready to accept the

consequences of your actions. All around us we see people who profess love for God and yet they worship Him with what God says is profane. You cannot take what is unholy before the Lord and claim that it is now holy because you are now offering it to God. It was unholy when it started out and it is still unholy now.

Leviticus 21:6 `They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God; therefore they shall be holy.

Leviticus 22:2 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they separate themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they do not profane My holy name *by* what they dedicate to Me: *I am* the LORD.

Ezekiel 39:7 "So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that *I am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.

We can see the steady progression of how God wants His people to serve Him. When you bring something profane before the Lord you are profaning His holy name. In Hebrew a person's name carries their meaning. We see this in the names of Abram and Sarai who became Abraham and Sarah. We see this again with Jacob who became Israel. God's name is no different. We must respect His name because in doing so we show respect for Him. If one does not respect God He will not respect his fellow man and may not even respect himself.

The command from God to Aaron commands him and his two remaining sons not to drink wine or any drink that could cause them to become intoxicated when they are to come into the Sanctuary. The sacrificial system was not an easy one to understand and it was very complicated. It was what God wanted and if God desires it then we had better do it. Today we tend to take God for granted. Since He is an invisible God and we never see Him we tend to believe that He is not watching us when we do something that transgresses His Torah. The Holy One of Israel takes the Torah very seriously because the Torah is His Son made in the Word and manifest in the flesh. As complicated as the sacrificial system is consider how complicated the nature of God is?

Is it easy to contemplate a God who is described as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Are these three separate Beings as the Church says or is it one God as Judaism says? Is God represented as the Father, Son and Mother as the Chassidim say? Is there a little bit of truth in each one of these descriptions that define the complexity of the Lord, God Almighty?

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. (NKJ)

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (NAU)

Colossians 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (NKJ)

Colossians 2:9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form. (NAU)

2320 θεότης theotes {theh-ot'-ace}

Meaning: deity, the state of being God, Godhead

Origin: from 2316; TDNT - 3:119,322; n f

Usage: AV - Godhead 1; 1

The same Greek word used to define deity and the Godhead is used in these two different translations of the Bible. The first instance is the New King James and the second one is the New American Standard. In one we see the word Godhead and in the other we see the word deity being used both aimed at the same conclusion about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This has caused no end of pain and suffering for Believers over the last 2,000 years. The dissension within the Body of Messiah has been overwhelming as Believers struggle to come to the point where they can make peace with themselves over the nature of God. I can say this, with all honesty, that I have seen too many people who have struggled with this and then made decisions that took them out from under the covering of the Lord because they wound up denying the One who made them – Yeshua. This is a sore point in the Body of Messiah that we have failed our brothers and sisters in their time of questioning because here we are 2,000 years later still trying to figure out who God is?

When the Jewish people recite the Shem, sometimes known as the watchword of Judaism, they say that God is **echad** or one. Many Jews know that **echad** reflects a oneness from coming together of more than one. In other words we are seeing a compound unity. The same thing is reflected in the description of the Almighty when we use the Hebrew Elohim. The **“im”** on the end makes this word plural yet in every place in the Tanach where Elohim is used to describe the one true God it is always, without fail, translated as the singular God when there is a Hebrew word for a singular God in **EI**. In every place that **Elohim** is used to describe a pagan god it is always rendered in the plural as gods.

In Hebrew the same word **Elohim** is used for pagan gods and the one true God. We know its meaning by how it is used in the passage. It's amazing how the translators arrived at the point where they did. We have made the nature of God complicated without figuring out what the truth is. In Nadab and Abihu we have tried to elevate their sin to a status well above what it deserves. It would appear, from the passage, and the command to Aaron right after the deaths of his two sons that they had become intoxicated because of being raised up to be priests of the Most High. In their intoxicated state they made a poor decision. Many people have done the same thing and paid a penalty for it and many have not.

Sin is sin to God and you cannot dress it up. The rabbis spent 500 years compiling the Oral Law in which we find their commentaries on various incidents found in the Tanach. In most cases where a sin occurred the rabbis have tried to make something righteous out of it and out of the individual. What I appreciate about the Bible is that God does not try to hide the imperfections of His creation. He shows us their warts and all. We see some flounder and fail and we see others become true men and women of the Most High. Nadab and Abihu failed because they had sinned before the Lord. As the 3,000 who died, as a result of the sin of the Golden Calf, so did the two sons of Aaron. God was trying to make a nation out of the Hebrew people and the mixed multitude whom He had brought up out of Egypt. A generation failed because they could not let go of Egypt. Many Believers fail today and have failed throughout the ages because we could not let go of Egypt either.

2 Samuel 6:2

2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned *above* the cherubim.

The place where God chose to meet with Israel would be above the lid of the Ark of the Covenant between the wings of the cherubim. He would do this once a year at the Festival of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The High Priest was the only one permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies to meet with the Holy One and make atonement for the Children of Israel, the Sanctuary and himself. Moses could meet with the Lord whenever the Lord would call him to the tent of meeting which had been moved to the outside of the camp because of the sin of the people. Because of their sin God chose to separate Himself from them and in turn from us because we are under the same covenant as they are.

Deuteronomy 29:10 "All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, **11** "your little ones and your wives-- also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water-- **12** "that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, **13** "that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **14** "I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, **15** "but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* **who is not here with us today.**

We are all part of the covenant that the Holy One of Israel made with His people. We are all His people because He says we are. There is even the possibility that some who were born into Israel may be removed from Israel for rejecting His covenant. Even someone who has been grafted into the tree of Israel can be removed. The only guarantee that the Almighty gives is that as long as we cling to Him and obey His covenant we will be covered by the blood of the Lamb through whom we receive forgiveness for our sins.

The Apostle Shaul speaks about this in his Epistle in Romans.

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, **14** if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and save some of them. **15** For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* but life from the dead? **16** For if the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*; and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. **17** And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, **18** do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root *supports* you. **19** You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." **20** Well *said*. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. **21** For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. **22** Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. **23** And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

This is a passage that every Christian and Messianic Believer needs to learn because it goes right to heart of the problem plaguing the Messianic Movement and the Church today. It shows us that all of us, no matter whether we are Jewish or not, can become part of olive tree of Israel. At the same time Shaul warns us that we can also be removed from the tree due to lack of faith in Yeshua or arrogance towards the Jewish people who do not know Yeshua. For that matter I believe it might also apply to those of the nations who do not believe but one day could the same as the Jew could. In our salvation we need to keep in mind where we came from. We were once in the same situation unbelievers are. We were not born believing in Messiah but we certainly knew there was something more than ourselves out there because we are descendants of Adam, the one who was created in the image of God. God was present in him, so too, He is present in us. We know it. We can taste it, feel it, smell it and desire it. He is there waiting for us to make the choice.

At the same time the enemy is waiting for us to make the wrong choice.

Revelation 4:8-11

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." [Ezekiel 1:5, Isaiah 6:2-3, Ezekiel 1:18, 10:12] **9** And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

When God created everything through Yeshua, the Living Word of God, this also extended to the heavens and all that inhabits them as well. The heavenly host of angels and other beings that God brought into existence were created to honor the Lord God Almighty. One-third of the heavenly host rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven to the earth where they serve Satan in trying to turn mankind away from the Master of all. The time is coming to a close my friends when the Messiah will be returning with the army of the Lord.

Joshua 5:13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" **14** So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?" **15** Then the Commander of the LORD'S army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." And Joshua did so.

As the Almighty had lifted up Moses so the Children of Israel followed him He also raised up Joshua as well. Moses had his encounter with God at the burning bush while Joshua was having His encounter with the Holy One on the plains by Jericho. See the similarity in one thing in both of their encounters with the Lord.

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** And the

Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. **3** Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." **4** So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." **5** Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

We know that it had to have been Yeshua who appeared to both of them because the same command to remove their shoes because they were standing on holy ground. Perhaps the link between the two was so that the people could see that the same God who guided Moses was now leading Joshua? I don't know but I can offer you my opinion for whatever it is worth.

The day is drawing near when Yeshua will once again walk the earth but this time every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Yeshua is Messiah!

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath.

Romans 14:11 For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

Philippians 2:11 and *that* every tongue should confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So shall it be!

You are near – never more than when I feel lost and far from faith. Would that I really knew that! O give me strength when I am weary, courage when I am faint of heart! Console me when I grieve, and bless me with a quiet spirit, filled with trust that joys await me along the road.

Other good Torah teachings:

Tony Robinson at www.devoted.to/Torah (sign up)

Mark R. Ensign at mrensign@arn.net (request to be added to list)

Ardelle Brody [abrody@mchsi.com](posted on Mordecai's website along with his Torah commentary-an excellent woman's perspective

May the Lord bless you and yours... *Mordecai Silver*

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