

Messianic Messages III: Do This In Remembrance of Me

For the past two chapters, we've been examining incidents in the Torah where the Messiah's mission was foretold and defined through circumstances, dress rehearsals, types, and prophecies. I'd like to now return to the realm of what Yahweh actually said to do—His instructions. As we have seen throughout this book, some of these seem to be logical rules any wise bronze age ruler might have imposed upon his people in order to ensure that his society ran smoothly. Others, however, have no apparent basis in human interaction. They don't promote peace, enhance public safety, advance health or welfare, ensure fairness, impose a moral standard, or even benefit the temporal ruler. Rather, they fall into the category of "religious law," ritual statutes for which there is no clear reason other than "God said to do this." We need to recognize that both categories of instruction were given by the same God, to the same people, with the same overarching purpose. Our study has led us (or at least *me*) to the conclusion that the fundamental reason behind *everything* in the Torah—from the mundane to the esoteric—explains something about Yahweh's plan for reconciling mankind back to Himself. He wished to make it possible for us to regain what was lost when our forebears sinned in the Garden of Eden: our innocence. Why? Because that innocence is a necessary component of our fellowship with Him—of communication, of a shared love—for evil cannot dwell in the presence of a holy God any more than darkness can exist in the presence of light. And sharing a loving relationship with mankind is the only thing Yahweh really wants.

Figuring out what God wants from us is the stated goal of every religion on earth, though the various solutions men have proposed betray an abysmal lack of understanding of the character and capability of the supreme deity. Think about it: what's a gift-giver's worst nightmare? It's shopping for the "man who has everything," right? If he wants it, he already has it. And if he doesn't own it already, it's probably because he'd really rather not have it. (I mean, who really *wants* a pouncing black panther table lamp with a clock in its stomach?) An infinitely stickier problem, then, is "shopping" for the Creator of the universe, the One who is holy and complete within Himself.

Virtually every religion assumes that its God wants to be appeased in some way. The Muslim bows toward Mecca five times a day (though their scriptures reveal that Allah really wanted *fifty* prostrations—pointed toward *Jerusalem*). The Jew tries to observe 613 customs and traditions he believes are derived from the

Torah (though as we have seen, half of them bear no more than a passing resemblance to the original Instructions). The Buddhist, reasoning that God must want as many prayers as possible, spins a prayer wheel *automating* the tedious process of talking to a deity with whom he can't relate—and doesn't really want to. The Hindu, believing that all living things contain the divine, meditates, chants mantras, or prepares offerings of food for his favorite god among millions of possible deities—leaving the rest of them ignored and unattended. The Catholic goes to mass and pays *the church* (not God) for the privilege of lighting candles to expedite prayer or extricate his loved ones from purgatory, while performing contrived penances to pay for his own sins—in effect declaring the sacrifice of Christ to be inadequate. The typical Protestant, meanwhile, figures he's done God a big favor by showing up at church for an hour a week, enduring a sermon and dropping a few dollars into the offering plate. We've come a long, long way from the *serious* religions of the past, where one might have been expected to mutilate himself or sacrifice his own child as a burnt offering. We cringe at the prospect of a god who would want such things, of course. But ask yourself: what kind of God would be so shallow as to allow Himself to be placated with the cheap, silly things *we* offer Him these days.

All of these “religious” things—the serious and the silly—are calculated to appease God, to buy Him off. They are not designed as avenues for relationship with Him, but rather as bribes, inducements to persuade Him to either bestow some kind of boon on the worshipper or simply go away and leave him alone—to do him no harm. Religion, in short, is the world's biggest protection racket. The stated goals may differ, but the underlying motivation is always the same: giving the “worshipper,” what he wants. He might be looking for a paradise populated by seventy sex-starved virgins, a place dripping with low hanging fruit and rivers of wine. He might seek nirvana, a state of nothingness where the pain and turmoil of life can no longer trouble him. He might be angling for reincarnation as somebody richer or more privileged than he is now. His motivation might simply be escape from the fiery damnation in hell his guilty conscience tells him he's earned. Man calculates that if he can figure out what God wants—and then give it to Him—then God will reciprocate in kind. But why do men assume the Creator of the universe would be the least bit interested in the pitiful things they do to appease Him? The God I know can spend His mornings building things like the Orion Nebula if He wants to. What makes us think He'll be awed with our devotion if we decorate a cow with flowers, circumambulate the Ka'aba, or manipulate a rosary? I submit to you that the religious things we do “for God” are nothing but “black panther table lamps” to Him. He'd rather we didn't bother. *Really*.

But then we look at the Torah, and we see hundreds of directives that, for all we can tell, look even less logical than mindlessly mumbling multiple “hail Marys” or fasting all day during Ramadan. These precepts were entrusted

exclusively to one nation, Israel—who were then told to separate themselves from the surrounding peoples. In some cases these outsiders were specifically prohibited from joining Israel in the performance of these rites. The Jews are inexplicably told to do things like refraining from work on Saturday, cutting off the foreskins of the penises of their male babies on the eighth day of life, killing their firstborn male animals, removing the yeast from their homes for one week each year, making a gold-covered wooden box with statues of angels on top, putting it in a special room in a tent where nobody is allowed to go except for one guy, one day a year, who sprinkles it with the blood of a dead goat—and hundreds of other things that on the surface seem far goofier than anything the Muslims or Hindus do. It all begs the question: *what's the difference?* One prophet says that Yahweh handed down a body of law. Another prophet insists that *Allah* handed down a body of law—a code diametrically opposed to the first. Moses, Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius, and a plethora of popes, princes, preachers, pundits, potentates, and presidents all claim to have the solution to life's puzzle: *follow me and prosper*. Who, if anybody, can we trust? Each one seems crazier than the next.

But there *is* a difference, though it's one you can only see if you're looking for it—if you're willing to take Yahweh at His word. This fundamental distinction is that all of the world's religions describe and dictate what they think *man must do for God* in order to appease and placate Him—and that includes Judaism's skewed take on the Torah. But in reality, the Torah describes the converse: *what God is doing for man*. This is what makes it absolutely unique among documents of faith. It also explains why its precepts seem so incredibly pointless if taken as mere “religious duties.” Even the word “precept” clues us in that there is more to the Torah than its face value. “Precept” is from the Latin *praeceptum*, based on a verb meaning literally “to take beforehand.” The instruction goes *before* the truth we are to derive from it. The law is not the lesson any more than a map is the actual place. The signpost is not the destination. The religious precepts of Muhammad, Buddha, or Zoroaster are but maps and signposts to cities that do not exist—handed down by “gods” who are figments of their prophets' imaginations. But the precepts of Moses are the words of the true and living God. Yes, the Torah is only a map, but the city toward which it guides us is *real*: a place of shelter, peace, and salvation. That “city” is Yahshua the Messiah.

After his resurrection from the dead, Yahshua explained it all to a couple of very confused disciples: **“Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”** (Luke 24:25-27) He pointed out that the writings of Moses—the precepts of the Torah—all concern, predict, and define the coming Anointed One. They are therefore not to

be seen as religious duties, rites and rituals devoid of (or independent from) prophetic significance. They are not things Israel was supposed to do to appease Yahweh, to keep Him “off their backs,” even though obedience promised blessing. They were, rather, symbols on the roadmap of heaven, indications of a thousand specific ways in which Yahweh was in the process of reconciling mankind to Himself—saving the world from its sin.

Paul, too, spoke of the fundamental difference between religious observance and a personal, living relationship with Yahshua. **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** Philosophy and tradition (which together define religion) are to be avoided, he says, because they are deceitful products of the fallen world. We are made complete, perfect, and whole not through the “principles of the world,” but through the One in Whom Yahweh dwells among us in bodily form: King Yahshua. **“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead....”** As if to make my point for me, Paul now refers to two ostensibly “religious” rites, one from the Torah and the other from New Covenant practice. Both of these have deep symbolic significance, though they make no practical sense whatsoever. Circumcision, he says, is a picture of “putting off the sins of the flesh,” and water baptism (literally, immersion) is symbolic of being buried and raised again with Christ—both things done as expressions of our faith in the promises of God. Neither of these things are of any value intrinsically; they only become significant in the context of what they represent—the shadow being evidence of the object that casts it.

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross....” I realize that this “handwriting of requirements against us” sounds at first blush like he might be talking about the Torah. But in the Greek, it’s clear that this is an erroneous deduction. The word (*cheirographon*) means “a document or note of indebtedness, written with one’s own hand, as proof of obligation.” It’s an I.O.U., so to speak. *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* notes, “The reference is to God’s pronouncement that the note which testifies against us is cancelled. The phrase is obviously based on a thought which is common in Judaism, namely, that God keeps an account of man’s debt.... The point of the metaphor of the note of indebtedness is to underline the preceding statement ‘forgiven you all trespasses.’ God has forgiven sins. He has cancelled the note of indebtedness by taking it and

fixing it to the cross of Christ.” In other words, that which God has nailed to the cross is *not* the Law—rather, it’s the debt we owe, the penalty for our sin: death itself.

Paul now comes to the point: **“Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”** (Colossians 2:8-17) He’s saying that *the way* we observe the symbolic precepts of the Torah is of little consequence, for they are but shadows of the substantial reality—Yahshua. His work is finished, and He has triumphed over the forces of evil (though admittedly, the physical reality hasn’t quite caught up with the spiritual). Since the destination has already been reached, it matters little whether we thought of the journey in terms of kilometers or miles or hours traveled. He makes it clear that both the “practical” and “religious” sides of the Torah point toward the Messiah, each in its own way. The things we are instructed to do are symbolic of what Yahweh was doing for us. They’re a reflection of His work, His grace, His love. We do them not to placate God, but to prepare for His presence.

The examples Paul cites will serve to demonstrate the principle. (1) *Food and drink*. If we follow the Torah’s dietary guidelines, we are showing our trust in Yahweh’s knowledge of what’s good or bad for us—even if we don’t know anything about nutrition or intestinal parasites. Spiritually, this is a picture of being discerning, assimilating into our souls only what is clean, pure, and undefiled—ultimately the body and blood of Yahshua. (2) *Festivals*. If we observe the seven “holy convocations,” the appointments with Yahweh He described in such detail in the Torah, we will see His entire plan of redemption at a glance. They’re sort of a “highlight reel” of the Big Game. But if we substitute Passover with Easter, Tabernacles with Christmas, and dismiss the rest of the *miqrym* as “mere Jewish tradition,” we will have a poor grasp indeed on Yahweh’s *modus operandi*. (3) *New moons*. If we don’t make a point of periodically renewing our relationship with Yahweh—as the Israelites were instructed to do at each new moon—we run the risk of growing stale and complacent in our relationship with our God. And (4) *Sabbaths*. If we refuse to honor the institution of the Sabbath, we will rob ourselves not only of the weekly reminder that Yahweh’s plan of redemption is on a schedule, we will miss the point that in the end, we cannot work to achieve our own salvation. God’s work is finished, and all of *our* works—whether done for God’s glory or our own—will also be complete by sundown on the sixth day, that is, the close of the sixth millennium since Adam’s fall. That day is rapidly approaching, but it need not catch us unaware like a thief in the night.

These and a thousand other things have been commanded by Yahweh, not so that we might appease Him, but so that He might teach us about His love and provision. They're not for His benefit, but for ours. Every precept reflects God's light from a slightly different angle, like the facets on a diamond. And like any precious jewel, the Torah is beautiful only if it is seen in the pure light of day. It is of no use to anyone if kept in a box.

SYMBOLIC INFORMATION

(964) *The price of a dead slave is thirty shekels of silver. "One guilty of fatal criminal negligence in the case of a slave must pay the owner the price of a slave. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned."* (Exodus 21:32) Why would Yahweh bother setting the price for a slave who had been slain through gross criminal negligence? Because He Himself was planning to become just such a slave on our behalf. Paul explains: **"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."** (Philippians 2:5-8) Paul's point is that for God Himself to willingly set aside His glory to take the form of a man, He had to abase Himself far beyond what the ordinary slave, having lost his status as a free man, would have endured. We can't begin to imagine the degree of sacrifice such an act would have required, for Yahshua relinquished more than mere power. He gave up actual dimensions (at least one: time) in order to enter our world. It's not like a handsome prince in a fairy tale becoming a toad; it's more like the prince becoming a *picture* of a toad!

Yahshua, then, volunteered to become the slave who was destined to be "gored to death by an out-of-control ox." This ox, of course, was the Roman Empire (goaded into action by the Jewish Sanhedrin, as I pointed out in Precept #884), and its criminally negligent "owner" was the human race—us. And just as the Torah required, a price had to be paid for the life of this "slave," thirty silver shekels: **"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."** (Matthew 26:14-16) At this late date, I am no longer amazed at the incredible accuracy of the Torah's smallest details—or that they all point directly and unequivocally to Christ. What leaves me speechless is that the chief priests and the scribes—who prided themselves on knowing their scriptures inside and

out—couldn't see that their own actions, time and time again, conspired to identify Yahshua of Nazareth as the Messiah.

(965) *God's sacrifice had to be sinless. "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning."*

(Exodus 23:18) A grain offering accompanied every blood sacrifice, though its form (bread, cakes, etc.) was not specified. As we have seen, bread, the staple of the Hebrew diet, would normally have been leavened; that is, yeast would have been employed to make the dough rise in the baking process. But Yahweh symbolically associated leaven with sin in His instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread—a small amount of it being enough to chemically alter the entire loaf, changing it from within, just like sin does to our lives. So leaven was never to be a component of the bread offered up with a blood sacrifice, for both the bread and the animal were metaphorical of the Messiah in their own ways. Grain was symbolic of God's provision, and its being made into bread fine tuned the picture to represent His provision of the body of Christ (see I Corinthians 11:24).

This, of course, tacitly requires that the Messiah Himself would have to be sinless, which explains why the scribes and Pharisees worked so hard trying (unsuccessfully) to prove that He was a sinner. If He *had* been sinful, they would have been entirely justified in having Him executed, for He claimed to be One with God. Their standard of "sinlessness," however, was slavish adherence to the impenetrable maze of rules their own "oral law" had extracted from the Torah—not the Torah itself. It would have been physically impossible to observe the requirements of their oral law, for two reasons. First, it is internally inconsistent, at war with itself: its tenets were entirely dependent upon which rabbinical school one chose to follow. Second, it wasn't codified at this point: the Mishnah (the previously forbidden written form of the oral law) wouldn't be created for another century or so. But according to the standards of the Torah, Yahshua—though enduring the same temptations we all face—remained faultless before God. **"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."** (Hebrews 4:14-15) As Paul, one of the foremost Torah scholars of his day, noted, **"He [Yahweh] made Him who knew no sin [Yahshua] to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** (II Corinthians 5:21) I guess that explains why both "sin" and the "sin offering" that covers it are expressed with the same Hebrew word: *chata't*.

And what was that about “the fat of My sacrifice not remaining until morning”? The fat of the sacrifice was Yahweh’s portion. It was to be completely consumed on the altar—a picture of the judgment Yahshua endured. The context of this passage is the observance of the three times each year all Israelite males were to keep the holy appointments of Yahweh—the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the spring (including Passover and Firstfruits), the Feast of Weeks in the early summer, and the Feast of Tabernacles in the fall. We are reminded that the Messiah’s “judgment,” that is, His sojourn in sheol while he endured the wrath of God on our behalf, took place on the Feast of Unleavened Bread. By the morning of the next day (Sunday, the Feast of Firstfruits), Yahshua had already resurrected Himself from the dead. **“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.... The angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.’”** (Matthew 28:1, 5-6) The “fat of God’s sacrifice” had not “remained until morning.” It had not continued under judgment, constrained by death, one moment longer than the Torah had required.

- (966) *Aaron and his sons represent the Messiah and His followers.* **“And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.”** (Exodus 29:4-9) We’ve previously discussed the symbology of the various garments and rituals associated with the Hebrew priesthood, so I won’t repeat the particulars. I’d just like to note that there are priesthods, and then there is *Yahweh’s* priesthood. Every religion on earth has a “priesthood” of some sort—a class of people who claim to intercede between the god of that religion and the common people. They station themselves as gatekeepers—interpreters of the divine psyche. Whether called “priests” or something else, these individuals enjoy power, prestige, and privilege because of their exalted position as go-betweens with the deity *du jour*. Even godless religions like atheistic secular humanism have their priests—the media stars, business moguls, politicians, and professors who shape public perception and mold society to honor un gods of their own manufacture: pleasure, profit, pride, political

correctness, or popular technology. Not surprisingly, these priesthoods are seen as positions to be aspired to, worked for, and coveted.

But in Yahweh's world, you can't join the priesthood. You can't aspire to it or educate yourself to become part of it. You have to be *born* into it. Under the Torah, to become a priest, one must be a male heir of Aaron. In fact, that qualification defines you as a priest, whether you meant to be one or not. The reason God set it up this way was that following His instructions isn't really a religion. A religion is something you *join*; a relationship is something you *experience*. A religion is something you *do*; a relationship is something you *are*. His priests aren't there to rule the people, but to serve them. They aren't tasked with controlling access to God, but merely enabling it.

More to the point, the Hebrew priesthood was—like virtually everything else in the Torah—designed to point toward a greater reality, something beyond its own temporal existence. The anointed High Priest was a transparent picture of the coming Messiah, and his sons are obviously those who “follow Him.” Like the priests of Israel who served in the tabernacle, we who follow Christ must be “born” into the job—that is, we must be “born from above” in His Spirit, as He explained in John 3. Moses was told to consecrate (make holy, set apart) Aaron and his sons for the work of the priesthood. Those who were not consecrated in this way were forbidden to serve in the capacity of a priest of Yahweh. In the same way, one who is not born from above in Yahweh's Spirit is intrinsically incapable of serving God or mankind in any meaningful way—and by “meaningful,” I mean in a manner that will have significance or value beyond our mortal lives.

(967) *We must be ransomed to avoid being plagued.* “Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: ‘When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to Yahweh, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them.’” (Exodus 30:11-12) The census to which Yahweh is referring was to be done for military purposes, males “**from twenty years old and above—all who are able to go to war in Israel.**” (Numbers 1:3) Each Israelite male (excluding Levites) who would be tasked with ridding the Land of its corrupt inhabitants was to be ransomed for half a shekel of silver—metal that would be used in the Tabernacle (See Exodus 38:27, Mitzvah #404, Precept #715).

Following God's train of symbolic thought through all of this is enough to make your head swim. The census “ransom” was not a fee or tax. It was an offering given to make a point: the Israelite soldiers were not to rely on their own strength, numbers, skill, or individual valor in

battle. Rather, Yahweh specifically said that *He* would be fighting their battles for them. His point is that self-reliance is antithetical to God-reliance. In fact, self-sufficiency is a plague that will, in the end, inflict death upon the one who does not trust Yahweh in the battles of life: we cannot save ourselves. So the soldier is “ransomed,” that is, exchanged for a nominal amount of silver. **“This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to Yahweh. Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to Yahweh.”** (Exodus 30:13-16) The message is: “this half shekel is given in place of the life of the soldier/believer, for the soldier is not responsible for Israel’s welfare or victory in battle—Yahweh is.

The “value” of the individual soldier had nothing to do with this arrangement. The muscular, seasoned Special Forces type of guy didn’t pay more than the skinny, green recruit, for the simple reason that this wasn’t about what *he* could do, but rather what *God* would do for him—and through him. **“The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to Yahweh, to make atonement for yourselves. And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Yahweh, to make atonement for yourselves.”** (Exodus 30:15-16) The offering was made *to* Yahweh, but it was to be used *for* “the service of the tabernacle,” in a manner we’ll discuss in a moment. This should be a clue to us that the plan of God is in view, for that is what the tabernacle is all about—each element of its design and ritual said something about Yahweh’s plan for our redemption. Bear in mind that “ransom” (*koper*) and “atonement” (*kapar*) are closely related words. The idea is to atone (that is, cover) by offering a substitute—often a blood sacrifice, but here a silver coin, which as we will see, is going to be pressed into service to represent the same thing.

The silver was used to make the foundation bases, the “sockets” into which the wall-planks of the tabernacle and the supports for the veil concealing the Most Holy Place would be anchored. **“And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: a bekah for each man (that is, half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men. And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket.”** (Exodus 38:25-27) As I pointed out a few chapters back, the word

for “socket” (*'eden*) is spelled the same as the word for lord or master (*'adon*), and not by accident, I’m thinking. The symbols lead us (or at least *me*) to conclude that we are being held upright, made secure, and kept set apart from the earth by our Master, Yahshua the Messiah—and specifically by the atoning ransom (*kapar/koper*) that He provided for us by shedding His blood for us on Calvary.

(968) *Burnt offerings predict the Messiah.* ‘When any one of you brings an offering to Yahweh, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before Yahweh. (Leviticus 1:2-3) The *olah*, or “burnt offering,” was completely voluntary, an act denoting homage to Yahweh or celebrating His atonement of the worshipper’s sins. Although it was offered of one’s own free will, there were restrictions concerning *how* it was to be done. The reason, as we shall see, was that Yahshua’s death on Calvary was to be an *olah*—a voluntary sacrifice that the Messiah would make of Himself, honoring Yahweh, providing atonement and celebrating the freedom it would bring to mankind. First, it had to be a clean animal (as defined by the Mosaic dietary laws). One couldn’t offer up a snake or pig, an act of penance, a sum of money, or even one’s firstborn child. Because it was a picture of the Messiah’s self-sacrifice, this had to involve the spilling of blood: an innocent life had to be given up—its innocence represented by restricting the types of animals that could be used to those that were “clean” for dietary purposes. Yahshua would later bring this metaphor home to roost, declaring that we had to “eat His flesh” and “drink His blood”—that is, assimilate Him into our very lives—in order to be saved.

Second, the *olah* had to be performed at a specific place: at the tabernacle of meeting. “Then he [that is, the one who brings the offering] shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before Yahweh; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.” (Leviticus 1:4-5) Although the tabernacle was portable by design, its function was eventually “set in stone” with the building of the temple, on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. The geography of the crucifixion provides remarkable confirmation of the Torah’s prophetic accuracy. The blood had to be sprinkled “all around the altar.” It would transpire that Yahshua was scourged within an inch of His life in the Tower of Antonia—only a few hundred feet from where the altar stood in the temple. Bulls or oxen were to be sacrificed on the *west* side of the altar (that is, between the altar and the door of the tabernacle, which faced east—v.3), and sheep on the *north*

side (v.11). And sure enough, the crucifixion site was *northwest* of the temple mount, at a spot now known as “Gordon’s Calvary,” a rock escarpment tucked in behind Jerusalem’s present day main bus station, a mere seven hundred paces from the temple (*not* down south at the religion-encrusted Church of the Holy Sepulcher). Here you can still see the “skull’s face” alluded to in John 19:17.

Third, just as the worshipper transferred his guilt to the sacrificial animal by placing his hand upon its head, our atonement is achieved through the transference of our sin to Yahshua. Note that the priest doesn’t slay the *olah*—that is done by the one who has brought the offering. Each of us is *personally* responsible for the death of God’s Messiah. Note also that this slaying is done “before Yahweh.” Nothing is hidden from Him.

- (969) *Grain, oil, and wine offerings must accompany every animal sacrifice.* “When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, and you make an offering by fire to Yahweh, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to Yahweh, from the herd or the flock, then he who presents his offering to Yahweh shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb.” (Numbers 15:2-5) The Levitical sacrifices—and there were several types (see Volume I, chapter 12)—were never supposed to be offered up by themselves. Whenever innocent blood was shed during one of the ordained sacrificial rites, three other things had to be presented as well: grain, olive oil, and wine. This should be taken as a clue that there is more to our salvation than one guiltless Man offering Himself up as a sacrifice.

First, grain (wheat or barley) was to accompany the sacrifice. We’ll cover this element more thoroughly in the following Precept, but the central truth here is that grain represents God’s provision. More specifically, the grain given with an animal sacrifice had to be “fine flour,” that is, grain that had been crushed, ground to powder, and from which all of the hulls or chaff had been removed. In this form, the grain represented the body of the Messiah, free of worthlessness (the non-nutritive “chaff” of a mortal life as a fallen, sinful creature), and ground fine in the mill of adversity and sacrifice for the benefit of mankind. Only grain that had been subjected to this “abuse” would be suitable for our spiritual sustenance. Only a Messiah who had shed the protective “hull” of heaven would be available to nourish our souls. An “ephah” was a dry measure equivalent to .652 bushels, or about 20.9 quarts; so the “tenth of an ephah” required here was just over half a gallon, or 2.3 liters.

The title “Messiah,” of course, means “anointed.” Kings and priests were anointed with olive oil poured over the head—inaugurating and consecrating them for their roles of leadership and service. Thus we should not be surprised to find that the “fine flour” that represented the body of Christ was to be infused with oil. This oil (as would be explained in Zechariah 4) represents the Holy Spirit. Thus the metaphor comes full circle: the “oil” with which the Messiah, Yahshua, was to be anointed was, in truth, Yahweh’s Spirit. It would not merely be poured out upon Him, either, but would be “mixed” throughout His very being, shaping His character and providing His power. Since a “hin” is about a gallon and a half, making a quarter of a hin one and a half quarts or 1.2 liters, we can deduce that the fine flour was positively *goopy* with oil—permeated, saturated, *wet* with it. Yahshua wasn’t just *influenced* by the Holy Spirit; He was oozing the Spirit’s presence from every pore. This same Spirit dwells within every believer today. So why isn’t our walk as flawless as Yahshua’s was? Maybe it’s a *lubrication* problem—not enough “oil” in our lives.

The third sacrificial element was wine, which was to be poured out as an oblation upon the ground. It was, in Yahshua’s words, **“the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”** (I Corinthians 11:25) But the blood of the lambs and goats was to be spilled upon the ground as well. Why the doubling of the symbol? I believe the answer is latent in the instruction as to *how much* wine to pour out: one quarter hin—the very same amount as the oil. The equivalence, it seems, implies a link between the blood of Christ and the Spirit that indwelt Him. We are told several times in scripture, “The life is in the blood.” Our eternal life is, in the same way, dependent upon the presence of Yahweh’s Spirit: **“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again [literally, from above].’”** (John 3:5-7)

- (970) *Grain offerings predict the Messiah.* **“When anyone offers a grain offering to Yahweh, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. He shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to Yahweh.... And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.”** (Leviticus 2:1-2, 13) We have seen that grain, bread, and even manna are representative of the body of Christ. As He Himself said, **“I am the bread of life.... I am the living bread**

which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh.” (John 6:48-51) “Take [this bread] and eat. This is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

(I Corinthians 11:24) Here in Leviticus we learn that offerings of grain (which were to accompany every blood sacrifice—see Precept #969) always had to have several ingredients added to them. First, olive oil was to be poured upon the grain or the bread. This, as we saw above, is symbolic of the Spirit of God that would permeate the life of Yahshua. Second, frankincense was to be sprinkled on it. This white powder, you’ll recall, was indicative of purity through sacrifice—specifically, *our* purity achieved through *His* sacrifice. And third, every grain offering was to be seasoned with salt, a picture of preservation and flavor, as well as being a symbol of God’s promise and our acceptance: a “covenant of salt,” where two parties would exchange a bit of salt upon reaching an agreement, was like our “shaking hands on it.”

There were also some ingredients that were specifically forbidden in the grain offerings—things that might ordinarily have been part of the process of making bread. **“No grain offering which you bring to Yahweh shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to Yahweh made by fire.”** (Leviticus 2:11) Leaven, as we have seen, is a picture of sin. The Messiah would be slain for our sins, not His own. As Daniel’s stunning 70-weeks prophecy puts it, He would be “cut off, but not for Himself.” Or as Isaiah wrote, **“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”** (Isaiah 53:4-5) So leaven was not to be part of the grain offering, for Yahshua did not sin—ever.

Honey was also forbidden as an added ingredient. As I noted in Mitzvah #477, “Honey is pleasant and sweet, a delight to the taste. Christ’s sacrifice, by contrast, was marked by sorrow and bitterness, pain and suffering. Honey was not descriptive of Messiah’s first-century mission, so it was not to be offered.” A telling description of Israel’s privileged position as Yahweh’s chosen people includes this detail: **“You were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate pastry of fine flour, honey, and oil.”** (Ezekiel 16:13) Fine flour was obtained by crushing the kernels of grain, and oil was produced by crushing ripe olives—both things predictive of the pain the Messiah would endure. But honey, the sweetness of a pleasant mortal life (obtained, it must be noted, by stealing it from those who had labored to make it) would not be the Messiah’s lot. He would instead be called a “Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief.”

There were also instructions with Messianic significance concerning the manner in which the grain offering was to be prepared. **“If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to Yahweh, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from full heads. And you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It is a grain offering. Then the priest shall burn the memorial portion: part of its beaten grain and part of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to Yahweh.”**

(Leviticus 2:14-16) Specifically in reference to the offering of firstfruits—a representative of the expected harvest—we see that the “green” or barely ripe grain was to be “beaten from full heads.” “Green” is the Hebrew *abib*, the original name for the month of Nisan—the first month in the Jewish calendar. It indicates grain (in this case, barley) that is ripe, but is still soft. Normally, the barley crop would be harvested in the second month, Iyar, when it had been given time to mature and dry out a bit in the field. Thus the firstfruits offering was made when the barley was at the peak of freshness—when it held the maximum promise for a bountiful harvest. Yahshua, of course, is the antitype for the firstfruits offering. His resurrection from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits is a harbinger, a promise, of *our* coming harvest, the resurrection of the living and dead saints of His *ekklesia*. This harvest is indicated in Yahweh’s “appointment book” by the Feast of Trumpets, scheduled for the first day of the month of Tishri, in the autumn.

Note that the just-ripe grain offering of firstfruits was to be “beaten from full heads.” No chaff (the worthless, non-nutritive part of the grain) was to be offered up by fire (read: judgment) to Yahweh. Instead, the barley kernel was to be extricated from its husk by beating or threshing—a violent process predictive of the abuse our Savior would suffer on our behalf on His way to crucifixion. Note also that only part of the firstfruits grain, and only part of the oil, were to be consumed in the fire. This tells us that although God subjected His own Spirit-filled Son to wrath for our sakes, He did not consume *Himself* in the process: God is not dead. However, *all* of the frankincense was to be used, telling us that our purity was achieved *completely* through His sacrifice—there is nothing that must be added later, nothing for us to do to finish God’s work, no works, alms, or penance. As Yahshua declared, “It *is* finished.”

- (971) *The Torah’s dietary rules predict the Messiah.* **“You shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. For I am Yahweh your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. For I am Yahweh who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God.**

You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 11:43-45) There were certain animals that the Israelites were not only not to eat, they weren't even supposed to touch their dead carcasses. But note what Yahweh *doesn't* say here. He doesn't talk about health hazards, warning of tummy aches or skin rashes; He doesn't speak of intestinal parasites and food-borne toxins. Rather, Yahweh appeals—no fewer than six times in these three short verses—to a *spiritual* principle: *set yourselves apart from the world because I, Yahweh your God, am set apart from My creation.* What we put into our bodies is analogous to what we put into our souls. If eating toxic meat is bad for our bodies, then thinking evil thoughts and idolizing worthless things is bad for our souls. **"This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten."** (Leviticus 11:46-47) We are to distinguish, discriminate, *decide* what to put into our lives, choosing the good from among a plethora of spiritual possibilities.

Yahweh uses two words to describe the negative result of association (dietary or otherwise) with these "unclean creatures," neither of them having anything in particular to do with health or nutrition. First, "abominable" is from the verb *shaqats*, meaning to "detest, abhor, disdain, i.e., have a strong emotional response of rejection and antipathy...feel contempt or scorn for those seen as bad, dirty, or without value; defile." (*Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains*) Yahweh is saying that this is how He will feel about the one who ingests "creeping things." The second word is "unclean," also translated "defiled." *Tame'* is a Hebrew verb meaning "to be or become unclean, become impure—sexually, religiously, or ceremonially; to defile oneself or be defiled by idolatry; to profane God's name." (*Strong's*)

On the other hand, there are a few words in this passage that speak of the positive aspects of avoiding these "creeping things" and other dietary no-noes. The first is translated "consecrate." *Qadash* is a verb meaning: "to be sacred, consecrated, i.e., dedicate to service and loyalty to God...to set apart, consecrate, dedicate, regard as holy; be holy, i.e., be in a state of having superior moral qualities, with behavior which is positively unique and pure, in contrast to other corrupt standards." "Be holy," uses an adjective based on the same root: *qadowsh* means "holy, i.e., pertaining to being unique and pure in the sense of superior moral qualities and possessing certain essential divine qualities in contrast with what is human; sacred, consecrated, i.e., pertaining to what is dedicated in service to God." The word translated "clean" is *tahowr*, an adjective that means,

“clean, i.e., pertaining to being ceremonially or ritually clean: pure, i.e., pertaining to the feature of an object not having foreign particles or impurities; flawless, perfect, i.e., without defect of any kind and so free from moral impurity.” (*DBL-SD*)

There is clearly more to this than eating some things and avoiding others. God has drawn a very clear contrast between the two worlds, the clean and the unclean. Eating “clean” animals for food is a metaphor for being set apart for Yahweh’s glory and purpose, dedicated to His honor and friendship, remaining untainted by the world’s moral standards and unimpressed with its wiles—which the believer understands to be dangerous, if not toxic. But eating “unclean” animals like pigs, shellfish, carrion birds, rodents, insects, and reptiles, is symbolic of buying into the world’s system—staying behind in Egypt, so to speak—where Satan’s spiritual substitutes promise exotic experiences, dangerous delights, or merely plausibly palatable counterfeits for the believer’s diet: the bread of life, living water, and a main course of the Lamb of God. The devil would have you believe that what God offers you is bland and boring. I find *nothing* boring about Yahshua. But spicy satanic concoctions like sin salad, pride pâté, and Babylon bouillabaisse leave a lost and hungry world sick to their souls and even closer to spiritual starvation than they were before they sat down to eat. How can we make the world understand that the antidote to poison is not more poison?

- (972) *Tsitzits are to function as reminders of God’s covenant. “Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of Yahweh and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I am Yahweh your God.’”* (Numbers 15:37-41) We looked at this concept way back in Mitzvah #18, so I’ll try not to repeat myself too much. These tassels were to be worn by everybody in Israel, throughout their generations. Doing this would achieve several goals. First, when you saw someone else wearing the tsitzit, you’d know immediately that he (or she) was an Israelite—a brother or sister and a fellow member of Yahweh’s “chosen family.” Many of God’s Instructions distinguished between how Jews were to relate to each other from how they were to deal with the world, so this was a practical, reliable, low tech means of identifying your own people—sort of like wearing gang colors would be today in some inner city neighborhoods, only without all the crime and bloodshed.

Second, they were meant to be a distraction from the daily grind of life. One's "life" in the Promised Land might seem to consist of waging war, tending sheep, planting wheat, making bread, or raising children. But this, Yahweh says, is an illusion—it's not your life, only your job. Your life, He says, is defined by the covenant—Israel's special relationship with Yahweh. Twice in this passage, among hundreds of repetitions in the Torah, He reminds Israel to "do all My commandments." At this late date, we have come to recognize that Yahweh's commandments, *all* of them, are there to teach Israel (and through them, the gentiles as well) about His plan for our redemption. Every precept, one way or another, makes a statement about how God was going to save mankind, where He would do it, when, why, or through Whom.

So the third objective of wearing the tsitzit was to instruct Israel about their coming Redeemer. We are not told what the fibers were suppose to be made of. I believe this is purposeful, for if Yahweh had specified wool, we might have read "works" into the precept; and if linen, we would have seen grace—imputed righteousness. As it is, the source of the tassel's thread is left unspecified, as if to say, "The tsitzit represents all of Israel, for better or worse, obedient or not, faithful or not, holy or not." All of the fibers except one would have been white or off-white in color, no matter what they were made of. And that one exception was the key to understanding the significance of the tsitzit.

That single thread was to be dyed blue—the color of authority, of royalty, of extravagant expenditure. The message was messianic: there would be *One* among Israel who had the right to rule. This one thread was made of the same stuff as the rest of them. That is, the Messiah would be human, an Israelite. But its color set it apart (read: *made it holy*) from all the rest, indicating that this One would be special, an eternal King. This blue fiber was, however, bound into a bundle with all the other threads—they all lived in the same Land, walked through the same world.

Blue dye, however, also implied another message: somebody had to get dirty—He had to become unclean. In order to obtain this precious fluid, the *tekelet* blue or purple dye, someone had to handle a ritually defiling animal—the carcass of a dead shellfish, the *murex* snail. Someone would have to sacrifice himself—take the people's impurity upon himself—in order that the Torah might be kept. That "Someone" would turn out to be the same One represented by the blue thread of royalty: Yahshua the Messiah.

(973) *The Messiah's mother must bring both a burnt offering and a sin offering. "When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, [a*

new mother] shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before Yahweh, and make atonement for her.”

(Leviticus 12:6-7) Catholics have been known to jump to the conclusion that because Christ was sinless, his earthly mother must have been sinless as well—making Mary an object of veneration, if not outright worship. But the Torah proves that notion to be false. Luke 2:24 reports that Mary brought “a pair of turtledoves or young pigeons” in order to fulfill the Law. That is, she took the “poor mother’s” option, as described in the Torah: **“If she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering.”** (Leviticus 12:8) The sin offering (*chata't*) was required **“if a person sins unintentionally [i.e., through error] against any of the commandments of Yahweh in anything which ought to be done, and does any of them.”** (Leviticus 4:2) If she had been sinless, then no sin offering would have been needed. By bringing one of the turtle doves, Mary was acknowledging her guilt before God—something we all need to do.

But what about the “burnt offering,” (*olah*) the sacrifice of homage and atonement that was also required? The Torah allowed, and Mary brought, a turtledove or young pigeon (see Leviticus 1:14 and 12:8), though a lamb was clearly preferred. Funny thing: although Mary didn’t know it, she *had* brought a “Lamb” to her purification ceremony: her own son, Yahshua. As John the Baptist would announce some thirty years later, **“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** (John 1:29)

- (974) *Bring two goats to describe the Messiah’s role in our atonement. “And Aaron shall bring the goat on which Yahweh’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before Yahweh, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.”* (Leviticus 16:9-10) On *Yom Kippurim*, the Day of Atonement, two goats were used to achieve the purpose of the *miqra*, which was stated thus: **“This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before Yahweh.”** (Leviticus 16:29-30) We have previously discussed several key *Yom Kippurim* concepts. (1) “Affliction of the soul” (Hebrew *'anah*), entails *both* repentance, contrition, and acknowledgment of guilt, *and* answering and responding to Yahweh—*together* achieving personal reconciliation, the formation and development of a familial relationship with Him. (2) The Priest who makes atonement for us is ultimately Yahshua—the only worthy intercessor between God

and man. And (3) the point of atonement (literally, “covering”—a concept related to the paying of a ransom) is to cleanse us from our sins, for becoming clean and pure is the only way we can stand before Yahweh, whose very presence is as lethal to evil as light is to darkness.

Here, I’d like to focus on another aspect of the *miqra*: the relationship between the goats, our sin, and the mission of the Messiah. Two goats were used because two different things happened to our sin through the sacrifice of Yahshua. One of them—designated as a sin offering (*chata’t*) for all of the people—was slain, and its blood was sprinkled by the Priest upon the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place. If the events I reported in *Future History*—chapter 13: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem”—are true (and I believe they are, though I can’t prove it), then the blood of *Yahshua Himself*, our ultimate sin offering, was literally, physically sprinkled upon the mercy seat, which was secreted away in a limestone cave directly beneath the crucifixion site. The Messiah’s blood was thus, by God’s own definition, efficacious in atoning for the sins of the people—“native” Israelites and believing gentile “strangers” alike.

But Yahshua, having sacrificed His life on our behalf, didn’t remain dead. So the second goat is recruited to reenact the mission of the living Messiah: the physical removal of our sins far away from us. This goat, having had the sins of the people symbolically transferred to him through the placing of the High Priest’s hands upon his head, was led into the wilderness, where no man dwells. Thus “all our iniquities” and “all our transgressions, concerning all our sins” (v.21) are not only covered over and paid for; they’re also separated from us by physical distance: they need never again trouble us. If you think about it, this becoming set apart from our sins is the very *definition* of holiness.

THE “RED HEIFER”

- (975) *Slaughter a red heifer outside the camp. “Now Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘This is the ordinance of the law which Yahweh has commanded, saying: Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting.’”* (Numbers 19:1-4) We discussed the Ordinance of the Red Heifer at length in Volume I, chapter 15, but the subject bears a second look. Remember what I said about “religious law” in the Torah making no sense if there’s no prophetic or symbolic meaning to it? This one is a

goofy as they get, if Yahweh isn't trying to tell us something. In fact, the Jewish sages assert that this is the only thing in the Torah that stumped Solomon.

The *purpose* of the law, however, is perfectly straightforward. Short version: the idea is to have a supply of ritually-prepared “water of purification” on hand at all times. This water, mixed with the ashes of the burned carcass of the red heifer and some other things, was to be sprinkled upon anyone who had touched a dead body. Without this sprinkling, they would remain ritually impure—a bad thing, for it disqualified the unclean person from participating in temple worship. If the ritual was pointless and self-serving, of course, one could merely shrug, yawn, and go on with his life. But if Yahweh meant for the rite to teach us about a spiritual reality, then its execution becomes a vitally important symbolic gesture. The lesson is: don't let death touch you without being cleansed.

But there's a rub. Actually, several of them. First, as usual, the rite can't be performed without a sanctuary and priesthood in place—things that haven't been available to the Jews for almost two thousand years now. Worse, this dog is chasing its tail. That is, the rabbis have declared that because Moses wrote, **“the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh,”** (v. 20) the *sanctuary itself* is defiled, as is the priesthood (or, they would be, if they existed). They therefore must be cleansed—through the Red Heifer ordinance. But that would require that the temple and priesthood were already available—and in a state of ritual purity. In other words, both the chicken *and* the egg must come first.

Then there's the little problem of obtaining a kosher red heifer. According to the rabbinical rules (which are far more restrictive than Yahweh's) the heifer must be *all* red—no more than three hairs on its entire hide can be another color; it must be born in Israel; and it must be in its third year. Since the time of Moses, only nine such animals have been seen in the Land—none within the last two millennia. However, prime examples of Red Angus cows that could potentially meet the Levitical *and* rabbinical requirements are readily available in America. So Christian cattle breeder Clyde Lott began working with Orthodox rabbis in Israel in the 1990s to produce the perfect Israeli red heifer. It's only a matter of time before they succeed. And *that* will bring Israel one step closer to returning in faith to Yahweh their God, for it would clear one more hurdle in the Jewish mind concerning the rebuilding of the temple—something that's explicitly predicted in Scripture to happen during the Last Days.

So let's review the Torah's actual, literal requirements so far. (1) The red heifer must be presented by the people of Israel. (2) It must be without blemish or defect (something Clyde Lott interprets to mean, "a good-milking, sweetly disposed, handsomely constructed animal—basically, a twenty-first-century, high-tech cow"). (3) It must never have labored as a working draft animal; (4) It is to be delivered to "Eleazar the priest." Since Aaron was still alive when the law was delivered, his son Eleazar represents his successors down through the generations. Through tradition and DNA analysis, the Jews presume to have identified the priestly line, the Cohenim—technically, males whose genetic profile features the CMH, or "Cohen Modal Haplotype." (5) The Heifer is to be slaughtered "outside the camp," which today I'd take to mean outside the old city of Jerusalem. The traditional site for this is on the Mount of Olives (though something tells me Yahweh had another hill in mind: Moriah). (6) The priest is to take some of the blood and sprinkle it "seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting." This, of course is a problem if no tabernacle or temple stands, but perhaps once the *site* of the future temple is determined, the ritual could be carried out as the Jewish faithful endeavor to once again draw near to their God.

These six points find symbolic fulfillment in the sacrifice of Christ, if only we'll bother to look for them. (1) Yahshua was an Israelite, from the tribe of Judah and the royal line of David. (2) Though fully human, He was without sin. (3) The cleansing of mankind came not through His life and work, but through His death and resurrection. (4) Yahshua stood condemned for our sins before Caiaphas the High Priest, a descendant of Aaron. (5) He was crucified outside the city walls of Jerusalem. And (6) Christ's blood was not only "sprinkled" near the temple during a horrific pre-crucifixion beating in the tower of Antonia (situated next to the temple mount), there is also evidence that His blood was literally splattered onto the ark of the covenant, secreted away for hundreds of years in a cavern directly beneath the execution site (as I mentioned above: see *Future History*, chapter 13). All of this and much more suggests—dare I say, *proves*—that Yahshua the Messiah, crucified outside Jerusalem's Damascus Gate on Nisan 14, 33 A.D., was *Himself* the Red Heifer whose body would provide purification for mankind, allowing us to overcome the stigma of death.

- (976) *Burn the heifer with cedar, hyssop, and scarlet. "Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. And the priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet, and cast them into the midst of the fire burning the heifer."* (Numbers 19:5-6) Fire represents judgment, the separation of the worthy from the worthless. It's the same

symbol as that presented by the altar that stood outside the tabernacle: Yahshua was enduring our judgment for us, allowing us to stand as worthy and righteous children before God. The fact that the entire heifer was to be burned made this akin to an *olah*, the “burnt offering” of Leviticus that was a voluntary sacrifice made in homage to Yahweh, for atonement, or in celebration. And note that this was to be done “in the sight” of Eleazar. He (representing the followers of Christ our High Priest) was to be a witness of the sacrifice—just like we are to be.

But in the case of the red heifer, there are three other elements that were to be burned along with the animal. Cedar wood speaks of pride, majesty, or great achievement. Hyssop is basically the opposite concept, denoting humility and insignificance. Thus the ashes that would indemnify us from the curse of death would contain not only Yahshua’s atoning body and blood, but also both our pride and insignificance. It’s as if to say, the whole range of our human experience must be sacrificed, as Christ’s body was sacrificed, in order to be made clean and pure. That is, neither our greatest work nor our most self-effacing humility is of any value in the face of death, unless they’re accompanied by the sacrifice of Yahshua. And the scarlet? Scarlet represents our sin, as well as the blood required to atone for it. We must be willing to consign it to the flame of judgment if we wish to be purified.

(977) *Realize that the process of cleansing makes us unclean. “Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. Then a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and store them outside the camp in a clean place.... And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.”* (Numbers 19:7-10) If this seems counterintuitive, it may help to sort out who is assigned to do what in the ordinance of the red heifer. The High Priest (the original being Aaron, and the prophetic antitype being Yahshua) is involved only in handing over to his son Eleazar the heifer that’s been brought to him by the people. (The heifer, of course, is also prophetic of the purifying work of Christ.) Eleazar, being Aaron’s son and follower, is symbolic of us as believers. He is to sprinkle the blood before the tabernacle and then supervise another man as he burns the red heifer to ash with the cedar, hyssop, and scarlet. Since the tabernacle is metaphorical of the Plan of God for our salvation, sprinkling the blood of Christ before it would seem to indicate making sure that the Messiah’s blood and the Plan of God are associated—connected—in the minds of those watching.

And the man who actually burns the carcass of the red heifer? He, I believe, represents anyone who finds himself being taught and guided by “Eleazar,” the believers of the world. We’re thus being given a picture of the Great Commission: we (Eleazar) are to go into all the world and preach the gospel (i.e., sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the tabernacle) to every creature (represented by the man tasked with burning the red heifer). A third man then gathers the ashes and stores them in a clean place outside the camp (i.e., a place in the world but not tainted by its values and practices). This man, I believe, represents those of us who are specifically tasked by God to transmit His truth, the good news of our indemnification against the curse of death, to succeeding generations. These three are involved in making the ashes of the red heifer available for use. There is also a fourth person in the cleansing process—the one who mixes and sprinkles the water of purification upon the defiled subject (see Precept #980). All of these people are rendered temporarily unclean through the performance of their roles. But all of them, like the one to whom they minister, will be cleansed in the end.

Some of us, of course, find ourselves included in several of the symbolic groups involved in the ordinance of the red heifer. Thus we should not be surprised to see that the consequences of carrying out this ordinance—and the remedy—are the same for everyone involved. We all find ourselves rendered unclean by walking through the world. And what is the cure for this defilement? It’s a three-step process. (1) We are to wash our clothing. What we wear is metaphorical of our status before God—how He sees us. Are we butt naked, or wearing fig leaf aprons or tunics of skin? Are we wearing the scratchy wool of works-based religion, or the brilliant white linen of grace—of imputed righteousness? In any case, we aren’t called to monastic isolation. We are told to go into all the world as witnesses of God’s love. As we walk through the world as mortal believers, it’s inevitable that we’ll brush up against things that make us unclean. But we aren’t to stay that way: we are to wash our garments.

(2) Next, we are to bathe. This is the same basic picture as that presented by the bronze laver standing between the altar of sacrifice and the tabernacle, carried through to the rite of water baptism as a picture of joining Christ in death to our old life and arising in life anew in Him. The water, in the end, is the Word of God, conveyed by His Spirit dwelling within us. It is Yahweh’s truth that makes us clean.

(3) Lastly (and this is the tough one for us, if we consider it carefully) we are to wait until sunset—a pretty clear euphemism for physical death. In other words, the process of purification won’t be fully accomplished as

long as we're still walking about in our mortal carcasses. But death (or rapture, if that happens to occur first) will free us from the bondage of these sinful bodies, making our cleansing complete.

(978) *Trust the ashes of the red heifer to purify from sin, cleansing the stigma of death.* “**And [the ashes] shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.... He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Yahweh. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.**” (Numbers 19:9, 11-13) Mixed with water (see Precept #980), the ashes became the “active ingredient,” so to speak, in the “water of purification” mixture that was to be sprinkled upon anyone who had come into contact with a dead body—defined here as “sin.” Although there was a straightforward and relatively simple remedy for having been defiled in this way, God attached dire symbolic significance to contact with death—going so far as to declare that one who did not purify himself as prescribed would be “cut off from Israel,” that is, excluded from the household of faith. This, in Yahweh’s view, is serious stuff.

But as usual, it’s not terribly “practical.” I mean, there’s no particular antiseptic value in sprinkling someone who has been exposed to germs with water that has cow ashes dissolved in it. If God had instructed the subject to do only as the red heifer preparation team had done—washing their clothes and their bodies, and then waiting until the sun went down—there might be some scientific logic to this. But the death-toucher was not told to do these things until the very end of the process. Let’s face it: getting splashed a couple of times with muddy water never made *anything* clean or pure. Yahweh has left us with no alternative but to look for symbolic meaning to the ordinance. And in truth, it’s not all that hard to see, this side of Calvary.

First, there are the ingredients of the “water of purification.” The ashes are made from the burning of a red heifer, which, given the breeding stock Israel had been using ever since the days of Jacob (see Genesis 30-32), turned out to be an exceedingly rare genetic anomaly. As I said, only nine such heifers have ever been used for this purpose, none of them within the last two thousand years. The point is that the Messiah’s advent is not an everyday occurrence, but He’s definitely worth waiting for—the central

ingredient in God's plan for the indemnification of death. Also in the ash mixture were cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet—together symbolic of the human condition that must be surrendered to Yahweh if we are to overcome our mortality (see Precept #976 and Mitzvah #574). Finally, the water must be “flowing,” (literally, “living”) a clear reference to the Word of God.

Next, let's examine the timing. The defiled person was to have himself sprinkled with the water of purification on the third day and the seventh day after his contact with the dead body. In Yahweh's prophetic timetable, when did death occur? On Passover—the very day Yahshua would sacrifice His life on our behalf. The third day, then, would fall on the third *miqra*, the Feast of Firstfruits—prophetic of the resurrection of Christ from the tomb, a preview of our own impending reawakenings. The seventh day, likewise, is prophetic of Yahweh's timetable—the proverbial “day of rest” that follows the six-day “work week.” At their core, then, the schedule of the days of sprinkling with the water of purification symbolize—they *personify*—the life made available to us through Yahshua's sacrifice. If we refuse to trust in the efficacy of the resurrection, and if we despise the life we can enjoy under Christ's loving rule, then we will find ourselves unclean forever—cut off from God's people.

(979) *Be aware that death surrounds us.* **“This is the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who are in the tent shall be unclean seven days; and every open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, is unclean. Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.”** (Numbers 19:14-16) Here we see that we need not be in physical contact with death in order to be tainted by its curse. Merely being in an enclosed space with it—in its sphere of influence—is enough to defile us. In the light of modern microbiology, we can now see the practical wisdom of this precept: germs are dangerous, even if we can't see them. Worse, infections can travel from dead bodies to living ones under the right (i.e., *wrong*) circumstances. What's not so easy to grasp is the parallel spiritual connotation.

As you'll recall from Numbers 19:9, the death from which the ashes of the red heifer cleanse us is characterized as “sin.” Paul would point out the same connection—and the same cure. **“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 6:23) What, then, is the spiritual equivalent of being found “in a tent” with a dead body? I believe what we have here is a not-so-subtle picture of the prevailing religion of a given place and time. It's your cultural environment. If you lived in the

Roman empire during Paul's lifetime, it would have been paganism; in Renaissance Europe it would have been Catholicism; in the Middle East, Islam; in America (until recently) Protestant Christianity. Of course, one need not paint with such a broad brush: our immediate neighborhoods can have a profound effect on our attitudes and preconceptions when it comes to our relationship with God. Someone who grew up in an Irish Catholic neighborhood in Boston might see things quite differently than the average guy from Dallas does, or a San Franciscan might. These are the "tents" in which we find ourselves, and from what I've seen, most of them have dead bodies lying around stinking up the place. And what about touching corpses in the "open field"? When society is in upheaval or when cultural influences are in a state of flux, it's even harder to remain undefiled, for the "graves" of our religious traditions are hidden, lurking, for all we know, like land mines underfoot. Insofar as religion obfuscates the love of Yahweh, it is both dead and deadly. The point: even children of Yahweh need cleansing as we walk through our lives. We are all in need of the purifying work of Yahshua the Messiah.

- (980) *Mix the ashes of the red heifer with running water. "And for an unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and running water shall be put on them in a vessel."* (Numbers 19:17)
Here's the scenario. The ashes of the red heifer (burned along with the cedar, hyssop and scarlet) had been obtained and stored for future use. Then someone who had come in contact with a corpse would present himself or herself to a ritually clean person who would then pour running water into a vessel containing some of the ashes and administer the mixture as we'll see in the next precept.

To give you a feel for the numbers here, in a nation of a million souls (and Israel was bigger than that when it left Egypt), normal attrition would account for over 14,000 deaths per year, or about forty per day on average—each one requiring *at least* one person to become unclean under the law. If the nation were at war, the number of people requiring cleansing would run much higher, for Canaanite and Philistine corpses killed in battle would defile you just like your octogenarian grandfather's did. Because the sprinkling rituals were to be performed twice per person, on the third and seventh days, we must double that number: over eighty souls a day needed to be attended to. In other words, if *the priests* had been exclusively tasked with carrying out this ordinance they would have been busy with it all day, every day. As a practical matter (although it isn't spelled out), the priests, or at least the Levites, would have been entrusted with the safe keeping of the red heifer's ashes. But one didn't have to be a priest or Levite to prepare the water of purification, or sprinkle the defiled

person with it—he only had to be ritually clean. This tells me that the love and testimony of God is not the exclusive province of religious “professionals,” people who have received a special calling upon their lives. No, the simplest, most “unqualified” believer can be the implement of cleansing to those who have been touched by death. That’s why hyssop was used to sprinkle the water of purification—it’s a metaphor for humility and apparent insignificance. Any willing soul can be a powerful tool in the hands of Yahweh.

The water was to be “running” or “flowing,” that is, fresh from a spring or brook. The Hebrew word used, however, is revealing of the mind of God: it’s *chay*, usually translated “living” or “alive.” Thus we read that **“Yahweh, God, formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (the *neshamah*); and man became a living being (*chayah*).”** (Genesis 2:7) Yahweh, of all the “gods” that men worship, is the only One said to be *chay*, alive: **“There is none like You. But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish. A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.... But Yahweh is the true God. He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.”** (Jeremiah 10:8, 10)

And living water? Look closely at this glimpse of Christ’s Millennial kingdom: **“In that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And Yahweh shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be: ‘Yahweh is one,’ and His name one.”** (Zechariah 14:8-9) This living water won’t just flow *from* the Messiah, either. In a sense, it will *be* the Messiah (in the form of the Holy Spirit living within us), as He Himself explained to the woman at the well: **“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.... Whoever drinks of this [well] water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”** (John 4:10, 13) Yahshua died for us so His Spirit might “spring up” to live within us (see John 14:17). So in the end, the water in which the ashes of the red heifer are dissolved is metaphorical of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Yahweh is the vehicle by which our salvation, through the death of Christ, is delivered, giving us eternal life.

- (981) *The one who has encountered death must be sprinkled with the water of purification on the third and seventh days. “A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave.*

The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.” (Numbers 19:18-19) As we saw above (Precept #978) the timing of the two sprinklings of cleansing is significant. The “third day” is obviously (to those of us this side of Calvary with eyes to see it) a reference to the resurrection of the Messiah, which took place on the third day after He “touched death.” Yahshua, of course, being God incarnate and knowing His own scriptures, knew this well in advance of the fact, telling His disciples, **“The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”** (Luke 9:22) This rising on the third day after experiencing death was prophesied in the series of annual appointments that Yahweh had instructed Israel to keep with Him throughout their generations. Death was encountered on the first *miqra*, Passover. The Feast of Firstfruits took place on the third day after this. And what was to happen on this day? **“When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before Yahweh, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.”** (Leviticus 23:10-11) The sheaf of grain, representing the Messiah’s body, was to be “waved,” that is, lifted up before Yahweh. This is clearly a picture of the resurrection. The ordinance of the red heifer is telling us that the Messiah’s resurrection—the evidence that He had overcome death—would effect our cleansing, thereby enabling us to overcome death as well.

The seventh day is, just as obviously, a reference to the Sabbath rest mandated by God. **“The feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of Yahweh in all your dwellings.”** (Leviticus 23:2-3) All the work in the world won’t make us clean before God. In the end, we must rest in His willingness and ability to do the job on our behalf. Indeed, that job is already done: it was accomplished at the resurrection. In a very real sense, God’s *offer* of cleansing is made through the sprinkling of the water of purification on the third day, and our *acceptance* of the offer is symbolized by repeating the rite on the seventh day.

Another way of looking at this is based on the literal reality of II Peter 3:8—that with Yahweh, one day *really is* as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. That is, Yahweh’s entire plan for the redemption of mankind was *designed* to take precisely 7,000 years to unfold, beginning at the need for our salvation (the fall of Adam) and ending at the conclusion of the Millennial reign of Yahshua (after which

time the eternal state will commence). The *offer* of cleansing was made during the third millennium—with the giving of the Torah, in all its prophetic glory, and the setting apart of Israel as the vehicle with which God purposed to deliver the Messiah to the world. The *acceptance* is our life as citizens of the Kingdom during the seventh Millennium, resting in Yahweh’s grace on the ultimate thousand-year Sabbath. In truth, it’s all pretty much the same metaphor, just upside down and inside out.

Resting in Yahshua’s finished work, we who have “touched death” are to finally to undergo the same cleansing procedure as that required of the priest, the man who burned the red heifer, and the one who carried the ashes: **“On the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.”** Only after the offer of purification has been made on the third day, and accepted on the seventh, can the *real* cleansing take place. As we have seen, clean clothes represent the way we are now perceived by God: as innocent. And bathing in water is immersion in Yahweh’s Spirit and truth—the “washing of water by the Word.” By the evening of the seventh day—by the end of our sojourn in time and at the beginning of the eternal state—we shall at last be totally, eternally cleansed of the curse of death.

- (982) *One not purified with the ashes of the red heifer remains defiled.* **“But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean. It shall be a perpetual statute for them.”** (Numbers 19:20-21) Once again, we are confronted with the fact that Israel has been unable to literally comply with the ordinance of the red heifer for the past two thousand years—defining the *entire nation* as being “cut off from among the assembly.” The fact that the precept is symbolic—that its real meaning comes to fruition in the death, and subsequent life, of Yahshua the Messiah—doesn’t help Israel out of their collective pickle, because they (as a nation) still don’t recognize Him. So, since they can’t perform the ordinance literally, and they refuse to accept its meaning symbolically, Israel remains defiled. (I hasten to add that Israel’s national rejection of their Messiah is not a permanent condition. The events of the Tribulation will conspire to open their eyes. In fact, Israel’s restoration is the most often repeated prophetic theme in the entire Tanach.)

Note that Moses states that the unclean one shall be “cut off” because he “has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh,” *not* because he has touched a dead body. We have established through examining scores of precepts that the sanctuary—its rituals, personnel, structure, layout, and furnishings—is

a complex metaphor for Yahweh's plan for our redemption through the sacrifice of Yahshua the Messiah. So what's being said here is quite profound: he who remains unclean (because he failed to avail himself of what the red heifer signifies—cleansing through Yahshua's sacrifice) has defiled, thwarted, and rejected the very plan of Yahweh.

Moses then reminds us that helping others to reacquire their purity can in itself be a dirty business. The participants in the great commission, though sanctified, still need to be cleansed after walking through the world. **“He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of purification shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.”** (Numbers 19:21-22) This, I believe, is the same picture presented by the layout of the tabernacle courtyard. After we've passed the altar (where our sins were atoned with the blood sacrifice), we still couldn't enter the tabernacle (God's Plan) without first encountering the bronze laver, washing our hands and feet—that is, cleansing our work and our walk—with the Word of God. Only then can we enter the sanctuary, see things by the light of Yahweh's truth, be nourished through His provision, offer up our petitions and thanksgiving, and finally enter into the very presence of our God.