

**פרשת**  
**מישפטים**  
*Parashat Mishpatim*

*Shemot / Exodus 21:1-24:18, Jeremiah 34:8-22, 33:25-26  
Luke 7:1-8:3*

**A Piece of Revelation from God**

In this week's reading Moshe writes the following, **אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִקְלַל, וְנֹשֵׂא בַעַמָּךְ לֹא תֵאָר:** *22:27 You shall not revile God, nor put a curse upon a chieftain among your people.* **מִלְאָתְךָ וְדַמְעָךָ לֹא תֵאָחֵר בְּכוֹר בְּנִיךָ.** *22:28 You shall not put off the skimming of the first yield of your vats. You shall give Me the first-born among your sons.* **כֹּן-תַעֲשֶׂה.** *22:29 You shall do the same with your cattle and your flocks: seven days it shall remain with its mother; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.* **וְאֲנִשִּׁי-** *22:30 You shall be holy people to Me: you must not eat flesh torn by beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs.* **לֹא תִשָּׂא שִׁמְעַנְךָ וְשׂוֹא אֶל-תְּנִשָּׁת.** *23:1 You must not carry false rumors; you shall not join hands with the guilty to act as a malicious witness:* **לֹא-תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי-רַבִּים לְרָעַת וְלֹא-תִעָנֶה עַל-רֹב לְנִטְוֹת אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטֹּת:** *23:2 'You shall not follow the masses in doing evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after a multitude in order to pervert justice;* There are a number of commands here that are related to the heart, to what we find most important, and to justice, truth, and faith.

The name of this week's reading, Mishpatim "*judgments*" or "*laws*" describes the lengthy collection of statutes the Lord is giving to His people in regards to living in this life. He says you are not to revile God or put a curse upon a chieftain among your people. To revile is to blaspheme meaning one is not to take the name of God in relation to cursing. *Rabbeinu Bahya on Shemot / Exodus 22:27 Part 1* states. "אלוהים לא תקלל, 'you shall not curse a judge.' This is a warning for the party who has been convicted of a crime or sin not to curse the judge who convicted him. This subject follows the subject of the need to extend loans to fellow Jews as on occasion disputes arise over whether a loan has been repaid, the debtor either denying he had received it or the lender claiming that he had not been repaid. Such disputes are submitted to judgment. It is quite possible that the party whose claim is rejected (if he feels that he has been wronged) will curse the judge who has wronged him. This is why the Torah has to warn that one must not engage in such conduct." This is connected to taking from the first fruits and giving it to the Lord, from the flocks, and even from our sons. These commands go on to describe how we are not to be as beasts eating flesh torn by animals, to tell lies, or to go along with the crowd when the masses are doing evil. God's people are to be holy and righteous and not act in a forbidden manner when others are doing so. We are not to be influenced by the fact that the majority thinks differently from us. This appears to be what is going on today in our culture. The joining of hands with ungodly thought processes and accepting and placing first in our lives the cultural norms as opposed to the Word of God. When studying the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings, we believe that God anoints His people to heal, to preach, and to witness his magnificent work in our lives and speaking of this to others. This is all true and necessary, but it seems today Christians stop short. The Lord God of Israel also wants to anoint us to think! The Holy Spirit of God and the mind are not our enemies. The Lord enables us to think and this is just as important and necessary for us as believers as the need to proclaiming the gospel. Remember the war that we are in is within the mind. This is why the Lord gave us the command to not spread false rumors. *Chizkuni on Shemot / Exodus 23:1 Parts 1 and 2* states, "לא תשא שמוע שוא, 'do not spread false rumours' the expression תשא from the root נשא, 'to carry,' is used here as 'carrying by mouth;,' another

*example of the same expression being used in a similar context is found in Psalms 16,4: ובל אשא את שמותם על שפתי אל תשת ירך, “so that their names will not pass my lips.” In other words: ‘let me not utter a lie.’ It follows automatically that you must not join him in giving false testimony.”* This is also connected to following the crowd as Sforno on Shemot / Exodus 23:2 Part 3 states, *“לנטות אחרי רבים, do not be influenced by the fact that the majority thinks differently from you. Assuming that in a trial 10 of the 23 judges had expressed the view that the accused was innocent whereas eleven had expressed the view that the accused was guilty,”* Notice the emphasis here on how important it is not to have deceit in the recesses of the heart (lies) and to not join hands with the wicked. This is true because of who we are called to be and the spirit of God dwelling within us empowering us to righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. The Lord God in heaven sent His son to set us free from the slavery of sin, and to establish in our lives righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth as a people who are redeemed. We are not slaves to unrighteousness but to the Messiah, and in being so, we are slaves to righteousness and truth.

In last weeks Torah Portion (Yitro) we learned the commentary *Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot / Exodus 18:1 Part 5* connects the resurrection to obedience to the commandments. The rabbinic commentary relates on the importance of the Torah for our lives when the rabbis say: *“This is why the portion ואלה המשפטים follows the giving of the Torah to signal to us that resurrection and eternal life will be for those who observe the commandments spelled out in that portion. It is worth noting that when Daniel 12,2 refers to that day in the future he mentions the word אלה twice in that verse. The proximity of our portions is to be understood in terms of Isaiah 46,10 מגיד מראשית אחרית “who foretells at the beginning what the end is going to be like.” By commencing פרשת משפטים with the word ואלה, the link between Torah legislation, observance and resurrection as mentioned in Daniel is established.”* The rabbis speak of a link between the Torah, obedience to the commands, and the resurrection. These things are connected because the mitzvot (commandments) are part of the sanctification process, of setting us apart as holy unto God for His glory in order to bear His testimonies. When the God

of Israel revealed Himself to us, He did not simply give us a systematic theology, creeds, recipes, or diagrams. The Torah is not simply just a set of rules as is taught in the church today. The Lord God gave us a way to know Him and His ways where each mitzvah brings a fresh revelation of who He is. He did not give the laws of the Torah just to tidy up human society. Each mitzvah (commandment) communicates a piece of divine revelation, a piece of godliness into His people. The Torah is more than just a set of rules for governing human behavior. The laws of the Torah reflect the Lawgiver Himself. This is revealed to us by what Yeshua said in *Luke 6:45*, “*out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.*” When we humble our lives to walk in God’s Ways according to His word, we are speaking from the overflow of our heart. When the Lord God spoke to His people at Mount Sinai, He spoke from the fullness of His heart. Each commandment, no matter how small or seemingly irrelevant, communicates a piece of revelation from God, which is an overflowing of His heart.

The opening verses in this week’s Torah portion, Parashat Mishpatim, begin with regulations on slavery. The Torah considers slavery something significant enough to talk about. How might these verses relate to us today? Remember in Parashat Bo, the Lord God of Israel told Moshe that He *הִקְבִּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבָבוֹ* “*glorified (hardened) Pharaoh’s heart,*” suggesting that the Lord God Almighty helped to facilitate the strengthening of pride in Pharaoh’s life. The hardening in part was to show forth the power of God where hardening is the neglect (absence) of a repentant heart and is connected to the self glorification of our own hearts. When we consider the way in which the Lord led the people out of Egypt, where Egypt is a type of physical and spiritual bondage, everyone today is a slave to something. We are either slaves to sin (to unrighteousness), or slaves to the Lord God in heaven (to righteousness). Remember, being a slave to sin has both physical and spiritual aspects. The same goes for one who is a slave to the Lord God in heaven. For example, the writers of the Apostolic Writings willingly declared their status as slaves to the Lord. Paul opens his letter to the Romans by referring to himself as a “*slave of Yeshua the Messiah*” (*Romans 1:1, Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ*) and his letter to Titus by calling himself a “*slave of God*” (*Titus 1:1, Παῦλος δοῦλος θεοῦ, ἀπόστολος δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*

κατὰ πίστιν ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ καὶ ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας τῆς κατ' εὐσέβειαν). James opens his epistle the same way saying, “James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1, Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ **δοῦλος** ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ χαίρειν). Most translations write “servant” or “bond-servant” in these passages, however the Greek word *doulos* (δοῦλος) is translated, literally as “slave.” The buying and selling into slavery is as real today in both the physical and the spiritual sense, as it was back in the day the Lord delivered His people from Mitzrayim (Egypt). In *John 8:34* Yeshua tells the Pharisees, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave (δοῦλος) of sin.” When we think of the analogy of a slave and his master, the point is that a slave obeys his master because he “belongs” to him. A slave has no will of his own. A slave is in bondage to his master. This is a significant point because when sin is our master, we are unable to resist it. The Scriptures in the Torah portion state, כ  
: 21:2 *If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. (NASB)* Moshe makes the point that the Lord does not want us to be in slavery all of our lives. One of the fundamental teachings about the Messiah, is in the Lord equipping us to overcome the power of sin. Do you have this power in your life today? This is why Paul wrote what he did in *Romans 6:18* saying, “You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” (ἐλευθερωθεντες δε απο της αμαρτιας **εδουλωθητε** τη δικαιοσυνη) This is the purpose of the Torah as it is related to Teshuvah (Repentance) to turn from sin, to overcome sin, to walk in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth, and to seek the Messiah. As we are enabled to live for the Lord in the Messiah, the Spirit of God dwells in our midst, and it is by the power of God that we are able to resist sinning and thus “being made slaves” (εδουλωθητε) to righteousness. This means the children of God obey Him and live in freedom from habitual sin. We can do this because Yeshua has set us free from the slavery of sin (*John 8:36*) paying the redemption price. This is how these things found in the Torah portion are related to us today. The question is “have you sold yourself to sin?” or “have you sold yourself to righteousness?” When we commit ourselves as followers of the Messiah we are committing ourselves to growing and maturing in our

faith by reading, studying, and putting into practice God's Word each day. We are also committing ourselves to spending time in prayer with Him and to serving Him by serving others. When we do these things, we will find ourselves more and more able to stand against and resist sin in our lives. Let's discuss this further in this week's Torah portion.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 21:1-6*.

### ***Shemot / Exodus 21:1-6***

*21:1 'Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them: 21:2 'If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. 21:3 'If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. 21:4 'If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master; and he shall go out alone. 21:5 'But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the door-post. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. (NASB)*

א וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תָּשִׂים לְפָנֶיךָ: ב כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד  
עִבְרִי יָשׁ שְׁנָיִם יַעֲבֹד וּבְשִׁבְעַת יֵצֵא לְחֻפְשֵׁי חָנּוּם: ג אִם-  
בְּגִפּוֹ יָבֵא בְּגִפּוֹ יֵצֵא אִם-בְּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא וַיִּצְאָהּ אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמּוֹ:  
ד אִם-אֶדְנִי יִתֶּן-לוֹ אִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדָּה-לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת הָאִשָּׁה  
וַיִּלְדֶּיהָ תִהְיֶה לְאֶדְנֶיהָ וְהוּא יֵצֵא בְּגִפּוֹ: ה וְאִם-אָמַר יֹאמֵר  
הָעֶבֶד אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶת-אֶדְנִי אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת-בָּנָי לֹא אֵצֵא חֻפְשִׁי: ו  
וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶדְנָיו אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל-הַדָּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה  
וַרְצַע אֶדְנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וַעֲבָדוֹ לְעֹלָם:

The Torah portion speaks of the Hebrew slave and a limitation being placed upon a slaves debt of servitude. Moshe also speaks of the man coming and going with or without a wife. The master who gives his slave a wife, may be paralleled to the one who receives a believ-

ing wife from the Lord. Based upon the context in the Torah, the text suggests to leave the master is to leave the faith. This seems to be the context based upon *Shemot / Exodus 21:5-6*. One does not take a believing wife and cause her to become unbelieving. From this context, the unfaithful servant leaves but his wife remains faithful. A faithful servant however may choose to remain with his master as the Scripture states, הַאִם-אָמַר יֹאמֵר הָעֶבֶד אֶת-אֲדֹנָי אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת-בְּנֵי לֹא, אֵצֶא חֲפְזִי: וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֲדֹנָיו אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל-הַדֶּלֶת אוּ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה: 21:5 *‘But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’ 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. (NASB)* The concept here is the man who chooses to remain faithful goes to the Mezuzah (הַמְּזוּזָה) and blood is shed on the Mezuzah (the door post) which contains within it a portion of the Torah Scroll indicating a covenant agreement being made between the servant, the master, and the Lord God of Israel. Notice how the door post (mezuzah) and the Torah scroll, suggests this house is founded upon God’s Word! How deep is that when we consider the Scriptures from a Torah context?

The rabbis comment upon this week’s Torah portion in the following way.

### ***Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 21:3 Part 2***

כִּי תִקְנֶה *IF THOU BUYEST [AN HEBREW SERVANT]*  
 — *This means an Hebrew servant whom thou hast bought from the hand of the court which sold him for a theft which he had committed, as it is said, (Exodus 22:2) “if he (the thief) have nothing, then shall he be sold for his theft”. Or perhaps this is not so, but Scripture is referring to the case of one who sells himself as a servant on account of his destitution, whilst he who has been sold by the court for his theft shall not go free at the end of six years! This assumption is erroneous, for when Scripture states, (Leviticus 25:39:40) “and if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and he sells himself unto thee ... [he shall serve thee unto the*

*year of jubilee]”, it is plain that in this passage there is mentioned the case of one who sells himself on account of his destitution. How then must I explain כִּי תִקְנֶה in this verse? Obviously as referring to him who was sold by the court (Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 21:2:1).*

Rashi speaks of slavery being imposed upon a person due to their sin of stealing. The consequence of sin results in the forcing of one into servitude to pay the debt. A person may be put into bondage in order to pay back what they have stolen. Note how sin has the capacity to force one into slavery against his will. Such a person does not necessarily go free after the six years in this form of slavery. The Scriptures also speaks of one selling himself due to his destitution. The idea is that for the one who sells himself into slavery due to being poor, he will go free after six years. The one who is sold due to sin (stealing) he will not go free until he has paid all that he owes. These Scriptures speak to us in the sense of both physical and spiritual bondage. One may be caught in habitual sin and then may labor all his or her life and not find freedom without the help of the Lord. Notice how studying the Rabbis tends to bring these points out in the Torah text.

*Daat Zkenim 21:2 on shemot / exodus 21:2 part 1* undertakes the discussion on the meaning of the verse from the Torah portion on whether this is in reference to a person who is being sold into slavery by the state due to his sins (stealing) or whether this is due to one taking it upon himself to become a slave in order to pay back his debts. It is interesting to understand these contrasting aspects in the commentary, the one who is sold due to sin and the other due to his being poor. The one who is sold due to sin is at the mercy of his master to the extent of his debt being paid. When one sins, one is at the mercy of his master where sin has no mercy but always requires more and more from its slave. On the other hand, the one who willingly becomes a slave in order to pay back his debt due to being poor, the commentary states, *“He is to be released at the end of that period, and his master is to provide him with a minimal stake to enable him to establish himself economically from that point.”* This is a very important conclusion, as we who serve the greatest Master of all, our Creator and Yeshua the Messiah, how much more will He deliver us, set us free, and provide us



with a minimum stake to enable us to establish ourselves in faith and to overcome sin!

The purpose of the Torah is to give God's people direction in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. When we fall short in living up to the mitzvot (commands), the descriptions of the tabernacle and the sacrifice leads us to seek the Lord God in heaven, to repentance, to turn from our sins, and to seek the Messiah, the One whom the Lord brought to deliver, provide atonement, and pay the redeemer's price on our behalf. All of these things are deeply rooted within the context of a Torah centric life. The Torah was given so God's people would bear witness to the testimonies of God. The process of bearing witness was not intended to lead to the death of the witness, although it is known from ancient writers (e.g. Josephus) and from the Apostolic Writings that witnesses often died when bearing the testimony of God. We are commanded by God to not let sin reign in our bodies, obeying its lusts, but instead we are to present ourselves to Him as instruments of righteousness (*Romans 6:12-14, 12:1-3*). This is why the Torah was given in order to understand what it means to be an instrument of righteousness. In *Romans 6:16-18* we are told that we are slaves to the one we obey, either in obedience to sin or in obedience to righteousness. We are to be enslaved to God from whom we not only receive the gift of sanctification and eternal life, but also the empowering of our lives to overcome sin for the specific purpose of the separation and sanctification of our lives in a practical way for the glory of God. We do this because the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Yeshua the Messiah our Lord (*Romans 6:23*).

These concepts may be illustrated from the Midrash on Tehillim 111, Part 1 which states, *Then They that love Him (God) will be as the sun when he goes forth in his might*. This is very significant in relation to Yeshua's words in the parable of the sower.

***Matthew 13:37-43***

*13:37 And He said, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, 13:38 and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; 13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is*

*the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 13:40 'So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 13:41 'The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, 13:42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 13:43 'Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (NASB)*

Note how the enemy sows wicked men in the midst of God's people. These wicked men hinder the righteousness of God's people. Once the unrighteous have been identified, Yeshua speaks of a time when the Lord will send His angels forth to gather out all of the unrighteous men and cast them into the fire which he calls a "*place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" Then God's people, the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He concludes with "*He who has ears, let him hear*" speaking of those who have understanding. To have understanding requires effort to study God's word and to put God's word into practice. If we are not putting God's word into practice, we have no understanding (see *Mishley / Proverbs 6:32*). The issue of believing a theology as opposed to believing in God's Word is related to putting into practice what God wants for our lives. The Theology would say "*just believe and that is all you got to do...*" Spiritualizing what God wants for us. This parable speaks of realizing the methods of the enemy and the importance of being good seed, growing in the kingdom of God, seeking His face, and continually looking to serve the Lord and to draw near to Him. This presupposes the hearts desire to turn from sin (Teshuvah) and to seek for the Lord to help with doing so. Being His people, we are told the following in the midrash:

*Then also, the Holy One blessed be He, will heal the breach of His people, as is said In that day the Lord binds up the breach of His people. How will He heal? By casting down the wicked on the day of great slaugh-*

*ter. How many of them will there be? Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision (Joel 4:14). What is meant by decisions? It means that whoever is then cast down, his doom is decided. Scripture says also, And the slain of the Lord will be at that day for one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth (Jeremiah 25:33). Yet we did not realize how many of them would be until David came and said, He that is enrobed with the names of the martyred dead will spread doom among the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 110:6). Streams will flow from the blood of the wicked, and birds will come to drink out of each brook of blood, for it is said, He will drink of the brook in the way.*

The Lord healing the breach of His people is said to be by the casting down of the wicked. Healing comes by the removal of wickedness from the midst of God's people. How is this considered healing? This is related to healing not only the wickedness that may be within, but also may be a comment related to whom we keep as friends, or what we take into our bodies through our eyes and our ears? Consider what Yeshua said in *Matthew 6:19-24*.

***Matthew 6:19-24***

*6:19 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 6:20 'But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 6:22 'The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 6:23 'But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 6:24 'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (NASB)*

Yeshua says that the eye is the lamp of the body and the objective is to keep the eye full of light (righteousness) as opposed to darkness (unrighteousness). The point is if we are looking towards sin, our bodies will be filled with it, and we know that sin functions as a merciless master over the person who is involved in it. Yeshua says that such a person will be governed by two masters, and such a person will love the one and despise the other using the example of God and money. The midrash relates the healing of the people to the casting down of the wicked and then asking the question, “*How many of them will there be? Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision (Joel 4:14).*” The rabbis then ask “*What is meant by decisions?*” and respond saying “*It means that whoever is then cast down, his doom is decided.*” This is a very important comment. The reason being is found in the context of what Yeshua wrote in *Matthew 7*.

### ***Matthew 7:18-23***

*7:18 ‘A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 7:19 ‘Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 7:20 ‘So then, you will know them by their fruits. 7:21 ‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter 7:22 ‘Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 7:23 ‘And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ (NASB)*

Yeshua said *7:21 ‘Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter (NASB)* Taking this into consideration of what the rabbis say in the midrash, how “*whoever is then cast down, his doom is decided.*” What may be suggested here is the one who has an eye (body) filled with sin, he does not know that he is on the path of unrighteousness (note *Mishley / Proverbs 6:32*). These people claim

to have cast out demons and performed many miracles in the name of the Lord. The response however is *'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'* Those who do not study and put into practice the ways of God are the one's he is speaking of. Consider these things we have been studying today. On average, there is at most a 10% involvement in church ministry by those who attend. Why do you think there is so little involvement in churches today? This is because most people simply believe a theology (just believe in Jesus) as opposed to believing what the Word of God teaches (to have faith and to be *"faithful"*). When we do not listen and obey, both the land and our lives will become a desert waste. The Lord's hand is required for sustaining life and this is the significance of walking in God's ways, because if we are not doing so He will not know whom it is He is walking beside. If we are not striving to walk in God's ways, he will say *"depart from Me you who practice lawlessness!"*

The midrash states that the Lord reveals his counsel to His servants. The apostle Paul wrote that he knows how difficult it can be to not live in sin because he struggled with sin even after he became a follower of the Messiah. This is important for all of us to know. In the Messiah we are set free from the penalty of sin, however we still live in the presence of sin while we are alive on this earth. For this we give thanks just as the midrash is stating, *"I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, with my whole heart, and not with a divided heart."* By drawing our lives to be in line with His word, we will not have a divided heart, but a unified heart with the truth of God's Word, just as Paul wrote in *Romans 7*,

***Romans 7:14-25***

*7:14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 7:15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.*

*7:16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.*

*7:17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is pres-*

*ent in me, but the doing of the good is not. 7:19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 7:20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 7:21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 7:22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 7:23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 7:24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 7:25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. (NASB)*

Notice how Paul says that he was sold into bondage to sin. He was sold, this is different than what we read in Parashat Mishpatim where one would sell himself due to his destitution and the need to help pay his financial debts. Paul writes that he agrees with the Law (7:16) because he does the things he does not want to do, meaning that he sins. He reiterates this saying, *7:19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. (NASB)* Paul writes of the Torah being substantiated by the spirit, in his heart his desire is to live an obedient life, and in the body, there is a different law that desires sin. The midrash states that *“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, I will pour My spirit upon your seed, and My blessing upon your offspring; and they will spring up among the grass, as willows by the watercourses (Isaiah 44:2-4). And they will require no one to teach them. For One will say, I am the Lord’s; and another will call himself by the name of Jacob (Isaiah 44:5).”* The Lord has this plan to send His Spirit to His people. The way we can be free from the power of sin is by the power of God’s Spirit which is given to His people who live for him by faith in the Messiah (see *Ephesians 1:13-14*).

When the God of Israel gave Moshe the pattern of the Tabernacle with all its furnishings on the mountain of Sinai, He was very detailed and precise in the manner in which it was to be constructed. On the

one hand, when we read *Shemot / Exodus 25* we see a picture of the ark of the testimony and its precise construction, realizing that the specific details were related to the spiritual life of His people. The deeper meaning is in the application of the Torah in the sense of repentance, turning from the ways of sin to the way of the Lord, and bearing His testimonies. The Lord provided us a way to repent and turn, and in doing so, the Lord leads us daily in our lives. The Lord wants to reach all men through His people as His testimony, where the linking factor for the Jew and Gentile is the Messiah Yeshua. It is in the power of God's Holy Spirit that enables us and strengthens us to bear God's testimonies. We do not bear God's testimony merely by speaking the word of God but by our whole being, all of who we are! We are to live out His testimonies, and this is the meaning of "*He who does the Lord's work will be clothed in glory and majesty, as is said, His work is glory and majesty (Tehillim / Psalms 111:3).*" This is what it means to live for the Lord in the Messiah, the Spirit of God dwells in our midst, and it is by the power of God that we are able to resist sinning and thus "*being made slaves*" (εδουλωθητε) to righteousness. The children of God obey Him and live in freedom from habitual sin. We can do this because Yeshua has set us free from the slavery of sin (*John 8:36*) paying the redemption price. When we commit ourselves as followers of the Messiah we are committing ourselves to growing and maturing in our faith by reading, studying, and putting into practice God's Word each day. We are also committing ourselves to spending time in prayer with Him and to serving Him by the way we serve others. When we do these things, we will find ourselves more and more able to stand against and resist sin in our lives. Those who are destined for the Olam Haba (world to come) are not those who simply give lip service to the name of Jesus. Those who are destined for the world to come are those who put into practice their faith. When we say we have something in our hearts, it will invariably come out in the way that we live our lives. This is most significantly demonstrated in the way that we treat our spouses (*husband and wife interactions*). If one says he or she has love for his spouse, but treats the spouse with hatred, that thing that is claimed to be in the heart (love) is a lie. Our relationship with our spouses has a direct correlation to our relationship with the Lord God our Father in heaven and Yeshua His Messiah. It does not matter how

much one does or is involved in the church, if one does not treat his or her spouse with respect and love, they are as Paul wrote, a sounding gong (*1 Corinthians 13:1*) where all that one does is worthless. The reason being, it is easy to put on a show in public, it is difficult to show real unconditional love in private and with the ones who are most close to us (family). This is what it means to live for the Lord in the Messiah, the Spirit of God dwells in our midst, and the power of God in our lives. Do you have the power of God moving in your life as we read according to the Scriptures?