

פרשת
צו
Parashat Tzav

*Vayikra / Leviticus 6:1-8:36, 1 Samuel 15:1-34,
Mark 7:31-8:38*

**The Torah causes us to Seek
God's Victory for our Lives**

In this week's Torah portion, comparison of the English translation (NASB) to the Masoretic Text (Ginsburg's) reveals a discrepancy between the numbering system that is used. In the English translation, the Torah portion begins in Parashat Vayikra as compared to the Masoretic Text saying, *5:19 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: נפש כי תחטא ומעלה מעל ביהוה וכחש בעמיתו בפקדון או עשק את-עמיתו או-בתשומת יד או בגזל או עשק את-עמיתו או-מצא אבדה וכחש בה ונשבע על-שקר על-השקט על-האדם לחטא בהנה או-מצא אבדה וכחש בה ונשבע על-שקר על-השקט על-האדם לחטא בהנה והיה כייחטא ואשם— והשיב את-הגזלה אשר גזל או את-העשק אשר עשק או את-הפקדון אשר מצא או את-האבדה אשר מצא או את-הגזלה אשר גזל או את-העשק אשר עשק או את-הפקדון אשר מצא או את-האבדה אשר מצא* *5:20 When a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by dealing deceitfully with his fellow in the matter of a deposit or a pledge, or through robbery, or by defrauding his fellow, or by finding something lost and lying about it; if he swears falsely regarding any one of the various things that one may do and sin thereby— והיה כייחטא ואשם— והשיב את-הגזלה אשר גזל או את-העשק אשר עשק או את-הפקדון אשר מצא או את-האבדה אשר מצא* *5:22 when one has thus sinned and, realizing his guilt, would restore that which he got through robbery or fraud, or the deposit that was entrusted to him, or the lost thing that*

he found, או מכל אשר ייִשבע עליו לשקר ושלם אתו בראשו וחמשתיו יסף
5:23 or anything else about which he swore falsely, he shall repay the principal amount and add a fifth part to it. He shall pay it to its owner when he realizes his guilt. ואת־
5:24 Then he shall bring to the priest, as his penalty to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, or the equivalent, as a guilt offering. וכפר עליו
5:25 The priest shall make expiation on his behalf before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for whatever he may have done to draw blame thereby. (Note, this is the correct numbering scheme based upon the Masoretic text. The English bible starts at 6:1.) In the Masoretic Text, Parashat Tzav begins in English at 6:8 *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:9 ‘Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law for the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall remain on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. 6:10 ‘The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. (NASB)* The source of this discrepancy is found in the Septuagint (LXX, Greek Translation). The Greek translation follows this new numbering scheme as opposed to what we find in the Masoretic Text. This illustrates for us how significantly the Bible translators relied upon the Greek translation of the Bible. I am not certain why a different numbering scheme was chosen, the Masoretic text describes being deceitful against a neighbor as synonymous to being deceitful to God is connected to may be related to what Moshe is saying in *Vayikra / Leviticus 5. Ibn Ezra on Vayikra / Leviticus 5:21 Part 1* interprets saying, “*a breach of faith in God by doing something wrong to his fellow man.*” Have you ever considered the way we treat others is an offense to God Himself? Rashi states the following on *Vayikra / Leviticus 5:21 Part 1*, “*IF A SOUL SIN [AND COMMIT FAITHLESSNESS AGAINST THE LORD] — R. Akiva said, What is the force of בַּיהוָה here, where it does not speak of betraying “holy things of the Lord” as in v. 15, but of betraying one’s neighbor? Because whoever lends or borrows money or does business*

with another, does it as a rule only in the presence of witnesses or by a document, therefore when he repudiates the matter, he repudiates the witnesses or the document; but he who deposits something with his neighbor does not wish any living soul to know about it except the Third Being (God) who is between them; therefore when he repudiates the deposit, he is repudiating the Third Being who is between them (Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Chovah, Chapter 22 4).” Rashi is describing our responsibility before God when dealing with men. Not only do we need the Lord’s help to overcome sin in our lives, we need His help for all that we do even to the maintaining of our relationships with others. This dependence upon the Lord is why we read so often of our own weaknesses as opposed to the Lord’s strength and His ability to strengthen us. *Midrash Tehillim 137 Part 7* illustrates man’s weakness and the Lord’s strength. Because of the sin of the people, the Lord’s hands were tied and then the people went into slavery, into exile. The Apostle Paul wrote that he had a thorn in the flesh (*2 Corinthians 12:7*), it made Paul weak and he had prayed about the matter three times asking the Lord to remove this thorn. The Lord said however, *“My grace is sufficient for you”* (see *2 Corinthians 12:8-9*). The power of God is made known in the weakness of man. This point is to keep us on our knees before God in prayer. Note how the Midrash shows Daniel praying and speaking to the Lord concerning the end of days (*yamim*) verses the power of the right hand (*yamin*) of God. The Lord gives us various gifts and strengths, but He also created us in weakness in order to cause us to walk in His ways, to seek His help, and to get on our knees before Him. Following through on the manner in which we were created, our having dependence upon the Lord, only then will we be able to do all things through him that strengthens us! The point appears to be centered upon the power of God in the lives of His people. This moving and working of God in our lives is said to be apparent before all nations and all peoples and to the ends of the earth. Note though that we are to love one another as a testimony before men and God. The victory is the Lord’s and we should count ourselves thankful for having a part of that victory by witnessing the power of the Lord God and His Messiah in our lives!

In Parashat Tzav, the Lord speaks to Moshe in the following way, *6:24 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:25 ‘Speak to Aaron and*

to his sons, saying, *‘This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the Lord; it is most holy. 6:26 ‘The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting.* (NASB) In this week’s Torah portion we are told of the significance of the Khatat (הַטָּאֵת) Korban (קָרְבָּן) being killed in the same place as the Olah (הֶעֱלֶה) Korban (קָרְבָּן) and of the priests consuming a portion of the sacrifice to bear the iniquity and to make atonement. This week’s study illustrates for us the need to seek God’s anointed one. The purpose of the sacrifice, based upon the context of the Torah, was to remind us to have a life that encounters God at every turn. We begin with blood, which consecrates, and symbolizes the life of the sacrifice that makes atonement. This daily encountering of the Lord God in heaven is the reason why we are called to seek His Messiah Yeshua. Atonement is what draws us nearer to the Lord in Heaven. The notion of being near to the Holy One of Israel, connects the idea of prayer with that of the freewill offerings. The reason being, both prayer and the freewill offerings serve as a means to this objective of the willful desire to draw near. Regarding the first verses in the book of Vayikra / Leviticus we are told, *“When any of you presents an offering to the Lord.”* (Vayikra / Leviticus 1:2) Jewish commentators have asked *“Why is it called korban (קָרְבָּן), an offering?”* The reason is because the person brings his soul close (drawing near, קָרוֹב) to his Maker, and Rashi remarks here that this refers to the freewill offerings. The idea is that within the sacrifice is the service of the imagination. The laying on of hands on the animal, sensing its life, and then seeing it being killed and having its warm blood smeared on the altar. The significance of this is found in the anointing of the priests, making sacred with the blood, anointing the ear, the thumb, the big toe, which is synonymous to making sacred (the setting apart) what one hears, what one sees, what one touches, and how we touch the lives of others. In the sense of Aaron and his sons, their lives were given as a gift to both God and the people. This is experienced every time they put their hands on a animal. Note that according to the Apostolic Writings, we are all priests and kings in God’s Messiah Yeshua. If we are to consider the sacredness of our lives in the Messiah, how can we make sacred what we hear, what we touch, and how we walk in this world so that our lives are a vehicle of aware-

ness of the Lord God in this world to others? In regards to the sacrifice, Jeremiah spoke of *“obedience but not sacrifices.”* (*Jeremiah 7:22 ‘For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. 7:23 ‘But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.’ NASB*) Jeremiah speaks of what we do, it is not just about externalities (the sacrifices). It goes much deeper than this. In the dialogue between the Lord God and man, *“God speaks to each man through the life He has given him and in the way in which the Lord upholds him.”* In addition, the way in which man responds to Him is with his whole life *“in the way he lives it.”* The Jewish teaching of the unity and oneness of God corresponds to this teaching of the oneness and the all-inclusiveness of life in our relationship with the Lord. The Lord gives man not merely spirit but success and existence in all its parts, from the lowest to the highest. Man’s partnership with God cannot be confined or reduced to merely *“spiritual”* attitudes, or to *“devout feelings”* as modern theologies teach saying *“No”* to the Torah. Our relationship with God requires all of our lives, in all its aspects and relationships. Man can have no real part in the holiness of God without the sanctification of his every-day life by what he does. The history of the interactions between Judaism and Christianity have led Christians to the conclusion that the rabbinic teaching of merits in Judaism are an attempt to buy off God in order to earn one’s salvation. Having a closer look at Judaism discloses the fact that Judaism is opposed to the so-called *“religion”* of meriting eternal life. The rabbis teach of the sacredness of the life of the believer in the commands that God has given us. At the center of all these things from a Torah context is the need to seek God’s anointed one for atonement before our Father in heaven. This week’s Torah portion illustrates this need and why it is necessary to seek our Father in and through His Messiah Yeshua.

This week we are looking at *Vayikra / Leviticus 6:8-30.*

Vayikra / Leviticus 6:8-30

6:8 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:9 ‘Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law for

the burnt offering: the burnt offering itself shall remain on the hearth on the altar all night until the morning, and the fire on the altar is to be kept burning on it. 6:10 'The priest is to put on his linen robe, and he shall put on undergarments next to his flesh; and he shall take up the ashes to which the fire reduces the burnt offering on the altar and place them beside the altar. 6:11 'Then he shall take off his garments and put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a clean place. 6:12 'The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it. It shall not go out, but the priest shall burn wood on it every morning; and he shall lay out the burnt offering on it, and offer up in smoke the fat portions of the peace offerings on it. 6:13 'Fire shall be kept burning continually on the altar; it is not to go out. 6:14 'Now this is the law of the grain offering: the sons of Aaron shall present it before the Lord in front of the altar. 6:15 'Then one of them shall lift up from it a handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil and all the incense that is on the grain offering, and he shall offer it up in smoke on the altar, a soothing aroma, as its memorial offering to the Lord. 6:16 'what is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a holy place; they are to eat it in the court of the tent of meeting. 6:17 'It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it as their share from My offerings by fire; it is most holy, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. 6:18 'Every male among the sons of Aaron may eat it; it is a permanent ordinance throughout your generations, from the offerings by fire to the Lord. Whoever touches them will become consecrated.' 6:19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:20 'This is the offering which Aaron and his sons are to present to the Lord on the day when he is anointed; the tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. 6:21 'It shall be prepared with oil on a griddle. When it is well stirred, you shall bring

it. You shall present the grain offering in baked pieces as a soothing aroma to the Lord. 6:22 'The anointed priest who will be in his place among his sons shall offer it. By a permanent ordinance it shall be entirely offered up in smoke to the Lord. 6:23 'So every grain offering of the priest shall be burned entirely. It shall not be eaten.' 6:24 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:25 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the Lord; it is most holy. 6:26 'The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. 6:27 'Anyone who touches its flesh will become consecrated; and when any of its blood splashes on a garment, in a holy place you shall wash what was splashed on. 6:28 'Also the earthenware vessel in which it was boiled shall be broken; and if it was boiled in a bronze vessel, then it shall be scoured and rinsed in water. 6:29 'Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy. 6:30 'But no sin offering of which any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place shall be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. (NASB)

In Parashat Tzav, the Lord tells Moshe, 6:25 *'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This is the law of the sin offering: in the place where the burnt offering is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the Lord; it is most holy. 6:26 'The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. (NASB)* The significance of the Khatat (חַטָּאת) Korban (קֶרְבַּן) and of the priests consuming a portion of the sacrifice to bear the iniquity and to make atonement is no small matter. What is further confounding, is in relation to Jeremiah's words which state the following, *Jeremiah 7:22 'For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. 7:23 'But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you*

will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you. (NASB) Jeremiah speaks of “*obedience but not sacrifices,*” and records the Lord saying that He did not command our fathers or bring Israel out of Egypt concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. This is confounding in the sense to what we are learning in this week’s Torah portion. The reason being, Parashat Tzav provides in great detail the ritual of the sacrifices and the point and purpose of atonement. Jeremiah speaks of the weightier matter, that what we do is not just about externalities (the sacrifices). Our life and relationship with God goes much deeper than simply the sacrifice. The point is if we all did what was right, there would be no need for the sacrifices as listed in these Scriptures. But because we do sin, the Lord God in heaven provided a way for atonement and the forgiveness of sin. The Torah teaches us that Lord God of Israel is involved in the inner-workings of our lives in the sense that, “*the Lord speaks to each man through the life He has given him and in the way in which the Lord upholds him.*” And, the way in which man responds to the Lord is with his whole life “*by the way he lives his life.*” Paul wrote to the Corinthians and the Ephesians saying, *2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (ESV) Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man (ESV) 2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (ESV)* The idea is that we are being renewed inwardly by the Spirit of God. This inward renewal is part of our own personal observations of the Lord working in our lives to remain faithful to His word, to remaining in the Word of God and living our lives with the help of the Spirit of God. These things are coupled to our faith in the Messiah Yeshua. Does your life demonstrate these things?

Rashi has the following to say concerning *Vayikra / Leviticus 6:19* (corresponding to the English translation: *6:26 ‘The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. NASB,* יט הכהן הממטיא אתה יאכלנה במקום קדש תאכל (בתצר אהל מועד):

Rashi on Vayikra / Leviticus 6:19, Part 1

המחטא אתה means the priest who performs those rites connected with it (i. e. those connected with the sprinkling of the blood), he is called the מחטא because it is through him that it becomes a sin-offering.

Note the interpretation of *Vayikra / Leviticus 6:19*, the priest is to perform the ritual connected to the Sin Offering. Rashi states we are to consider the way the Hebrew text is written, ט הכהן המחטא אתה, 6:26 'יאכלנה במקום קדש תאכל בקצר אהל מועד: *The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. (NASB)* (Note the English and Hebrew translations verse references diverge a little based upon the editors choice in numbering the chapter:verse.) So Rashi looks at the Hebrew word המחטא where the mem (מ) functions as a preposition meaning “from.” The interpretation follows the way this is written with a preposition, that “it is through him (the priest) that this offering becomes a sin-offering.” The concept that is being brought forth from the rabbinic commentary is that a sin offering only because a sin offering through the priest that functions on behalf of the person and the sacrifice. This illustrates why the Apostolic Writings so emphasizes the need to believe in Yeshua for atonement and the requirement of sacrifice. Simply praying to our Father in heaven asking for forgiveness, without a high priest to make the sin sacrifice to effectively “become a sin-offering” there will be no atonement and no forgiveness.

Rashi seems to bear this out in part 1 and part 2 of his commentary: *Part 2, אתה המחטא אתה יאכלנה THE PRIEST THAT OFFERETH IT MAY EAT IT — i. e., the priest who is fitted to carry out the rite (so that the words denote: Any priest who may offer it as a sin-offering may eat of it; they do not refer to that priest alone who offered it). Thus there is excluded a priest who is unclean (and therefore unfitted) when the blood is sprinkled — that he has no share in the flesh. One cannot say that Scripture here forbids the eating of it to ANY priests (i. e. even to clean priests) except him who sprinkles the blood, because, you see, it is stated later on (v. 22), “All the males among the priests may eat thereof” (cf. Zevachim 99a).* Note the significance of the priestly role

in bring atonement on our behalf. Rashi describes the priest that is “fitted” to carry out this rite suggesting that it is not just any priest that is given this task to make an offering to become a sin offering and to make atonement. The priest must be clean and not unclean. This is illustrated in the instruction to eat the sacrifice in a holy place (6:26 *The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place, in the court of the tent of meeting. NASB*)

Ibn Ezra has the following to say on *Vayikra / Leviticus 6:19*:

Ibn Ezra on Vayikra / Leviticus 6:19

The kohen who purges denotes the one who dashes the blood — i.e., the one who purges the sinner of his sin. Many commentators have translated this verb in the sense of “to wash”, or “to render ritually pure” (as in, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be purified” [Psalms 51:9]).

Ibn Ezra recognizes the priest who is fitted to carry out this rite is the one who purges the sinner of his sin. This is why the Torah directs us to seek God’s anointed one. The purpose of the sacrifice, based upon the context of the Torah, was to remind us to have a life that encounters God that is found within the ritual of atonement. The blood consecrates, and symbolizes the life of the sacrifice that makes atonement on our behalf. This leads us to daily encounter the Lord God in heaven by our faith in His anointed one, Yeshua the Messiah.

It was mentioned earlier regarding the history of the interactions between Judaism and Christianity have led Christians to the conclusion that the rabbis teach our merits are an attempt to buy off God in order to earn one’s salvation. As we study the Midrash on the Psalms, the rabbis appear to speak of something more than the merit of a physical act. One must look a little deeper at the interpretations of the rabbis, else one may think this is what the rabbis are teaching. Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5 however illustrates something deeper where the rabbis are teaching something more deeper in the context of meriting (earning) one’s salvation. The midrash opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying, *“Another comment on When Israel came forth out of Egypt, Through what merit did the children of Israel come forth*

out of Egypt?” This statement draws with it the concept of salvation from slavery in the sense that Israel merited her deliverance. What was the merit that Israel had performed that led to her deliverance? On the topic of salvation, Christianity maintains that all men are doomed to sin, and everyone will go to everlasting hell unless they accept Jesus as their savior. Judaism on the other hand does not hold to that belief. Judaism teaches that we are not doomed or damned at birth meaning that we are not doomed or fated to sin (and destined for hell). The Torah says, *“If you do good, won’t there be special privilege? And if you do not do good, sin waits at the door. It lusts after you, but you can dominate it.”* (*Bereshit / Genesis 4:7*) The Lord God Himself was speaking to Cain in regard to sin. The basic premise of the Torah text is that you can do good, and if you do, things will be better for you. If you do not do good, sin wants to be partners with you. But you can control sin, you can control your evil desires, and you can do what is right. We all have free will, and that is what Judaism teaches, because that is what the Torah teaches. The Torah does not teach and nowhere in God’s Word does it state that we are *“born in sin,”* or that we are *“fated to sin.”* This is simply a product of Christian theologies. This is supported by the fact that the Apostle Paul wrote we were created for righteous works (*Ephesians 2:10*). Paul believes that we have the ability to choose to do what is right. This concept of being born into sin, taught in the theologies of Christianity, has been confused with our own imperfections in the sense that though we choose to do good, there are times when we fail to do so. This does not cause fault with the Law of God but with ourselves as sinful creatures. Modern theologies would have you believe that the Law has failed and so the Lord had to do something else (something new). Paul wrote *“all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”* (*Romans 3:23*). He did not write that the Law of God has failed. Nowhere do the Scriptures state that the Law of God has failed. It is mankind that fails, the Law of God according to Paul is righteous, holy, and true (*Romans 7*). The midrash states in the homiletic introduction, *“Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6).”* The idea here is that Israel relied upon something other than good works for

their deliverance from bondage, slavery, and sin. It was the blood of the sacrificial lamb that merited their deliverance.

The rabbis say, *“Rabbi Judah taught, Through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and of the blood of the circumcision, as is said, I said unto you when you were in your blood, live; yes, I said, unto you when you were in your blood, live (Ezekiel 16:6).”* Rabbi Judah concludes that it was through the merit of the blood of the Passover Lamb and the blood of circumcision that merited Israel’s deliverance. It is interesting to point out that Rabbi Judah is providing some tension in the text by coupling circumcision to the Passover lamb. It is important to consider and figure out what he is trying to say concerning circumcision because circumcision was not a part of the Passover festival. In fact, the Torah describes the people as not being circumcised, at the end of the Torah as not having circumcised their own children. (see *Joshua 5:2*) What is it about circumcision that Rabbi Judah is trying to make in his statements about the merit of the Passover lamb? It could be that this is related to having a repentant heart in the sense that without a circumcised heart (Repentant), the blood of the lamb would not merit anything. According to the midrash, Rabbi Nehemiah taught the following:

Rabbi Nehemiah taught, Through the merit of the Torah which they were to receive, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And all the people saw the thundering (Shemot / Exodus 20:15) at the giving of the Torah. So too, you may learn from another passage in which Moshe is told When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve God upon this mountain (Shemot / Exodus 3:12). (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)

The idea here is that the reason the Lord delivered His people was so that He could give them His Torah (instructions) at the mountain of Sinai. The people were brought to the mountain for the purpose of serving God in the way that He wants to be served by the way that His people live their lives. The reason the Lord delivered the people was due to His mercy, and so His word would be fulfilled (His word would

come true). According to the midrash, Rabbi Joshua taught the following:

Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, Through the merit of the Tabernacle, which the children of Israel make, or it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said, And Moshe saw all the work (Shemot / Exodus 39:43) of the Tabernacle. So too, you may learn from another passage in which God says, I that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them (Shemot / Exodus 29:46) that is, with the stipulation that I dwell among them. (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)

Rabbi Joshua taught that it was for the reason of the Tabernacle that Israel was brought out of Egypt. This is an interesting comment because it parallels the concept of God's dwelling in our midst. The Lord delivers His people so that He can dwell in their midst. The Lord gives His people His instructions to live by so that He can dwell in their midst. The stipulation for the Lord delivering His people, was so He could dwell in their midst, not so they could go out and continue in sin. Have you ever thought about that considering anything that may be going on in your life? Do you seek deliverance, healing, or some other mighty work of God in your life? If the Lord would bring this into your life, how would it effect your relationship with the Lord or with others? What about sin that may be in your life? Will it cause you to turn from sin or will you continue in your sin regardless of what the Lord does for you? Remember Yeshua's words when he said in *John 5:14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you."* (NIV)

According to the midrash, Rabbi Eliezer taught the following:

Rabbi Eliezer son of Jacob taught, Through the merit of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, for it is said, And God saw the children of Israel (Shemot / Exodus 2:25), and then it is said of Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, When Jacob sees his children, the work of My hands, in the

midst of him, that they sanctify My name, yes, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob (Isaiah 29:23). What children are alluded to in When he sees his children? Those children in whom was no blemish (Daniel 1:4), who sanctified God's name in the fiery furnace. (Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5)

Rabbi Eliezer refers to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, three faithful men who were thrown into a furnace because of their faith in the Lord God of Israel. The Lord delivered them and preserved them in the midst of the fire that was so hot, the guards who threw them into the furnace died due to the heat. This interpretation is also important, because it speaks of deliverance in the context of living a faithful life, just as the midrash states *“When Jacob sees his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him, that they sanctify My name, yes, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob (Isaiah 29:23).”* Note how Jacob sees the work of God's hands in the lives of his children. The Lord helps His people remain faithful.

Midrash Tehillim 114, Part 5 concludes saying, *“Rabbi Abba son of Kahana taught, Through the merit of the generation of Isaiah, of which it is said, his children, the work of My hands, in the midst of him (Isaiah 29:23). Now when David saw on account of how many merits the children of Israel came forth out of Egypt, he began to sing in praise of the exodus from Egypt, Praise the Lord. When Israel came forth out of Egypt.”* Rabbi Abba taught that it was for the merit of a future generation in the time of Isaiah the prophet that Israel was delivered from Egypt. The idea here is that God's promises are brought to pass for the sake of the past, present, and future generations.

Having a closer look at Judaism discloses the fact that Judaism is opposed to the idea of meriting eternal life. The rabbis teach of the sacredness of the life of the believer in the commands that God has given us. At the center of all these things from a Torah context is the need to seek God's anointed one for atonement before our Father in heaven. This week's Torah portion illustrates this need and why it is necessary to seek our Father in and through His Messiah Yeshua. The idea provided to us in these Scriptures and the interpretations of the midrash speak about our faith being coupled to our actions. This is illustrated

here in the concept of merit, where we are called to actively seek and live our lives for the Lord. The act of being successful in living is not what produces merit. It is the observation of our hearts having the right motivation to live for the Lord in Righteousness, Holiness, Justice, and Truth which demonstrates not only how the Lord is working in our hearts, but also our love for the Lord and what He has done for us. If we say that we have faith in Yeshua, and are not motivated to live for Him according to God's Word, can we say what Yeshua has done has been subjectively appropriated to us? The only way to receive the benefit of the Messiah's life, death, and resurrection, is by abiding in Him which means we are putting our trust in him and determining our hearts and lives to seek the Lord on a daily basis. The concept here that is taken from Parashat Tzav is that our faith is demonstrated by our willingness to obey God's Word and to turn from sin. Sure we all fall short of doing so. This does not cause fault with the Law of God but with ourselves as sinful creatures. The point is, we were created for righteous works. If our lives demonstrate the lack of trying there is a much a much deeper spiritual problem taking place that may be related to a one believing in a theology as opposed to what is actually being taught in the Scriptures. When it comes to salvation and faith in the Messiah Yeshua, if you do not have a deep desire to live your life for Him and to bring glory to His name, this would suggest there is a deadness of the spirit. If you find this happening in your life, get down on your knees and prayer, and ask the Lord to help created in your heart a deep desire to truly, and honestly seek Him and His ways, and to turn from sin in the Messiah Yeshua. Then, get up and determine your heart to serve the Lord, and do what it takes to turn from sin as best that you can. (Note what the author of Hebrews stays in *Hebrews 12:4 You have not yet resisted to blood, striving against sin. NASB*) At the center of all these things from a Torah context is the need to seek God's anointed one for atonement before our Father in heaven. Without a high priest to make the sin sacrifice "*become a sin-offering*" there will be no atonement and no forgiveness. These Scriptures coupled with the rabbinic commentaries appear to drive this point forward and is the reason why the Apostolic Writings so emphasize faith in Yeshua the Messiah as our high priest before our Father God in heaven!