

פרשיות אחרי אמר / Parashat Emor

Shabbat Iyar 15, 5769, May 9, 2009

32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d

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Proclaiming the Moedim and the Messiah!

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 21:1-24:23

הפטרה: Ezekiel 44:15-44:31

הברית: 1 Peter 2:4-10

החדשה

10 In the early part of the tenth century Ben-Asher (בן-אשר, ב"א) and Ben-Naphtali (בן-נפתלי, ב"נ) were two rival textual critics engaged in the redaction of two rival recessions of the Hebrew bible in which each furnished the vowel-points, accents and their own Masorah. Hebrew grammarians have theories on the vowel-points and accents as developments of the respective systems of Be-Asher and Ben-Naphtali. The variations between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali occur in the vowel-points such as the Dagesh, Raphe, the Metheg (Gaya) and the accents, and there are some instances where the two textual critics differ in the consonants and textual readings (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 26:23, Yeshayahu / Isaiah 30:23, and Yermiyahu / Jeremiah 27:19*, etc). Ginsburg notes, in Parashat Emor, in his Masorah that Ben-Naphtali would connect two words with a raised horizontal stroke called a maqqef and place a gaya under the first word. Biblical manuscripts written in the period preceding the rise of the printing press were categorized as belonging to either Ben Asher or Ben Naphtali tradition. In this week's reading we find one such difference between these two redactions of the

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25 Hebrew text in *Vayikra / Leviticus 23:2* and *23:4*.

ויקרא 23:1-4

כַּג וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 2 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם מִקְרָאֵי
 3 קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים הֵם מוֹעֲדֵי: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶה וּבַיּוֹם
 הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ כָּל־מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ
 שַׁבַּת הוּא לַיהוָה כָּל־מוֹשְׁבֵי־כֶסֶם:
 4 אֱלֹהִים מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה מִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֹתָם
 5 בְּמוֹעֲדֵם: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּאַרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר לַחֹדֶשׁ בֵּין
 הָעַרְבִים

v. 28 ס"א או ובלא מקף. v. 29 ס"א וכי תביר ובלא מקף. v. 29 ס"א תזבחהו וכן ח"ש.

ח"א כ"ו, ת"ע ות"ס. כג. v. 2, 4 ב"א חושף אֲשֶׁר־עַם תִּקְרְאוּ בלא געיא, ב"ג אֲשֶׁר־

v. 5 ס"א עשר יום וכן ח"ש, ת"ע ות"ר. בגעיא.

Vayikra / Leviticus 23:1-4

23:1 The Lord spoke again to Moses, saying, 23:2 'Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The Lord's appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations My appointed times are these: 23:3 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the Lord in all your dwellings. 23:4 'These are the appointed times of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them. (NASB)

Ginsburg notes the difference in the rival recessions of the Hebrew bible in the Masorah between Ben-Asher and Ben-Naphtali.

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30 The criteria for distinguishing the differences between these two traditions
have been the subject of much argument. Both schools are quite close to one
another having identical readings for the majority of words. Ginsburg points out
that “it is the presence of the metheg or gaya which constitutes fully nine-tenths of
35 the differences” between Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali. The use of the
accentuation deals with the development of vocalization and a system for marking
the text to help with the vocalization during reading of the text. Masoretic studies
though have difficulties with the placement of the gaya in the various Masoretic
40 texts between the different schools and remain today with unresolved problems.
Now the details of vocalization, accentuation, and placement of the gaya is not
something I want to discuss rather I wanted to point out that there are differences
in opinions between the various Masoretic texts within the tradition in which we
have received the scriptures. Just as there are differences in traditions in the
45 transmission of the Hebrew bible, this week we find another interesting feature on
differences in opinion over this section of verses between Christians and
Messianic believers. The difference in opinion isn’t one of textual criticism but
over the topic of the Shabbat and the Moedim (appointed times). The celebration
of the appointed times has gone relatively unnoticed in the Tradition of the
Christian Church which I believe is a tragedy for believers today. Let’s begin by
looking at how Moshe is instructed to proclaim the moed of HaShem.

כַּן וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם מוֹעֲדֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־תִּקְרְאוּ אֲתֶם מִקְרָאֵי
50 קֹדֶשׁ אֵלֶּה הֵם מוֹעֲדֵי: שְׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מִלְאֲכָה וּבַיּוֹם

Vayikra / Leviticus 23:2 ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘The Lord’s appointed times which you shall proclaim as holy convocations My appointed times are these:

55 In אשר-תקראו we find the variance between the schools of Ben Asher and
Ben Naphtali on accentuating the relative pronoun אשר. The relative pronoun in
English is “who,” “that,” and “which.” The relative pronoun introduces a relative
clause that modifies a noun. In Hebrew, the word אשר functions as the relative
60 pronoun. The form of this word never changes meaning it does not inflect to
indicate gender and number of its antecedent (the noun it is modifying). In our
text this week the relative pronoun אשר appears with the maqqef and means
“which shall read.” The NASB chose to render this “which shall proclaim.” G-d
is instructing Moshe to proclaim the moed of HaShem (the appointed times of
65 HaShem). But what is a moed? The word “moed” implies a holiday, a yom-tov.
If this is a holiday as we understand it why doesn’t Parashat Emor use the Hebrew
word “Chag” (holiday) in its description of the holidays? Furthermore, is it a
coincidence that the word “moed” is also used in the phrase “Ohel Moed”
describing the “Tent of Meeting” which is the Mishkhan (Tabernacle)?

70 The Hebrew word “moed” stems from the root “וָעַד” to meet. The
Mishkhan is called the “Ohel Moed” (Tent of Meeting) and it is in the Tent of
75 Meeting Beni Yisrael (the children of Yisrael) would “meet” with HaShem. In a
similar manner the moedim are designed for us to set aside special times during
the year to meet with HaShem. Parashat Emor emphasizes the aspect of the
80 holidays with that of the relationship between HaShem and man. The importance
of the moedim is illustrated by Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi) on *Vayikra /
Leviticus 23*. Rashi in his commentary gives us an asked and answered question.
“Why is the subject of the Shabbat juxtaposed to the subject of the festivals?” He
then answers: “to teach you that whoever desecrates the festivals is considered as
he desecrated the Shabbat days.” Rashi is focusing upon the importance of the
mitzvah to proclaim the moedim and to observe the moedim. In the Torah, there
are three major moedim which HaShem requires all to appear before him and are
called the Shalosh Regalim:

85 **The Shalosh Regalim (Three Pilgrimage Festivals, שלוש רגלים)**

1. Chat HaMatzot (Pesach)
2. Shavuot (feast of weeks, pentacost)
3. Succot (tabernacles)

90 I would like to also note something further in *Vayikra / Leviticus 23:4*.
The text says “*these are the appointed festivals of HaShem, the callings of
holiness, which you shall designate in their appointed time.*” Notice here, the
Shabbat was established by HaShem but the moedim are to be designated in their
95 time. The Shabbat is outside of the category of the appointed times and thus
provides us with the reasoning behind Rashi’s interpretation on the placement of
the Shabbat to that of the call to keep the moedim (the appointed times).

We choose to celebrate the appointed times because HaShem gave them as
an appointment to meet with Him. Only in Parashat Emor is there emphasis on
the proclaiming of the appointed times over against the various mitzvot “observe
100 the Festival of Matzot” or “observe the month of aviv” which appear in Parashat
Mishpatim, Ki Tissa, and Re’eh. Beginning with the Shabbat, the first holy day
revealed in the Scriptures, we also have Pesach, Unleavened bread, Firstfruits,
Shavuot, Rosh HaShannah (Trumpets), Yom Kippur, and Succot. Let’s look at
each festival to see their significance:

105 **Pesach (Passover):** Pesach (Nisan 14) falls in the March/April time frame
on the Gregorian calendar. *Leviticus 23:5* “*In the first month, on the
fourteenth day of the month, between sundown and complete darkness,
comes Pesach for ADONAI.*” This feast celebrates the deliverance of
110 Yisrael from Egypt; the story of redemption through the killing of the
Pesach Lamb whose blood was to be applied to the doorposts of their
houses, an act which would spare their firstborn from the Tenth Curse
against Pharaoh. HaShem promised that the Angel of Death would “pass
over” those houses with the blood on the doorposts, and spare the first
115 born (*Shmot / Exodus 12:1-13*). Within the Torah here we find a messianic
expectation on Yeshua, HaShem's "Pesach Lamb," who fulfilled Pesach

when he was crucified and willingly allowed His own blood to be shed on our behalf in order to become our atonement redeeming us from the bondage of sin.

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Hag HaMatzot (Unleavened Bread): Celebrated on Nisan 15, it marks the beginning of a seven day period during which the eating of leavened Bread is forbidden as leaven is a symbol of sin (see *1 Corinthians. 5:6-8*). This moedim is a foreshadowing of Yeshua the Messiah in making us righteous before the Father in Heaven (*Romans 6:4, 2 Corinthians 5:21*).

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Yom HaBichurim (Firstfruits): Yeshua fulfilled Yom HaBichurim in the resurrection, the Firstfruits of Creation (*1 Corinthians 15:20-23*). Celebrated on Nisan 16, Firstfruits occur during the March/April timeframe. This Feast celebrates the bringing of the firstfruits of the winter harvest to the Beit HaMikdash (Temple in Jerusalem) indicating there would be more to come. Note that the first three Feasts were fulfilled through the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah!

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Shavuot (Feast of Weeks): Shavuot or "Pentecost" the Feast of Weeks is celebrated during the May/June time period. *Shemot / Exodus 34:22 "Observe the festival of Shavuot with the first-gathered produce of the wheat harvest, and the festival of ingathering at the turn of the year."* The Torah directs the seven-week "Counting of the Omer" (beginning on the second day of Pesach and culminates in 49 days as the festival of Shavuot). The counting of the days and weeks convey anticipation of and desire for the giving of the Torah. In other words, at Pesach, Yisrael was freed from their lives of slavery in Egypt; and 50 days later on Shavuot they accepted HaShem's Torah, a covenant relationship, which made them a nation committed to serving G-d. The Feast of Shavuot was fulfilled by the coming of the promised Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) on the disciples of Yeshua. It represents the beginning of the body of believers on Earth, in which the believers are redeemed through the blood of Yeshua the Messiah according to the Torah and are lifted up before ADONAI and set apart as holy (see *Acts 2, John 14:15-18, Ephesians 2:11-22*).

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Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets): Rosh Hashanah marks the New Year and the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve and their first actions toward the realization of man's role in the world. This is the time in which the first sin was committed and then the resulting repentance and atonement offered by HaShem himself on behalf of Adam and Eve. This Feast on Tishri 1 falls in the September/October time period. *Vayikra / Leviticus 23:23-25 ADONAI said to Moshe, "Tell the people of Isra'el, 'In the seventh month, the first of the month is to be for you a day of complete rest for remembering, a holy convocation announced with blasts on the shofar. Do not do any kind of ordinary work, and bring an offering made by fire to ADONAI.'"*

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165 **Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement):** Celebrated ten days after Rosh
Hashanah; represents the need for the sacrifice/sin offering that must be
made for the sins of the nation. Yeshua was that Sacrifice. Yom Kippur
is celebrated on Tishri 10, this Feast falls in the September/October
months. *Vayikra / Leviticus 16:29 tells us: "It is to be a permanent
170 regulation for you that on the tenth day of the seventh month you are to
deny yourselves and not to do any kind of work, both the citizen and the
foreigner living with you. For on this day, atonement will be made for you
to purify you; you will be clean before ADONAI from all your sins. It is a
Shabbat of complete rest for you, and you are to deny yourselves. This is a
permanent regulation."*

175 **Succot (Feast of Tabernacles):** Succot is 7 days long; Yeshua the
Messiah was born during the Feast of Succot and not on the 25th of
December. Succot serves as a reminder of the days in the wilderness
when HaShem's people were forced to reside in tents or temporary
180 dwellings. Succot is celebrated on Tishri 15, this Feast falls in the
September/October months. The festival is outlined in *Devarim /
Deuteronomy 16:13-15*, where HaShem tells the Yisraelites: *"You are to
keep the festival of Sukkot for seven days after you have gathered the
produce of your threshing-floor and winepress. Rejoice at your festival,
185 you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the L'vi'im
(Levites), and the foreigners, orphans and widows living among you.
Seven days you are to keep the festival for ADONAI your God in the place
ADONAI your God will choose, because ADONAI your God will bless you
in all your crops and in all your work, so you are to be full of joy!"*

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Looking at at the various moedim (appointed times) G-d commanded us to
celebrate in their designated times do you notice any special features about these
festivals? There is a close connection between the festivals, Yeshua the Messiah,
195 and the messianic expectation/foreshadowing of what was to come. Without a
Jewish cultural background or understanding, it is easy to miss out on the
meaning of scripture as Yeshua lived out its fulfillment here on earth. When
Yeshua returns the unity of G-d, the Torah, and Yisrael will be restored on the
earth. It is then many nations will come and say "Come and let us go up to the
200 mountain of the Lord, to the house of the G-d of Jacob. He will teach us His
ways, so that we may walk in His paths." The Torah will go out from Zion, the
word of the Lord from Jerusalem. This is the richness of our faith.

205 Tradition and/or customs can be either good or bad. Have the traditions or
lack of traditions you hold today taken away from the significance of the meaning
of scripture? One of the questions that arise when we begin to see the beauty of
the Biblical festivals is whether they are for believers today? Modern day
believers schooled in seminary are taught that the festivals are "merely shadows"
of the person and work of the Messiah Yeshua and that with His coming they are
no longer needed. But what do the scriptures say about the place of the moedim
210 in the life of G-d's people? G-d's loving instructions given to us in the Torah are

215 given to teach us what honors Him. Remember, the primary purpose of the Torah
is “teaching” not “law.” Celebrating the cycle of the moedim we discover what it
is like to live life according to G-d’s schedule rather than our own. We can honor
G-d by taking time on the days of His moedim and focusing upon the lessons He
intends to teach us. In doing so we learn to fashion our lives according to His
ways while placing Him at the center of our lives, this as a whole enables us to
reflect the awesome glory of the Lord.

220 Heavenly Father,

225 I thank you for your words of truth which help me to understand the love
you have for me. Thank you for revealing to me the Messiah Yeshua within the
moedim you established according to your Torah. Help me Lord to continue to
grow deeper in the knowledge and understanding of Yeshua. I want to apply
what I have learned to my life in order to bring glory and honor to your name.

230 In Yeshua’s name I pray. Amen.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

255 הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever