

פרשת שמיני / Parashah Shmini

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32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
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G-d's Holiness and Our Holiness

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Leviticus 9:1-11:47
הפטרה: 2 Samuel 6:1-7:17
הברית: Hebrews 7:1-19, 8:1-6
החדשה

10 Last week, the celebration of Passover was a very important and holy holiday that memorializes the night when the faithful of Yisrael were protected by the blood of the lamb. The Passover is a significant time that is marked in three distinct ways. First, it looks to the past, instructing believers to remember and to show forth the Messiah's death and resurrection by this observance. Second, it focuses upon the present in which the Messiah Yeshua meets with His people to strengthen them in their sanctification. Third, it looks to the future, to the hope of our reunion with the Messiah in heaven were we will participate in a banquet feast that is described in the Scriptures as the feast of the Lamb and His bride. In this week's reading from the Triennial cycle, *Leviticus / Vayikra 11:1-47*, the Scriptures detail the animals which are clean and unclean that is fit to be eaten known as the dietary laws. The question that always comes to mind while reading these portions of scripture is that if G-d is holy as the scriptures state, how much of what I do in my life reflects the holiness of the Lord I serve? The way we worship the Lord that are detailed in the Scriptures, the reality of the incarnation (Yeshua, the Word become flesh) and Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection (Passover), we realize that ultimately there is a holy purpose for our lives, one day we will dwell with G-d, hence the reason and need for our salvation from sin.

ויקרא 11:44-47

44 וּנְמִמֹתֵם בָּם: כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְהִתְקַדְּשִׁתֶם
וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ אֶת־
45 נַפְשֵׁיכֶם בְּכָל־הַשָּׂרָץ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: כִּי אֲנִי
יְהוָה הַמֵּעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהוֹת לָכֶם
46 לְאֱלֹהִים וְהִייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי: זֹאת תּוֹרַת
הַבְּהֵמָה וְהָעוֹף וְכָל נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת בַּמַּיִם
47 וְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ הַשָּׂרָצָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ: לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַטָּמֵא
וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר וּבֵין הַנֹּאכְלֹת וּבֵין הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא
תֹאכַל:

Vayikra / Leviticus 11:44-47

11:44 'For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 11:45 'For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.' 11:46 This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, 11:47 to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten. (NASB)

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The chief moment of time in Jewish history is marked by the remembrance of the Exodus from Mitzrayim (Egypt) through the Passover holiday. G-d (HaShem) instituted an annual feast to celebrate the miraculous act of the redemption of Yisrael from Egypt. For us today, observance of Passover is done so to celebrate G-d's redemption of Yisrael and to celebrate the life and redemptive work Yeshua has done for us.

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The Torah of G-d is often considered to be the law of the Old Testament applicable only to the Jews and of no relevance for ecclesia (church) today. This is the primary reason for the church choosing to celebrate Easter instead of Passover. According to the Scriptures, holiness is a very large part of our lives as children of G-d and that the celebration of Passover instead of Easter is one of the ways we may honor G-d in His Word (the Scriptures) and live a holy life before him. In fact, Paul's statement in *Romans 3:19* *Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; (NASB)* shows the universal application of G-d's Torah to all people since it is by the law that every mouth will be closed and we will be accountable to G-d. The question though is how does this relate to G-d's holiness and our holiness? A. W. Tozer wrote this about G-d's holiness *"We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God's holiness is not simply the best we know, infinitely better. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. Only the Spirit of the Holy One can impart to the human spirit the knowledge of the holy."* The Scripture in *Romans 3:19* relates to G-d's holiness by realizing that the meaning of sin begins with an understanding of the holiness of G-d. It is with G-d that we gain our understanding on what sin really is. The problem we face today is that sin is differentiated in our minds between what we consider sacred or holy and what we consider profane or secular (i.e. Passover versus Easter). This distinction is clearly seen in history, such as the Canaanites and their idol worship. What they saw as holy for their gods (prostitution that was centered in their fertility religion), the Almighty creator G-d (the G-d of Yisrael) called an abomination. Sin is defined by a person's concept of who G-d really is. If G-d is loving, easygoing, and a pushover whose love for man overrides His own holiness, then the people who worship and serve Him will live and respond in conjunction with that belief. If a person believes that a loving G-d would never send someone to an eternal torment in hell for their sins, then their life and actions will most likely reflect it. Rabbinic Judaism teaches in the *Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashanah* that three books are opened in heaven, the book of life, the book of the dead, and the book of the intermediate. This teaching suggests that G-d weighs the good and the bad upon a balance, and if the good outweighs the bad, then one will go to heaven. Do you see a problem with this type of reasoning? The point is that our concept of G-d determines our response to G-d and our response to His Word (the Scriptures). What one considers holy determines how one will live. Essentially no person will live their life beyond his or her concept of who G-d really is in their

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understanding of His holiness. (Note that this is also why it is very important to study the Bible in order to gain a deeper understanding on the holiness of G-d.)

80 The difficulty that presents itself for us now is centered upon how we understand the holiness of G-d. Our understanding of the holiness of G-d determines whether we serve the True G-d of the Bible, or a false god of our own imagination. G-d is the standard by which we determine what is holy and what is to be considered sin. We serve a holy G-d who defines Himself and His holiness in the Scriptures and is the One whom Yeshua prays saying “Holy Father,” and who has revealed himself as *“light in whom is no darkness at all.”* In light of the 85 Torah, the life of Yeshua, and our relationship with G-d, it is clear that our holiness is derived from a relationship with G-d and the indwelling of His Ruach (Spirit). Thus, the holiness that is lived out in one’s life is done so to the extent to which one is reflecting the nature of the One True G-d. Having G-d’s Ruach (Spirit) indwelling us, we should be reflecting His holiness in our lives right? On 90 the other hand, sin is committed to the extent that one has departed from the holy character of G-d.

R. C. Sproul said *“People are uncomfortable in our presence, not because we are so holy, but because we represent the One who is.”* Sproul is talking about his being a minister of G-d and how people behave around him. The 95 knowledge of a man being a minister makes people uncomfortable, how much more so should our understanding of G-d and His holiness affect the way we live our lives? How should our knowledge of the holiness of G-d affect the way we interact with and share our faith with others? Now, consider the dietary laws that are listed for us in our reading for this week (*Vayikra / Leviticus 11:1-47*) what do 100 you think we should do with those?

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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