

RE'EH – “Behold, See”

DEUTERONOMY (D'VARIM 11:26 – 16:17)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In this section Moses addressed laws that deal with:
 - The Sanctuary.
 - Distinguishing worship of God from the nations.
 - Prohibition against heathen methods of worship.
 - Clean and unclean things.
 - Tithes, Year of Release, firstborn, etc.
 - Three principal feasts.
2. Concerning the Sanctuary it is made clear that, once in the Land, sacrifices are to be offered only at the Sanctuary
3. In this portion, Moses plainly states the choice of whether to obey God's commands or not is the equivalent of choosing between life and death – blessing and curse.
4. Our experience on earth boils down to two choices – two paths.
 - a. This is first demonstrated in the beginning:
 - b. Tree of Life or Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
5. In this portion, God sets the same choice before Israel – obedience and blessing; disobedience and curses.
 - a. Inherent in keeping the commands is blessing.
 - b. The logical result of going the other way – away from blessing – is curse.
6. It is not to say that God curses the disobedient; the disobedient curses himself.
 - a. Bil'am could not curse Israel because God had blessed.
 - b. Yet, Israel brought death upon themselves by their disobedience.
7. Adam doesn't “die” because God determined to kill him; Adam “killed” himself when he disobeyed.
 - a. Something inherently evil and deadly was in the forbidden fruit.

CHAPTER 11: BLESSING AND CURSE

1. Verse 26: “Behold or see” –is the Hebrew *r'eh* ראה.
 - a. Footnote: This is believed to be the root word for *Moriah* מריה.
 - b. Also related to the word *moreh* מורה or “teacher.”
2. Rabbis contend the pronouncement to occur on Gerizim and Ebal was not about the future.
3. One can “see” that those who obey Torah are blessed with prosperity and peace.
 - a. It becomes obvious to all who observe – they can “see” it.
 - b. God placed a distinction between Israel and Egypt – the difference was “seen.”
4. “Set before you a blessing and a curse” – the choice is yours to make.
5. Most people are content to be average – not too good but not too bad.
 - a. Stay away from the extremes: *kadosh* קדוש as opposed to *k'deshah* קדשה.
 - b. The view these two positions from the middle which is “mixed.”
 - c. This is where most people live – lukewarm, Laodicea.

6. Therefore, any extreme regardless of which end of spectrum is considered “extremist.”
 - a. Usama bin Ladin as opposed to the two witnesses.
7. “And the blessing, if you shall hearken” – if you שמע *sh'ma*.
 - a. Blessing comes only if you hear.
 - b. Consequently, “hear” is a metaphor for “blessing.”
8. The center of balance is located in the ear – where we “hear.”
 - a. If we are to stand upright and walk straight we must “hear.”
 - b. When we hear, we are to do and observe His commands.
 - c. This will result in blessing.
9. Noted in rabbinical commentary is the belief that, in the future, all will come to understand that hearing is equivalent to blessing.

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.”

– Amos 8:11

10. Doesn't say a famine for the word but a famine for “hearing the words.”
 - a. Today people hear so many things and most of it is a “mixed message.”
 - b. Secular world preaches “tolerance” and churches fall in line with this message.
 - c. Many refuse to teach what the Word says regardless of consequence.
11. Mankind will learn to discern what is really important to hear.
12. This is connected to the purpose of the manna in Deut. 8.

“So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”

– Deuteronomy 8:3

13. The word “hunger” is רעב *re'av* or “famine”; purpose of hunger was to teach physical bread is not what man needs most; we need the bread from heaven – the Word of God.
14. Verse 28: “And the curse, if you do not hearken” – if you do not שמע *sh'ma*.
 - a. If you stop up your ears or if they get infected, you can't stand upright or walk straight.
 - b. This will lead to going after “other gods” – a rejection of the true God.
 - c. Not hearing equates to idolatry and the curse.
15. The word used here for “curse” is from root קלל *kalal*.
 - a. Meaning is “to diminish in substance; lessen material things.”
 - b. Inferring that the first evidence of the “curse” is substance will diminish.
 - c. Related word is קול *kol* or voice: refusing to hear His voice results in קלל *kalal*, curse.
16. Verse 29: The blessing and curse is to be pronounced on Gerizim and Ebal on the other side of Jordan – two prominent hills in the natural center (heart) of Canaan.
17. Gerizim גרזים comes from root *garaz* which is “to cut off,” thus “cuttings.”
 - a. Something separated from main “tree.”
 - b. The mount of blessing and is near *Sh'khem* – place where Joseph's bones will be.
 - c. Joseph was “cut off” but was doubly blessed.
18. Ebal עיבל believed to be “bald, bare or stony” (as in heart?).
 - a. In the heart of the land, a choice has to be made – blessing (Gerizim) or curse (Ebal).

19. Verse 30: Describes them as being “against Gilgal beside the terebinths of Moreh.”
 - a. Gilgal גלגל means “circle or wheel” and from root גלל *galal* – “roll, rotate, circuit.”
 - b. Footnote: This word is where Galil or Galilee comes from.
 - c. Interesting that mountains are near Gilgal (“circuit”) and Moreh (“teacher”).
20. “Terebinths of Moreh” refers to the oak tree at Sh’khem where Abram stopped when he first entered Canaan.
21. When Abram entered the land, it was promised to him and to his seed.
 - a. By entering the land where Abram first entered the land, they are being taught.
 - b. Things are coming “full circle.”
22. Genesis 12 mentions “blessing” and “curse” as well.
 - a. It also mentions a place called Ai (Gen. 12:8) which will later be a defeat for Israel.
 - b. In Judges 7, Israel will lose the battle of Ai (Ayin) because Achan didn’t *re’eh*.
 - c. He failed to see that blessing only comes from “hearing” and “doing.”
 - d. Only curses and death comes from failing to “see” this.

CHAPTER 12: CENTRAL SANCTUARY IN THE LAND

1. These commands are specific where Moses had before spoke in general terms.
 - a. These commands have special relevance to the Land of Israel.
2. Verse 1: “Which you shall observe in the land” – only in the land.
 - a. Yet, is not logical that, in some cases, the principles still work outside the land?
 - b. e.g. *sh’mittah*.
3. Verse 2: “You shall utterly destroy” – all the idols, altars etc.
 - a. Make sure they do not return.
 - b. The *asherah* trees were not merely cut down, but dug up by the roots.
 - c. Notice that pagans in America congregate in mountainous or scenic areas.
4. This one of the commands that pertains only to the Land.
 - a. Notice Paul did not destroy the idols he encountered on Mars Hill in Athens.
 - b. To the contrary, he utilized their acknowledgment of the “Unknown God.”
 - c. Not that he advocated the idol but that he used it to make a point.
5. “You shall destroy their name out of that place” – still speaking of within the Land.
 - a. Rabbinical commentary states: destroy the idols and don’t pronounce their proper name.
 - b. This would mean that *ba’al* is not necessarily a proper name – it is generic.
6. *Ba’al* בַּעַל in verb form means “to be master, to marry.”
 - a. As a noun it means “husband, master.”
 - b. Genesis 20:3 – Abraham is referred to as *ba’al* (husband).
7. So in case of *ba’al*, verse can’t mean not to say *ba’al*.
 - a. *Ba’al* was a generic term adopted by certain cultures as a title for their god.
 - b. Context would mean everything – likewise when it comes to title “God.”
8. So, what does this verse mean to say? *Shem* denotes “authority.”
 - a. Stamp out and destroy anything that suggests these gods have any authority or validity.
 - b. Profaning the name of the Creator has more to do with authority than pronunciation.
9. Verse 4: “You shall not do so unto the LORD.”
 - a. Not to worship on “high mountains and under every green tree” but in Sanctuary.
 - b. Some contend this means that we are not to erase the Name or destroy a stone of altar.
10. Some commentary extends this to mean, not to commit sins that would cause exile.

- a. Exile would allow “holy places” to be desecrated and destroyed.
 - b. i.e. the Temple, Jerusalem before 1967, Joseph’s tomb.
 - c. This would go back to the idea of ignoring His authority.
11. Verse 5: “But the place where He puts His name, even His habitation you shall seek.”
- a. “The place” (Heb. המקום *ha’makom*) refers to Jerusalem, the Temple Mount.
 - b. However, that would come later – tabernacle would be in Shiloh.
 - c. The *mishkan* stood here, in the province of Ephraim, for 369 years.
 - d. Was destroyed by Philistines in time of Eli and his corrupt sons.
 - e. Prophetic footnote: “Resting place” was in Ephraim, fell and rebuilt in Jerusalem.
12. On one level, this is to say that Israel was to worship only in places designated by God.
- a. He used prophets to express the proper place to Israel until Temple built.
 - b. e.g. the altar on Mount Ebal.
 - c. The average person was not to determine a place to worship.
13. The Sanctuary in Jerusalem – a centralized location – provided for united national life.
- a. Splintered, the people would be more likely to “go after other gods.”
 - b. Jeroboam strengthened the division between two kingdoms by setting up altars.
 - c. This hastened their exile.
 - d. This accentuates the importance of the restoration of David’s Tabernacle.

“On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages (breaches); I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old.”

– Amos 9:11

14. This is to say, He will reunite the two divisions and restore the “kingdom unto Israel.”
- a. One flock under one shepherd – one people under one King, the Messiah.
 - b. “The place” – *ha’makom* – also hints at this in Genesis 22.

“Then on the **third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw **the place afar off.**”**

– Genesis 22:4

15. This occurs “on the third day” – Hosea 6:2 predicts restoration on “the third day.”
- a. Third Day strongly points to the Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom.
16. “The place” is *ha’makom* is a rabbinic “name” for the Creator – He is everywhere.

“If I ascend up into heaven, you are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, you are there.”

– Psalm 139:8

17. “Afar off” is מרחק *merachok* – not only in distance but in time.
- a. Commentaries suggest that he not only saw the place Isaac was to be offered.
 - b. He saw into the future – they say that Jacob would come to this place.
 - c. Y’shua said, “Abraham saw my day and rejoiced.”
18. Abraham saw that God would provide Himself a “lamb.”
- a. Consequently, he called the place YHWH *yireh* (Heb. יהוה יראה).
 - b. *Yireh* יראה comes from the same root as does ראה *re’eh*.
19. “His habitation” (Heb. לשכנו *l’sikhno*) – from same root as *mishkan* – “indwelling.”
- a. His presence completes the house – ultimately in Messianic era.

CHAPTER 12: PROHIBITION AGAINST PRIVATE ALTARS

1. Verses 8-9: “You shall not do all that we do here this day...for you have not come to the rest.”
 - a. Until the Sanctuary was built in Jerusalem, private altars were permitted.
 - b. This was obvious in the day of the Judges.
 - c. Footnote: Elijah repaired “altar of God” that had been broken down.
2. Some commentators believe this was to refer specifically to years between entry and Shiloh.
3. Quote from Stone’s Edition of Chumash, page 1001.

“When there was a Temple or central Tabernacle – as in the Wilderness, Shiloh, and Jerusalem – it was forbidden for an individual to erect a private altar. When no such Sanctuary existed, there would still be a national altar for communal and required personal offerings, but individuals were permitted to erect altars of their own. Such was the situation, for example, during the fourteen years before Shiloh, when there was a national altar at Gilgal, and after the destruction of Shiloh, when there were national altars at Nob and then at Gibeon; during those periods, individuals had the right to erect private altars...But on your private altars, ‘you shall not do everything that we do here today [i.e. you are forbidden to bring every kind of offering on a private altar].”

4. The purpose for this statement was “you have not come to the rest” – referring to Shiloh.
 - a. A temporary resting place until the Temple would be built in Jerusalem.
5. Verse 10: “He gives you rest from all your enemies” – did not occur until the reign of David.

“Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around...” – 2 Samuel 7:1

6. David began to develop plans to build God’s permanent Sanctuary – *ha’makom*.
 - a. “David” hints at the Messiah – the fruition of this promise.
 - b. Only then will we truly “dwell in safety.”
7. Verse 11: “It shall come to pass that the place God shall choose, there you shall bring...”
 - a. At that point, private altars are prohibited; all expected to bring offerings there.
 - b. Messianic era will see all men coming up to Jerusalem to worship the King.
8. Verse 13-14: “Take heed you don’t offer in the place you see but in place the LORD chooses.”
 - a. Phrase “among your tribes” might hint at time when private altars were permitted.
 - b. The LORD would make His choice known through the prophets – e.g. Elijah.
 - c. Could also refer to the Sanctuary that would be built in Jerusalem in Judah/Benjamin.
9. Verse 15-16: In Wilderness, one who ate meat had to bring animal to *mishkan* as *shalamim*.
 - a. See Leviticus 17:3-4.
 - b. Once in the Land, because they were spread out, permitted to slaughter meat anywhere.
 - c. Understood that the animal had to be slaughtered in proper manner.
 - d. This doesn’t apply to what would have been considered an offering.
10. “Clean and unclean may eat” refers to the ritual status of the person.
 - a. Could eat of a non-sacrificial animal whether clean or unclean.
11. Verse 16: Reminded not to eat the blood under any circumstance.
12. Verse 17: The tithe that may not be eaten refers to the second tithe – eaten in Jerusalem.
13. Verse 21: “You shall kill of your flock ... as I have commanded you.”
 - a. Referring to liberty to slaughter animal for food in the Land.

- b. “As I have commanded” suggests to rabbis that Moses had instructed *sh’chitah*.
- 14. Verse 23-24: Reminded again not to consume blood.
 - a. This law is mentioned in Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11,14; Lev. 19:26.
 - b. This law also a command for the new believers in Acts 15.
 - c. Blood of these non-sacrificial animals was to be poured out upon the earth.
- 15. Verse 25: In conjunction with this command, doing right in God’s eyes means things “go well for you and your children.”
 - a. Not just because it is disgusting but because it is right.
- 16. In general, while it is commendable to try and attain understanding of why we should do or not do what God commands, sometimes it has to come down to – “because He said so.”
 - a. We tell this to our children for various reasons but, because we love them.
- 17. Verse 28: “Observe and hear” – “Guard” *shamar* and “listen” *sh’ma* to all.”
 - a. We are to be distinguished, not only in “where” we worship Him – i.e. Sanctuary.
 - b. We are to be distinguished in how we worship Him.
 - c. We don’t do like the nations which is, however, whenever, wherever we like.
 - d. We shouldn’t determine which are for us and which are not – “every Word.”
- 18. Verse 30: “You shall not inquire after their gods” – don’t seek after what has been destroyed.
 - a. Later generations would be tempted to resurrect practices of the natives dispossessed.
 - b. People often find intrigue in lifestyles and habits already discredited.
 - c. Americans fascinated with pagan traditions of those here before we were a nation.
- 19. Verse 31: “Every abomination ... have they done unto their gods.”
 - a. To adopt these ancient practices of heathen nations is abominable.
 - b. Canaanite practice was immoral and inhumane and needed to be exterminated.
 - c. Human sacrifice was a part of it as it was with other cultures: e.g. Celts, Germans.
 - d. Bricks of Jericho have contained bones of humans – specifically infants.
- 20. Ironically, Jews have been accused of blood libel and ritual murder by the nations.
 - a. Accusers typically accuse others of what they, themselves, are guilty of.
 - b. Nazi Germany resurrected these accusations in 1930s – they were guilty of murder.
- 21. What does this say for America and other nations who practice abortion?
 - a. The end result is same as that of Canaan – murder for sake of convenience.
 - b. People who want to be immoral end up being inhumane.
 - c. Interestingly, culture has adopted en masse practices of Canaan; i.e. tattoos, piercings.

CHAPTER 13: WHAT IS A PROPHET?

1. Moses warns against being seduced by “signs and wonders” in context of not adding or subtracting from God’s Word.
2. Verse 1: “You shall not add to nor diminish from it” – inferring it was incomplete.
 - a. This is what the Adversary did at the beginning in Gen. 3.
 - b. Being “crafty” (Heb. **ערום** *arum*) seduced the woman and the man follows.
 - c. Eyes were opened and realized they were naked (Heb. **עירום** *eirumim*).
 - d. Man began to emulate the methods of the Adversary – adding to and taking away.
3. This is something we are warned of again and again; in Revelation warned not to tamper.
4. In my opinion, Judaism and Christianity exemplify this – one adds to, the other takes away.
5. Result being, both suggest the Word was imperfect and needed our help.
 - a. Equivalent to saying that certain commands are invalid.

6. Creates an environment that teaches what we think and believe is honorable and holy.
 - a. However, may find that what we think is good is an abomination in God's eyes.
 - b. Also plants thought that the original was not of Divine origin but stories handed down.
7. Within that context that we are warned of false prophets or prophets that misappropriate gift.
 - a. Actually not called a "false prophet" – perhaps one who has gift but led astray.

“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” – Romans 11:29

8. Context is Israel walking in unbelief but nevertheless retaining gift and calling.
 - a. Always potential for repentance.
 - b. Likewise, individual retain gift and calling for all were created with a purpose.
9. Saul of Kish is an example of gift remaining even when person is in error.
 - a. After he is anointed by Samuel to be king:

“When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, ‘What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’ ” – 1 Samuel 10:10-11

10. He is anointed and he prophesies but later in life we see pride has gripped him:

“And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. And Saul cast the spear, for he said, ‘I will pin David to the wall!’ But David escaped his presence twice. Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul.” – 1 Samuel 18:10-12

11. Even though the LORD had departed Saul, he prophesied (again in 1 Sam. 19).
 - a. Demonstrating that “gifts and calling are without repentance.”
12. Perhaps this is why we see the prophet gives a sign or a dream that comes to pass (v. 3).
 - a. “Wonder” is a “portent” – predicting something that happens in future.
 - b. Yet, he uses the sign or wonder to lead the people away from God and His commands.
 - c. Notice the prophet arises “in the midst of you” – in concert with Adversary's tactic.
13. This demonstrates how God's people are led astray by “lying signs and wonders.”

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” – Matthew 24:24

14. The signs and wonders do occur but are intended to mislead.
 - a. “Lying signs” infers it is a mixture of truth and falsehood – adding to and taking away.
 - b. This is the methodology of the Adversary – convincing lies contain measure of truth.

“The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.” – 2 Thessalonians 2:9

15. We see this just before the Exodus and at the end of the age – always intended to lead people away from the true and toward “other gods.”
 - a. Exodus 7:11-12 (Pharaoh’s magicians)
 - b. Revelation 13:13-15 (the False Prophet)
16. God’s people have always been susceptible to this lure – following signs and wonders.
 - a. Y’shua said:

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.” - Matthew 12:39

17. “Adulterous” means those who have gone after “other gods” and left their “husband.”
 - a. Seducing people away from their first love.
 - b. The movement is supposed to be in the other direction.

**“And these signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”
– Mark 16:17-18**

18. The true prophet will use the signs and wonders to lead to the One God and His commands.
 - a. “Believe” is the key; believing is faith which is hearing and doing.
 - b. The devils believe and tremble but what distinguishes our belief from theirs?
19. Discerning a true prophet also accentuates “hearing” over “seeing.”
 - a. Center of balance is in the ear – hearing is to suggest balance.
 - b. Just because you see a wonder doesn’t mean you should believe their words.
 - c. Anyone accepted as “prophet” who condones any idolatry is not to be heeded.
 - d. Idolatry doesn’t have mean a literal icon; not “hearing” God is the equivalent.
20. Verse 4: “God puts you to the test to see if you love Him” – who will you listen to?
 - a. He that has an ear, let him “hear” – *sh’ma*.
 - b. The Lakeland FL “revival” demonstrated how quick people were to be led by signs.
 - c. So focused on the “signs” they stopped listening to what was being said.
21. Miracles, in and of themselves, are NOT proof of God’s Will or Voice.
 - a. Verse 6: These prophets have spoken perversion (literally “something that rots”).
 - b. They have spoken something God never said.
22. We are to hear, fear, love and serve God even if there are no miracles by Him.
 - a. And in the face of miracles by others, to cleave unto Him even unto death (Dan.3).
23. Verses 6-12: Very adamantly states lying prophets and even relatives that would lure you away from the God of Israel and His commands are to be destroyed.
 - a. Verse 6: “the evil in the midst of you” – serpent was in the “midst” of the garden.
 - b. Most attacks come from within not without – consider Israel’s modern wars.
 - c. Words used to “entice you secretly” just as serpent did.
 - d. Cancer has to be removed from the body or the entire body will die.
 - e. Even if it is those closest to you – consider Levi at the Golden Calf incident.
24. Some would interpret this as cruel but, for the sake of body, it is really love and concern.
25. Irony is story of Ahab and Elijah; true prophet is regarded as “troubler of Israel” while lying prophets are permitted to dine at Jezebel’s table.
 - a. This has huge prophetic implications.

CHAPTER 13: WAYWARD CITY

1. Verse 13-14: Introduces the possibility that entire city could be source of false doctrine.
 - a. “Certain base men are gone out from your midst” – again, within your midst.
 - b. “Base men” is בני בליעל *b'nai belial*. – not completely wicked in appearance.
 - c. Hophni and Pinchas were “sons of belial” (Heb. בני בליעל *b'nai belial*) - 1 Sam. 2:12.
 - d. They wore garments of priests – outwardly, sons of Elohim but really sons of Belial.
2. Paul uses this term when speaking of not “mingling” with other seed.

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Messiah with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God.”

– 2 Corinthians 6:14-16

3. Perhaps the point is “sons of Belial” don’t always appear to be evil – in your midst.
4. They have incited an entire city to abandon God for idols.
5. If it is determined, conclusively, to be true and the city is completely corrupt:
 - City is declared a “wayward city.”
 - Guilty parties are killed with the sword.
 - City and all property are destroyed.
 - City to be a heap and never inhabited.
6. Verse 18: Nothing of the city is to be salvaged and kept: חרם *cherem* “devoted” to destruction.
 - a. Can’t profit off of idolatry or property that pertains to it.
 - b. Reminiscent of Judges 7: Achan and the battle of Ai or Ayin – the eye.
 - c. Followed his eye rather than listening with ear – same problem with false prophets.
 - d. Caused the nation to falter at Ai.
7. Penalty placed upon “wayward city” reminds of S’dom and cities of the plain.
 - a. Corrupt throughout and are still ruinous heaps.
 - b. Consider other cities: Enoch (Cain’s city), Bavel (Nimrud) and city of Rev. 17 & 18.
8. Footnote: Judaism considers Jerusalem to be exempt from this law because it was not meant to be a city used primarily for dwelling (v. 13) but for the Sanctuary and all the tribes.
 - a. Yet, in Revelation 11:8 Jerusalem is regarded as “Sodom and Egypt.”
9. Verse 18-19: When Israel is faithful to recognize the dangers in their midst, confront them according to His commands and follow through, He will have compassion on them and multiply them.

CHAPTER 14: LAWS AGAINST HEATHEN RITES

1. Israel is subject to commands that distinguishes them from all other nations.
2. Verse 1: “You are the children of YHVH” – as opposed to “sons of Belial.”
 - a. Therefore, you are to behave according to my statutes and laws.
3. Relationship between heavenly Father and His children based on covenant (love, obedience).
 - a. Some heathen nations claimed literal descent from “gods.”
4. Rabbi Judah the Prince taught that Israel were the children of God ONLY when they conformed to His Will but forfeited that honor when they walked in disobedience.

5. In short, claimed that bloodlines were not the determining factor in who the “sons of God” are.
6. This agrees with what another Torah scholar said:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” – Romans 8:14

7. This same chapter teaches being “spiritually minded (led by the Spirit) is to be subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7).
 - a. The sons of God are those that walk in obedience to God’s instructions.
 - b. In John’s Gospel this is confirmed.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” – John 1:12-13

8. In fact, those born of blood are, at one point, called *lo ammi* – “not my people” (Hos. 1:9).
 - a. Yet, sons of God will be as “sands of the sea” (Hos. 1:10).
9. As His children, not to “cut yourself or make baldness...for the dead.”
 - a. Don’t do what the heathens do – this group is about to be annihilated.
 - b. Don’t disfigure your bodies and do things that associate you with other gods.
 - c. The hair was sometimes buried with corpse as “offering” to a god.
10. Priests are prohibited from doing such things, a “kingdom of priests” should be likewise.
11. One commentary suggests that the prohibition against “cutting” yourself speaks of division.
 - a. Don’t divide up into factions – a “holy nation” is to be a united nation.
 - b. Note Paul’s admonition:

“You are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” – 1 Corinthians 3:3

12. If carnal (minded) then not spiritually minded and not being led by Spirit then not behaving as the “sons of God.”
13. Verse 2: Israel called to be “His own treasure” (Heb. *סגולה s’gulah*):
 - a. Same word as in Ex. 19:5 – “peculiar treasure.”
14. Verses 13-20: Recaps those animals and things that are permitted and forbidden as food.
 - a. Addressed in *Sh’mini* in detail.
15. Unclean foods are considered to be “abominable things” in and of themselves.
 - a. More so when looked upon as food.
16. In context of “holy people” and not “mixing” with things that “look” attractive.
 - a. Consider Isaiah 66:

“Those who sanctify themselves and purify themselves, to go to the gardens after an idol in the midst, eating swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, shall be consumed together,” says the LORD.” – Isaiah 66:17

17. Many would readily eat or be tempted to eat pork but would be revolted at the mouse.
 - a. Yet, BOTH are considered “abomination” by God – they are the same.
 - b. So, we can’t be led exclusively by what we see (lying signs) but by what we hear.

CHAPTER 14: LAWS THAT DENOTE A HOLY PEOPLE

1. Verse 21: “You shall not eat of anything that dies of itself” – because you are “holy.”
 - a. Hebrew is נבלה *n'velah* and doesn't necessarily mean “road kill.”
 - b. Understood to mean a clean animal that was not slaughtered in kosher manner.
 - c. It is NOT an abomination (not “unclean”) but unfit for food for a “holy” people.
2. Would suggest there is a decision to be made as to how close one wishes to approach God.
 - a. There are those “set apart” from those “set apart.”
3. It also leads us to see how some things may be technically permitted but not profitable if one desires to be a “holy” people.
 - a. Is it possible that this has some bearing on what Paul meant when he said:

“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.”

– 1 Corinthians 10:23-34

4. Obviously, Paul did not believe we could do whatever we wanted – “all things lawful.”
 - a. In the context of food and *n'velah*, those animals would be “lawful” but not profitable.
 - b. Furthermore, Paul goes on to emphasize how my actions impact someone else.
5. Interesting in light of comment in *Stone's Edition* pertaining to this subject and v. 21.

“In addition, it (holiness) requires people to be sensitive to the strictures adopted by others, so that they should not permit such things – even though they may be halachically permitted – in the presence of others who do not use them.”

6. In other words, those who wish to lead holy lives should be careful not to do something that is technically “lawful” when it might create issues between you and a brother who, in pursuit of holiness, feels you should not do that.
7. Holiness may require us to rise above and go beyond what is technically “lawful.”
 - a. Context of Paul's point was, as a holy people, we must be distinguished from others.
 - b. These things you are eating may be “lawful” but not “prepared” properly.
 - c. Consequently, not something profitable for a holy people.
8. To accentuate this point, *n'velah* may be given to the stranger (גר *ger*) or sold to foreigner.
 - a. Judaism distinguishes among the *ger* – גר צדק *ger tzedek* and גר תושב *ger toshav*.
9. *Ger tzedek* “righteous stranger” is understood to be one who had become a “convert.”
 - a. *N'velah* was defiling to Israelite and this category of stranger (Lev. 17:15).
10. *Ger toshav* “returning/repenting/inhabitant stranger” defined as one who had abandoned idolatry but didn't take on all Israelite practices.
 - a. Neither Israelite by birth or conversion but who were not foreigners.
 - b. Some in Judaism associate this with *b'nai Noach* – adopting Noahide laws.
 - c. Judaism does not regard *b'nai Noach* as brothers – i.e. I am not *b'nai Noach*.
11. This person - *ger toshav* - could eat *n'velah* suggesting a limited desire for holiness.
 - a. Therefore, this verse hints that there are those who go only so far in pursuit of holiness.
 - b. They continue, perhaps unknowingly, to mingle profane things with holy things.
 - c. Or they do things that are technically “lawful” but fall short of “edifying.”
12. Paul was speaking to people coming into faith out of pagan traditions.

- a. Was compelling them to flee idolatry and go beyond what seemed to be “lawful.”
- 13. Perhaps this is what Y’shua meant by the “least” or “greatest in the kingdom” (Mt. 5:19).
- 14. *Toshav* would suggest those returning to righteousness (least) while *tzedek* would allude to those who were approaching the goal (greatest).
 - a. Noah and Abraham were regarded as *tzadik* – “righteous one.”
 - b. Noah was “perfect (*tammim*) in his generations.
 - c. Abraham came out of Babylon (idols) and didn’t stop: crossed over, ascended Moriah.
- 15. There are those who only ascribe to a degree of holiness – coming out idolatry – but who do not care to adopt all those commands given to Israel – they are in the community but are “least.”
 - a. There are those who wish to go “all the way” and no longer be regarded as “least.”
 - b. Just depends on how close one wishes to draw unto the Creator who is “holy.”
- 16. Verses 22-27: Addresses the “second tithe” – as opposed to tithe given to Levites.
 - a. After tenth of produce set aside for Priests, must separate the second tithe.
 - b. This was collected in first, second, fourth and fifth years of *sh’mittah* cycle.
 - c. During third and sixth years, a tithe for poor was taken (v. 28-29).
 - d. During *sh’mittah* year, no tithe was taken.
- 17. Is taken to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem to be eaten there.
 - a. To eat it in Jerusalem in sight of the Temple would emphasize God’s beneficence.
 - b. Maimonides also suggests it would encourage giving to others – charity.
- 18. Those who lived too far away to transport this produce could exchange for money.
 - a. Travel to Jerusalem and buy what they needed there and partake.
- 19. Verse 26: “whatever your soul desires” – including “strong drink.”
 - a. Hebrew term is שֶׁכָּר *shekhar* which removes any doubt about what is meant.
- 20. Still, remember that, though some things are “lawful” they are not edifying.
- 21. Verse 28-29: Addresses the “poor tithe” which was kept at home to help poor in one’s community.
 - a. Note that the Levite is mentioned along with “stranger, fatherless and widow.”
- 22. Either this means, the Levite collected the “first tithe” and the other was distributed to the poor.
- 23. Or it would seem those who worked in Sanctuary were not all wealthy.

CHAPTER 15: YEAR OF RELEASE

- 1. Verse 1: In the seventh year (*sh’mittah*) the land was to rest (release) but debts were canceled.
 - a. This was to pertain to your brother or you neighbor.
- 2. Verse 3: “Of a foreigner you may exact it”: Heb. נֹכְרִי *nochri* as opposed to the גֵּר *ger*.
 - a. Understood to be someone there temporarily, e.g. a trader.
 - b. This demonstrates it is not unlawful or trivial to collect debts.
 - c. To cancel your neighbor’s debt is to demonstrate generosity and faith in God.
- 3. Verse 4: “There shall be no needy among you...for the LORD will bless you.”
 - a. “IF” you diligently hearken unto the LORD.
 - b. If this were to happen the other would be the result; however they didn’t do this.
 - c. Verse 11: “the poor shall never cease out of the land.”
 - d. Still, the goal is attainable and possible.
- 4. This is one of those promises that will be fulfilled under the Messiah.
- 5. Nevertheless, He promises that they will lend to many and borrow from none.

- a. Again, contingent upon keeping commands.
6. What does it say for the nation who borrows from everyone and lends to nobody?
7. Verse 7: Warned not to harden the heart against a needy among you.
 - a. People think they can't afford to give – denies God's ability to provide.
8. The destitute or your brothers who need your help suggests, the closer to you the more you should help – relatives first, the poor in your city and then the poor in the nation.
9. Verse 9: Specifically warns against withholding knowing the 7th year is approaching.
 - a. That mindset would betray someone's heart as being cold and stingy.
 - b. In fact, the word translated "base thought" or "lawless thought" is *belial*.
10. Y'shua addressed it this way:

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." – Matthew 6:21-24

11. The one who would hold back provision for the needy is full of darkness – *belial*.
12. In regard to the forgiveness of those debts, Y'shua said:

"Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

– Matthew 18:23-35

13. Thus, the forgiveness of debt in year of release may allude to something much bigger.
 - a. Context of this parable is "how many times do I forgive?"
14. We are being taught that:
 - Everything we have comes from God.
 - He being "rich" bestows blessing upon us who are "poor."
 - He has compassion and forgives our shortcomings and sins.

- A “holy” people should do likewise.
 - Not to do so would expose you are not a “holy” nation.
15. Verse 11: “The poor shall never cease out of the land” – indicating you won’t obey totally.
 - a. Demonstrates only way to eradicate poverty and hunger is to obey God’s commands.
 - b. May hint that if withholds what he has from poor, he may end up poor himself.
 - c. We know this principle exists in parable of talents.
 16. We conclude that this is intended to discern the person’s heart – whether He trusts God or no.
 - a. Whether he acknowledges God as the originator of all blessing.

“He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.”
– Proverbs 19:17

17. Verses 12 – 18: Addresses the release of servants.
 - a. These issues are addressed in the portion *mishpatim*.
 - b. Some could not better themselves with simply a loan – sold themselves as an *eved*.
 - c. In the seventh year, the bondservant was set free.
18. Verse 14: “You shall furnish him liberally” – fill his hands from your resources.
 - a. Again, to show, as the master, this is what God has done for Israel.
 - b. They were slaves in Egypt but, upon release, hands filled with gold and silver.
 - c. Also to challenge a “holy” nation to emulate a “holy God.”

CHAPTER 16: THE FESTIVALS

1. These are the laws pertaining to the three pilgrimage festivals:
 - Pesach
 - Shavuot
 - Sukkot
2. These, we address in portion *Emor*.
3. One distinction made in this portion is the role of the Sanctuary in Jerusalem.
 - a. Once in the land they will be scattered but must still appear before the LORD
 - b. When they do they are not to appear “empty handed.”
 - c. They are to give as “he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD.”
4. In regard to Pesach, Israel is instructed not to offer the *pesach* in their different communities.
 - a. Only to be offered in the place that God chooses – Temple in Jerusalem.
 - b. Was to be done in Aviv at the appointed time.
5. Verse 15: In regard to Sukkot, one notable point is we are to be “joyful.”
6. Judaism points out that one of the most “joyful” attributes of Sukkot was Drawing of Water.
 - a. According to the Mishnah:

“He that has not beheld the joy of the Drawing of water has never seen joy in his life.”

“Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” – Isaiah 12:3

7. As believers, we also see this particular ceremony and this verse as noteworthy.
 - a. The word “salvation” is *ישועה* *yeshuah*.

8. In regard to the Water Drawing and Libation, Y'shua commented:

“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Y'shua stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ – John 7:37-38

9. Many of these commands pertain to the land of Israel.

a. Thus could be argued they don't apply outside of the land.

10. Consider we are made from the dust of the earth.

11. We must dispossess those things in us; destroy that within us which would lure us away.

a. Important that we may be blessed and that it may be “seen” in our lives.