



OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

REACH TEACH ENCOURAGE DISCIPLE



OCTOBER 2011

**TISHRI:
SEVENTH MONTH REBOOT**

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STATEMENT OF BELIEF

Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

There is only one assembly of chosen ones/elect, the congregation of Israel, of which all Believers in Messiah are a part. God does not have two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church."

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be followed and studied by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the saints after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website

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OIM UPDATE

October 2011

As we enter into the seventh Hebrew month of Tishri, and all that it entails with the Fall high holidays, the thought of God's faithfulness to His children keep coming to mind. As a result of reflecting upon His desire to perpetually commune with us, I have been prompted to write the lead article for this issue of OIM News, entitled, "**Tishri: Seventh Month Reboot.**" This is an analogy of how born again Believers need to return to the Lord, just like how computers need to occasionally reboot in order to eliminate any tech glitches that might be forming due to viruses and malware attaching to programs or e-mails. I pray that the Lord will use some of these thoughts communicated to inspire all to take the opportunity to return to Him, through the many activities instructed for the month of Tishri.

All of this personal soul searching has rekindled a deep desire within me, to delve into the annual Torah teachings, with a definite look at them through *the grid of faith*. Since our respective walks with the Messiah center around our pleasing faithfulness to Him, the concept of discovering elements of required faith in the weekly readings should be encouraging. As the author of Hebrews tells us, "And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). For this next Torah cycle, I will be commencing a new series of TorahScope posts focused around the theme of **the Torah and faith**. Messianic Believers the world over need to be seriously challenged—in these difficult times in which our planet finds itself politically, economically, and above all spiritually—to make sure that they all *believe in the Lord*. I am sure that He will use these new weekly studies to encourage you in your personal walk of faith, as we look at the examples of those who have preceded us in a relationship with the Holy One of Israel (1 Corinthians 10:11).

This month also marks the release of the new paperback *TorahScope Haftarah Exhortations*, which is available for you to use for the coming Torah cycle. We have a special offer running for \$40.00, which includes this new book, *TorahScope, Volume I*, and a TorahScope desk calendar. Be sure to get these materials for your personal or congregational library!

We certainly want to thank everyone who has contributed to our expanding OIM Prison Ministry Free Book Fund. Many of our written materials are being used to help a growing number of inmates in difficult circumstances, as they seek God for answers. We have received various letters from those in prison, as well as prison chaplains, appreciating our ability to freely provide books for their needs.

Finally, if you are a member of Facebook, we would like each of you to be sure to "like" the new Outreach Israel Ministries page at www.facebook.com/outreachisraelministries. We are very excited as this page grows, to see our fair-minded and balanced Messianic message reach out to others who have never heard of us, or have encountered our teachings and books before. Be sure to become a member today, and to share this with friends!

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things... Mark Huey

TISHRI: SEVENTH MONTH REBOOT

by Mark Huey

With the Fall High holidays fresh in all of our minds, the annual opportunity to return to the Lord with increased fervency, once again has presented itself before seekers of the Most High. While contemplating the blessings of participating in the specific appointed times during the seventh month of Tishri (תִּשְׁרִי), it dawned on me that in many regards, the Almighty has programmed these specific convocations into the Creation for His Divine purposes. After all, He understands the human proclivity to wander from His ways, as the worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and desires for other things tend to choke out the veracity of His Word resulting in unfruitfulness. As Yeshua taught in His parable of the sower,

“And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful” (Mark 4:18-19).

It is conceivable that God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that His children would need a yearly personal “reboot”—like restarting a computer, to eliminate any choking viruses or malware—in order to refocus and restore their relationship with Him. The concept of establishing annual practices that are intended to assist people in their spirituality, in returning to Him, makes sense. An annual seventh month return to Him, through the appointed times of Tishri, can be viewed as such a time—since the first day of the seventh month commemorates the Day of Blowing or *Yom Teruah* (יּוֹם תְּרוּעָה). In Judaism, this is also known as *Rosh HaShanah* (רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה), the beginning of the new year on the civil calendar. The tendency for many people to make various New Year resolutions has a similar connotation to the spiritual “reboot,” which I believe the Lord desires for His people during this season. So, for those who desire a closer walk with the Holy One, perhaps reexamining these seventh month convocations will inspire many of you to take the message of these appointed times to heart, as the Almighty has given His people a series of activities that can encourage one and all to prune away any unnecessary obstacles that might be impeding their fruitfulness in the work of His Kingdom on Earth.

For all of God's people today, this yearly occasion to pause and reflect upon His majesty and mercy, arrives just as predictably as the cooler breezes of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere. What a blessing to God's beloved children that year after year—He practically reminds His faithful ones to return to Him with all their hearts, minds, souls, and strength—through active participation in the holy convocations of the Fall! From the formation of the cosmos, when the Almighty set in motion the sun, moon, planets, and stars (Genesis 1:14), the omniscient God understood that natural seasonal transformations and human activities associated with such changes were appropriately connected to His people obediently

setting apart some special and specific times to commune with Him.

Moreover, to evidence His handiwork and design, the Holy One embedded a special relational sign between Himself, humanity, and the created order. For various unfathomable reasons, because His thoughts and ways are higher than mortal thoughts and ways (Isaiah 55:8-9), the Creator impressed upon Creation and people, a need for them to rest every day in seven:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:1-3).

Obviously, blessing and sanctifying the seventh day of the week is significant, because it sets apart one day in seven, to enter into a weekly appointed convocation with one’s Creator. The Sabbath rest or *Shabbat* (שַׁבָּת) is the first appointed time described in Leviticus 23:1-3, and it is noted to be a significant sign or *ot* (אוֹת) between God and His people in Exodus 31:13-17. Of course, the most important part, of remembering the seventh-day Sabbath, is that its remembrance is clearly instructed in the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue:

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11; cf. Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

From the opening chapters of Genesis, to the deliverance of Ancient Israel from bondage in Egypt, to receiving the Ten Commandments—it appears to many Bible readers that God has a special arrangement with often ordering the cycles of Creation through a grid of sevens. A principle of seven embedded in much of the created order is seen as the Lord instructed the Israelites on how to give the Promised Land and its food production a rest every seventh year:

“You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but *on* the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard *and* your olive grove. Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease *from labor* so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave, as well as your stranger, may refresh themselves” (Exodus 23:10-12).

In this context of describing the seven-year rest for the Land of Israel, a connection with the seventh day of rest for all—including beasts of burden, slaves, and strangers—can be made. Recognizing the significance of the seventh day and seventh year in the Torah, it is logical to recognize that the seventh month also has importance associated with it every year. Once a year during the seventh month, there is a special and sacred season for God’s people to humbly come before Him, in order to make a reaffirming commitment to walk in His ways. This is what I have thought can be better understood in today’s technological

nomenclature, as *Tishri: the seventh month reboot*.

Thankfully, because the Scriptures establish some guidelines in Leviticus ch. 23, and other parts of the Torah, for commemorating the Fall high holidays, one has a framework for this season of returning to the Lord. But even with these basic commands delineated, the ancient Sages of Judaism have prescribed some additional spiritual exercises, to prepare the hearts of people for a serious return to the Lord—especially with the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur* (יּוֹם כִּפּוּר) commemorated on the tenth of Tishri. While the importance of the month of Tishri was understood, starting in the sixth month of Elul is a forty-day time of preparation for *Yom Kippur*, much of it is guided by Elul (אֱלוּל) serving as an acronym for the saying *Ani l'dodi v'dodi li* (אֲנִי לְדוּדִי וְדוּדִי לִי), “I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine” (Song of Songs 6:3). “According to tradition, the First of Elul is...the day when Moses ascended Mount Sinai in preparation for receiving the second tablets 40 days later on *Yom Kippur*” (*JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions*).¹ The thirty days of the sixth month of Elul, coupled with the ten-day period between *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*, are to prepare individual hearts to make *teshuvah* (תְּשׁוּבָה), or a “return to God, repentance” (*Jastrow*).² This is a time for personal introspection, resolving any known conflicts with others, and most appropriately, should be a time to fall back in love with the Lord by moving closer to Him. **A person is to draw closer to God, as He desires to draw closer to His people.**

Many of you probably missed your chance to go through a forty-day exercise of focusing on intimacy between our Heavenly Father and yourself from the month of Elul to *Yom Kippur*. But with our ever-patient and ever-loving God, it is **never too late to approach Him with a repentant heart!** Some of you reading this, may, for various reasons, have not fully engaged yourself with the observance of the Fall high holidays this year. Yet, the message of the Fall high holidays is to resonate throughout the year, for those who seek Him and His ways. Perhaps a review of these special appointed times is in order?

The seventh month of Tishri commences with a momentous blowing of the *shofar* (שׁוֹפָר) on *Yom Teruah* or *Rosh HaShanah*, to proclaim and commemorate this special season of reflection:

“Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, **“In the seventh month on the first of the month you shall have a rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.** You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD”” (Leviticus 23:23-25).

Notice that the Lord has commanded that a day of rest or High Sabbath be taken on *Yom Teruah*, to reflect on the significance of this day. While no laborious work is to be done, instead the day was to be originally devoted to presenting offerings to the Lord. In the practice of the Jewish Synagogue now, the custom is to blow the *shofar*, and focus one's attention on specific liturgical prayers that emphasize the importance of turning to God. *Rosh HaShanah* is the day when all

¹ Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 183.

² Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Treasury, 2004), 1703.

in the community are to focus on Him, as the Ten Days of Awe occur right before the Day of Atonement or *Yom Kippur*. Customarily, many will study various aspects of Tanakh Scripture, to prepare their hearts for *teshuvah* or fully returning to the Lord.

For Believers in the Messiah of Israel, the Ten Days of Awe can be a definite season for some serious pruning of thorns or weeds, which might be impeding our relationship with God, or with others. While we affirm that Yeshua the Messiah has offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice, via His atoning blood at Golgotha (Calvary)—it is still highly useful to reflect on the areas of one's personal walk with Him that need improvement. Interceding, for the lost of Planet Earth, is surely also useful! Certainly, if one truly loves the Lord, then a sincere desire to be fruitful in service to Him requires serious soul searching times of reflection like *Yom Kippur*. One practice for the Ten Days of Awe, that I have conducted over the years, has been to reflect daily upon each of the Ten Commandments, and consider if I have been fully adhering to its direction not only in actions, but most especially in my heart and thoughts!

The seventh month reboot, starting with *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* toward *Yom Kippur*, might seem like an extended period of reflection—but it has been designed to bring our relationship with the Holy One into sharp focus. On the Day of Atonement, God's people are commanded to afflict their souls:

"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; **it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls** and present an offering by fire to the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath'" (Leviticus 23:26-32).

The emphasis on *Yom Kippur* is to humble oneself, which has always occurred via fasting and prayer (cf. Acts 27:9). To extend my reboot analogy somewhat, the time from *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* through the Ten Days of Awe, may represent a computer shutting down, as one turns off all of the programs—while on *Yom Kippur* all systems remain off. Deep reflection and pressing into the Lord, for a clean and clear conscience, free of any personal encumbrances, is the goal. For twenty-four hours, being separated from any fleshly desire to eat, helps enhance the process. It is at this complete shutdown of oneself, that significant growth in our relationship with the Holy One can advance. The traditional *Yom Kippur* service is replete with pleas for God's mercy, confessions of individual and corporate sin, and consideration of many liturgical prayers that are likely to have been used in the Jerusalem Temple in ancient times.

From the eleventh to the fourteenth of Tishri, the resurgence of power to the soul, begins to slowly return. By the time of the next Sabbath rest on the fif-

teenth of Tishri, which commences the Feast of Tabernacles or *Sukkot* (סוכות), the restored person should now be associated with great joy—as a return to a right and restored relationship with the Lord has occurred. The rebooting of the soul has begun with all of one's programs—meaning thoughts, attitudes, and ideas—relatively free of viruses and ready to go. Note the bevy of activities for the next eight days of Tishri, as originally summarized in the Torah, that take the obedient followers of the Holy One through a season of joy:

“Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘On the fifteenth of this seventh month is the Feast of Booths for seven days to the LORD. On the first day is a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work of any kind. For seven days you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation and present an offering by fire to the LORD; it is an assembly. You shall do no laborious work. These are the appointed times of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, to present offerings by fire to the LORD—burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, *each* day's matter on its own day—besides *those* of the sabbaths of the LORD, and besides your gifts and besides all your votive and freewill offerings, which you give to the LORD. On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It *shall be* a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’ So Moses declared to the sons of Israel the appointed times of the LORD” (Leviticus 23:34-44).

From the sounding of the *shofar* on the first of Tishri, through the Ten Days of Awe leading up to the Day of Atonement on the tenth of Tishri, to the commencement of the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth of Tishri—the emotions of the faithful move from one important theme to the next. With the reboot now nearing completion, joyful participants build themselves temporary tabernacles in which to reside, as they rejoice in their relationship with the Lord—as another year of serving Him, studying His Torah, *and* loving others restarts. It is during the eight days of *Sukkot* that many observant Jews and Messianic people, review the Book of Ecclesiastes, in order to glean from the wisdom of Qohelet. The concluding words of Ecclesiastes are a fitting final reminder of the wisdom to dedicate one's life to studying and applying the words of God's Instruction, by fearing Him and obeying Him:

“The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this *applies to* every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

Providentially, *Sukkot* is book ended with a Sabbath rest on the first day and

another Sabbath rest on the eighth day, with an additional holiday called *Shemini Atzeret* (שְׁמִינִי עֲצֵרֶת) or the Eighth Day Assembly taking place. God is always in the process of reminding His people of their dependence upon Him through these special times. When the reboot is completed at the end of *Sukkot*, we can all rejoice in serving Him with a joyful heart! Traditionally in Judaism, the Fall high holidays end with the celebration of *Simchat Torah* (שִׂמְחַת תּוֹרָה) or Joy of the Torah. This marks the end of the past Torah cycle, and the beginning of a new year of studying the Torah. This is a discipline that all Messianics have certainly learned is most beneficial, as they desire to be instructed by Moses' Teaching, and make sure that they have a firm foundation for understanding the rest of Holy Scripture. Hopefully, the Fall high holidays have served to prepare hearts, and the seed of God's Word can bear much fruit, as any thorns and weeds that might have been restricting spiritual growth have been removed.

With hearts and souls further enlivened, by the various activities from the first of Tishri (if not the first of Elul) through the twenty-third day of Tishri—the rebooted man or woman of God is ready to fully embrace a return to Him, and has renewed dedication to serving Him. The worries of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things that can impede our relationship with the Lord—should have been dealt with during this seventh month reboot. So with great joy, one and all can praise the Lord for His stamp of approval upon the seventh month—as all that is done during this month is designed to guide His followers into fruitful service to advance His Kingdom! For this month of Tishri, I wish you His greatest blessings, as you joyfully obey Him *and* express your love for Him and all His people!

JOIN THE TNN PRESS BOOK FUND



The TNN Press Book printing project is back underway, as an array of new titles has been prepped and queued for paperback release. This is a very important time for the spiritual development of the emerging Messianic movement, as we face new external *and* internal challenges. In order to see that the voice of Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online gets the hearing that it deserves, please get behind us to see each of the following titles go to the printer in a timely manner:

The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic
The New Testament Validates Torah
Counting the Omer
Ephesians for the Practical Messianic
A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic
A Survey of the Tanach for the Practical Messianic
TorahScope Apostolic Scripture Reflections

The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic commentary and *The New Testament Validates Torah* are both due to be released later this year. Several new titles will also be added to the queue by year's end as well.

Leviticus 18:5 (Luke 10:28; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5): Does the Torah actually teach that by keeping its commandments, a person can earn eternal life?



Is it possible for a person to keep the commandments of the Torah, and as a result incur eternal life and everlasting communion with the Father? There are those throughout Jewish and Christian religious history, and even to our present time, who have thought that Leviticus 18:5—“So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them”—implies precisely this. There are certainly Christian interpreters, who would dispute this conclusion based on a variety of contextual factors, and would consider it in stark contradiction with Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God.” Only by carefully evaluating the original setting of Leviticus 18:5, and then some key places in the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, where it is quoted or alluded to (Luke 10:28; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5), can a Bible reader have a good idea about what is being communicated.

Leviticus 18:5

“So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.”

On its own, Leviticus 18:5 says, “You shall observe My decrees and My laws, which man shall carry out and by which he shall live—I am HASHEM” (ATS). The two verbs of interest first include *shamar* (שָׁמַר), generally meaning to “keep, watch, preserve” (BDB),^a “The basic idea of the root is ‘to exercise great care over’” (TWOT).^b The second is *chayah* (חָיָה), seen in the clause *ha'adam v'chai b'hem* (הָאָדָם וְחָיָה בְּהֵם), a very wooden translation of it being: “a person/mortal and will live in/by them.” The verb *v'chai* (וְחָיָה) is a third person, Qal vav consecutive perfect, here in Leviticus 18:5 likely having a “**Consequential**” usage, meaning that it “expresses logical result, describing an action or situation resulting from a previous action or situation” (*A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*).^c If people keep God’s statutes and judgments, then they will live. The theological challenge, with approaching the verb *chayah*, is how it can range from meanings relating to physical life, a prosperous life, to eternal life.^d

What is intended by, “if a person does them, he shall live by them” (Leviticus 18:5, ESV)? This is where we need to be sure to read Leviticus 18:5 in view of its wider context, in which some important contextual and historical indicators are mentioned. This should give readers an appropriate perspective of what is being asserted by the Lord:

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, “I am the LORD your God. You shall not do what is done in the land of

^a BDB, 1036.

^b John E. Hartley, “שָׁמַר,” in TWOT, 2:939.

^c Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 88.

^d Cf. Elmer B. Smick, “חָיָה,” in TWOT, 1:279-281.

Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall not walk in their statutes. You are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes, to live in accord with them; I am the LORD your God. **So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD**” (Leviticus 18:1-5).

Following this preface in Leviticus ch. 18 is largely a series of sexual instructions, prohibiting various incestuous relationships (Leviticus 18:6-18), sexual intercourse during a woman’s menstruation cycle (Leviticus 18:19), sexual relationships between a man and another woman (Leviticus 18:20), male homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22), and bestiality (Leviticus 18:23). Also seen are a prohibition on presenting one’s offspring to Molech (Leviticus 18:21), and how Israel will be cast out of the Promised Land if they perform any of these sins (Leviticus 18:24-30). The universal nature for all of those within the community to keep these instructions is emphasized (Leviticus 18:26). The essential summary is that the sexual practices observed in Egypt, and also observed in Canaan, are strictly off limits for the Ancient Israelites. Readers should notice that,

“So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD...For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do *so* shall be cut off from among their people. Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as not to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 18:5, 29-30).

With this all in view, the wider context and issues present in Leviticus ch. 18 should not guide readers in the direction of thinking that eternal life, or everlasting communion with God, is something that can be earned by keeping the Torah’s commandments. Such a conclusion is something plainly absent from the text reviewed. It would, however, be most proper to conclude that Leviticus 18:5 says that a proper mode and quality of life, *b’hem* (בְּהֵם)—“in them” (KJV), “by them” (NIV/ESV), or “through them” (CJB)—can be present by those who keep the Torah’s commandments. The Torah’s high sexual instructions, for example, are surely intended to generate respect for other people in the community. For the Ancient Israelites who would be faithful to observe God’s Torah, especially in regard to the immediate instructions seen in Leviticus ch. 18, they would not have been cut off or have faced capital punishment for their offenses. On the contrary, in guarding their sexual conduct, they would be contributing to a society where the value of all people was honored.

The tenor we see, from how Leviticus 18:5 is referenced elsewhere in the Tanach, would confirm that a high quality of Earthly life and conduct is in view:

“I gave them My statutes and informed them of My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live...But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They did not walk in My statutes and they rejected My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; and My sabbaths they greatly profaned. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them in the wilderness, to annihilate them...But the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, nor were they careful to observe My ordinances, by which, if a man observes them, he will live; they profaned My sabbaths. So I resolved to

pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the wilderness” (Ezekiel 20:11, 13, 21).

“And admonished them in order to turn them back to Your law. Yet they acted arrogantly and did not listen to Your commandments but sinned against Your ordinances, by which if a man observes them he shall live. And they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen” (Nehemiah 9:29).

At the very most, what could be implied from Leviticus 18:5 is that the person, who keeps God’s commandments, would remain on a straight and narrow path (cf. Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24), that will consummate in entering into God’s Kingdom—not that keeping commandments themselves will earn or merit one eternal life. Those who live within the right sphere of conduct on Planet Earth, by their behavior, should demonstrate themselves as those who are members of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In theological studies, both Jewish and Christian, one will certainly find a divergence of views on the meaning of Leviticus 18:5. The debate on how Leviticus 18:5 is to be approached, generally falls into two categories: those who see this as a quality of daily life in holiness on the path of faith that God has established for His people, and those who see this verse as implying that eternal life can possibly be earned through human Torah observance.^e The following chart is a summary of relatively current Jewish and Christian approaches:

| LEVITICUS 18:5 IN THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION | |
|--|---|
| A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE | POSSIBLY EARN ETERNAL LIFE |
| <p>“Verse 5 enjoins obedience to Yahweh’s ‘statutes’ and ‘judgments’ with a reference to their life-giving effect—i.e. the prevention of sudden death in the framework of ‘normal’ earthly life.”^f Martin Noth, <i>liberal Christian</i></p> | <p>“The simple sense of the clause <i>va-ḥai ba-hem</i>, ‘he shall live by them,’ is that one should live his life in accordance with God’s laws and commandments and that he should obey them all his life or while he is alive. This clause has, however, stimulated other interpretations reflecting its unusual syntax and semantic nuances. Syntax allows us to understand this clause as one of result: ‘that man shall perform, so that [as a result] he may acquire life by them.’ Performance of God’s laws and commandments holds forth the reward of life, whereas their violation threatens man</p> |

^e For a useful approach to the various views, consult R. Laird Harris, “Leviticus,” in Frank E. Gaebelien, ed. et. al., *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:597-599.

^f Martin Noth, *Leviticus: A Commentary*, revised edition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977),

LEVITICUS 18:5 IN THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION cont'd

| A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE | POSSIBLY EARN ETERNAL LIFE |
|--|---|
| <p>“As long as the chosen people kept the prescribed statutes and ordinances, they could expect to <i>live</i> (5). The kind of life which the law brought would be one of divine blessing and material prosperity, consonant with the covenantal promises, but contingent always upon implicit obedience to the will of God.”^h R.K. Harrison, <i>evangelical Christian</i></p> | <p>with death. This interpretation is the basis for the traditional understanding of our verse by later commentaries [Targum Onkelos, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban], which state that observance of the commandments is rewarded by life in the world to come.”^g Baruch A. Levine, <i>liberal Jew</i></p> |
| <p>“Lev. 18:5 does not teach salvation by works. It teaches that the OT believers who trusted God and obeyed him from the heart received life abundant both here and hereafter....Observance of these laws in an attitude of faith resulted in spiritual life and power for the godly Israelite... Therefore it is best to take Lev 18:5 as a command to keep all God’s laws by faith and thus attain a full spiritual life.”ⁱ R. Laird Harris, <i>evangelical Christian</i></p> | <p>“This verse [Leviticus 18:5] may mean no more than that the pious Israelite should ‘live out life’ in the sphere of the law. But the use of the language of ‘life’ elsewhere in the Pentateuch to denote the reward God gives for obedience to the law (e.g., Deut. 30:15, 19) makes it more likely that ‘will live’ in Lev. 18:5 is a reward for obedience....Leviticus 18:5 is not...a promise that the doer of the law will attain eternal life. On the other hand, one can make a good case for thinking that Paul, like later Jewish writers (cf. the Onkelos and Pseudo-Jon. Targums) understood Leviticus 18:5 to be promising eternal life for the doer.”ⁱ Douglas J. Moo, <i>evangelical Christian</i></p> |
| <p>“Men and women will fare much better if they will follow God’s laws. This chapter is addressed to those who claim the Lord as their God...Only those who already have this Lord as their God are commanded to walk in God’s laws so that they might live (v. 5). Keeping the law will not lead to eternal life, as some have mistakenly thought that this verse teaches, but it will lead to an abundant life. The phrase ‘will live by them’ means that life will be lived in accordance with God’s laws and commandments. The subsequent history of</p> | |

^g Baruch A. Levine, *JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 119; cf. J.H. Hertz, ed., *Pentateuch & Haftorahs* (London: Soncino, 1960), 489; A. Cohen, ed., *The Soncino Chumash* (Brooklyn: Soncino Press, 1983), 716.

Levine, 119 also notes that Leviticus 18:5 has been used to support the Rabbinic principle of *Pikku'ach Nefesh*, in that certain commandments can be violated in order to preserve human life.

^h R.K. Harrison, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980), 185.

ⁱ Douglas J. Moo, “The Law of Christ as the Fulfillment of the Law of Moses: A Modified Lutheran View,” in Wayne G. Strickland, ed., *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), pp 325-326.

^j Harris, in *EXP*, 2:598.

LEVITICUS 18:5 IN THEOLOGICAL EXAMINATION cont'd

| A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE | POSSIBLY EARN ETERNAL LIFE |
|---|----------------------------|
| <p>interpretation finds both Christian and Jewish commentators attempting to have this phrase reinterpreted to say, '[A person] shall perform, so that [as a result] he or she may acquire life by keeping them.' But this result, as one can see, is contrived both in its understanding of 'life' and in its unusual construal of the syntax.^k Walter C. Kaiser, <i>evangelical Christian</i></p> | |
| <p>"And by which he shall live. Ramban writes that the term <i>by which he shall live</i> refers particularly to the 'social commandments' between man and his fellow man, such as the laws governing property and debts, and those forbidding murder and robbery. Only if society adheres to this body of law can life be peaceful and stable."^l ArtScroll Chumash, <i>Orthodox Jewish</i></p> | |
| <p>"The call of Israel was a call to abundant life. Obedience to God's commands would result, not in poverty, death, or destruction, but in a fullness of life denied to those who lived by their own laws instead of by God's word. God promised to look on those who obeyed the terms of his covenant with favour (26:9) and to bestow on them the blessings of peace and prosperity. Rich and fruitful lives would be theirs."^m Derek Tidball, <i>evangelical Christian</i></p> | |

Gordon J. Wenham is one whose observations on Leviticus 18:5 seem to move between Earthly and eternal views of life. He first states, "For the OT writers life means primarily physical life. But it is clear that in this and similar passages more than mere existence is being promised. What is envisaged is a happy life in which a man enjoys God's bounty of health, children, friends, and prosperity. Keeping the law is the path to divine blessing, to a happy and fulfilled life in the present (Lev. 26:3-13; Deut. 28:1-14)."ⁿ He goes on and adds, however, "it is Jesus and Paul who insist that the full meaning of life is eternal life. If anyone can keep the law, he will enjoy eternal life (Matt. 19:17; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12)."^o Wen-

^k Walter C. Kaiser, "The Book of Leviticus," in Leander E. Keck, ed., et. al., *New Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 1125.

^l Nosson Scherman, ed., *ArtScroll Chumash, Stone Edition* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2000), 650.

^m Derek Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 219.

ⁿ Gordon J. Wenham, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 253.

^o Ibid.

ham further takes this to the point of saying, “In John’s Gospel man must keep the new law—the word of Christ.”^p

There are those Christian examiners who lean toward, “So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them” (Leviticus 18:5), as relating to the obedience of Yeshua the Messiah to the Torah—and how born again Believers are to be associated with such obedience, as they are to be found in Him. A similar view would be how people keep a Torah that is intended to naturally point to the salvation of the Messiah (cf. Romans 10:4, Grk.).^q While we do surely all benefit as redeemed souls from the perfect obedience of Yeshua to the Torah, and a Believer’s keeping of God’s commandments is to always point to the salvation of Yeshua—this is probably a bit of a stretch for interpreting Leviticus 18:5.

For today’s Messianics, who can be certainly said to have a faith practice significantly informed by Judaism, it is true that there are views expressed in ancient Jewish literature, such as the Targums, which would conclude that Leviticus 18:5 teaches that eternal life is attainable via keeping the Torah’s commandments:

“And you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man do he shall live by them an everlasting life. I am the Lord” (Targum Onkelos on Leviticus 18:5).^r

“And you shall keep My statutes, and the order of My judgments, which if a man do he shall live in them, in the life of eternity, and his portion shall be with the just: I am the Lord” (Targum Jonathan on Leviticus 18:5).^s

A lesser, although notable view, is seen in the Talmud, where a Rabbi Meir is said that a non-Jew who keeps the Torah may be regarded as though he were a high priest:

“R. Meir says, ‘Whence do we know that even an idolator, should he take up study of the Torah, is equivalent to a high priest? For it is said, “[You shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments,] which, if a man do them, he shall live by them” (Lev. 18:5); priests, Levites, and Israelites are not specified, but only a man. From that formulation you learn that even an idolator, should he engage in study of the Torah, is equivalent to a high priest” (b.*Sanhedrin* 59a).^t

^p Ibid.

John E. Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus*, Vol 4 (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 293 takes Leviticus 18:5 itself to not imply that there is any kind of promise of eternal life given to those who keep the Torah, concluding, “There is little support in the Pentateuch for such a reading of this text.” Yet, he further thinks that “the language of the OT, while in itself not expressing a specific belief, nevertheless prepares the hearer for the fuller revelation of God,” in that eternal life is promised to those who believe in the Messiah.

^q This is the basic thought expressed in Walter C. Kaiser, “Leviticus 18:5 and Paul: Do This and You Shall Live (Eternally?)” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol. 14 No. 1 (1971).

^r *BibleWorks 7.0: Targum Onkelos on the Pentateuch*. MS Windows XP. Norfolk: BibleWorks, LLC, 2006. CD-ROM.

^s *BibleWorks 7.0: Targum Pseudo Jonathan on the Pentateuch*.

^t *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*.

There are ancient Jewish opinions that regarded Leviticus 18:5 as teaching that eternal life could be attained via keeping God's commandments. This was an opinion surely present within the First Century Jewish world of Yeshua and the Apostles, but whether they actually agreed with it or endorsed it can probably be disputed (discussed further).

A more modern Jewish approach to Leviticus 18:5, which can be appreciable, is how Richard Elliot Friedman renders the clause *ha'adam v'chai b'hem* as, "he'll live through them."^u In his estimation, "This way of picturing the laws, as a path to *life*, begins here. It returns as the climax of the Torah in Deuteronomy. The path to the Tree of Life is blocked at the Torah's beginning, and the way to recover it is emphasized at the Torah's end. The laws are not presented as a burden but as a blessing."^v He goes on to chastise those "who have characterized the law as a weight that no human can possibly bear, as a curse from which one needs to be saved."^w Yet, Friedman's view is probably a bit too conditioned by a Jewish theology which sees the Torah as the means of obtaining what was lost in Eden, rather than a coming Messiah who is to save God's people (cf. Genesis 3:15).

From the actual text of Leviticus 18:5, we see that "life" is promised to those who keep God's commandments. Readers are definitely on good footing to conclude that Leviticus 18:5 regards a **high quality of life lived on Earth**, one that is intended to be blessed and prosperous from the Lord. To conclude that eternal life can somehow be merited from keeping commandments, though, has to be eisegeted into the text, even though there are interpreters in history who have incorrectly held to it.

However, for those who have acknowledged Yeshua (Jesus) as Savior—to act as though daily life has no connection to future Heavenly life—would be most inappropriate. For those who obey God's commandments in Messiah are surely to be regarded as men and women of the age to come living in the present evil age. They are to bear in their activities of daily life, the blessings to be fully consummated in future Heavenly life. Leviticus 18:5 does not promise eternal life via someone keeping God's commandments, but Leviticus 18:5 can provide assurance that those who keep God's commandments will be firmly planted within the sphere of His Kingdom. God's commandments **do not provide the way of salvation from sins and eternal punishment**, but they do provide the way of sanctification and holiness. As Tidball properly describes,

"Some might wish to object to God's right to say how his people should live, but it should really come as no surprise that the God who made us knows better than we ourselves know how we should function in his world. It should not surprise us that obeying the maker's instructions is likely to bring the best out of us and lead us to live life to the full."^x

the second half of this entry, with information on [Luke 10:28](#); [Galatians 3:12](#); [Romans 10:5](#) is accessible at the following address: tnnonline.net/faq

^u Richard Elliot Friedman, *Commentary on the Torah* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), 375.

^v Ibid.

^w Ibid.

^x Tidball, 219.

KOSHER YOUR PLATE

edited by Margaret McKee Huey

It is my intention to bring our Messianic readers several timely recipes of interest in each issue of the OIM News. In this issue, I have included two of my favorite salads!

Israeli Salad

3 large cucumbers
6 Roma tomatoes
Greek salad dressing
fresh mint leaves
feta cheese

Peel and chop up the Cucumbers. Chop the Tomatoes. Mix both together and add 2 tablespoons of fresh chopped Mint Leaves. Mix with 3-4 tablespoons of Greek Salad Dressings to make a nice consistency. Add Feta Cheese to your taste on the top and throughout. Enjoy!

Yield: enough salad for 6 people as a side dish.

M.R.'s Southern Slaw

1 cup mayo
3 chopped tomatoes
1 small onion diced
1 teaspoon celery seed

Mix above ingredients and pour over and mix into the following dry cabbage & carrots

16 oz shredded cabbage
2 shredded carrots

Sprinkle some celery seed on top and chill until ready to serve!

Yield: enough salad for 6 people as a side dish.

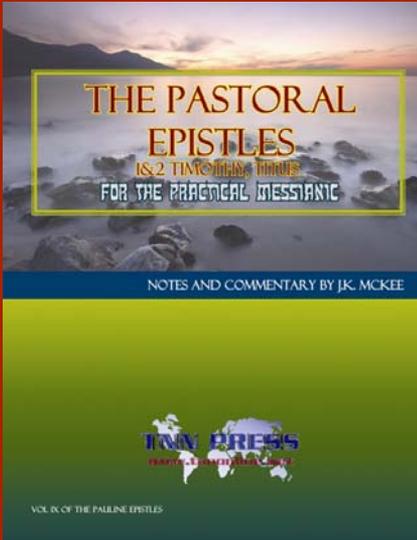
Please submit your recipes to Margaret Huey at the OIM office for inclusion in this column and our upcoming cookbook "Kosher Your Plate."



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A new commentary coming soon from TNN Press:

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC



Unlike some of the other letters of the Pauline corpus, there has been no significant demand for a detailed, Messianic examination of the Pastoral Epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Many of today's Messianic teachers and leaders think that they already know what these letters mean, and so putting out the effort of analyzing them beyond a cursory reading or survey is thought to probably not be needed. Sadly, today's broad Messianic movement is largely unaware and under-informed of a literal factory of academic proposals and perspectives, from over the past fifty years, regarding 1&2 Timothy and Titus. Much of this scholarship has affected various trends present in evangelical Christianity, the ordination of females as clergy within the contemporary church, and the debate over complimentarianism and egalitarianism. **It**

is time for our faith community to join into these discussions.

The Pastoral Epistles for the Practical Messianic takes into consideration much of what has been offered by various scholars, not only in terms of the ancient setting of 1&2 Timothy and Titus, but also with how these epistles should be accurately applied in a modern setting. TNN Online editor J.K. McKee helps to probe these letters for the future development of the Messianic movement, weighing our strengths and weaknesses of them, in an effort to be an assembly that is no longer lacking an adequate understanding. What are the things that we have actually interpreted correctly from the Pastoral Epistles, and what needs to be improved upon? How might some Messianic congregations and fellowships change if we took a good, hard look at 1&2 Timothy and Titus, and implemented some necessary reform? How can we truly be all of the things that we can be in the Lord? This significant commentary asks these, and many more pertinent questions.



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