

אֶחָרֵי

Acharei

(after)

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 16:1-18:30

Obey and Live

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 18:4-5

4 “My judgments shall you do, and My statutes shall you keep, to walk in them; I am YHWH your Elohim.

5 You shall therefore keep My statutes, and My judgments; which if a man does, he shall live in them; I am YHWH.”

I can remember many years ago (1980s) one Sunday morning in a Sunday school class in which I was not the teacher. We were studying Psalm 119:1-8. The teacher was having the class put up on the board all the different words contained in these few verses that were suggestive of the commandments of YHWH. After the list was complete to the satisfaction of the teacher and the teacher was ready to proceed with the lesson, I spoke up and suggested that one word was missed. The teacher said, “No!” All the words were written on the board which should be there and that none was left out. However, I suggested that there was a word that had been left out; that word was *judgments* (verse 7).

The effect that the speaking of this word had into this classroom setting was definite and immediate. The class was immediately galvanized into two groups; one group consisted of those who said that the judgments of YHWH were not to be followed and were not to be viewed as Scripture. In this group was most of the class, including the teacher. The other group consisted of those who knew that the judgments of YHWH were Scripture and should also be obeyed. In this group was one person, me.

There were several people who were red-faced with anger that I would even suggest such a thing that we should or even could keep and obey the judgments of YHWH. But I stuck to what Scripture said and knew that I was right, even though at the time I was unprepared to back up what I knew in the Spirit to be true with other passages of Scripture. We find several such passages of Scripture in this week’s Parasha. We have two verses above in which YHWH clearly states that we are to obey His judgments.

One would expect to find such a mindset out in the world; a mindset that was set against YHWH and His commandments. One would not really expect to find this type of mindset within the church. However,

this shows to us the great degree of falling away that has already occurred in the church and most do not even know that it has happened.

The typical mindset of those in the church today is one in which one is not obligated to obey the commandments of YHWH, particularly those found in the Old Testament. However, if our heavenly Father, YHWH is the same yesterday, today and forever, then would it not follow that His commandments are also the same yesterday, today and forever? To be sure, it does, indeed!

Gilyana (Revelation) 18:4

And I heard another voice out of the heaven, saying, "Come forth out of her, My people, that you may not partake of her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues."

One of the first realizations that comes upon those who desire to come out of Babylon is that in order to do this one must keep and obey the commandments of YHWH. In this week's Parasha YHWH teaches us that if we desire to live, then we must include keeping and obeying His judgments and statutes as well.

But just exactly what is a judgment or a statute and how do these things differ from His commandments?

The Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּטַי – "mishpatai" is the plural construct form of מִשְׁפֵּט – "mishpat." This word means "a verdict or a formal decree." It comes from the root שָׁפַט – which means "judge" and "to create order and harmony." Certainly the idea of order and harmony fall right in line with having life. If a person desires to have life in its fullness, then the מִשְׁפֵּט of YHWH must be a part of his life.

The Hebrew word חֻקֹּתַי – "chuqqotai" is the plural construct of the word חֻקָּה – "chuqqot." This word means "custom, manner, or statute." It comes from the root חָקָה – "chaqah" which means literally "to portray," and by extension it means "something prescribed or an enactment."

The Hebrew word צִוָּה – "tzavah" means "to command." This word in its root form means *command* or *delegate authority while retaining control*. Surely YHWH has given us the authority to do His commandments while He maintains control of His creation.

Each of these words and the ideas that they each convey are similar in that they each convey a specific type of instruction from YHWH to us. All of these together we understand to be called His Torah - תּוֹרָה.

There are two additional words that we need to examine from our passage in this week's Parasha as well. One is found in verse four in conjunction with the word "judgments." It is the Hebrew word עָשָׂה – "asah" which means *to do* or *to make*. When YHWH gives us a judgment, then He expects us to take that judgment and make it a reality. If we do nothing with His judgments, then they will do us no good and bring us no benefit. This word is also found in verse five, but in conjunction with both words, indicating that we need to do both His judgments and His statutes.

The other word is שָׁמַר – “shomer” which means “to guard, keep and observe.” We have discussed this word before. This word is used in conjunction with His statutes in verse four. However, in verse five it is used in conjunction with both His judgments and His statutes.

So YHWH is teaching us that we are to guard and do both His judgments and His statutes if we desire to have life.

In Babylon we find that the common mindset is that life consists of doing whatever one’s own desire and will happens to be. While in the flesh this may bring fairly instant gratification to one’s self. However, this will actually separate one from true eternal life.

Matityah (Matthew) 16:25

“For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it.”

Mashiach Yeshua taught us that a person who would follow after his own will and do his own thing shall lose his life. However, a person who will give his life to Yeshua and live for Him, such a person shall find his life and have it for all eternity.

So we find repeated in this week’s Torah portion several times that YHWH commands us to guard and observe and do His statutes and His judgments. YHWH then promises that those who will do this will have life. This is the common thread throughout Torah and the prophets and the Brit Chadasha.

In fact, this is particularly applicable to those who are descendants of the ten tribes of the north as they return to YHWH and a proper Hebraic understanding of Scripture. If we truly desire to be completely restored then we need to fully embrace all of His commandments. It is at this exact point that those coming out of Babylon tend to stumble. Many think that they have the option of picking and choosing which commandments and which statutes and which judgments they will keep. Many go so far as to shop around looking for a teacher who is teaching those commandments that they like.

2nd Timothy 4:3-4

3 For there shall be a time when they shall not endure sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear,

4 and they shall indeed turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths.

Not only are we warned that this will happen in the latter days as we are seeing now, but we were warned long ago that it happened then and will happen again.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 30:10

that say to the seers, “See not”; and to the prophets, “Prophecy not to us right things, speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”

With the advent of the internet this shopping around looking for teachers who will tickle the ears and say what one would like to hear is coming into the fullness of its fruit. A couple of years ago I witnessed this first hand. It was at a Sukkot gathering in which there was a good number present. One man was there who was quite wealthy. He took exception to a teaching of one of the teachers present. This wealthy man held out the possibility of a large donation to this teacher if he would revise his study. This teacher did revise his study and received the large donation. Brothers and sisters, I was appalled! However, this happens every day to a lesser degree when a person simply goes from teacher to teacher looking for one who says what he wants to hear.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 5:31

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so; and what will you do in the end?”

The question found in this passage is right and just. What will we do in regards to guarding His commandments? Will we pick and choose? Will we seek to have our ears tickled?

Romans 16:18

For they that are such do not serve Adonenu Yeshua Mashiach, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.

It is sad that I must confess to you that in the past there have been times that I have been beguiled by such people who are smooth in speech and desire to take advantage of others. These have been some very valuable lessons. But they are lessons that were quite difficult to endure and I certainly do not desire to repeat any of them.

Perhaps you have been through many of these yourselves. I know that many who are coming out of the Babylonian system have experienced such things as this. This is what I believe YHWH wants to say to us today who have experienced such things. Go slow, take your time and don't get in a hurry. Listen for the sound of His Voice and obey Him. If there is any doubt, no matter how small, do not proceed until that doubt is completely taken care of. If the doubt cannot be taken care of in a righteous manner, then do not go down that road!

If we will do this, it will save us from a lot of hurt and heartache!

ABBA YHWH, teach us Your judgments and Your statutes that we might obey them; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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