

March 30, 2013
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Grafted In Fellowship
Parsha: Sh'mini / "Eighth"

NOTE: The following are the general notes used for the teaching. They were primarily meant for reminders of the topic I wanted to cover, and do not include all that was said during the teaching.

Counting the Omer

Slide 2

This section has nothing to do with this week's Torah portion, but we are in the season of counting the omer, so I want to take the time to explain it.

Also, keep in mind, this is not an in-depth study—that would take an entire teaching session of its own.

I will teach on this as time passes, but not today.

This is simply an overview.

Slide 9

Good question!

Some say it begins after the first day of Unleavened Bread (for 2013, Nisan 16, Mar 27, which began the evening of Mar 26).

Others say it begins after the Sabbath within Unleavened Bread (2013: Nisan 20, Mar 31, evening of Mar 30...TONIGHT!)

Study! Study!

Slide 13

Looking at this from the Hebrew perspective, the books are from the right to the left.

Slide 18

The heart of the Torah!

Again, I remind you that Jewish children begin their studies by reading Leviticus!

There are some special treasures within Leviticus!

Slide 19

Can you see how if you are one side of Leviticus, Genesis and Exodus are going towards Leviticus?

Slide 20

And from the other side, Numbers and Deuteronomy are pointing to Leviticus?

Slide 21

What is the hidden treasure?

Let's look!

The first is taking the "eighth" into consideration!

Slide 22

This is Leviticus 1:1 in Hebrew.

Remember to read from right to left.

I have established that Leviticus is the "heart" of the Torah.

We can then extrapolate to understand that the Torah is the heart of God.
What is God's name? Y-H-V-H.

Slides 23

Beginning with the first letter of God's name—the yod.
Then count “eight” letters.

Slides 27

God's name!
But let's keep looking at the heart of the Torah!

Slides 28

These are the names of the books of Torah in their Hebrew text:
B'reisheet, Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar, Devarim

Slides 29

Genesis 1:1-5, in the Hebrew text.

Slide 30

Since we are looking for the heart of the Torah, let's look for the word “Torah” in the text.
Beginning with the first letter of the word “Torah” – tav.

Slide 31

Then counting 50 letters to the next letter in the word “Torah” -- vav

Slide 32

Again, 50 letters to the next letter – reysh.

Slide 33

Then another 50 letters to the last letter in the word “Torah” – hey.

Slide 34

Reading from right to left, in B'reisheet, we have a word: tav, vav, reysh, hey – Torah!

Slide 35

Looking to the next book of the Torah, Exodus (Shemot), we can find the same pattern.

Slide 36

Going to the first instance of the letter “tav”.

Slide 37

Count 50 letters to the next letter – vav.

Slide 38

50 letters to the next letter – reysh.

Slide 39

Then another 50 letters to the last letter – hey.

Slide 40

In Shemot, we have a word: tav, vav, reysh, hey
In both books, we are moving to the center.

Let's go from the other direction...

Slide 41

We look at the verses in Numbers 1:1-4, in Hebrew.

Since we are looking to the heart of the Torah from the opposite side, things will be "backwards" for the Hebrew reader (but, forward for the English reader).

Since it is backwards, we will start with the last letter of the word "Torah" – hey.

However, the pattern changes since it does not begin with the first instance of the letter "hey".

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The pattern begins with the third "hey".

The sources I referenced for this pattern did not disclose why the pattern did not start with the first hey.

The key is that the pattern is still there, and it was found.

Slide 43

Counting 50 letters to the next letter – reysh.

Slide 44

50 letters to the next letter – vav.

Slide 45

Then 50 letters to the last (first) letter of the word – tav.

Slide 46

Notice we have the same word, but it is spelled backwards in Bamidbar: hey, reysh, vav, tav
In other words, it is now pointing from the back to the middle.

Slide 47

Finally, the last book of the Torah – Deuteronomy 1:5-8.

Slide 48

Not only does the pattern not begin with the first instance of the letter "hey", but the count also changes from 50 letters to 49 letters.

Again, it is unknown why the pattern changes, but the pattern is there.

Slide 49

So, now counting 49 letters to the next letter – reysh.

Slide 50

Then, 49 letters to the next letter – vav.

Slide 51

And 49 letters to the last (first) letter – tav.

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We are getting closer to completing the picture.

Slide 53

We can now see the word “Torah” spelled out from each direction in the books surrounding Leviticus – the heart!

Fifty is number of deliverance.

The Jubilee Year is every 50th year.

The year of Jubilee is the year that all the slaves are freed and debts are canceled.

The interval from the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Weeks, also known as Pentecost, is 50 days. (See Leviticus chapter 23 for details.)

Jesus rose from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits and the Holy Spirit was given on the Feast of Weeks 50 days apart.

Forty-nine is seven sevens.

Seven is the number of completion.

God rested on the seventh day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy completes the Books of Moses and thus, is a type of completion.

It also marks the completion of the wandering in the wilderness.

But, the question still comes to: What is in the middle—the heart of the Torah?

Slide 54

So let's look to the “heart” of the Torah – within Leviticus to see what is there.

Slide 55

According to my calculations (and I could be wrong), there are 5,846 verses in the Torah.

My middle verse is Lev 8:8

When trying to find a Hebrew source determining the middle verse of the Torah, it occurred to me that the original Hebrew text did not have “verse” as we understand them.

The verses are not numbered like today's texts.

With this in mind, the Menachem Mendel web site states:

According to the Talmud the middle verse of the Torah is Lev. 13:33, while according to the counting accepted today which is based upon the Masorah, the middle verse is Lev. 8:7. Not only do the Babylonian Talmud and the Masorah disagree, but there is a third tradition. In Massechet Soferim 9:2 the middle verse of the Torah is said to be “וַיִּשָׁחֵט”. M. Higger in his edition of Soferim isn't sure as to which verse this is referring. The possibilities that he gives are Lev. 8:15, 19, 23; 9:8, 12, 18.

The Minchat Shai is understandably perplexed at the situation, concluding that we must wait for Elijah the Prophet to come sort things out (see his comments on Lev. 8:8). As modern scholars of the Masorah have shown, there were different traditions of the division of the Tanakh into verses. C.D. Ginsburg has said that “In the division of the verses, however, as is the case with other features of the Hebrew text, the different Schools had different traditions”. (Introduction, p. 69)

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A Torah scroll contains 304,805 letters, which means that the midpoint would be the 152,403rd letter

Slide 57

There are 79,847 words in the Torah.

Slide 58

There are certain letters that are different.

Some are written in an unusual fashion, while others are bigger or smaller than the standard letters of the Torah.

If one were to count all the small and large letters in a standard Torah scroll, one would find that there are 16 or 17 of these letters (depending on whether we count the truncated vav in Numbers 25:12.3) Of these, the ninth, i.e., the middle one, is the vav of gachon.

In other words, the Talmud was not referring to the vav of gachon as the middle of all the letters of the Torah scroll; rather, it was referring to it as the middle of all the unusually large and small letters in the Torah scroll.*

*Note: Shmaatin, issue 43, cited by Rabbi Menachem Kasher in Torah Sheleimah, vol. 28, ch. 12. Rabbi Yosef Tov Elem (cited in Machzor Vitry, vol. 2, p. 683) has a different tradition of small and large letters. However, according to that tradition there are 32 such letters, and the 16th is the vav of gachon, making it still in the middle.

Slide 59

There are 77 instances of double words in the Torah scroll, for example, "Abraham, Abraham" (Genesis 25:19) and "Noah, Noah" (Genesis 6:9). Of those 77 cases, the 39th instance, the middle one, is darosh, darash. So while it is not the middle of all the words in the Torah scroll, it is the middle of all the unusual double words found in the Torah scroll.*

* Note: He explains that the double words lech lecha (Genesis 12:1) and sham sam (Exodus 15:25) are not counted, for while they are spelled the same, the two words do not share the same root and have a different meaning.

Slide 60

According to the Chumash, Lev 10:16 is the middle verse, with the words darosh darash being the middle words.

And according to the Chabad.org web site, and their understanding of the middle double word, the middle verse is also Lev 10:16.

The *Stone Edition Chumash* on Leviticus 10:16 mentions that most printed editions of the Torah contain a masoretic note stating that these two Hebrew words-*darosh darash*-are the exact halfway mark of all the words of the Torah.

That is to say that if one person started with the last Hebrew word of the Torah and started counting backward, one word at a time, and another person simultaneously started with the first Hebrew word and started counting forward, they would meet at the exact center.

In Leviticus 10:16, where it says, "*darosh, darash*" right at the very center of the Torah are the words "Search, search!"

The same words can be understood to mean, "Study, study!"

Slide 63

We are to STUDY, STUDY the Torah!

What was Moses looking for in this verse?

The SIN OFFERING!

Who is the SIN OFFERING?

YESHUA!

We are to be looking for Yeshua throughout the Torah!

He is there! We just have to look!

Slide 64

With this in mind (study, study!), let's look at John 5:39.

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Most translators agree that the same verse could also be read in the imperative sense!

Slide 66

See the difference?

Yeshua is telling them to “study, study!” or “darosh, darash!”

Slide 67

A short teaching on Torah is sometimes called a *d'rash*.

Slide 68

A traditional interpretation of Torah is called a *midrash*.

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The study of the Torah is one of the commandments of the Torah.

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To teach the Torah one must study it first!

Offices of the Messiah!

Slide 75

Moses as a Type of Messiah: First Redeemer

Slide 77

Moses enjoyed access to the Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies beyond the constraints of the Aaronic priesthood.

As we saw in last week's comments, Moses was a priest of a different order, a higher order of priests than that of the Aaronic priests.

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He also led the tribes for forty years.

Slide 79

In order to be the Anointed One in all the fullness of that title, Messiah must fulfill each of these offices.

This person is the Second Redeemer, the One foretold through Moses!

Slide 80

In the years of His ministry among the disciples, He functioned as a prophet.

He spoke like a prophet, uttering the words of God, chastising and rebuking, warning and admonishing.

He called Israel to repentance and reminded them of God's word.

He heard directly from God and conveyed the Father's message to Israel.

Those are the roles, the job and function of every prophet.

But the Master went further than this.

He replicated many of the miracles of the most famous of the prophets: Moses, Elijah and Elisha.

His healings confirmed His prophetic ministry, showing that He walked in line with the greatest of Israel's prophets.

Slide 81

Yeshua functions even now as our High Priest before God.

He makes intercession and access for us, having worked atonement through the sacrifice of His own life.

He has applied His own spilled blood on our behalf.

By necessity, then, He entered His priestly office only subsequent to His sacrifice-the death and resurrection.

It is important to understand that we are speaking metaphorically and symbolically.

As the writer of the book of Hebrews points out, Yeshua is not truly an Aaronic priest.

Neither does He serve in an earthly Temple.

Rather, He serves in the greater reality, and His priesthood is infinitely greater and more substantial.

Therefore, though we speak of Him as performing the functions of priest on our behalf, the images we have in our minds of Him applying blood to an altar in heaven are, of course, merely crude imaginings, primitive approximations of the greater spiritual transactions that occurred with His death, resurrection and ascension.

Slide 82

When He returns, He will come in glory, with trumpet and fanfare, mounted on a warhorse, commanding armies, taking up David's throne in Jerusalem and ushering the kingdom of heaven on earth.

In that sense, He will be a king after the pattern of His father David.

The Eighth Day

Slide 83

Leviticus 9 is a record of what happened on the eighth day

Slide 84

For 7 days, Aaron and his sons were practicing their duties.

On the eighth day, which is the first day of the week

Slide 86

Throughout the seven days of their confinement, Aaron and his sons prepared to step into the role of priesthood.

On the eighth day, they were ready to take over the sacrificial services.

The sequestering of the priests offers us a glimpse of Messiah sequestered in the heavenly sanctuary with the Father.

Slide 87

The priests come out of seclusion in the Tabernacle on the eighth day.

Throughout the ancient Near East, the number seven was regarded as the number of divinity, the number of the heavens.

In the Torah, the number seven represents the cycle of time.

There are seven days in the week, seven weeks between Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, seven festival Sabbaths, seven years in a sabbatical cycle, seven sets of seven years in a Jubilee.

Slide 88

The number eight represents a step outside the cycles of ordinary time.

Eight is the number of eternity.

Eight is also the number for new beginnings.

Slide 89

"Eighth day" was a term in early church literature sometimes applied to the day of Yeshua's resurrection since it followed the Sabbath, the seventh day.

Priestly service begins on the eighth day.

Similarly, Yeshua's priesthood began on the day after the Sabbath, the day of His resurrection.

Though the death and resurrection of Messiah happened at a fixed point in time, their real spiritual consequence is unbounded by time.

His atoning sacrifice was available to generations that came before Him, just as it is available to the generations that followed Him.

Lifting the Hands

Slide 95

The priesthood was commanded to bless Israel with it. Each day, following the daily, continual burnt offering, the priests would recite this blessing over those assembled in the Temple.

Slide 96

"The going up to the platform": because in Temple times, the priests would ascend to a platform (*duchan*) before conferring the blessing.

Slide 97

In Temple times, the priests would lift their hands and make the sign of the Hebrew letter (*shin*) with their fingers.

The *shin* is an accepted Jewish abbreviation for the name of God (El Shaddai).

Slide 99

After His death and resurrection, He led His disciples out onto the Mount of Olives as far as Bethany "And He lifted up His hands and blessed them" (Luke 24:50).

Slide 100

Just as Aaron concluded his first day officiating over the sacrificial services by lifting his hands and blessing the people, Messiah concluded His sacrificial mission by lifting His hands and blessing His disciples.

By using the term "lifted up His hands," Luke makes it clear that Yeshua blessed them with the priestly benediction of Numbers 6:24-26.

Slide 101

The etiquette of the Temple required the congregation to look down when the priests lifted their hands out of respect for the name of God.

The Talmud explains that when the priests lifted their hands in the Temple and blessed the people, the glory of God rested upon their hands.

The custom was to avert one's eyes from the hands of the priest to avoid being blinded by the glory of God.

One who stared at the priest's hands risked losing his eyesight.

(*b.Chagigah* 16a)

Slide 102

When the Master lifted His hands to bless the disciples with the priestly benediction, the scars left behind by the nails were clearly visible.

The scars of Messiah are testimony to the glory of God.

While Yeshua blessed His disciples, "He parted from them and was carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:51).

Glory of the Lord

Slide 107

The term "glory of the LORD" appears to be an early theological circumvention.

Theologically, the ancient Israelite understood that God is invisible, and any visible manifestation of God cannot be God in His totality.

The term "glory of the LORD" allowed the writers of the Scriptures a way to speak of encountering a visible manifestation of God.

Slide 108

Ezekiel sees a throne carried by angels on which a figure like a man is seated.

But Ezekiel is careful to avoid saying that the image he sees is actually God.

He distances himself three times from saying, "It was the LORD."

It was (1) an appearance of (2) the likeness of (3) the glory of the LORD.

Nevertheless, the simple meaning is that it was God upon the throne, or at least as much of Himself as He chose to disclose to the prophet.

Slide 109

In the Torah, the glory of the LORD ordinarily appears in some form of fire and/or cloud. Not that the fire/cloud is God, but it is the manifestation of God.

Slide 115

We can then say that Messiah is the glory of God.

He is the revelation of God's presence in human flesh, the tangible, visible representation of God in human form.

Slide 121

When we behold Messiah, will our reaction be the same as the reaction of the Israelites when they beheld the glory of the LORD?

"When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Leviticus 9:24).

Drawing nearer...

Slide 123

The story of the inauguration of the priesthood illustrates the need for an intercessor.

Though the Tabernacle had been set up for eight days, God had not yet received the sacrifices of Israel.

Only after the priests were functioning in their assigned roles, carrying out the priestly service, did the Divine Presence appear in fire and consume the sacrifices on the altar.

The sacrifices represent the people's attempt to draw near to God.

Without the intermediary of Aaron and his sons, those attempts would be futile, heaped on the altar.

When Aaron and his sons stepped into the priesthood, however, God received the effort of the people, and His glory appeared in their midst.

Slide 124

The same is true of our own attempts to reach God.

Although we are not offering sacrifices, we are nonetheless attempting to draw near to God.

Our goal is to enter His presence.

We desire for Him to receive us and to reward our efforts at reaching Him.

Without an intercessor, however, our best efforts are futile.

Our religious acts, our prayers, our *mitzvot* and our striving for salvation all lie cold, piled up on the altar.

We need a priest to facilitate the relationship.

Slide 125

Judaism often criticizes our faith in Messiah on the basis that any man can reach God if he simply turns his heart toward heaven.

Contemporary Judaism believes that an intercessor is not necessary.

Slide 126

The Torah teaches the contrary.

The Torah teaches that man's efforts alone are insufficient.

Even God's desire for us to be in relationship with Him is not enough.

A third party is necessary.

In the Tabernacle, the third party is the priesthood.

In the matter of our salvation and personal relationship with God, the third party is Messiah.

Slide 127

Before Israel's sacrifices could be received, Aaron and his sons needed to offer sacrifices on their own behalf.

Once they had completed their seven-day inauguration and then brought the required sin offering and burnt offering for themselves, they were ready to complete the circuit between God and Israel.

Only then could the sacrifices of Israel be received.

Slide 128

In the same way, Messiah came to the earth, born as a human being, inaugurated into the role of the righteous Son of God.

He offered Himself in complete, sinless devotion to the Father and gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin. Then the circuit between God and man was closed.

Because of the intermediary nature of Messiah's work, our efforts, religious acts, *mitzvot* and prayers are received by the Father, even as the sacrifices of Israel were consumed on the altar thanks to the priestly effort of Aaron and his sons.

Consuming Fire!

Slide 131

The joy of the day was cut short when two of Aaron's sons make a fatal misstep.

Carried away with the excitement and euphoria of the moment, Nadab and Abihu decided to innovate by introducing a little spontaneity into the worship service.

It appears that they offered incense at the wrong time, in the wrong place, and in the wrong manner with the wrong fire.

The result was disastrous.

Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them both.

Slide 132

Moses explains the tragedy in an odd manner.

Slide 133

Moses interprets "those who come near" to be Aaron's sons.

Slide 134

The conflagration that killed Nadab and Abihu glorified God because it demonstrated His absolute holiness to all Israel.

It revealed something of His person and character.

It was a visible, tangible expression of God.

Furthermore, it underscored the seriousness of the situation.

Intersection with God is not something to be treated lightly.

Those who witnessed the deaths of Nadab and Abihu were imbued with a healthy fear of God.

Resources:

Resources:

El Shaddai Ministries (www.elshaddaiministries.us)

First Fruits of Zion (www.ffoz.org)

Gateways to Torah, Rabbi Russell Resnik

Partners in Torah (www.partnersintorah.org)

Chumash

Tikkun

Judaism 101 (<http://www.jewfaq.org/index.htm>)

Chabad of Pierce County (www.chabadpiercecounty.com)

Saltshakers (<http://www.hebrewroots.com>)

Chabad.org (http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1883118/jewish/What-Is-the-Midpoint-of-the-Torah.htm)

The Sefer Torah Project (<http://torah.cbebk.org/frequently-asked-questions/#7>)

Menachem Mendel: <http://menachemmendel.net/blog/the-middle-verse-of-the-torah/>

Chabad: http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1883118/jewish/What-Is-the-Midpoint-of-the-Torah.htm

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