



#27 Tazria Leviticus 12:1-13:59

Torah Teaching By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged
Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah
(We also use transliterations from Hebrew)

The portion for this week is Tazria. Tazria means "she conceives." The portion Tazria begins by talking about circumcision. Genesis 17:10 NKJV says, "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised." The word covenant means agreement. Those who want to live in agreement with God should circumcise their male babies. Shaul (Paul) taught circumcision; Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution?"

Circumcision of adults was dangerous, and the Old Testament commandments teach us that life is to be protected. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." So, the issue back in Shaul's time was the loss of life due to the circumcision of adult males. Those who were preaching circumcision of adults were Torah breakers. Circumcision was not done away with according to Shaul. Those who say it is just for the Jews are teaching false doctrine.

There is light even among darkness.

Sometimes we think that everything is backwards and evil, and no one wants what is good. Just because the prevailing attitudes are far from God, it does not mean there are no people who keep God's commandments. There are many among Jews, Christians, and Messianic Jews that keep God's commandments.

At various times, Old Testament believers have committed idolatry. Idolatry is the worship or prayer to anyone or anything other than the true God. Exodus 20:3-6 NKJV says, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth

generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

Even at times where the majority were making terrible mistakes with their lives there were still believers around. 1 Kings 19:18 NKJV says, "Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." So, take heart. You can be among those who keep God's commandments and if you are now living in sin, you can repent, and God will forgive you. Repentance means that you change how you are living and rebuke the sinful ways you were doing and decide not to do those things ever again. Psalms 103:12-13 NKJV says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him."

It is a shame that good believers have to share in the problems created by those who do what is wrong. In the case of Israel at one time, the nation was defeated, and many good believers were taken captive to Babylon. Many kept their faith though and some of those exiled were able to return to their homeland.

Keep your heart and mind attached to God. It is not hard.

Sometimes we think that following God is difficult, or we have been told that following God is difficult. For the most part it is actually the opposite because doing what God says is a productive and good way to live.

The Bible says that what God commands us is not too difficult to do. Deuteronomy 30:11 NIV says, "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." All the extra man-made commands can make it difficult to follow God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Read your Bible and start following what God tells us to do. There are many religions that just follow what people have made up. God's word in the Bible was given to us by God.

This scripture is talking about the Old Testament scriptures because there was no New Testament at the time. 2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV says, "No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The Bible and not what mankind has made up are the scriptures that came from God. People may say that they believe is their culture, but man-made culture is not from God.

Test what people are teaching. If they are teaching murder, they are contradicting how the Bible says to live. If they are kidnapping people, the Bible says that kidnappers are to be put to death. Kidnapping is wrong. Read the Bible. The Bible says that men are not to dress like women and women are not to dress like men.

Those that teach otherwise are wrong. 2 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly." Noah

taught people to do what is right. That is what righteousness means. See Deuteronomy 6:17-18 where it says that we are to keep God's commandments and do what is "right and good." Those that live in sin and preachers who teach others that it is okay to do what is wrong are according to 2 Peter 2:17 NKJV, "Wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." Your man-made ideas will cause you extreme eternal pain. God is a good God and He must judge those who bring evil into the world, or He would not be a just and good God.

God's ways bring His presence and goodness. The ways of mankind do not work. (Although they think they do).

I sometimes talk about that if nations would start following God's commandments to not murder, and not covet and steal we would have fewer wars. They self-justify their behavior and cause terrible atrocities. False religions justify murder and taking what belongs to others. The Bible does not teach murder, stealing, or coveting.

God is good and His commandments are good. Psalms 119:68 NKJV, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes." Psalms 106:1 NKJV says, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever." God forgives those who are truly sorry for their sin and those who are determined to live right. Psalms 86:5 NKJV says, "For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

God wants what is best for us, He is upright. Those who are humble, who want God's truths, learn His good commandments. God's ways are the true and good way to live. Psalms 25:8-10 NKJV says, "Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth."

People are paying for the darkness they desire. They think their wrong ideas and lies do not matter.

They may think ideas and ideals are relative. Namely, that each person has their own preferences and there is nothing wrong with these even if the Bible says they are wrong. The creator of the universe is right, and they are wrong. There is a saying that you reap what you sow. It means that a person will often receive the corresponding consequences for their behavior. Isaiah 40:26 NKJV says, "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing."

Nothing is hidden to God. Do not think that your evil will not catch up to you. Remember the darkness for eternity scripture in 2 Peter 2:17. God knows what is going on. Numbers 32:23 NKJV says, "But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out." Not keeping the commandments of a good and caring God is evil and separates people from God because God wants us to do good and not evil. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you."

Sometimes we think that the world is backwards, and no one wants what is right and good. Stay true to God's good commandments. Learn them and grow spiritually. Keep your heart and mind where it belongs. Stay strong and do what is right. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." God is good and His commandments bring goodness into the world instead of the pain and consequences that come with evil. You reap what you sow, so sow what is right and good. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you."

Torah Study

This week is the portion, Tazria. Tazria means "she conceives." Its Hebrew root is *zarah* which means to sow. In Genesis 3:15 the same root is used and translated seed which is a prophecy about the Messiah overcoming the devil through the seed of the woman, namely one of the offspring of Eve some day in the future.

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." Yeshua the Messiah has given us power over the suggestions of the devil. James 4:7-8 NKJV says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." Even in Yeshua's time they understood that the devil was at the cause of some sin.

The portion Tazria begins with laws concerning the birth of a baby boy. If a woman conceives a boy, he is to be circumcised on the eighth day. Shaul (Paul) taught that male babies should be circumcised in Galatians 5:11 NKJV; he says, "I still preach circumcision."

The issue of circumcision.

Adults do not have to be circumcised because of the danger involved. That was the issue for new Gentile believers in the Messiah Yeshua in that era. Yeshua said that saving life supersedes other commandments. Luke 14:5 talks about saving life even though it is Shabbat, a day of rest. The Old Testament commandments even say that they are to help animals at risk. What about people? Deuteronomy 22:4 NKJV says, "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." The people of Shaul's time who were telling adult men they should be circumcised were putting new believers at risk, and people were dying because it was dangerous to do at that time. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." We are to protect life. Shaul taught circumcision of male babies. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision."

You may find this interesting. Circumcision was an agreement made with Abraham that he believed in God (see Genesis 17:10-14). It included everyone associated with Abraham. Those who do not circumcise their males have broken the agreement between themselves and God. The agreement was to be practiced forever. Galatians 3:6-9 NKJV says, "Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." Remember the word righteousness means that he did what was right. Abraham and all those associated with Abraham circumcised their males and

kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." He did what was right. He was righteous.

Since we are sons through Abraham, we are required to not only keep God's commandments but to practice the circumcision of male babies. Genesis 17:14 NKJV says, "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

The portion continues. The woman is to refrain from marital relations for 7 days if she has a boy and for 14 days if she has a girl. There is a 40-day period of purification if she has a boy, 80 days for a girl and she is to make a sacrifice for her purification. Often people are anxious about resuming activities after having a child. Why not be patient and listen to what God says.

When someone has a skin sore, boil, burn, or sore on their head or under their beard that could turn tzara'at (leprous), they are to be examined by the Cohen (Priest) and the Cohen is to determine if they are leprous or not. The person can be isolated for seven-day periods to determine if they are leprous. Being bald does not make a person unclean. People with tzara'at must identify themselves by wearing torn clothes and by voice and live outside the camp. The Cohen will also examine clothing for tzara'at (leprosy) and if it is infected, the garment must be burned up.

We see God's protection over women in the purification period for women following childbirth giving her time to recover. Also, there were many instructions given for watching out for leprosy. It shows us that the commandments of God are there to protect us and help us. We can learn from this that it is appropriate to not spread disease and the idea of quarantine is biblical. We should always remember that God is for us and cares about people and we should care about others too.

Back in the 1950s, quarantine was still practiced in order to protect others. Who wouldn't save the life of someone in their family if they could? I remember being in quarantine for a sickness I had when I was young. I didn't like it, but that is the right thing to do. Be patient and thoughtful in your approach to life. Years ago, some of the guys I worked with did not like wearing eye protection. If I had not been wearing eye protection, I would have lost an eye. A large piece of hot metal hit my eye protection hard.

I often went along with my friends who did not keep the safety rules that protected me, but I am glad I had safety glasses on that day. These things were instituted to help protect life, so do not scoff at them. I was talking to my uncle one day and he said that another person at work had just died because of carelessness. They were showing their equipment to someone, and they turned on the power while someone was working on the equipment. We now have lockout rules that prevent someone from turning on the electricity while someone is working on it.

A note about leprosy and speaking evil. Myriam, Moshe's sister, was saying bad things about Moshe and ended up with leprosy. When she repented, she was healed. We know there is a connection between speaking evil and emotional problems and even physical problems.

Often people who focus on the negative become sick or emotionally sick. The ancient Rabbis saw a connection between speaking evil (lashon harah) and sickness in the Bible. They said that is it wrong to commit lashon harah (have an "evil tongue"). Shaul said, "If there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things;" Philippians 4:8 NKJV. He also must have believed that lashon harah (an evil tongue) was wrong. So, watch your attitude and what you say. I am not saying to be a Pollyanna and think everything is great when it is not.

The Haftarah for the portion Tazria is 2 Kings 4:42-5:19. This portion in 2 Kings begins with the school of the prophets being miraculously fed. Then the captain of the armies of Aram, Na'aman, is healed of tzara'at (leprosy). Na'aman went to the king of Israel first and the king was despondent, but Elisha heard about it and told the king to send Na'aman to him. Elisha tells him to dip in the Jordon 7 times and he did so and was healed. Elisha took no reward, but his servant disobeyed Elisha and Geichazi asked for the reward and he and his descendants ended up with the tzara'at after he did that.

We should remember that God wants obedience for our benefit. After Na'aman put off his pride, he received healing from God. So put off your pride and do what is right and keep God's commandments. God knows what is best for us.

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

Male babies are to be circumcised. The people of Shaul's time who were telling adult men they should be circumcised were putting new believers at risk, and people were dying because it was dangerous to do at that time. Exodus 20:13 NKJV says, "You shall not murder." We are to protect life. Shaul taught circumcision of male babies. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision." We are to keep all of God's commandments and not just some of them. Some say we are children of Abraham by faith. Abraham kept God's commandments (see Genesis 26:5). All those who are of Abraham including the foreigner are required to keep God's commandments and have their male babies circumcised (see Genesis 17:9-14). God said to Abraham in Genesis 17:14 NKJV, "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant." Genesis 17:13 NKJV says, "It is an everlasting covenant." It is not done away with.

There is a ritual uncleanness after a woman has children. She is not to eat of the sacrifices. She is not to have sexual relations for 7 days if it is a boy, and for 14 days if it is a girl. She is to give a sacrifice at the end of her uncleanness, 41 days for boy and 81 days if she has a girl. Leviticus 12:2-8.

A person with a skin condition is unclean and it must be determined if it is leprosy or not. Leviticus 13:2-6.

Hair is not to be shaved from a discoloration of the skin. Leviticus 13:33-34.

A leper is to live outside the camp, to keep their hair long, and tear their clothes. Cloth also needs to be inspected to see if it is leprous. Leviticus 13:47-50. Quarantine to stop the spread of a dangerous disease is a proper application of the commandment to live outside the camp.

These are the directions for restoring the purity of a leper. Leviticus 14:2-32.

A house can be unclean and what must be done. Leviticus 14:34-38.

A man with gonorrhoea remains unclean and what to do about it. Leviticus 15:1-8.

A man healed of gonorrhoea is to present a burnt offering and a sin offering. Leviticus 15:13-14.

A man having a discharge of semen while not having intercourse is unclean and what to do. Leviticus 15:16.

A woman during her menstruation or when bleeding is unclean and what she is to do for irregular bleeding. Leviticus 15:19, 25, 28-30.

The Aaronic Blessing

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name.

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. 2,363 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה). Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֲלֹהֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְךָ
 וַיִּשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֲלֹהֶיךָ, וַיִּשְׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.