



MATOT - TRIBES

Numbers 30:1 to 32:42

Jeremiah 1:1 to 2:3

Matthew 5:33-37

James 4:1 to 5:20

Vows and Oaths

Numbers Chapter 30 is entirely devoted to the subject of vows and oaths. When believers come to Yeshua, as their Messiah, it is by way of a promise and an oath. Through repentance, they pledge their life to Him saying, “*Come, rule and reign in my life.*” When two enter into an agreement, they enter a covenant relationship. It is this way with Yeshua. When we pledge our lives to Him, we enter His Kingdom Covenant, which consists of *His statutes and judgments, Sabbaths, Covenants, and Feast Days* - all that He has. His heavenly principles that govern the earth (Exodus 24:3).

Yeshua taught His people to love one another. He then went on to calibrate that loving your neighbor translates to *walking in His holy commandments.*

✠ **John 13:3, 14:17, 20, 15:10, 17** “A new command I give you: love one another. On that day [*that you give your life to Me*], you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in His love. This is my command: love each other.”

✠ **1 John 2:9-11** “He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

What Are Yeshua's Commandments?

When God/*Elohim* spoke on Mount Sinai, it was through His mouthpiece *Yeshua*, the Incarnate Living Word, called *the Gospel or Torah*. *Yeshua* is the voice of God/*Elohim*. The principles spoken at Mount Sinai are *Yeshua's* commandments or *His Gospel*. By His Word (*Yeshua*), God/*Elohim* created the universe and everything in it. The physical presence of God's/*Elohim* Word is *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* is in the Father, and the Father is in Him, and *Yeshua* is in us - hence the force that created the universe also lives within. To love our neighbor is to love *Yeshua* by walking in His Holy instructions/*Torah*, thereby keeping His commandments. His Word, conceived in our spirit and then spoken becomes a creative force. Thus, when we speak, it is with the power to bless or the power to curse. (Isaiah 66:1; Proverbs 23:7; John 1:1,14; 15:7; John 5:46-47) (*For more information see study Beresheet in Genesis 1- www.sheepfoldgleanings.com*).

✠ **John 14:23-24** Jesus/*Yeshua* answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.”

From what we *think, say, and do*, becomes what we *sow*; hence also what we *reap*. What we say will come toward us. Thus, we are what we speak. If we sow healthy seed, we will reap blessings and a good harvest. If we sow immorality and perverse speech, we invite poverty *physically, spiritually, emotionally, and financially*. By our thought, talk, and lifestyle we either join our soul to a blessed life or a cursed one. We are to be responsible for the vows and oaths we make. Therefore, if we fail to keep them – we are held accountable. Our thoughts and actions are to honor our promise to *Yeshua* and mirror His lifestyle. However, if our lifestyle produces fruit opposite to our confession that fruit will expose where our heart is by what we have sown.

✠ **Deuteronomy 23:21-23** “When you make a vow to the LORD/*Yahweh* your God/*Elohim*, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD/*Yahweh* your God/*Elohim* will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD/*Yahweh* your God/*Elohim* what you have promised with your mouth.”

If we are in *Yeshua*, we are also called a people of His Word, a people of integrity and honor. Therefore, just as God/*Elohim* kept His promises to us, we also are *doers* of His word.

✠ **Joshua 23:14** “Behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD/*Yahweh* your God/*Elohim* spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.”

If we experience a traumatic or painful event in our life (whether by another person or an accident - physically, spiritually or emotionally), that event or individual does not have *the right* to shape our future in a negative way, *unless we allow it*. We can change the world around us by choosing to have a moral heart attitude, forgiving others, turning (*teshuvah*) from painful experiences, and move forward. We make choices hourly and daily for which realm we walk in - *blessings or curses*. Thus, in that regard, we hold the destiny Yeshua has given us in our hand.

📖 **Philippians 4:4-8** “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God/*Elohim*; and the peace of God/*Elohim*, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus/*Yeshua HaMashiach*. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.”

📖 **James 1:20-22** “For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God/*Elohim*. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

📖 **Mark 7:21-23** “*For from within, out of the heart of men*, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

📖 **Matthew 15:19-20** “*For out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

Vows

📖 **Numbers 30:2, 9** When a man, a widow or a divorced woman makes a vow to the LORD/*Yahweh*, or takes an oath to obligate themselves by a pledge, they must not break their word but must do everything they have said.

If a man or woman commits anything to God/*Elohim*, self or their neighbor, they are to honor their word, as a promise made in God's/*Elohim kingdom* denotes your maturity to carry out your pledge. Therefore, when making a promise, vow or oath you automatically put yourself in the position of being *a person of your word*. Therefore, must fulfill your word.

📖 **Deuteronomy 23:23** “That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD/*Yahweh* your God/*Elohim* what you have promised with your mouth.”

If a man makes an inappropriate declaration, he must make restitution, especially if he has uttered a slanderous remark. He is bound both legally and morally to God/*Elohim* for both accounts. If a woman, still living under her father's care, makes an inappropriate statement, a careless word or takes an oath, her father (*being her head covering*), upon hearing it, can forbid and cancel her rash commitments and restore her bring her back under Kingdom principles. It is same for a married woman. Upon hearing a hasty pledge, her husband (*her head covering*) can respond to God/*Elohim* on her behalf and nullify the vow. Thus, the vow will not be binding upon *them*. But if these men do not respond or cover their women, then any foolish pledge the women have spoken will be binding on both the man and the woman as God/*Elohim* holds the *man* accountable for *their* words.

🌿 **Ecclesiastes 5:2** “Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God/*Elohim*. For God/*Elohim* is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.”

🌿 **Ecclesiastes 5:4-7** “When you make a vow to God/*Elohim*, do not delay to pay it; for *He* has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed - Better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God/*Elohim* that it *was* an error. Why should God/*Elohim* be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands? For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But fear God/*Elohim*.”

Women in The Assembly

🌿 **1 Corinthians 14:34-35** “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak [*out*] (*The word speak is Strong's G2981 “laleo” meaning to utter a voice or emit a sound, to speak, to use the tongue or the faculty of speech, to utter articulate sounds*); but *they are* to be submissive, as the law [*Torah: Numbers 30*] also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak [*out, i.e. to scream*] in church.”

In the setting above, Paul was not speaking in a church like we see today. He taught in a pagan temple. Many Corinthian's were not familiar with His God/*Elohim* or His Word. They were untaught, unprincipled and at times unruly people who were accustomed to practicing pagan rituals. It was also a female dominated society. Paul was sent to strengthen the new believers and help establish proper Kingdom order among the Corinthians. In his teaching, he was not saying that women were *never* allowed to speak in church. The women Paul addressed in this passage were accustomed to appeasing pagan gods. One method was by screaming. Because of this distraction, Paul requested they be silent so others could hear him teach. If those women would like to learn more, their husbands could share with them when they got home (1Corinthians 14:34-35).

Coverings and Conduct

✠ **1 Corinthians 11:3-16** “I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ/*Messiah*, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ/*Messiah is* God/*Elohim*. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since he is the image and glory of God/*Elohim*; but woman is the glory of man. For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God/*Elohim*. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God/*Elohim* with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God/*Elohim*.” (Note: *Italicized words are not in the original scripture but added by the translators*).

In 1 Corinthians 11:3-16, many have been taught that Paul was teaching women to wear a physical covering like a scarf or wrap around their heads. However, Paul was not addressing a piece of clothing or the hair on one’s head but referencing the covering upholding one’s commitment to a vow and oaths from Numbers 30. Honoring (or covering) the word we promise is critical for a believer. Paul’s theme throughout this chapter and the chapters before and after are about honorable conduct and the fact that our character must match our confession according to Messiah’s word. Thus, this passage is about being a people of our word.

The word *vow* in Hebrew is *neder* (Strong’s H5088) meaning: *to bind or imprison, and to dedicate a specific object or creature to God/Elohim*. The word *oath* in Hebrew is *sh’vuah* (Strong’s H7621) meaning: *an obligation taken upon yourself rather than imposed on the object*. *Sh’vua* comes from the root word *sheba* meaning *seven*.

What happens if a person speaks a vow or an oath without a covering to guide them? What happens when they do not uphold or honor the word they uttered? Scripture is very clear that we are bound by the words we speak.

Some people tend to think of a vow as only used for formal occasions like a promise of marriage. However, many fail to realize that pronouncing a commitment to God/*Elohim* or a person is a vow that *carries a creative force behind it*. If a believer *promises* to do something, their words then become *binding*. Therefore, God’s/*Elohim* people must be very careful in what they say, how they say it, and follow through on their words from *start to finish*. *Action* to a commitment

is a fundamental practice of faith in Yeshua. If we do not follow through on the promises made, then they are *false prophecies*.

Promises

Many make vows with no thought of committing to their words. They say things like, “*I’ll call you sometime.*” “*We’ll get together.*” “*That’s a promise.*” “*You will have it on time.*” “*We will love to come.*” “*We will be there.*” “*You can count on me!*” Sadly, these vows are just empty promises with no real meaning behind them. Instead, they have become social closing remarks rather than earnest endeavors.

Then there are the personal promises, vows, and oaths like “*I’ll never hurt you again.*” “*I’m going to quit.*” “*I promise Honey.*” “*I will never do it again.*” “*I will be home on time.*” “*I’ll be right there.*” “*I love you.*” Unfulfilled promises are forms of *excuses*.

As Yeshua is faithful to perform His word to us, we must also be true to God/*Elohim* and our neighbor. That is the essence of love; *doing* what we say. As children of the Living God/*Elohim*, a promise becomes a prophecy or a covenant committed between two parties. As His ambassadors on earth, speaking a pledge links us to God’s/*Elohim* eternal, immortal Kingdom. Unkept promises become empty containers or vessels. Thus, misrepresent (*blaspheme*) His Name and Kingdom. Empty promises are *lies*. They are not part of God’s/*Elohim* Kingdom.

✠ **James 3:9-10** “With it [*the tongue*] we bless our God/*Elohim* and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God/*Elohim*. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.”

Broken vows and oaths are careless and hurt others. Empty words can create awkward situations that cause other’s to carry the burden generated by a broken promise. When God’s/*Elohim* people misrepresent *the Word*, they become untrustworthy, unreliable, and unpredictable. Breaking vows and oaths is a reflection of not valuing oneself, as well as disrespect of others; both of which are the action of an unloving spirit. Disrespect is a form of self-idolatry, rebellion to authority, and self-deception of the heart. Dishonor of self and others can become a stronghold that creates the fruit of distrust and dishonesty, all contrary to the Holy Spirit/*Ruach* thus; our word is no longer our bond, no longer truthful, and no longer valid. A relationship cannot be established on a blanket of empty expressions, promises, and excuses. If our word is not our bond, we will be unstable and unreliable in all our ways (called double minded). For those caught in a cycle, not able to keep commitments, know that by following through on what they say can bring healing, not only for themselves but also for others. We are called to be reconcilers of His word. When our testimony matches our commitment, it builds trust and respect. Being committed to the words we speak, means we are obedient and quick to work out our *salvation through the heart of repentance and sanctification* (Ezekiel 18:30-32; 2Corinthians Chapters 6-8; James 4:8-10).

- ✚ **Ephesians 4:14-16** “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, *speaking the truth in love*, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ/*Messiah* - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”
- ✚ **Ephesians 5:28** “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.”
- ✚ **Matthew 7:24-27** “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”
- ✚ **Proverbs 8:36** “But he who sins against me [*Yahweh*] wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me [*lie*] love death.”

Excuses, Justifications, and Rationalization

It is human nature to want to be accepted by others. As believers, if the heart is not entirely given over to Yeshua, we tend to rely more on man’s opinion and approval than in keeping a relationship with God’s/*Elohim* or living by His word. If a believer’s action is not consistent with his or her confession in Yeshua, and they have not kept their pledge to God/*Elohim*, self, and others, then, in essence, they are endorsing *disloyalty and falsehood*.

What if a believer is questioned regarding the fruit of his or her walk and their first response is *an adverse reaction*? If they are reactors, unforgiveness, bitterness, and even idols may be rooted in the heart. Living with unchecked guilt can lead to uncontrolled physical addictions like alcohol, smoking, porn, etc., which in turn can lead to illnesses, as one cannot build a life on smoke screens, shifting sand, and lies.

Does that person tend to blame others as the reason why they are angry? Do they become defensive accusing others as being controlling or condemning? Justifications and excuses are defense mechanisms that make them accountable before God/*Elohim*. If a believer resorts to backtalk, alibis, and self-rationalization they exhibit a heart that is not wholly given over to Yeshua. He or she has not fully entered sanctification yet. Being critical, excusing or avoiding responsibility for not keeping *their* word to others is a *sin*.

People in depravity often seek ways to justify continuing their conduct. If believers are well meaning but addicted to habitual excuses, chronic inability to finish projects or unable to keep their promises, they have a spiritually rooted problem. When people participate in willful sin,

they cannot excuse it away as if they cannot help themselves and expect others to accept it. Individuals who continue in persistent transgression are exhibiting how their habit has captured their heart. They are *hooked* and find it tough to quit (as in alcoholism or drug addiction). Nevertheless, they began the sin because they *chose a pattern of life that led to the habit*. If people have no power on their own to overcome a problem, only through Yeshua will they be able to resist temptation and overcome. Scripture says that Yeshua has provided *everything His people need to overcome sin*. For that reason, God/*Elohim* continues to hold them accountable. Therefore, sin is without excuse.

Habitual excuses, unfulfilled and empty words are dysfunctions. Sadly they do not win people over or misrepresent Yeshua; whose Spirit lives within. In some cultures, if a father *has to ask* his child to do a chore, it is considered disrespectful to the parent, as the father has already taken the time and the patience to teach his children beforehand. He then expects his children to take the *initiative* and *respond*, respecting his words by obeying them. *Taking the initiative is what brings honor to the father*. It is the same for us. Yahweh has already declared His word to us. When we take the *initiative* and *respond*, this brings Him honor. When we walk in His word, Scripture says we are walking in His righteousness. This is the way of holiness.

📖 **Deuteronomy 6:25** “Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD/*Yahweh* our God/*Elohim*, as He has commanded us.”

By maintaining our commitments and promises, a significant guarantee of blessings and prosperity is generated. Breaking our word creates a notable withdrawal. Every time we break a commitment, we eat away our self-esteem. How can we feel good about ourselves if we cannot keep our promises? Maybe we say yes when we want to say no because the desire to please others (or saving face called pride) is stronger than honoring God/*Elohim*. Some craft a false commitment out of a feeling of guilt or wanting to be liked or just because they never actually learned to say *no*. And, then there are the *duty addicts* whose lives end up a treadmill of endless promises impossible to keep. Along the way, family and friends move further back on the bus, as the over-achiever trades commitments and promises made to their family for a more self-serving opportunity. “*I’m doing it for you, Honey!*” The family should not be given crumbs off the table. It is our responsibility to serve them a banquet.

📖 **James 4:1** “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?”

📖 **1 John 1:5-7** “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God/*Elohim* is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ/*Yeshua Ha Mashiach* His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Some reason that the cost of being honest may be too high and create a habit of lying that is rooted in a lifestyle of compromise while trying to gain favor with others around them. In conflicts, lukewarm people tend to leave things just as they are so as not to rock the boat. Some just get up and walk out of the room thinking that will solve their problems and keep others quiet, hoping the tension will evaporate over time. This kind of reasoning is not from a cleansed heart but allows sin to abound even more. With that logic, guilt will always be their constant companion. Excuses, justifications, and self-rationalizations are all forms of *self-perjury*. When a believer starts to weight the cost of compromise and begins to be honest with God/*Elohim*, self, and others, they will stop lying and truly experience a heart conversion (Luke 22:32 KJV).

✿ **1 John 2:15-17** “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God/*Elohim* abides forever.”

✿ **James 1:14-16** “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

Rationalization

Rationalization (also known as making excuses) is an unconscious defense mechanism in which perceived controversial behaviors or feelings are logically justified and explained in a rational or logical manner to avoid any real explanation, and made consciously tolerable. Rationalization encourages irrational or unacceptable behavior, motives, or feelings. This process ranges from fully conscious (e.g. to present an external defense against ridicule from others) to mostly subconscious (e.g. to create a block against internal feelings of guilt).

Self-justification (internal or external) describes how, when a person encounters a situation in which a person's behavior is inconsistent with their belief, that person tends to justify the behavior and deny any negative feedback associated with the response. Example: ‘Their minds rationalize it by inventing a comfortable illusion’. Thus for example ‘people who start to smoke or drink again after quitting for a while perceive it to be less dangerous to their health, compared to their views when they decided to stop’ - thereby averting their ‘post-decisional regret’ through their new rationalization. Self-justification aims to diminish one's responsibility for a behavior viewing themselves in a positive light.

Justification

An explanation that is aimed at eliminating or lessening the negative value of the outcome of a questionable action.

Excuse

An explanation that is aimed at eliminating or lessening our responsibility for a questionable action.

Martin Luther King Jr. said,

“It seems to be a fact of life that human beings cannot continue to do wrong without eventually reaching out for some rationalization to clothe their act.”

We are made in God’s/*Elohim* image. If we do not impart Yeshua, we misrepresent Him. That behavior in Scripture is called *strange fire*. Thus, our word is no longer our bond (our covenant). Many do not realize unfulfilled vows/oaths will bind and imprison. Empty promises hinder God’s/*Elohim* blessings. Therefore, we must weigh the gravity of our thoughts and speech very carefully (Proverbs 10:11; 12:14,18; 13:3; 14:13; 15:2,4,14; 16:23-24; 21:23).

🌿 **Luke 8:15** “But the ones [*seeds*] that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.”

Believers need to decide to *choose* righteous behavior. It is their moral obligation and promises to Yeshua. Restitution begins by returning to where dishonor initially took place to restore honor, first with God/*Elohim*, and then with our fellow man, and finally with self. Yeshua will always be quick to apply grace, healing (sanctification), and restoration (John 8:31-34; Matthew 13:20-21; Psalm 51:2-3, 8-10; Psalm 32:5, 38:18; James 5:16; Ecclesiastes 12:13).

🌿 **Proverbs 24:10** “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.”

🌿 **Luke 6:27-28** “But I say to you who *hear*: ‘Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.’”

We Are Yeshua’s Reflection

Looking further into the Hebrew word for *oath* and the root word *seven*, we see our speech joined to God’s/*Elohim* eternal Spirit, which lives in us. Therefore, our speech is to reflect Him. If not, we defame Him and bind ourselves to the consequences called *curses*.

The only factor impeding our walk in Yeshua is our soul. It is not the wife or the husband; the children or the in-laws; the neighbors or co-workers who are to blame for *our* lack or *our* anger. God’s/*Elohim* word points to *our* heart. Empty promises and all the excuses people use to protect themselves are the enemies. Ungodly order comes from our thoughts, mind, and mouth – that is what binds us. We need to act upon the promises in His word, as our actions will reveal the Kingdom we trust: *His or ours*.

🌿 **James 1:12-15** “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God/*Elohim*;” for God/*Elohim* cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

🌿 **James 1:19b-27** “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God/*Elohim*. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God/*Elohim* and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”

🌿 **James 2:14-26** “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God/*Elohim*. You do well. Even the demons believe - and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God/*Elohim*, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God/*Elohim*. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

🌿 **James 3:13-18** “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

🌿 **James 4:1-10** “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God/*Elohim*? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world

makes himself an enemy of God/*Elohim*. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, ‘The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously’? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: ‘God/*Elohim* resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Therefore submit to God/*Elohim*. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God/*Elohim* and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

In a book called *Hung by the Tongue*, the author writes,

*“What you say is what you get (Mark 11:23). What comes out of your mouth will determine your future. God/*Elohim* knows the future because He spoke the future into existence. He also put your future into your hands, so that YOU CAN actually speak your own future. That is why I am training myself to control my words, to control my future. Your words are spirit and life – once you speak them, they become life. What you say is what you get. You cannot rise above what you allow yourself to think or say. You can think back and as you think about your life, the life you have been leading, ask yourself this question: ‘What has been happening to me?’ Then stop and think about what you have been saying or thinking all your life. You will find that you have been speaking your life into existence. A spiritual principle such as the law of sowing and reaping can never be broken. This spiritual principle always works. Luke 6:37-38 tells us that whatever we give out, we will have it multiplied back to us. If you criticize people, you will reap criticism. If you judge people, you will be judged. If you bless people, you will receive blessing in return.” (End of quote)*

 **Matthew 5:33-37** Yeshua said, “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord. But I tell you, do not swear at all: either by heaven for it is God’s/*Elohim* throne; or by the earth, for it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’, ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

The *Head* Covering

We see a gracious provision in Scripture for the “head” of the family (a father or a husband), to declare an inappropriate oath made by his wife or daughter as void provided he does so *upon hearing*. However, where there is no male covering for a young woman, wife, widow or a divorced woman, the vow or oath they speak will be binding. For the man, his word will be binding on him, as he is directly accountable to God/*Elohim*. A vow or oath to God/*Elohim* that is obligated by a pledge is to be kept and not broken. All are to honor the words spoken just as God/*Elohim* honors His Word to His people (Numbers 30:2, 9).

For those who *have* spoken out vows and oaths innocently and not kept them, they can approach their Heavenly Father to repent. He is our *head* covering for redemption. Yeshua paid the price

on our behalf that we might live and walk uprightly in Him. Renouncing foolish vows and oaths we made or promises we did not keep takes place during the celebration of the New Moon/*Rosh Chodesh* each month. The New Moon is often referred to as a mini *Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur*. During that time, God's/*Elohim people* repent of any past sins before entering into the new month. Thereby always keeping their altar cleansed and their wicks burning brightly.

The *corporate* atonement (one with Him) for all Israel occurs on the Day of Atonement/*Yom Kippur* (the Wedding Day). On that day only truth enters His Holy Chamber (*sanctuary*), therefore, those who *sanctify* themselves by His truth/word, enter. God's/*Elohim people*, who are *sanctified*, will stand before Him. Those who walk after His truth (life) and not after the flesh (death) *will be known by their fruit, as their fruit will actively be displayed for all to see*. It is they who declare the truth - *that Yeshua has utterly defeated sin and death*, as they are a reflection of Him. Thus, Yeshua recognizes His likeness (truth) *in them* (Matthew 25:1-13).

✿ **Matthew 7:15-20** “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

✿ **Romans 8:1-2** “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus/*Yeshua Ha Mashiach*, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus/*Yeshua Ha Mashiach* has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

✿ **Romans 6:15-18** Paul said, “What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law [*of sin and death*] but under [*the law of life called*] grace? By no means! Don’t you know that when you [*as believers*] offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to *sin*, which leads to death, or to *obedience [to Torah]*, which leads to righteousness [*and holiness*]? But thanks be to God/*Elohim* that, though you used to be slaves to sin [*before you repented*], you wholeheartedly obeyed *the form of teaching [the gospel – the Law of Moses and Yeshua given at Mount Sinai]* to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin [*by Yeshua’s taking our sin upon Himself so that we could be set free from law of sin and death through repentance*] and have become slaves to [*Yeshua’s*] righteousness [*and holiness through God’s/*Elohim teaching and instruction given at Mount Sinai*].”*

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:
Fear God/*Elohim* and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.”
Ecclesiastes 12:13

Vengeance on The Midianites Numbers 31:1-18

📖 **Numbers 31:1-3** “And the LORD/*Yahweh* spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people.’ So Moses spoke to the people, saying, ‘Arm some of yourselves for war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the LORD/*Yahweh* on Midian.’”

The Midianites are the seed of Abraham through Keturah’s children who intermarried with the Ishmaelite’s (Abraham’s seed through Hagar). The Midianites also engaged with the Moabites (Lot’s eldest grandchild) to have Balaam curse the Israelites.

After the Edomites (descendants of Jacob’s twin brother Esau) had rejected Israel, God/*Elohim* warned His people not to provoke or retaliate against them. That land was theirs by inheritance. However, when the Israelites arrived at the boarder of the Midianites, they refused access and warred against them. So intimidated were the Canaanites of Israel that they attacked and then deceived them by seduction. The sin of Moab in the camp threatened the very essence of Israel’s morals and family life. Therefore, when Moab went to war against Israel, God/*Elohim* gave them permission to take vengeance (*Midianites, Moabites and Ammonites are interchangeable in scripture through intermarriage and worship of Baal*) (Genesis 25:1-2; 37).

In the reprisal, the Moabite men, included Balaam, died. However, Israel took captive the women, who were the very essence of moral decay in the sin of Balaam against Israel. Moses corrected the issue by allowing only the younger girls to live (Numbers 21:23; 25:1-3).

Even though much impurity and discord come through the Moabites, we also see God’s/*Elohim* grace at work. *Ruth* was a Moabite, who married Boaz and *Naamah*, the wife of Solomon and mother of Rehoboam, descended from Ammon’s ancestry. Both heritages are in Yeshua’s genealogy (Genesis 19:30-38; Ruth 1:4; 1Kings 14:21; Matthew 1:5, 7).

Purification of The Camp Numbers 31:19-24

During the time of war, when the children of Israel had come into contact with death, Moses instructed them to stay outside the camp seven days until the days of their purification were complete. They entered into the *mikvah /water of cleansing* for a status change on the third and seventh day before returning to the community (Numbers 19). God/*Elohim* let His people know that touching the *physically* dead also related to touching the *spiritually* dead as both brought contamination. Since the Moabites caused *spiritual* and *physical* death in the camp, the Israelites needed to separate and cleanse to keep the camp clean; hence, the application of the water of cleansing (*living water*) for purification.

Yeshua fulfilled the red heifer *water cleansing* upon His death. Scripture does not say that by filling this ceremony, Yeshua eliminated the ritual application in our day (along with the benefits

of God's/Elohim Feasts, His New Moon festival, His Sabbath and all physical applications of His Word). On the contrary, His instructions, filled with the Spirit of Yeshua, are to continue for the blessings they impart.

✚ **Romans 3:31** Paul said, “Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law [*Torah – Yeshua’s words*].”



Today, when believers uphold the ritual application of cleansing by entering into the *mikvah* (water cleansing) in Yeshua's Name, their status changes from *the realm* of death to *the realm* of life. Because they are in Yeshua, they can enter the mikvah as often as they wish. Unfortunately, the early church father's deemed a sprinkle of water on the forehead for an infant sufficient, while other church denominations believe in a complete immersion at adulthood but only once, at the time of conversion. However, Scripture is very clear, instructing the people to apply *as often as they desire for cleansing*. The mini form of a *mikvah*, known in Hebrew as *rachatz*, is the hand washing ceremonially (James 4:7).

✚ **James 4:7-8** “Therefore submit to God/Elohim. Resist the devil [*unclean realm*], and he [*it*] will flee from you. Draw near to God/Elohim and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your hands* [*physical application of water – Strong’s G2511*], *you sinners*; and purify *your hearts, you double-minded* (John 2:6).

We are to apply the Living Water (Yeshua) spiritually *and* physically. Fulfilling the physical application is obedience to His commandments that brings sanctification and purification to our hearts and a change of status from the unclean realm to the clean realm. As we learned in the parsha *Balak* two studies earlier, the spirit of Balaam is with us today (2 Peter 2: 1-22; Jude; Revelation 2:14). If we have unknowingly come in contact with the unclean realm (*by association, clothing or building*), we are called to cleanse by first repenting and then entering into a mikvah (*the ritual application of the water of cleansing*). The water cleansing represents *the red heifer sacrifice*, fulfilled in Yeshua, that we might enter this *eternal* commandment (Numbers 19). The water cleansing symbolizes Yeshua's death and resurrection. Today the application of water is part of the ongoing process, not for salvation but holiness and sanctification, as Yeshua is the living water that brings LIFE! Yeshua is the same yesterday, today, and forever, therefore, the mikvah is still applicable (Ezekiel 16:9; Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:1; John 3:5; 4:1-30; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5-7; Hebrews 10:22; Hebrews 13:8; 1 John 5:6). (*For further information on the Red Heifer water cleansing, please refer to the study Chukah – Numbers 19 – www.sheepfoldgleanings.com*).

In obedience, Yeshua's Priesthood will no longer walk in the sins (iniquities) of their ancestors. Today, they are learning how to shed filthy garments (transgressions), to immerse/*mikvah* themselves in the water of cleansing, and clothe themselves in righteous.

Dividing the Spoils – The Law of Reciprocation Numbers 31:25-54

Numbers Chapter 31 has to do with correctly dividing the increase in the camp. Only after purification did the Israelites proceed to share the spoils. The distribution was between the men who went to war and the Israelite community. Before taking possession of the goods, the army paid *tribute* to God/*Elohim* through Eleazar the High Priest. The Israelite community and Levites offered the same to God/*Elohim*.

The army of God/*Elohim* was lead into battle by Eleazar's son Phinehas, and the Levites. The priests and Levites had no inheritance of their own therefore received a tribute as a thanksgiving offering for the whole community. It is the same in our day. Our *tribute* called the *Law of Reciprocation* ought to be a priority in our lives.

Reciprocate

To give or to take mutually; interchange. To show, feel or give in response or return. To move back and forth alternately. To give and take something mutually. To be complementary or equivalent. To return in kind or degree.

What we receive from others needs to be acknowledged in returned for *the Law of Reciprocation* to bear fruit in both parties. If not, what others have poured into our lives by way of blessings and anointing will not produce life or multiply but become stagnant. Out of the ten lepers, Yeshua healed, only one returned to give Him thanks. Many in ministry today have served the people for years. The people continue to take freely without a word of appreciation or even an offering of support. The Dead Sea in Israel is without life. It has no life form because there is no outflow of water, only inflow, and stands as a stark witness to God's/*Elohim* people today. We have become a high-speed culture that is very self-focused. We are a generation that *expects*, and in that, take for granted and even advantage of what others have freely extended to us through their hard work and efforts to help teach Yeshua's Gospel – to transform our lives for the better. Those who have worked hard on our behalf need to be acknowledged under the *Law of Reciprocation*. This law can be practiced within our family, among our friends, with our neighbors and with our fellowship leaders and teachers. *The Law of Reciprocation is a universal law, a holy tribute before God/Elohim - that blesses both sides (Luke 17:11-18).*

The Transjordan Tribes Numbers 32

The tribes of Reuben and Gad saw that the land east of the Jordan was suitable for livestock. Thus they desired it. In their approach to Moses, Eleazar, and the community leaders, they said, "*If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan*" (Numbers 32:5).

Immediately Moses was concerned by their adamant attitude. "*Do not take us over the Jordan.*" They were saying they reject the land God/*Elohim* was giving them for the Moab land. Moses witnessed how the first generation rebelled after spying out the land. Nowhere were their

offspring. They were so close to the land. He did not want another uprising. Reuben and Gad promised Moses they would fulfill their duty to help conquer the land and only return after settling their brothers. Moses agreed. He also gave permission for the Makir and Jair families from the tribe of Manasseh to settle east of the Jordan along with Reuben and Gad.

The tribes who settled east of the Jordan suffered the consequences of their decision later, as they were the first tribes deported in the exile eight years before the Northern Kingdom/Israelite tribes (1Chronicles 5:25-26).

Shabbat Shalom
Julie Parker

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