

# 613 Laws of Torah

## Laws 100 – 149

### (100)

Not to commit incest with one's wife's sister (Lev. 18:18) (CCN131). See Prohibited Marriages and Illegitimate Children.

Do not commit incest with your wife's sister. "Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive." (Leviticus 18:18) This is the very type of multi-wife relationship that jump-started the nation of Israel, not that it was Jacob's fault or plan. God allowed it and used it for His own purposes in that instance, but He's making it clear here that it is not His pattern for the ideal family unit. If polygamy is dynamite with a short fuse, polygamy with sisters is like nitroglycerine on a bumpy road—it's apt to blow up in your face with no warning at all.

### (101)

Not to have intercourse with a woman, in her menstrual period (Lev. 18:19) (CCN132).

( I have been editing the anti-Jewish slant the source I have been using sometimes says. I am going to allow it this one time. Instead of rabbis, I would insert the word men instead. It is men in general who are ignorant of the woman's body.)

Do not have intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period. "You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity." (Leviticus 18:19) There is a large body of Torah law about which the rabbis are relatively clueless—that of ritual purity. They have identified the what, of course, but not the why. We will discuss these issues at length later (Mitzvot #561-576). Here we see the physiological side of what Mitzvah #572 will cover from a symbolic viewpoint: the disposition of women during their periodic menstrual cycle. They and their husbands are to abstain from sexual intercourse during this time. Again, we see that our Manufacturer knows how we're built, and His instructions reflect the proper use of the equipment: intercourse during menstruation, as it turns out, makes a woman more vulnerable to a variety of vaginal infections, and puts her at greater risk for cervical cancer. Moreover, abstinence during menstruation is known today to be a safe, low-tech method for enhancing a couple's fertility (see #63).

This passage doesn't specify a duration for sexual abstinence. It merely describes it: "as long as she is in her customary impurity," which typically lasts about five days for a healthy woman. Leviticus 15:19 defines the duration of ritual impurity as a seven-day period. According to the rabbis, however, the time of separation ends only after the woman's seventh clean day (following the five days or so of her menses) making the period of separation a minimum of twelve days—almost twice what Yahweh mandated. Typical rabbinical bungling, the result of which in this case is a degree of sexual frustration Yahweh never intended.

One wonders if perhaps this monthly week-long hiatus was what Paul had in mind when he wrote, "Do not deprive one another [of sexual contact] except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." (I Corinthians 7:5) We can only imagine how different the attitude and walk (and love life, for that matter) of the average young Christian husband would be if he and his wife "gave themselves to fasting and prayer" in place of sex for five or six days out of every month while God took care of the routine periodic maintenance chores on his wife's sexual apparatus.

## **(102)**

Not to have intercourse with another man's wife (Lev. 18:20) (CCN124).

Do not have intercourse with another man's wife. "Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her." (Leviticus 18:20) More simply stated is the way Yahweh wrote it with His own hand on a stone tablet: "You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14). That's a pretty good summary of most of the mitzvot in this section. I can only reiterate that Yahweh ordained marriage between a man and a woman to be a picture of the relationship He seeks to enjoy with His people—lifelong, fruitful, devoted, faithful, and loving.

As the prophet Malachi puts it, "Did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth." (Malachi 2:15) Adultery is the ultimate treachery.

Yahshua provided commentary for us during the Sermon on the Mount. "You have heard that the law of Moses says, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if your eye—even if it is your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand—even if it is your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell." (Matthew 5:27-30) The

problem is, it's not really our eye or our hand that "causes us to sin," though we use our bodily members to facilitate our crimes. It's our sinful character, our darkened heart, our carnal nature. It is this that we need to "cut off and throw away." Paul characterized it as "dying to self" in order that we might "live to Christ."

### **(103)**

Not to commit sodomy with a male (Lev. 18:22) (CCN116).

Do not commit sodomy with a male. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination." (Leviticus 18:22) There. He said it. It's wrong. I don't want to hear any more politically correct hogwash about how homosexuality is an "acceptable alternative lifestyle," or how "God made some people different from others in their sexual propensities." If He did, then He's awfully confused. Granted, this is merely one of hundreds of behaviors that are prohibited in the Bible, any one of which is sufficient to define us as "sinners." On the other hand, Yahweh goes beyond merely telling us not to do this; He uses the word "abomination" to describe this particular "alternative lifestyle." The Hebrew word translated abomination is *toebah*, which means: "something morally disgusting, that is, an abhorrence; especially idolatry or an idol—an abominable custom or thing." (S) It comes from the root *ta'ab*, a verb meaning "to abhor, the logical response to a strongly detestable activity. It is associated with a severe sense of loathing." (B&C) To put things in perspective, this is the strongest language you can find in the Bible. Make no mistake: God hates homosexuality.

### **(104)**

Not to have intercourse with a beast (Lev. 18:23) (CCN117).

Do not have intercourse with a beast. "Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it." (Leviticus 18:23) I guess I've led a sheltered life. Under normal circumstances, this one never would have entered my mind, much less would I have needed instructions prohibiting it for me to know it was wrong. I mean, duh! We don't really need a special *mitzvah* telling us not to hit ourselves over the head with a frying pan, do we? So why are we told something like this? As I observed at the beginning of this section, the land to which the Israelites were moving was populated with a people whose "iniquity was full." They had grown so perverse in so many ways, God had no choice but to eradicate them and their practices if He wanted to keep His chosen people set apart for His purposes. This sort of sick behavior was part of what Yahweh wanted to wipe out.

Beyond that, our sexual relationships are once again pressed into service as a picture of our relationship with Yahweh—or not. Genesis 1:26 reports that we are made in the “image of God.” In all of nature, God designed his creatures to mate only with their own kind—you can’t cross a cat with a gnat. And we are God’s “kind.” At least, we become so when we are “born from above.” (John 3) But it’s also possible to be born from below—to become indwelt with the spirit of Satan (whether metaphorically or in fact). This is the spiritual equivalent of “having intercourse with a beast.”

### **(105)**

That a woman shall not have intercourse with a beast (Lev. 18:23) (CCN118). A woman shall not have intercourse with a beast. “Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.” (Leviticus 18:23) In the interests of being thorough, Yahweh makes sure that the women of Israel understand that this applies to them, too. Their purity was every bit as important to God’s plan of redemption as that of the men. And as for the spiritual application, we are reminded that when “God made man in His image, He made them male and female.”

### **(106)**

Not to castrate the male of any species; neither a man, nor a domestic or wild beast, nor a fowl (Lev. 22:24) (CCN143).

Do not castrate the male of any species; neither a man, nor a domestic or wild beast, nor a fowl. “You shall not offer to Yahweh what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land.” (Leviticus 22:24) The rabbis have missed the point entirely here. Yahweh’s instruction was not about castration at all—it was about respect. The Israelites were not to offer imperfect sacrifices, animals that had been injured or for some other reason had become worthless (or worth less) to them as livestock. They were to offer perfect specimens, without spot or blemish, usually specified as males, often of a certain young age. Why? Because their sacrifices were a prophetic dress rehearsal—a symbol—for what Yahweh Himself was about to offer up as a propitiation for our sins: a perfect Sacrifice, without sin, a young male full of promise, as flawless in character as the lambs or goats of the Levitical sacrifices were in body.

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Of all the laws we have now looked at this is the first one that was off. And as far as I can remember there has not been any law so far that we could not do and should not keep.

We are less than twenty percent of the way through our list of the “613 mitzvot,” and some startling truths are beginning to emerge.

God’s actual instructions fall into two basic categories (neither of which is mutually exclusive). Some are practical instructions on how to maintain the “equipment” of the human race, how to keep our bodies and our communities free from physical ailments and undue degradation—even down to the molecular level, by keeping the DNA in our gene pool vigorous and healthy. Others are spiritual in nature, instructing us how to approach and relate to our God. But the spiritual mitzvot invariably work themselves out in our relationships with our fellow men, and the practical “Laws” just as often include a symbolic component instructing us how to remain holy, set apart for Yahweh’s use.

As strange as it may sound coming from a dyed-in-the-wool literalist like myself, God’s symbols, lurking just beneath the surface in these mitzvot, are the primary point; in many cases the rules seem to be there largely to serve as vehicles for the deeper truth. As we can readily observe from Yahshua’s modus operandi, teaching in parables is one of God’s favorite methods: the lessons would be somehow less personal if we didn’t have to glean the truth from the story and watch the “light bulb” go on above our heads. What matters is not that the stories are true or untrue—it’s that they aren’t in themselves the point. A good example is the tale told to David by the prophet Nathan about a poor man whose sole possession, a little ewe lamb, was callously slaughtered by his rich neighbor so he could entertain a guest. David was rightly indignant, and being king, declared that the rich man should die for his crimes. Only then did Nathan tell him, “You are the man.” If the prophet had chastised the king to his face (as John the Baptist later did to Herod) David might never have repented and asked forgiveness for his role in the Bathsheba affair. His defenses would have been up, and his human nature might have gotten the better of him. But since the story had been presented in symbolic form, the king was able to relate to the core truth of it and make the proper response.

I believe that a great deal of the Torah uses exactly the same instruction technique. I’m not suggesting that there’s some hidden meaning that only an illumined inner circle of religious devotees can perceive—a secret kabalistic system of hidden knowledge that elevates the cognoscenti above the unwashed masses. Rather, I’m asking the reader to merely scratch one layer beneath the surface, to blow the dust off the cover—to look at the obvious underlying truth. What Yahweh said to do, and what He meant for us to learn by so doing, are as obvious as any parable recorded in the Gospels. But as Yahshua observed, the meanings of the parables are only for those who are willing to see the light: “The disciples came and said to Him, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever

has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: "Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it." (Matthew 13:10-17)

## **Times and Seasons**

### **(107)**

That the new month shall be solemnly proclaimed as holy, and the months and years shall be calculated by the Supreme Court only (Ex. 12:2) (affirmative) (the authority to declare months is inferred from the use of the word "unto you").

The new month shall be solemnly proclaimed as holy, and the months and years shall be calculated by the Supreme Court only. "Now Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 'This month (Abib/Nisan) shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.'" (Exodus 12:1-2) Oh, good grief. Here we go again. The rabbis have not only gotten the mitzvah wrong, they have in the process usurped the authority of Yahweh and placed it in their own hands. According to Judaism 101, the authority to declare months is inferred from the use of the words "to you." Sorry, guys, it's not. The passage supporting the mitzvah indicates that the first month of the year was to be the month of Passover, now called Nisan (in March or April on the Gregorian calendar. Each month began at the first sliver of the new moon—Passover would fall two weeks later in the first month, near the full moon phase.

Here's how Yahweh set it up: there would be twelve lunar months in the year, adjusted to the solar calendar by adding an intercalary month now and then. Within the first seven of these months (beginning in the Spring with Abib, later called Nisan) there would be seven solemn convocations, or miqrym, holy appointments instituted by Yahweh, beginning with Passover. These seven "Feasts of Yahweh" would prove to be prophetic of Yahweh's plan for the redemption of mankind. As keepers of the Messianic signs, we're supposed to keep these divine appointments throughout our generations.

During the captivity in Babylon this monthly calendar was switched from Nisan to Tishri as the beginning of the year, putting their new year's day in the fall, where their Babylonian captors had it. They actually assigned another of Yahweh's seven miqrym as their "head of the year," or Rosh Hashanah. The day they picked is the Feast of Trumpets, which was set up by Yahweh to be number five in the series.

### **(108)**

Not to travel on Shabbat outside the limits of one's place of residence (Ex. 16:29) (CCN7). See Shabbat.

Do not travel on Shabbat outside the limits of your place of residence. "Now it happened that some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather [manna], but they found none. And Yahweh said to Moses, 'How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! For Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day." (Exodus 16:27-30) This is a clear case of taking a sentence out of context. Yahweh here was telling the Israelites (again) not to go out to gather manna on the Sabbath, because He had already provided what was needed the previous day. In short, they were being told to trust Him.

According to the Gospel record, however, the Pharisees didn't make a big deal out of where Yahshua happened to be on the Sabbath. They didn't suggest that He had broken the Sabbath by not staying home (wherever that was). Instead, they were upset that he didn't take a break from healing people on the Sabbath. "One Sabbath day Jesus was in the home of a leader of the Pharisees. The people were watching him closely, because there was a man there whose arms and legs were swollen. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in religious law, 'Well, is it permitted in the law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?'" I just love this. That's precisely the same question with which they had hoped to entrap Him back in Matthew 12. This time, Yahshua beat them to the punch, putting the question to them before they could demand an explanation of Him. "When they refused to answer, Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him away. Then he turned to them and asked, 'Which of you doesn't work on the Sabbath? If your son or your cow falls into a pit, don't you proceed at once to get him out?' Again they had no answer." (Luke 14:1-6 NLT) He had responded in the affirmative when asked this question, but they couldn't answer without incriminating themselves. If they said healing on the Sabbath was permissible, they would be contradicting their own traditions. But if they said it was not, they would be denying the power of God, for Yahshua frequently manifested that power by healing people on the Sabbath.

We can read in Acts 1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. I have walked this many times. It is about a 20 minute walk.

### **(109)**

To sanctify Shabbat (Ex. 20:8) (CCA19). See Shabbat.

Sanctify Shabbat. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11) This is the fourth Commandment of the Decalogue. Notice first that there is a proper time for work—the first six days of the week, or metaphorically/prophetically, the first six millennia of man. The seventh day, however, is holy or hallowed (qadash, meaning set apart, made clean, consecrated, withdrawn from profane or ordinary use). As Yahshua Himself said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is yet day; the night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4) Second, Sabbath (alternately spelled Shabbat or Sabbat) comes from a verb (sabat) meaning to take an intermission, rest, or repose. It is thus a mirror of Yahweh's symbolic "rest" on the seventh day of creation and a prophetic hint that our work—even if it's godly or creative behavior—has no place in God's plan of redemption. Third, note that there are no exceptions to the Sabbath Law: it applies to everybody, even the servants and beasts of burden: nobody works for a living on this appointed day of intermission, for if they do, they will be cut off from God's people (see Exodus 31:14). The Sabbath speaks eloquently of Yahweh's provision of our salvation. It's no stretch to apply Psalm 118:24 to the ultimate Sabbath: "This is the day that Yahweh has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it."

After one of the many incidents recorded in the Gospels in which the Pharisees erroneously accused Yahshua of "working" on the Sabbath, He said, "The Sabbath was made to benefit people, and not people to benefit the Sabbath. And I, the Son of Man, am master even of the Sabbath!" (Mark 2:27-28 NLT)

When do we gather for worship?

Yahshua taught in the synagogues on the Sabbath (e.g. Luke 4:16) And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up : and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.



**(110)**

Not to do work on Shabbat (Ex. 20:10) (CCN6). See Shabbat.

Do not work on Shabbat. “In it [the Sabbath] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.” (Exodus 20:10) As we have seen, the very word Sabbath indicates a period of repose, of rest from our labors. Yahweh wanted the Israelites to trust Him, and He began with a simple demonstration: On six days each week, He would provide manna for them to eat. Ordinarily it would spoil overnight, but on the sixth day they were to gather enough for the Sabbath as well, and He would miraculously keep it fresh. Thus every Sabbath, those who trusted Yahweh witnessed a miracle of preservation (in addition to the usual miracle of provision). God’s sustenance here is a metaphor for our salvation. Yahweh will provide sustenance/salvation on the seventh day of the week to those who trusted Him on the first six days.

In a passage parallel to the Matthew 12 verses we saw earlier, Yahshua helps us define what, precisely, is the “work” from which we are to rest on the Sabbath. Is it any and all activity (the rabbinical view), or is it only what we ordinarily do to provide for ourselves? “Jesus went into the synagogue again and noticed a man with a deformed hand. Since it was the Sabbath, Jesus’ enemies watched him closely. Would he heal the man’s hand on the Sabbath? If he did, they planned to condemn him. Jesus said to the man, ‘Come and stand in front of everyone.’ Then he turned to his critics and asked, ‘Is it legal to do good deeds on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing harm? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it?’ But they wouldn’t answer him. He looked around at them angrily, because he was deeply disturbed by their hard hearts. Then he said to the man, ‘Reach out your hand.’ The man reached out his hand, and it became normal again! At once the Pharisees went away and met with the supporters of Herod to discuss plans for killing Jesus.” (Mark 3:1-6 NLT) The principle is this: It is never bad to do good. Yes, we were commanded in the Torah to refrain from doing our regular jobs on the Sabbath—from doing those tasks with which we provide for our own needs. But that’s not what Yahshua was doing here. Thus by definition, our “ordinary work” (that which is restricted on the Sabbath) is not the same thing as “doing good works.”

**(111)**

To rest on Shabbat (Ex. 23:12; 34:21) (CCA20). See Shabbat.

Rest on Shabbat. “Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be

refreshed.... In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.” (Exodus 23:12; 34:21) This of course is merely the affirmative restatement of negative Mitzvah #110. The supporting passages, however, shed some added light on God’s mindset here. First, notice that Yahweh understands that the servants and beasts of burden won’t be able to enjoy their Sabbath rest if their “master” does not observe it. This places the burden of responsibility squarely on his shoulders: those in control are held to a higher standard of obedience, whether in a household, a business, or a whole nation, for their actions and beliefs affect the lives of those beneath them in the hierarchy, for good or ill. This is why Yahshua said the religious leaders of His day would “receive the greater condemnation.”

Second, the Sabbath rest was to be observed “in plowing time and in harvest,” that is, even when things were at their busiest and “rest” seemed to be a luxury one could do without. At issue here is our trust in Yahweh’s provision. In early Israel, this mistrust might have taken the form: We’ve gotta get this crop in before the weather turns bad, or we’ll all starve to death this winter, so let’s work through the Sabbath to get the job done. Today we might say: This deadline the client has saddled us with is so tight, if we don’t skip church and work all weekend on it we’ll lose the contract and go out of business. Oh really? Who took care of you yesterday? Who can be trusted to do so tomorrow? Who brought you the client, and gave you the skills you need to serve him? If you can’t trust Yahweh with your day-to-day material needs, how can you trust Him with your eternal soul?

Before we leave the subject of Sabbath Law, let’s take a look at one more telling incident during Yahshua’s ministry. “One Sabbath day as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, he saw a woman who had been crippled by an evil spirit. She had been bent double for eighteen years and was unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are healed of your sickness!’ Then he touched her, and instantly she could stand straight. How she praised and thanked God!” Her response was right and proper. What did the religious bigwigs have to say? “But the leader in charge of the synagogue was indignant that Jesus had healed her on the Sabbath day. ‘There are six days of the week for working,’ he said to the crowd. ‘Come on those days to be healed, not on the Sabbath.’ Yeah, right, like he was planning on coming back and healing the lady himself the following Tuesday. “But the Lord replied, ‘You hypocrite! You work on the Sabbath day! Don’t you untie your ox or your donkey from their stalls on the Sabbath and lead them out for water? Wasn’t it necessary for me, even on the Sabbath day, to free this dear woman from the bondage in which Satan has held her for eighteen years?’ This shamed his enemies. And all the people rejoiced at the wonderful things he did.” (Luke 13:10-17 NLT) The final word on what should have been considered “work” to be avoided on the

Sabbath was illustrated here. It boils down not to what, but to why. If a deed is done for the purpose of supporting yourself financially or materially, then you should refrain from doing it on the Sabbath. But if it is done out of a spirit of love, mercy, or just plain good manners—even if it's only feeding the family pet—then it's not really considered work under the Sabbath Law.

## (112)

To celebrate the festivals [Passover, Shavu'ot and Sukkot] (Ex. 23:14) (affirmative).

Celebrate the festivals [Pesach, Shavu'ot, and Sukkot]. "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field. Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh." (Exodus 23:14-17) Yahweh instituted seven annual Miqrym, holy appointments or convocations, commonly referred to as "feasts," during the Jewish calendar. The reason we see only three of the seven listed here is that there are three groups of miqrym. The first three were mandated to occur on three successive days in the spring. These were followed seven weeks later by a single miqra, and the final three fell within a few weeks of each other in the fall. Thus by convention and observation, we can lump the spring feasts together as one, calling them the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover, and the three fall feasts are similarly grouped under the umbrella name of the last one, Sukkot, or Tabernacles. Yahweh attached memorial significance to a couple of the feasts, but there are definite prophetic implications to every one of the seven.

Pesach, or Passover, (scheduled by Yahweh on Nisan 14, in our March or April) is memorial of the night in which the death angel killed the firstborn of every family in Egypt whose dwelling was not protected by the blood of the sacrificial lamb. It is thus prophetic of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Yahshua of Nazareth, which occurred on Nisan 14 in 31 AD. Everyone whose "house" is not marked by the blood of this sacrifice is similarly doomed.

Chag Matzah, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread, (on the very next day, Nisan 15) is memorial of the Israelites' hasty flight from Egypt in the wake of the death of the Egyptian firstborn—a move so sudden they didn't even have time to let the bread in their kneading bowls rise. Leaven (yeast) is a picture of sin, of corruption. We are instructed to remove all the leaven from our homes—a metaphor for the removal of sin from our lives. The miqra is prophetic of the day Yahshua spent in the tomb. His death was what removed the sin from our lives, if only we'll trust

Him to do so. This feast was the beginning of a weeklong festival—the seven days being symbolic of the fact that our sins have been removed completely.

Yom HaBikkurim, or the Day of Firstfruits, (on the day after the weekly Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread) was a celebration thanking Yahweh for the upcoming barley harvest. The day is prophetic of Yahshua's ascension to Heaven on the first day of the week in 31 AD, in which He Himself was the "firstfruit" of many who would subsequently rise from their graves immortal and undefiled because of their faith in Him.

The Last day of Unleavened Bread was the seventh day of Chag Matzah, in which you are to keep a solemn Assembly on the first day and on the Seventh day. These are Holy Days in which no work shall be done.

Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks, was scheduled on the day after the seventh Sabbath after the Feast of Unleavened Bread—making an interval of fifty days, hence the Greek name: Pentecost. It was the day Moses announced the covenant between Yahweh and Israel at Mount Sinai. The prophetic aspect, however, is obvious: this was the very day, in 31 AD, on which the Ruach Kodesh, the Holy Spirit, came to indwell the believers of the risen Messiah. Even though there were no gentiles present that day, this indwelling continues to the present time—in both believing Israelites and gentiles, a group known as the "called-out assembly (the Ekklesia), or simply the Church. Yahweh's revelation of His redemptive plan has thus been extended beyond the bounds of Israel. Shavuot was the second of the three national gatherings mentioned in the Exodus 23 passage—there called the Feast of Harvest.

The first four of these prophetic feasts have been fulfilled, then, in the sacrificial work of the Messiah and in the coming of His Spirit to indwell the believers. It is worth noting that every single one of them was fulfilled on the precise day of its Levitical mandate (the odds against that happening by chance are over 16 billion to one) and we therefore have strong reason to believe that the last four will be fulfilled in the same way. The three yet-to-be-fulfilled miqra convocations occur in the month of Tishri, in September or October—the seventh month on the Hebrew Levitical calendar. They are as follows:

Yom Teruah (i.e., the Day of Blowing or Shouting), a.k.a. the Feast of Trumpets, is slated for Tishri 1. It is sometimes called Rosh Hashanah—erroneously, since it isn't the day Yahweh designated as "head of the year." That happens on the first day of Nisan, in the spring—a date that is not among the miqrym). It's also known as Yom Hakeseh, the "Day of Hiding," for rabbinical tradition held that this was the day Satan went before God to accuse Israel—so the day had to be kept a secret.

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, comes on Tishri 10. This miqra isn't really a "feast" like the other six, but is rather a day of repentance, remorse, fasting, and affliction of the soul. Again, it isn't actually memorial of anything specific in Israel's history, but the future fulfillment in light of the weight of Scripture is overwhelmingly plain: this will be the day Israel recognizes her Messiah for who He was—and is. It will coincide with the day Sataan is locked away from mankind for 1000 years.

Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles, the anchor of the three fall feasts, is the last of the seven-miqra series, occurring five days later, on Tishri 15. Like the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it kicks off a weeklong party. There is a far more significant future role for this festival: it is prophetic of the Millennial reign of Yahshua the Messiah, it represents the Marriage supper and celebration of the wedding. The Israelites were instructed to build temporary structures—booths or huts—to live in during the festival. This is a poignant picture of the real point of the Feast of Tabernacles: that Yahweh Himself would "camp out" among men for a thousand years of perfect peace.

### **(113)**

To rejoice on the festivals (Deut. 16:14) (CCA21).

Rejoice on the festivals. "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates."

(Deuteronomy 16:13-14) As we can see from the context, the command to rejoice is specifically applicable to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Rejoicing is also an expressly mandated feature of the Feast of Weeks (predictive of the coming of the Holy Spirit) and the Feast of Trumpets (prophetic of the coming of YAHshua), and implied in the celebration of the Feast of Firstfruits—the three other events that are obviously cause for celebration. The rabbis' blanket statement is inappropriate in the case of the other three miqrym, however, and it betrays a lack of understanding as to why Yahweh instituted them in the first place. Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Day of Atonement all speak of the negative aspects of our salvation—our certain death if our sins are not covered by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, the elimination of sin from our lives through the death of the Messiah, and the essential affliction of our souls when faced with our unworthiness. These things are all necessary and good, but they are not in and of themselves cause for celebration. The fact that these three miqrym are needed at all is actually cause for mourning. Yahweh was precisely accurate in His instructions as to when we were to rejoice.

## (114)

To appear in the Sanctuary on the festivals (Deut. 16:16) (affirmative).

Appear at the Sanctuary on the festivals. “Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Deuteronomy 16:16) As we saw in #112, the festivals of Yahweh were lumped into three groups, three miqrym in the spring, one in early summer, and three in the fall. All the men living within Israel were to congregate at a central location three times each year. The meeting place was wherever the Tabernacle happened to be at the time. It eventually settled permanently at God’s chosen location, Jerusalem, with the building of the Temple. Thus every man in Israel would be gathered together for the worship of Yahweh for at least five of the seven festivals, for one week in the spring, a couple of days in the summer, and a week or more in the fall. Only the men were required to go, but as a practical matter, whole families often made the journey (cf. Luke 2:41-44).

Why was everyone’s presence required so often? Because Yahweh was making a point. The annual cycle of holy convocations was prophetic of God’s plan of redemption for mankind. Every part of the plan is essential for our ultimate reconciliation with Him. Sacrificial death without removal of sins or subsequent resurrection in glory is an unfinished story. If a holy God were to “camp out” among a race of men who had chosen not to love Him,( and as we have been showing you from scriptures, Yahshua said if you love me then you will keep the commandments,) the result would be fatal for them. All seven miqrym are needed to communicate God’s plan.

It’s interesting that Maimonides specifies the Jews’ appearances at the Sanctuary (though the Torah delineates only “the place God chooses,” which would eventually settle at Jerusalem). The “Sanctuary,” the remodeled second Temple, had been torn down by the Romans over a millennium before he wrote his Mishneh Torah.

## (115)

To remove chametz on the Eve of Passover (Ex. 12:15) (CCA22). See Passover

Remove chametz on the Eve of Passover. “Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.” (Exodus 12:15) Chametz is leaven, or yeast. Judaism 101 says that in addition to being memorial of the Israel’s’ hasty

departure from Egyptian bondage, the removal of chametz “is also a symbolic way of removing the ‘puffiness’ (arrogance, pride) from our souls.” Close, but no cigar. Yeast is a picture of sin, of corruption, of rottenness. Its removal is thus symbolic of the elimination of sin from our lives—something that could only be accomplished by the sacrificial death of the Messiah. John tells us sin is the transgression of the law, the commandments. To repent of sin is to begin to keep the commandments. The removal of Chametz is to take away that which is against the commandments.

The rabbis misspoke when they connected the removal of leaven with “Passover.” Yahweh is very precise: there is a separate miqra for the elimination of yeast: the seven-day-long Feast of Unleavened Bread—beginning on the day after Passover (which was symbolic of the Messianic sacrifice, the crucifixion). I may seem to be nitpicking here, but we obscure the prophetic significance of the miqrym if we don’t keep them straight in our minds. Passover—the death of the Lamb of God—came first. The elimination of our sin for eternity (symbolized by the seven-day duration of the Feast) can only follow.

#### **(116)**

To rest on the first day of Passover (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:7) (CCA25). See Passover

Rest on the first day of Passover. “On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month [of Nisan] at evening. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.” (Exodus 12:16-20). The passage makes it clear that the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not Passover, is in view. The first and last days of the seven-day event were to be set aside as special Sabbaths—whether or not they actually fell on the seventh day of the week. By sundown on the fourteenth of Nisan (Passover) the homes of the Israelites were to be free of leaven. This condition was to last until sundown on the twenty-first.

#### **(117)**

Not to do work on the first day of Passover (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:6-7) (CCN147). See Passover.

Do not work on the first day of Passover. “On the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to Yahweh; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.” (Leviticus 23:6-7) This is the negative counterpart to affirmative Mitzvah #116. Again, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, not Passover proper, is being described. Note that the fifteenth day of the month began (by Yahweh’s reckoning) on the evening of the fourteenth; in other words, the next day began at sundown, not at midnight as we commonly reckon it. Thus the apparent starting date contradiction between the Exodus passage and this one in Leviticus isn’t really there.

### **(118)**

To rest on the seventh day of Passover (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:8) (CCA27). See Passover

Rest on the seventh day of Passover. “...and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. (Exodus 12:16) The festival ended as it began, with a holy convocation, a special Sabbath rest. Normally, food preparation (being somebody’s “customary work”) was forbidden on the Sabbath. Here, Yahweh makes an exception to His own rule, allowing the preparation of food on the special Sabbaths opening and closing the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He knew that there would be times when two Sabbaths (the normal seventh-day one and the special feast-day one) would fall back to back, and He didn’t wish to impose an undue hardship on His people for the sake of a metaphor. As He would later say through His Messiah, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.”

Notice that it is permissible for the High Holy Days to be back to back with the weekly Sabbath. But in the fall the Rabbis have instill the postponement rule which does not allow the fall Holy Days to be back to back with the weekly Sabbath. You can go to this article and take special note of what is called exhibit “D” [https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon\\_2015/?page\\_id=23](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=23)

### **(119)**

Not to do work on the seventh day of Passover (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:8) (CCN148). See Passover

Do not work on the seventh day of Passover. “The seventh day [of the Feast of Unleavened Bread] shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.” (Leviticus 23:8) We’ve caught Maimonides padding the list again so he could come up with the requisite number of affirmative and negative commandments. This is simply the converse of the previous mitzvah. We’re going to see a lot of the same sort writing technique in the next few mitzvot. Bear in mind



that every time the rabbis mention “Passover” in Mitzvot #115 through #126, the correct term is the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” or Chag Matzah.

**(120)**

To eat matzah on the first night of Passover (Ex. 12:18) (CCA23). See Passover

Eat matzah on the first night of Passover. “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.”

(Exodus 12:18) Matzah is, at its most essential, simply bread baked without yeast—unleavened bread. Bread was the staple food in the Israelite diet. Something that was ordinarily there within the bread (yeast) would be non-existent for the duration of the feast (not just the first night).

Yahweh is saying that something that was ordinarily there within our lives (sin) would be non-existent for the duration of eternity. If we don’t understand the metaphorical connection between leaven and sin, we will miss the entire point of this Feast, Yahweh never does or says anything on a meaningless whim.

**(121)**

No chametz shall be in the Israelites’ possession during Passover. “For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land.” (Exodus 12:19) The complete removal of leaven/sin is the whole point of the Feast. The “congregation of Israel” is indicative of all believers of every age (cf. Galatians 3:6-9). “Strangers” and “natives of the land” (biological Israelites) alike must be made free of sin if they wish to be numbered among the “congregation of Israel.” But we can’t achieve this status by our own efforts. That is why the Feast of Unleavened Bread follows Passover—the cleansing is a result of the sacrifice.

**(122)**

Not to eat any food containing chametz on Passover (Ex. 12:20) (CCN5). See

Passover.(122)Do not eat any food containing chametz on Passover. “You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat [only] unleavened bread.” (Exodus 12:20) There were two phases of the un-leavening of an Israelite home for the Feast: first all the yeast was to be removed from the home; second, nothing baked with leaven was to be eaten. Applying our established metaphor of leaven=sin, we perceive a subtle distinction between external and internal corruption. Not only is the evil influence of the world to be taken out of our environment, it will also be purged from within us: we will be sanctified and justified before Yahweh. The

prophetic implications are spectacular. Remember, in these “rituals” we are acting out what Yahovah has already accomplished in the past or will achieve in the future.

**(123)**

Do not eat chametz on Passover. “And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand Yahweh brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.” (Exodus 13:3) This mitzvah seems to be identical to the one that precedes it. But the supporting passage sheds some added insight on the subject. Notice how Yahweh connects the absence of leaven with deliverance from bondage. The purging of sin from our lives is tantamount to our being freed from slavery to that sin: by memorializing one thing, the Israelites were celebrating the other as well.

Note; this same principle applies to what we are talking about in this Newsletter; Sexual or gossiping sin. When you stop doing these things you will be coming out of the bondage that each of them holds over you. Yes when you just have to look at another sexual picture you are a slave to that sin, or when you just have to share this juicy bit of gossip, you are a slave to this type of sin.

**(124)**

Chametz shall not be seen in an Israelite’s home during Passover. “No leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.” (Exodus 13:7) The symbolic translation: “Sin shall not be evident in the life of a believer, nor shall it trouble him any longer.” I can’t help but think of a passage from Daniel describing the last seven years of this age. During this time, God promised to “finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.” (see Daniel 9:24) In other words, the chametz is on its way out.

**(125)**

Discuss the departure from Egypt on the first night of Passover. “And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what Yahweh did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that

Yahweh’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand Yahweh has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.” (Exodus 13:8-

10) Allow me to quote something heartbreaking from Judaism 101: “Watch out for Christianized versions of the haggadah. The Christian ‘last supper’ is generally believed to have been a

Pesach seder, so many Christians recreate the ritual of the seder, and the haggadahs that they use for this purpose tend to reinterpret the significance of the holiday and its symbols to fit into their Christian theology. For example, they say that the three matzahs represent the Trinity, with the broken one representing Jesus on the cross (in Judaism, the three matzahs represent the three Temples, two of which have been destroyed, and the third of which will be built when the moshiach comes). They speak of the paschal lamb as a prophecy of Jesus, rather than a remembrance of the lamb's blood on the doorposts in Egypt. If you want to learn what Pesach means to Jews, then these 'messianic' haggadahs aren't for you."

In context, Tracey Rich has just completed a detailed description of a Pesach seder, the annual rehearsal of the original Passover event. The Exodus passage above speaks of a

"memorial," and today's Jews apparently have that down pat. The heartbreaking thing is that they completely missed the other half of it: "keeping this ordinance in its season from year to year" is also supposed to be a sign for them. Not just a memorial, but also a sign. And if it's a sign, what is it supposed to signify? Rich admits that his own symbol is all goofed up when he equates the one broken matzah with two Temples that have been destroyed. He is absolutely correct in perceiving that a third and final Temple will be built by Moshiach/Messiah (see Future History, Chapter 27 for an exhaustive study). But he can't explain this: if the Jews, who haven't changed their approach to the Torah in any material way for the better part of the last three millennia, are in the center of God's will, why did He allow their first two Temples to be destroyed? Why did he let them wander the earth like homeless vagabonds for nineteen hundred years? Could it be that, as Yahshua Himself implied, they were (and are) willingly ignorant of the signs that were given to them? I weep for a people who are so close to the truth and yet they refuse to see it: the Messiah came. They crucified Him. His death makes life possible for us. All of Yahweh's signs point directly and unequivocally to Yahshua of Nazareth.

**(126)**

Do not eat chametz after mid-day on the fourteenth of Nisan. "You shall eat no leavened bread with it [the Passover Lamb]; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life." (Deuteronomy 16:3) Yahweh doesn't put this particular deadline on cleaning out the leaven from the Jewish households, but as a practical matter, this cut-off time works reasonably well. The schedule went like this: the Passover lamb was to be slain on the afternoon of the fourteenth day of Nisan (precisely the time of day when Yahshua was crucified), and then roasted (not boiled, because fire is symbolic of the judgment Yahshua endured on our behalf). This is why the fourteenth,

Passover proper, is often called the Day of Preparation. The Passover meal, then, took place after sundown—technically now the fifteenth, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (The Last Supper, therefore, was not technically a Passover seder, but a regular meal that took place within the timeframe of the Passover “day.” Neither the lamb nor The Lamb would be killed until the following afternoon.) The lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs that were a reminder of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt— and symbolic of the sting of sin in the world. All the cooking had to be done by sundown, for the fifteenth of Nisan was a designated Sabbath. That meant that at the very latest, sundown on the fourteenth was the last possible opportunity to remove the chametz from the house, and it made sense to try to have the job done several hours earlier. But Yahweh didn’t expressly command it.

### **(127)**

Count forty-nine days from the time of the cutting of the Omer (first sheaves of the barley harvest). “You shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath [i.e., the Weekly Sabbath during the Day of Unleavened Bread—the “day after” this would be the Feast of Firstfruits on the first day of the week], from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath [Again another Sunday]; then you shall offer a new grain offering to Yahweh. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to Yahweh.” (Leviticus 23:15-17) Don’t let the dual designation of “firstfruits” throw you. This miqra (Shavuot) is based on the wheat harvest, whereas the “Feast of Firstfruits” (Yom HaBikkurim) speaks of the earlier barley harvest. After all the hullabaloo about getting rid of the leaven during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we’re almost shocked to see a specific directive that the two loaves that were to be symbolically “waved” in offering before Yahweh here were to be baked with leaven!

No explanation for this is given in the Torah, but it all becomes clear in the New Testament:

Shavuot, or the Day of Pentecost, is prophetic of the coming of the Ruach Kodesh, the Holy Spirit, to dwell within the believers of the Messiah after His resurrection. The whole story is related in Acts 2: “Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” The Law had been fulfilled in the sacrifice of the Messiah. Our sins (note: not the law, but our sins) had been nailed to the cross and taken to the tomb with Him. Thus leaven was no longer an issue: it’s not that we were no longer required to be holy—it’s that in God’s view, we already were.

**(128)**

To rest on Shavu'ot (Lev. 23:21) (CCA28). See Shavu'ot.

Rest on Shavuot. “You shall proclaim on the same day [The Feast of Weeks] that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” (Leviticus 23:21) Five of the seven miqrym are designated as special Sabbaths, days upon which no customary work is to be done. This begs the question: what’s different about Passover and the Feast of Firstfruits—miqrym that are not designated as Sabbaths? As it turns out, these are the only two whose symbolic fulfillment was accomplished by Yahshua alone, without any participation on the part of His believers.

Passover represents His death, and Firstfruits prophesies His presentation before Yahweh after His resurrection—events we can only thankfully acknowledge, but in which we had no part whatsoever to play. The other five all imply some contribution, some involvement, by the Faithful.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolizes the removal of sin from our lives. The Feast of Weeks marks the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. The Feast of Trumpets heralds our coming of our Savior. The Day of Atonement speaks of the remorse and repentance of God’s people and the locking away of Satan. And finally, the Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the wedding of Israel to the Yahshua. So whether in an active or passive role, we as believers are participants in each of these five miqrym.

**(129)**

Not to do work on the Shavu'ot (Lev. 23:21) (CCN149). See Shavu'ot.

Do not work on Shavuot. “You shall proclaim on the same day [The Feast of Weeks] that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.” (Leviticus 23:21) This of course is merely the converse of #128 above. The command is to refrain, on the day of this holy convocation, from doing the work you’d ordinarily do. In the previous mitzvah we explored the “why.” Perhaps we should take a moment to look at the “who.” In whose dwellings will it be a “statute forever,” and whose “generations” are in view? It’s crystal clear in context. Four times in Leviticus 23 we see this formula: “Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel....’” These festivals are to be observed by the children of Israel. It is to Abraham’s progeny alone that Yahweh entrusted the signs of his redemption. When He told Abram, “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” (Genesis 12:3) He was speaking of more than the coming of the

Messiah. He was also referring to the signs heralding His great work—the seven miqrym, and at some level, the entire “Law of Moses.”

### **(130)**

To rest on Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24) (CCA29). See Yom Teruah

Rest on Feast of Trumpets. “In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation.” (Leviticus 23:24) First, be aware that the Feast of Trumpets is not Rosh Hashanah—the head of the year. That’s a convention the rabbis obsequiously borrowed from their Babylonian captors. Yahweh, however, had specifically designated the first day of Nisan—in the spring, two weeks before Passover—as the Hebrews’ “New Year’s Day.” The Feast of Trumpets is in Tishri, the seventh month; it is the first of the “fall feasts.” Second, notice that this is the first miqra in the series that has not yet been fulfilled. In a nutshell, the first four feasts were fulfilled in the death, burial, resurrection, and Spiritual indwelling of Yahshua the Messiah. The Feast of Trumpets would logically signal the next crucial phase in God’s plan of redemption, and we don’t have to look too far to find it. Paul writes: “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (I Corinthians 15:51-52) “The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (I Thessalonians 4:16-17)

The word translated “blowing” in the Leviticus passage quoted above is *teruah*, which means “alarm, blowing (as of trumpets), joy, a loud noise, rejoicing, shouting, a sounding.” (S) If we look at the words associated with this event Paul is describing (“last trumpet... sound... shout... voice... trumpet of God”), we are confronted with a perfect match.

### **(131)**

Not to do work on Yom Teruah (Lev. 23:25) (CCN150). See Yom Teruah.

Do not work on Feast of Trumpets. “You shall do no customary work on [the Feast of Trumpets]; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh.” (Leviticus 23:25) Here’s the negative permutation of the affirmative mitzvah we saw in #130. The one unique thing about this miqra is the blowing of the ram’s horn “trumpet,” or shofar.

As long as we're here in verse 25, let's look at that last bit: "You shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh." Fire in Scripture is invariably a metaphor for judgment. Here fire is intimately associated with the Sabbath rest of the Feast. Could Yahweh be telling us that our exodus from this corrupt world will lead to its judgment (like Lot's departure from Sodom did)? Or is this just a coincidence? I'll let you be the judge on that one.

### **(132)**

To hear the sound of the shofar on Feast of Trumpets(Num. 29:1) (CCA30). See Feast of Trumpets.

Hear the sound of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets." (Numbers 29:1) Since Yahweh didn't actually say why they were to blow the trumpets, the Jews came up with some fanciful myths of their own. First, it was a call to remembrance and repentance, for the day was the first of the ten "days of awe" that culminated in Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, which we'll see in a moment. Second, it was to remind Israel of their covenant relationship with Yahweh. And third, this was supposed to be the one day of the year when Satan came before God to accuse Israel, so the Jews blew the shofar to confuse the devil. It's not working, people. This last tradition led to the day being known as Yom Hakeseh, or the "Hidden Day," for (the story went) if you never said when the Feast of Trumpets was coming, then Satan wouldn't know. (If only he were that stupid.) So they'd say, tongue in cheek, "No one knows but God." This goes a long way toward explaining Yahshua's enigmatic statement about not knowing the time of His return for His own people, recorded in Matthew 24:36. He was, in a backhanded way, informing us that He intended to gather His believers on some future Feast of Trumpets. He didn't say what year.

### **(133)**

To fast on Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:27) (CCA32). See Yom Kippur.

Fast on Yom Kippur. "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh." (Leviticus 23:27) Whereas most of the miqrym of Yahweh call for rejoicing and feasting, this one is different. It calls for affliction of the soul, introspection, mourning—a somber response to the realization of one's guilt. Why this is will become apparent shortly. I must note that fasting and "affliction" are not the same thing. This, sadly, is one more instance of rabbinical meddling designed to "get them off the hook" with God—performing the letter of their law while

willfully ignoring the true intention of Yahweh. In point of fact, fasting is never specifically commanded on the Day of Atonement, although if true “affliction of soul” is taking place, fasting could well be a manifestation of that attitude. But anybody, in any frame of mind, can fast for a day if they want to.

The key is the word “afflict.” ‘Anah is “a verb indicating to be afflicted, to be oppressed, to be humbled. It means to bow down, to humble oneself.” (B&C) Only twice in Scripture it is shown to be accompanied by fasting of any kind (Ezra 8:21, to punctuate a spirit of supplication as the Israelites began their return journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, and Daniel 10:3 (sort of), where Daniel mourned for three weeks, eating only bread and water as he awaited clarification concerning a troubling vision). Neither instance is connected in any way to the Day of Atonement.

But there is another ‘anah in Hebrew whose meaning is so different it has been assigned an entirely different reference number (though it’s spelled identically). This verb means “to answer, to respond, to reply, to testify.” It also means “to sing, to shout, to howl. It is used of singing joyously to the Lord and in praise of His Law, or in a riotous, uncontrolled way. It is used of a victory song or crying out in victory. It is used figuratively of a rested Israel singing again.” (B&C) I find it fascinating that both meanings of the word (or should I say, all of them) fit the scenario scripture paints of the definitive Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

And what is this significant future event to which Yom Kippur points? All of the previous five miqrym (as we have seen) are linked to fulfillments of key milestones in Yahweh’s plan of redemption, in chronological order. This one extends the pattern. The climactic moment is prophesied by Zechariah: “And I [Yahweh] will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself.... And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north, and half of it toward the south.” (Zechariah 12:10-12, 14:4) Yes, it’s the appearance of Yahshua the King, returning in glory, that will cause those who had witnessed their miraculous national deliverance to “afflict their souls.” Will there be fasting? I wouldn’t doubt it. Who could keep anything down? But after the shock and remorse sink in, the reality of their deliverance will emerge in their response, their answer, their joyous testimony. And before the day is through, they’ll be singing and shouting in reply to their Messiah’s inevitable victory. The ‘anah of their nephesh (souls) will be the order of the day.



**(134)**

Not to eat or drink on Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:29) (CCN152). See Yom Kippur.

Do not eat or drink on Yom Kippur. “For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people.” (Leviticus 23:29) We’ve already established that Yahweh never actually said anything about fasting on Yom Kippur. But we need to pay close attention to the penalty for not being “anah.” If, on the day of the ultimate Day of Atonement, anyone looks upon the returning King and is not awed by His presence, afflicted and humbled, if he does not respond, answer and shout joyfully, then he shall surely be “cut off.” This is no idle threat, by the way. The prophetic timeline places this last Yom Kippur within a couple of days of the Battle of Armageddon—a battle (if you can call it that) in which no enemies of Christ will survive.

**(135)**

Not to do work on Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:31) (CCN151). See Yom Kippur.

Do not do work on Yom Kippur. “You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.” (Leviticus 23:31) There’s a subtle difference here from the normal Sabbath: usually, it’s “Don’t do your customary work.” Now it’s “Do no manner of work.”

This is a very special Holy day in which Satan is locked away. It is very somber and different than other joyous festivals. It is also the last of the 10 days of awe. You can read more on this at [https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon\\_2015/?page\\_id=255](https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/?page_id=255)

**(136)**

To rest on the Yom Kippur (Lev. 23:32) (CCA31). See Yom Kippur.

Rest on Yom Kippur. “It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.” (Leviticus 23:32) Here’s the converse of Mitzvah #135. Did you ever wonder why Yahweh begins the “day” at sundown? We see it described this way all the way back in the creation account, where we see the formula repeated: “The evening and the morning were the nth day.” What separates nighttime from daytime? The defining factor is light. It was not by accident that Yahshua said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (John 8:12) John explains the connection: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning

with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [i.e., overcome] it.” (John 1:1-5) Yahweh’s pattern is to move us from darkness into light, from chaos into order, from ignorance into knowledge, from slavery into freedom. And so as we see in His instruction to rest on the Day of Atonement, it is reiterated that the Sabbath is to take us from affliction into celebration.

### **(137)**

To rest on the first day of Sukkot (Lev. 23:35) (CCA34). See Sukkot.

Rest on the first day of Sukkot. ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to Yahweh. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh.’ (Leviticus 23:34-36) Here the Sabbath rest is back to being described as not doing one’s “customary work,” that is, the type of work one normally does to earn his living—to provide for his own needs. The rabbis, of course, aren’t satisfied with this definition (and the grace of God that it symbolizes) and generally state that all work must cease on this day. So verse 40 must give them migraines: “And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days.” That’s right: they’re supposed to “work” on the first day of Sukkot, putting their temporary shelters together.

Although the rabbis have zeroed in on the things they can observe ritualistically (i.e., without thinking about them too much), there is a reason Yahweh instituted this Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles. (“Tabernacle” is admittedly a word we don’t use much anymore outside of the technical description of the “tent of meeting” used during the wilderness wanderings. All the word means, however, is a booth, pavilion, or tent—a temporary structure of some kind.) As I’ve said before, Yahweh doesn’t do things on a pointless whim—He invariably has some benefit or illustrative lesson in mind. So we must ask ourselves: why would God ask the Israelites to leave their comfortable homes and build these temporary huts to live in for a week every year? It’s a picture of one of the most astounding concepts in all of scripture—God Himself is planning to leave His glorious heavenly abode and camp out personally among men for a season—a thousand years of perfect peace. Like the weeklong Sukkot celebration, it’s described as one big party—a barbecue, if you will. In the ultimate permutation, the inhabitants of earth will enjoy a flawless world with King Yahshua on the throne for an entire Millennium.

That's why John told us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt [Greek skenoo: to tabernacle or encamp] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

### **(138)**

Not to do work on the first day of Sukkot (Lev. 23:35) (CCN153). See Sukkot.

Do not work on the first day of Sukkot. "On the first day there shall be a holy convocation.

You shall do no customary work on it. (Leviticus 23:35) It's annoying, isn't it—this habit of Maimonides to restate everything as both an affirmative and as a negative. I should remind the reader that this practice wasn't quite so obvious in the original. There, the negative mitzvot were grouped together, and the affirmative rules were set aside by themselves. The order we're using (that of Tracey Rich of Judaism 101) makes this childish propensity far more obvious—like a seventh grader trying to stretch one page of research into a three page report. What's not so obvious is what Maimonides (and the rabbis before him) left out. There are thousands of rule-worthy statements in the Torah that could have been codified but for the fact that they point directly to Yahshua in His role as the Messiah. For example: (1) Select the perfect Passover lamb on the tenth day of Nisan and bring him into your household until he is slain on the fourteenth. (Exodus 12:1-6); (2) Don't break any of the bones of the Passover lamb. (Exodus 12:46); (3) All firstborn who are males are dedicated to Yahweh (Exodus

13:12); (4) The pure gold lamps lighting the holy place must burn continually, fed with the oil of pressed olives, and tended by the High Priest. (Leviticus 24:1-4) I could go on ad infinitum, but since neither these nor thousands of other possibilities were listed by Maimonides, they are beyond the purview of this study, nor will I take the time to explain how they tie into the revealed plan of man's redemption. My point is simply that what the rabbis left out is as revealing as what they put into the "613 Laws of Moses."

### **(139)**

To rest on the eighth day of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret) (Lev. 23:36) (CCA37). See Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

Rest on the eighth day of Sukkot. "For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it." (Leviticus 23:36) If the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles is prophetic of the beginning of the Millennial reign of Christ, then what in the world could the eighth day signify? Actually, it's not "in

the world” any more at all, but “out of this world,” if you’ll excuse the lame play on words. The eighth day is predictive of what comes after the Millennium: eternity! Our life after the thousand-year reign of the King will be a completion of the process that was begun on the Feast of Trumpets. By this time, all believers of all ages will have received their immortal, spiritual bodies (see I Corinthians 15), and Yahweh will unveil a New Heaven and a New Earth (not to mention a New Jerusalem) in which we can enjoy His company forever.

That’s why it’s called a “sacred assembly.” There will be no one left who has not chosen to accept Yahweh’s love. Once again, it’s designated as a Sabbath rest. There’s nothing we can do to earn this eternal state of blissful communion with our God—all we can do is relax and enjoy the gift.

### **(140)**

Not to do work on the eighth day of Sukkot (Shemini Atzeret) (Lev. 23:36) (CCN154). See Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

Do not work on the eighth day of Sukkot. “On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to Yahweh. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it.” (Leviticus 23:36) Oy vey. Read #139 again.

### **(141)**

To take during Sukkot a palm branch and the other three plants (Lev. 23:40) (CCA36).

See Sukkot.

Take during Sukkot a palm branch and the other three plants. “You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before Yahweh your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to Yahweh for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahweh your God.” (Leviticus 23:40-43)

### **(142)**

To dwell in booths seven days during Sukkot (Lev. 23:42) (CCA35). See Sukkot. (142)Dwell in booths seven days during Sukkot. “You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths.” (Leviticus 23:42) Seven is the number for completion, of

perfection. Thus a seven-day festival is indicative of something that has eternal ramifications: Yahweh will dwell with man for eternity. Yes, only the first thousand years of it will be on this earth, but a change in environment doesn't signal a change in relationship. Our old mortal bodies were built for this earth. Our new immortal bodies (like the one Yahshua had when he rose from the tomb) will be built to inhabit an entirely different kind of universe.

## Dietary Laws

If you ask a hundred Christians if the dietary laws of the Old Testament are still valid for us today, ninety-five of them will say "No," and point out a couple of places in the New Testament that seem to prove their case. For example, in an incident recorded in both Matthew and Mark, Yahshua answered the Pharisees' criticism of His disciples' eating with unwashed hands with what seems like a refutation of the Levitical dietary precepts:

"Jesus called to the crowds and said, 'Listen to what I say and try to understand. You are not defiled by what you eat; you are defiled by what you say and do.'" His point here is actually that the Pharisees didn't understand the nature of defilement—that which makes you unclean or unholy. They thought that neglecting the traditional ceremonial hand washing before meals would somehow separate you from God. "Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowds, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the statement he had made." Yahshua's disciples didn't quite get it either, apparently. "Don't you understand either?" he asked. 'Can't you see that what you eat won't defile you? Food doesn't come in contact with your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then comes out again.' (The Christians say 'By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable.')

We'll come back to this last sentence. It's the heart of the argument, but there are problems with it.

"And then he added, 'It is the thought-life that defiles you. For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God.'" In other words, neither the food you eat nor the way you prepare it can make you unholy. What separates you from God is your sin. "Then the disciples came to him and asked, 'Do you realize you offended the Pharisees by what you just said?' Jesus replied, 'Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be rooted up, so ignore them. They are blind guides leading the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall into a ditch.'" (Matthew 15:10-13 NLT, Mark 7:14-23 NLT, blended) Yahshua didn't care if He offended the Pharisees' delicate sensibilities. They were leading people astray; the record needed to be corrected. And He was just the Guy to do it.

The Pharisees were doing their best to follow the strict letter of the Mosaic Law, including the dietary part. So far, so good. The problem was that they were relying on their strict outward observance of the rules to earn favor with Yahweh—Who sees what’s in our hearts. Yahshua wasn’t saying that it was wrong to follow the precepts of Moses, or that they had somehow been rendered obsolete by His coming. He was only saying that observance of the Law could not and would not reconcile us to a holy God. Just as “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,” so was the rest of the Torah: the dietary laws were there for our benefit, not God’s.

But what about that incriminating parenthetical, “(By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable.)”? Isn’t this saying that all bets are off, that we have been given divine permission to eat whatever we want? Not exactly. The primary passage defining the dietary laws is found in Leviticus 11. The summary verse reads, “This is the law of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.” (Leviticus 11:46-47) Two things, it says, have been defined in the preceding passage. First are those things which are clean (as opposed to unclean).

If an Israelite were even to touch anything on this list, he would be ceremonially defiled, or “unclean until evening,” that is, temporarily disqualified from certain duties or privileges that required ceremonial cleanliness. Second, those things which are edible (as opposed to inedible) are identified. Thus any animal that was prohibited in the Leviticus 11 list was, by definition, not food. So Yahshua is not saying, “Go ahead and eat spiders and mice—I’m telling you it’s okay, never mind what the Torah said.”

He is, rather, saying, “Nothing you put in your mouth can establish or destroy your relationship with Yahweh. Only the condition of your heart—your love, faith, and trust in Him—has any bearing on this relationship.” The things that were not considered “food” in the first place never even entered into the discussion.

I should point out that the New Living Translation is probably guilty of unwarranted extrapolation at this point: “(By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable)” isn’t not in the Greek text in any recognizable way. The bottom line is that the Mark 7 passage does nothing to abrogate the Levitical dietary laws: that which is not food is not purified.

Okay, then, what about I Timothy 4? Surely that’ll prove the case. “Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from what we believe; they will follow lying spirits and teachings that come from demons. These teachers are hypocrites and liars. They

pretend to be religious, but their consciences are dead. They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods.” See? See? The people telling us it’s “wrong to eat certain foods” are hypocrites and liars! “But God created those foods to be eaten with thanksgiving by people who know and believe the truth. Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it. We may receive it gladly, with thankful hearts. For we know it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.” (I Timothy 4:1-5 NLT) Hold on a minute here. What’s God’s definition of “food?” It’s all the stuff on the “okay” list in Leviticus 11. The items on the no-no list aren’t classified as food at all. But when the rabbis tell you not to eat beef or lamb that was butchered by someone other than a duly authorized shochet, or when the Catholic Church tells you (as they did for centuries) that you can’t eat meat on Fridays, you can be relatively certain you’re dealing with “hypocrites and liars.” Again, things that aren’t defined as food in the Torah aren’t even part of the discussion. I know you were probably all watered up for some barbecued buzzard breast with minced mouse-meat stuffing, but neither this passage nor the Mark 7 statement has authorized any such culinary adventures. Sorry.

Alright then, what about Peter’s vision of the sheet with all the non-kosher sandwich fixin’s on it? Rule number one: don’t take my word for anything. Let’s look up the passage. The day after Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion, received a vision about Peter, “Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” (Acts 10:9-15) Peter, like the Pharisees and indeed, most Jews of his time, made an effort to follow the Mosaic dietary laws. They were such an ingrained religious tradition, nobody really thought about them much—they were second nature, as they should have been. But certain rabbinical prejudices had become equally ingrained in the culture, among them that gentiles were unclean dogs whom Jews were to despise and look down upon as lesser creatures.

So as Pete was puzzling over the meaning of his non-kosher vision, Cornelius’ messengers arrived and asked him to go with them to visit this gentile they worked for. Peter may have been impetuous, but he was teachable. He saw immediately what Yahweh was trying to tell him. He relates his conclusion in Acts 10:34-35, 43: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation, whoever [i.e., not only Jews, but gentiles as well] fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him....

Whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” Was Peter’s vision about food? No. It was about dropping errant prejudices about other people whom God loved. Note that God wasn’t telling Peter to be tolerant of other people’s false beliefs. Cornelius was a believer, or at the very least, an honest searcher, and Yahweh never slams the door shut on these folks, no matter what their cultural background is. The problem was on Peter’s end. He had assumed that because Yahweh had told the Israelites to keep themselves set apart from the nations, that gentiles could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, at least not without becoming Jews first.

God was showing him that this just wasn’t true. Peter got the message. Why don’t we?

As we examine Maimonides’ take on the Levitical dietary laws, then, let us bear in mind that nothing Yahweh instructed in the Torah has been abrogated, diminished, or otherwise done away with. There are, however, several ceremonial cleanliness issues, mentioned in Leviticus in the context of dietary law, that have been fulfilled in the person of the Messiah. Maimonides doesn’t distinguish these from what and what not to eat, so I will, briefly. These seem to be indicative of whether or not an Israelite was to be admitted into the camp, to be a part of the congregation. If a person was ceremonially unclean, he was to remain outside the camp, separated from those who were not contaminated. It’s never really spelled out, but we are given a picture of how it worked in Deuteronomy 23:10-11. “If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. But it shall be, when evening comes, that he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.” Being admitted “into the camp” is a picture of entering the Kingdom of God. There is no shortage of ways we can “defile ourselves,” making us unfit for the Kingdom. But the blood of the Messiah has washed us clean, allowing us to come into God’s very presence “when the sun sets,” that is, upon our death .

As we read the Torah, it becomes plain that there’s really no way to avoid becoming ceremonially unclean from time to time. (Actually, it’s worse than that: it’s next to impossible to remain ceremonially undefiled for longer than a New York minute.) Interestingly enough, Yahweh never commanded the Israelites to completely avoid this state, though being ceremonially clean is clearly to be preferred—a goal to shoot for. He said far less about how to avoid becoming “defiled” than He did about the subsequent purification process—typically, the washing of the body or clothes with water and the passage of time.

But as I said, Maimonides stuck pretty much to the practical dietary side of the subject—what and what not to eat and how to prepare it. Sadly, this makes perfect sense, because ever since the wilderness wanderings ended, there was no practical way to “go outside the camp.” God’s instructions in that regard became purely symbolic, and the symbols pointed toward



Yahshua the Messiah. Therefore, it served the interests of the rabbis who'd rejected Him to bury the truth. But we're following Maimonides' list for organizational purposes, so the dietary rules are where we're going next...

### **(143)**

To examine the marks in cattle (so as to distinguish the clean from the unclean) (Lev.

11:2) (affirmative). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Examine the marks in cattle (in order to distinguish the clean from the unclean). "Now

Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying,

'These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth...'

(Leviticus 11:1-2) What follows these verses is a litany of not just "cattle," but all sorts of animals that might or might not be considered edible. The people weren't so much to examine the marks or characteristics on individual animals as to separate different kinds of beasts from each other: it wasn't that Angus beef might be okay but not Holstein, but rather that cows were clean and camels weren't. Yahweh would go on to speak not only of mammals, but also of sea creatures, bugs, reptiles, and birds. As we will see, the more complicated an animal's digestive system and the more "discriminating" its typical diet, the more likely it would be that its kind would be included in the "edible" category.

This was not the first time the issue of "clean" versus "unclean" animals was ever raised. 1,500 years (give or take) before the Law was handed down through Moses, Noah was instructed to "take with you [into the ark] seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth." (Genesis 7:2-3) How did Noah know which was which? Either Yahweh told him specifically for this occasion, or more likely, Noah already knew because he had made sacrificial offerings to Yahweh of these kinds of animals in the past, as had his ancestors—going back to Adam. It isn't even hinted that what Noah did in Genesis 8:20 was an unprecedented act: "Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar." However, using these animals for food—instead of eating only plants—was possibly a post-diluvian innovation. Yahweh told Noah after the flood subsided, "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives

shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, it's blood." (Genesis 9:2-4)

#### **(144)**

Not to eat the flesh of unclean beasts (Lev. 11:4) (CCN93). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Do not eat the flesh of unclean beasts. "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, 'These are the animals which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth: Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves and chewing the cud—that you may eat. Nevertheless these you shall not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is unclean to you; and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. They are unclean to you.'" (Leviticus 11:2-8) Yahweh made it easy to determine what animals were "edible" and which were not: of mammals, only those with divided hooves that also chewed the cud were to be used as food. This includes cattle (plus oxen, buffalos, bison, etc.), sheep (both wild and domestic), goats, and deer (including a broad range of wild herding animals inhabiting grasslands from one end of earth to the other). In Deuteronomy 14:4-5, the list looked like this: "These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep."

Specifically excluded because they did not meet the dual criteria are several animals that would have been quite familiar to the Israelites: notably, pigs and camels. Horses, donkeys, zebras, and onagers (the indigenous wild asses to which Ishmael was prophetically compared in Genesis 16:12) are among other potentially familiar hoofed beasts that didn't make the cut. Carnivorous or omnivorous hunters and scavengers (e.g. lions, wolves, apes) were not to be eaten, nor were omnivorous or vegetarian species that were susceptible to various diseases, such as the hyrax and the rabbit. In clarification, Yahweh stated, "Whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on all fours, those are unclean to you." (Leviticus 11:27)

Since horsemeat and 'possum aren't protein staples for most folks, it would seem eating Torah-Kosher isn't a real big problem for the most part. In fact, as far as the typical American diet is concerned, there are only two food types on the "forbidden" list that are problematical— pork and shellfish. We'll cover seafood a bit later, but for now, let's take a close look at the "other white meat," pork. I know, pigs are quite intelligent, they're kind of cute, and their reputation as being "filthy" animals is somewhat exaggerated. More to the point (be honest, now), pork can be

mighty tasty: bacon, chops, ribs, ham, sausage—why should we have to give it up just because of some moldy 3,000-year-old dietary guidelines? I don't mind abstaining from vulture meat and barbecued rat, but...

Yes, we have a fondness for our carnitas and pork chow mein, don't we? So we scour the Bible looking for loopholes. An Israeli friend of mine who would never openly admit to a fondness for pork nevertheless refers to pigs as "short cows." Wink wink, nudge nudge. And because we like the taste of pork products, we Christians desperately cling to passages like Mark 7 that seem to abrogate the inconvenient portions of the Torah.

Remember, the Torah is our Owner's Manual. It was written for our benefit, not Yahweh's. Why doesn't he want us to eat pigs? It's because of what he designed them to be—barnyard garbage disposals, made to cleanse the world of spoilage and death. Pigs raised for consumption these days are mostly fed corn, but left to themselves, they'll eat almost anything, including rotting garbage and the feces of other animals. It's their job. Being "food" isn't. They have no mechanism in their digestive tracts to filter out the toxins they ingest—it ends up being secreted through their skin or hooves (pickled pigs' feet, anyone?) or absorbed into the meat. A cow or sheep will take between twelve and sixteen hours to digest and process its food; a pig's digestive system is so simple, it'll get the job done in three or four hours.

And disease? Everybody seems to know that pork needs to be cooked thoroughly in order to kill the worms that infest the meat, but hardly anybody actually gets out the ol' meat thermometer to check to see if the requisite minimum of 170 degrees Fahrenheit has actually been reached. That's what it takes (if you're lucky) to kill *trichinella spiralis*—the trichina worm, one of nineteen such worms commonly found in pork. Merely cooking your pork chops until they have the consistency of a baseball mitt is no guarantee that the worms are dead. And don't take comfort in the USDA stamp: all that means is that the pigs have been inspected. But trichinae are microscopic and nearly transparent—it takes an expert to find them, and the government inspectors aren't even looking.

The journal *Healthwise* reported that there are 150,000 new cases of trichinosis in the U.S. each year. Some authorities estimate that as many as twenty-five percent of the American population is infected. So why isn't this epidemic recognized and dealt with? Two reasons: first, the obvious—there's money to be made, and lots of it, if the pork industry is allowed to continue doing business as usual. The second reason is the stealthy nature of the disease. "Trichinosis is the chameleon of diseases," said the *Saturday Evening Post* (7/8/82). "The number and variety of ailments with which it is more or less commonly confused approach the encyclopedic." The journal goes on to list 41 disorders ranging from commonplace to esoteric that are frequently

misdiagnosed instead of the real culprit, trichinosis—everything from arthritis and asthma to typhus and cholera.

I think it's safe to say that this is one place where our "Christian" traditions have led us into error. We should never have taken the Church's word over Yahweh's. But I'm afraid there's a sinister plot afoot there as well, and it's not over anything as trivial as money. You see, the original Babylonian mystery religion was predicated on the tragic death and miraculous rebirth of Tammuz (Satan's prototypical Messiah counterfeit), who was, the legend goes, killed by a wild boar in his fortieth year. Devotees of the religion would therefore symbolically "weep for Tammuz" for a forty-day Lenten period each year (cf. Ezekiel 8:14), at the end of which they would ritually slaughter the pig that killed Tammuz and celebrate his (Tammuz', not the pig's) resurrection as a god—in the form of an egg-laying rabbit (I'm not making this stuff up, I swear). Does any of this sound familiar? It should. After Constantine declared Christianity legal at the Council of Nicaea in 325, all sorts of pagan sun-god traditions were woven into the fabric of "Christianity," including the oh-so-popular "Easter" ham. It was an often-stated objective of the "Church" hierarchy at this stage to separate itself from all things Jewish. But you can't do that without separating yourself from Yahweh. It was a really stupid thing to do.

Satan's not stupid, of course. He's got something for everybody. And so we observe that the entire Muslim world is deathly afraid of pigs. Are they following the word of Yahweh, then? Hardly. They're merely buying into another of Satan's counterfeits. There's more to the Mosaic dietary laws than just pigs. Ask 'em about camels—specifically declared unclean in the Torah. Middle Eastern Muslims not only eat them, they sacrifice them in droves to Allah every year at the Ka'aba.

### **(145)**

To examine the marks in fishes (so as to distinguish the clean from the unclean (Lev.

11:9) (affirmative). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Examine the marks in fishes (to distinguish the clean from the unclean. "These you may eat of all that are in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which is in the water, they are an abomination to you." (Leviticus 11:9-10) As He did with mammals, Yahweh has provided very clear, simple instructions as to what aquatic creatures are to be considered "edible" and which are not. As before, there are two criteria, both of which must be met: both fins and scales had to be present, which pretty much restricted the category of seafood to true fish—i.e., the bony fishes.

Cartilaginous “fish” like sharks and rays have fins but no scales. Sea snakes and certain sea creatures that might be construed to have scales (like shrimps or lobsters) don’t have fins. Both types are thus prohibited. All shellfish (clams, oysters, scallops, mussels, etc.) are out of bounds, as are crustaceans like crabs, lobsters, shrimp, and crayfish. Aquatic mammals like whales, dolphins, and porpoises don’t have scales, so they’re not to be eaten, nor are the more exotic sea creatures like octopi, squids, sea cucumbers...you get the idea.

Once again, we don’t have to look too far to find practical reasons for nixing everything but regular fish. Most of the prohibited sea creatures are scavengers, no matter which end of the food chain they occupy. Their God-given job in life is to clean the waters of death and decay. Anybody who’s ever had a successful aquarium knows that one of the secrets of maintaining balance is to have a few scavengers and snails in with the pretty fish to keep the tank clean. Shellfish and mollusks filter pollutants out of their environment, but their simple digestive systems have no capacity for keeping these toxins out of their own tissues. Though they themselves are not normally adversely affected by the nasty stuff they ingest, their flesh retains the accumulated toxins. The bottom line: you never really know if they’re “safe.” So God made the decision easy for us. Fins and scales, or forget it. Caveat emptor.

#### **(146)**

Not to eat unclean fish (Lev. 11:11) (CCN95). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Do not eat unclean fish. “They [whatever in the water does not have fins and scales] shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that shall be an abomination to you.” (Leviticus 11:11-12) Here we see the negatively stated converse to Mitzvah #145. It’s not a separate precept. But as long as we’re here, let me point out another detail that forces us to look beyond the mere letter of the law. We see here (as in other places) that not only weren’t the Israelites to eat the forbidden flesh, they weren’t even to touch the carcasses of these creatures after they had died. The consequences of touching the carcass of any unclean animal are summarized in verses 24-25: “By these you shall become unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.” “Whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them?” I hate to tell you this, but Yahweh commanded every Israelite to do precisely that—or something very close to it. Remember Mitzvah #41? The Jews were instructed to attach tassels—called *tsitzits*—to the corners of their garments, each containing a single blue thread, the purpose of which was “that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of Yahweh and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your

own heart and your own eyes are inclined.” (Numbers 15:39) Where did the blue dye come from? There was only one source, the cerulean mussel,

a.k.a. the murex. So by wearing the tsitzit with the required blue thread, the Israelites were in a sense “carrying part of the carcass” of an unclean creature. At the very least, their keeping of the law of the tsitzit had required someone else to become ceremonially unclean for their benefit—processing the dye from the shellfish corpses. When they saw the blue threads in their tsitzits, they should have been reminded that somebody had borne their uncleanness for them. The blue thread was prophetic of the Messiah.

Yahweh was practically screaming that “whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight....” Did God purposely build this glitch into His Law, making it impossible to remain ceremonially clean? I believe He did. Paul goes on to explain: “For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:19-23) We are all unclean, and keeping the Law cannot make us clean. Only the blood of Christ can do that.

### **(147)**

To examine the marks in fowl, so as to distinguish the clean from the unclean (Deut.

14:11) (affirmative). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Examine the marks in fowl, to distinguish the clean from the unclean. “All clean birds you may eat. But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; every raven after its kind; the ostrich [a mistranslation in the NKJV: it’s ossifrage (Hebrew: peres), i.e. a lammergeyer or osprey], the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.”

(Deuteronomy 14:11-18) In Deuteronomy, Moses repeated many of the instructions he had delivered previously in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Here we see a list of forbidden fowl—although the precise species intended by Moses are in question, the picture’s pretty clear: all of these are carnivorous birds of prey, scavengers, or otherwise indiscriminate in their dietary habits. The bat, of course, is not a bird (nor did Moses say it was) but it’s listed here because it flies like one.

That leaves an unspecified litany of “clean” birds that were okay for food and sacrifices. Yahweh Himself provided quail to eat (Exodus 16:13, Numbers 11:31-32) and turtledoves and pigeons were specified as acceptable sacrifices—thus clean—in Leviticus 5:7, etc. Partridges are mentioned in passing in I Samuel 26:20. It’s pretty clear that domestic fowl like chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese would have been considered clean as well, although they’re not specifically listed.

### **(148)**

Not to eat unclean fowl (Lev. 11:13) (CCN94). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Do not eat unclean fowl. “And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, the kite, and the falcon after its kind; every raven after its kind, the ostrich [wrong word: see the note on #147], the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.” (Leviticus 11:13-19) This is the negative permutation of the previous mitzvah, and the Leviticus passage supporting it is almost identical to the one we saw in Deuteronomy. It’s no particular surprise that scripture agrees with scripture. But does science agree? We’ve (unfairly, perhaps) come to view science as somehow antithetical to matters of faith. But as time marches on, honest researchers perceive a growing correlation between the data of science (though not necessarily the common interpretation of that data) and the words of scripture (though not necessarily the spin put on them by the religious establishment). Our ignorance of this correlation is the fault of neither science nor scripture, but rather of scientists and clerics with agendas to advance.

So, does science agree with scripture in regard to the Torah’s dietary precepts? In a word, yes. In 1953 (that’s right, the facts have been available for over half a century now), the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine published an article in their “Bulletin of the History of Medicine” by a Jewish physician named David I. Macht, M.D. It was given the unwieldy title An Experimental Pharmacological Appreciation of V’yrikra XI and D’varim XIV. Perhaps if he had entitled the article The Health Ramifications of the Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 Dietary Laws, it might have received more attention (or have been rejected for publication altogether). At any rate, Dr. Macht set about testing extracts of the flesh and blood of a wide range of animals, including fifty-four different kinds of fish, identified as “clean” or “unclean” in the Torah. Under controlled laboratory conditions, he subjected each sample to the same standard toxicological analysis. The results were, depending on your point of view, either yawningly

predictable or stunningly revealing: every single sample that the Torah listed as “clean” or edible was shown to be non-toxic, while every subject tested from the Mosaic Law’s “unclean” or inedible list turned out to be toxic. There was a one hundred percent correlation between Yahweh’s instructions and Dr. Macht’s experiments. Pigs, by the way, ranked way up there in toxicity with rats and groundhogs.

### **(149)**

To examine the marks in locusts, so as to distinguish the clean from the unclean (Lev.

11:21) (affirmative). See Animals that may not be eaten.

Examine the marks in locusts, to distinguish the clean from the unclean. “All flying insects that creep on all fours shall be an abomination to you. Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on all fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. These you may eat: the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. But all other flying insects which have four feet shall be an abomination to you.” (Leviticus 11:20-23) Bugs in general are on the “inedible” list. “Creeping on all fours,” of course, is merely a figure of speech: it says less about the number of legs than the mode of transport. Insects, spiders, centipedes, scorpions—all kinds of creepy crawlies are hereby declared unclean. But there’s one notable exception: insects that have jointed legs used for hopping are approved as food.

Grasshoppers, locusts, and crickets are okay to eat.

Because of recent swarms in which billions of locusts have swept across 60 countries in Africa, Asia, and Australia eating everything in their path, researchers have been studying these creatures intently in recent years. They can eat their body weight (2 grams) in food every day while traveling up to 130 kilometers. But stopping them with pesticides has proven problematical. It turns out that they are incredibly fussy eaters who know better than humans how to regulate and balance their food intake.

They “taste” their environment through microscopic “hairs” on their legs as well as through their mouthparts. This helps them avoid areas that have been treated with pesticides. Oxford University researchers have discovered that locusts will regulate their food intake: when given food diluted fivefold with indigestible cellulose, the locusts merely increase their intake—fivefold! They will also compensate for past deficiencies in their diet if given the opportunity, eating precisely the right balance of proteins, carbohydrates, and salts. So locusts and their cousins are safe to eat (which is not to say they’re not an acquired taste).