

## BEMIDBAR (NUMBERS) 30:1-32:42 –MATTOTH – TRIBES

As we begin this Torah portion, we recognise how Mosheh was preparing the children of Yisra'el to receive their allotted inheritance in the Promised Land, and in the last Torah portion we ended with looking at the various sacrifices that were required for each Feast, which, in essence, carries the great picture that deals with the ability in drawing near to יהוה; and in a way, we see a great flow here, on how we are to 'love' יהוה and serve Him only. And in this Torah portion we see a clear picture of how we are to relate to one another and 'love' our neighbour, as this portion speaks to all the Tribes and renders clear guidance on the very words we speak, both to יהוה and to each other, as well as the responsibilities of sharing with each other and being able to stand and fight for one another.

This week's Torah portion is called "Tribes" or "**the tribes**" – תְּמִטּוֹת – '**ha-mattoth**' – which is the plural of the word מַטֵּה mattah – Strong's H4294 meaning, '**a staff, rod, branch, a tribe, a branch of a vine**' which comes from the primitive root נָטָה natah – Strong's H5186 meaning, '**to stretch out, spread out, extend, incline**'.

This word is for all the 'tribes' (branches) of Yisra'el – all who have 'spread out', and when we see the meaning of these words we can quickly be reminded of the words of our Master and Elohim in:

**Yohanan/John 15: 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who stays in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit. Because without Me you are able to do naught!"**

These instructions of יהוה as given through Mosheh are for us, the branches of The Vine (יהושע Messiah), who have been grafted in by the blood of Messiah!

### CHAPTER 30: Vows and oaths:

As we look at this chapter, we can certainly learn how important our words are and we are therefore taught to watch what we say at all times, lest we find ourselves being caught or trapped by our idle and vain words, which we are to be responsible for.

**Verse 2** – In this verse we see some very critical words that we must understand, from a Hebraic perspective, in order to fully grasp the importance of the words we speak. It starts off by telling us that when a man makes a vow or swears and oath – he must not break it! The two Hebrew words for **vow** and **oath** are as follows:

**1 – Vow** – In Hebrew, the word that is translated as '**vow**' is נָדָר neder – Strong's H5088 which means, '**vow**' and the phrase, '**to make a vow**', in Hebrew, is the word נָדָר nadar – Strong's H5087; and therefore, to "**nadar a neder**" is to swear to Elohim with an '**oath**', and therefore bind oneself with what proceeds from one's mouth.

A **neder** is something promised to Elohim verbally, and anyone who makes a vow is obliged to fulfil/do his promise! In Scripture, a vow is always to Elohim and not to man. And the understanding behind a '**vow**' carries the meaning, '**to bind or imprison, or to dedicate a specific object or creature to יהוה**'.

**Tehillah/Psalm 61:8 "So I sing praise to Your Name forever, when I pay my vows day by day."**

**Tehillah/Psalm 116:14 "I pay my vows to יהוה now in the presence of all His people."**

**Yonah/Jonah 2:9 "But I offer to You with the voice of thanksgiving, I pay what I have vowed."**

**Deliverance is of יהוה."**

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 5:33 "Again, you heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to יהוה.'"**

This can also cause us to recognise that we must be true to the words of our mouth as we do what we say we will, in offering up the commitment to follow Messiah and walk in Him daily!

**2 – Oath** – In Hebrew, the word that is translated as '**oath**' is שָׁבַע shebua – Strong's H7621 which means, '**oath, curse, swear, sworn**' and comes from the root שָׁבַע sheba – Strong's H7651 meaning, '**seven**', and from this word we get the denominative verb – שָׁבַע shaba – Strong's H7650 which means, '**to swear, exchange oaths, take an oath, vow**'.

An '**oath**' is typically and obligation taken upon yourself rather than that which is imposed upon you.

To “swear”, in Scripture (which is also the root word שָׁבַע *shaba*), was to give one’s sure and promised unbreakable word in testimony, that the one swearing would faithfully perform some promised deed, or that he would faithfully refrain from some evil act. Occasionally we see in Scripture that one ‘swore’ that he freely acknowledged a truth and would continue to acknowledge it in the future by sticking to what he has heard.

In Hebrew, when one promises to complete something, it is considered as ‘done’ and the word one has promised could be depended upon, and that which was said would be accomplished.

This is vital for us to grasp, as we see in the world today how so many ‘break their word’ so easily and brush it off without any regard for the consequences of making rash promises and vows.

What we are to recognize is that the one we make a promise to is, in a sense, ‘incomplete’ until we fulfill the vow – and so too are we, as we have ‘by our words’, bound ourselves to another and therefore are required to follow through or else we are rendered as not having completed our work and are ‘incomplete’.

When we ‘swear by His Name’ we are identifying ourselves with His character and His clear standards, as prescribed in the Torah and therefore יהוה *YHWH* warns us that we are not to ‘swear FALSELY’!

**Wayyiqra/Leviticus 19:12 “And do not swear falsely by My Name and so profane the Name of your Elohim. I am יהוה.”**

To not swear falsely in יהוה's Name is a very serious instruction as many do this as they pass off their own agendas and ideas as that of יהוה. It also speaks of not fulfilling something that we have declared to complete; and now we have all said we will follow His commands and obey them as we have dedicated our lives to following Messiah and therefore we must be careful not to be found faltering in our commitment, for this would be an example of ‘swearing falsely’ in His Name when we fail to do that which we have committed to doing and being marked and sealed as a set-apart nation unto Him!

Messiah reiterates this command by saying we should not swear falsely by anything, but rather let our yes be yes and our no be no as anything beyond this is from the evil one!!! He was not saying that we cannot swear or make an oath – He was saying that we should not do it falsely!!! Do not give your word and then break it!

If we are to be a light to the nations and ‘living letters’ of Messiah, then we had better be careful to ensure that we speak the Truth and follow through on our commitments, which ought to always be for His purposes!

The word used for ‘bind’ in Bemidbar/Numbers 30:2 is אָסַר *asar* – Strong’s H631 meaning, ‘to tie, bind, imprison, yoke, hitch’, and in fact it also carries the meaning of being ‘joined in battle’, hence the understanding of a vow or oath that we make is a ‘binding/imprisoning’ us to another. The word ‘himself’ is the Hebrew root word נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh* – Strong’s H5315 meaning, ‘soul, living being, life, person, desire, appetite, passion, emotion’.

And here we see that the vow or oath is binding on our soul – binding on our life, and to not carry it out can have serious ramifications for our ‘life’.

What we must be willing to understand here is that we are to show great integrity in our words for whatever comes from our mouths is a ‘vow’ – meaning, that if I say that I am going to do something and do not do it, reveals not only a lack of integrity, but when understanding the concept of ‘being joined in battle’, and when looking at the meaning of being ‘bound’, then it is clear that when we do not keep our word we show that we are in fact not battle ready and stand the real possibility of losing some battles that we face along the way, as a result of not sticking to, and accomplishing, our words that we speak!

One of the meanings of the word for ‘bind’ - אָסַר *asar* – is ‘yoke’ (as mentioned above), and it further emphasises how our words yoke us to another through the promises we make; therefore, we must learn not to make promises or agreements with those who do not keep the Torah. Having said that we do understand that while we are in those world and not of the world, we certainly have to make promises to those who are not in Torah – be it our employers or clients or work colleagues – yet what I am stressing here is that we must make sure that we do our utmost to not make promises or agreements with those outside of the Torah if it will in anyway require us to break the Torah! For example, if one goes for a job interview and they receive new employment, they must make sure upfront that they clearly state that they cannot work on the Shabbat or Feast Days of יהוה, for to enter into an employment contract without making this clear can and will cause great conflict down the road.

That is why we are warned in Scripture to be careful with our words and we must be careful to whom we say “yes” to, for oaths involve more than the mere words we speak – they bind us to that person or persons!

**Shemoth/Exodus 23:32 “Do not make a covenant with them nor with their mighty ones.”**

**Qorintiyim Bet/2 Corinthians 2:16 “And what agreement has Messiah with Beliya’al? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever?”**

We must remember that we are what we speak and our words will come toward us, so be careful to do what you say! The instruction here is clear – a man must not ‘break’ his word!

The word used in verse 2 for ‘break’ simply means to ‘profane’. What does it mean to profane? The word profane means to treat something set-apart with abuse, irreverence or contempt.

The Hebrew word is חָלַל *halal* (chalal – with a ch.. sound as in loch) – **Strong’s H2490** which means, ‘*profane, bore to pieces, kill, wound, defile, pollute, violate*’.

What is very interesting to me is that the word for praise in Hebrew is חָלַל *halal* (with a soft sound as in ha)– **Strong’s H1984**, which means, ‘*to shine, be boastful, praise, sing praise*’

These two words differ with a slight difference is the stroke of the pen by means of a little tiny gap! In Praise the letter ה (hey) is used and in profane the letter ח (het) is used. This may sound a little pedantic to some of you, but for me it makes me realise just how fine line it is between pure worship and profanity! Remember Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aharon who offered profane fire unto יהוה – they offered a false worship and got zapped!

Let me tell you why I find this very interesting in the closeness of these words – we see in the world today that there are many who claim to be born again believers of the Almighty yet in their worship they are offering profane worship and they cannot distinguish between the set-apart and the profane! The ‘church’ today is profaning the Name of יהוה and have not only brought His Name to nought but have profaned it by treating it with abuse, irreverence and contempt!

Now, while we understand this clear difference between profane and praise, we must see that when we ‘break’ our word, we are in fact rendering ‘profane’ worship unto יהוה, as we are clearly told in:

**Qolasisim/Colossians 3:17 “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Master יהושע, giving thanks to Elohim the Father through Him.”**

Our words carry great power and if any word or deed cannot be associated with the pure Name of the Master יהושע. Then we should not speak or do them, lest we ‘profane’ His Name and character!

How do we break/profane our word? By simply not doing what we said we would do; and when we break our word we risk killing any trust being built between ourselves and others, we risk breaking relationships and we can, by breaking our word, destroy any progress we may have achieved in any project and or relationship. When this happens our weapons of warfare get broken down and we end up losing many battles.

This is the simple truth that ought to wake us up drastically:

יהוה’s Word says – KEEP YOUR WORD AND DON’T BREAK IT – so when we do break our word – guess what - WE BREAK HIS WORD!!

There is a very fine line, as I have said, between ‘praise’ and ‘profane’; and profane, as outlined in this chart:

**PRAISE vs. PROFANE**

**PRAISE: ‘HALAL’**

STRONG’S H 1984: to shine, to be boastful, to praise, to give praise, to offer praise, sing praise

חלל

ה = HEY

ל = LAMED

ל = LAMED

SMALL GAP → ח

**PROFANE: HALAL (CHALAL)**

STRONGS H 2490: to bore, pierce: to pollute, defile, profane: to desecrate, violate, to kill,

חלל

ח = HET

ל = LAMED

ל = LAMED

NO GAP → ח

FINE LINE BETWEEN PRAISE AND PROFANE!!!!

Let us look at a few Scriptures in regards to our words and commitments:

**Ĕkrah/Ecclesiastes 5:4** “When you make a vow to Elohim, do not delay to pay it, for He takes no pleasure in fools. Pay that which you have vowed.”

**Ya’aqob/James 3:1-6** “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment. 2 For we all stumble in many matters. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the entire body. 3 Look, we put bits in the mouths of horses, for them to obey us, and we turn their body. 4 Look at the ships too: although they are so big and are driven by strong winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot intends. 5 So too the tongue is a little member, yet boasts greatly. See how a little fire kindles a great forest! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the world of unrighteousness. Among our members the tongue is set, the one defiling the entire body, and setting on fire the wheel of life, and it is set on fire by Gehenna.”

**Ya’aqob/James 1:18-22** “So then, my beloved brothers, let every man be swift to hear, **slow to speak**, slow to wrath, 20 for the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of Elohim. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and overflow of evil, and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your lives. 22 And become doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

In the event that you find yourself in a position where you have made a promise or have entered into an agreement that would require you to break an Appointed Time of יהוה (His Sabbaths and Feasts), then you must find a way out of that unequal ‘yoke’:

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 6:1-5** “My son, if you: Have become guarantor for your friend, have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, 2 have been snared by the words of your own mouth, have been caught by the words of your mouth – 3 do this at once, my son, and deliver yourself, for you have come into the hand of your friend: go, humble yourself, and urge your friend. 4 Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids. 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter’s hand, and like a bird from the hand of the trapper.”

This passage is very clear – when you realise that you have given your agreement in doing something only to find out that you would be breaking the Torah, then you must act quickly and ‘give no sleep to your eyes’ – in other words do not delay in going and setting straight what was agreed in error – this also applies to ‘working’ agreements that may cause you to break the Sabbath – deliver yourself from the trap that your binding agreement put you under, which means you will have to humble yourself and confront the one with whom you have made or signed the agreement or contract with and get released from any requirements that would cause you to break the Torah - even if it may cost you your job!!

A great example for us in Scripture of a man who kept his word by not breaking his vow to יהוה, is **Yiphtaḥ the Gil’adite** as recorded in **Shophetim/Judges 11**. He made a vow to יהוה, that if יהוה gave the children of Ammon into his hands that he would offer up to יהוה whatever or whoever would meet him when he returned in peace. His only daughter came out first and so he offered her up to serve continually in the Temple and kept his word!

We cannot be rash with our words in promises to call something set-apart to only later use it for profane use:

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 20:25** “It is a snare for a man to say rashly, “It is set-apart,” and only later to reconsider his vows.”

We must think before we speak. Yiphtaḥ realised and knew that he cannot go back on his word – he tells his daughter, “I have given my word to יהוה and I am unable to turn back!” When we say something we need to be ready to do it and follow through regardless of the circumstances!!! Yes, I suppose Yiphtaḥ could have turned back like so many today would quickly do, however disobedience to יהוה was not an option to him, and that is a great lesson for us today!!!

This is a clear warning being given to us here in **Mishlĕ/Proverbs 20:25**! The warning is against making vows or commitments that are later discarded and not kept. The Hebrew word translated as ‘snares’ is **מוקש moqesh** – **Strong’s H4170** which means, ‘a bait, lure, trap, snare, ensnared’, and comes from the root verb **יקש yaqosh** – **Strong’s H3369** which means, ‘to lay a bait or lure, ensnared, set a trap’.

The term ‘set-apart’ in Hebrew comes from the root word **קדש qodesh** – **Strong’s H6944** – and it means ‘apartness, consecrated, dedicated, that which is dedicated and separated unto יהוה’. The word is self-explanatory and carries with it great weight in its identification of truly setting something or someone apart from another with a clear distinction of being marked as separate and apart from the rest.

Many people are very quick to ‘commit’ to something and dedicate themselves to being set-apart yet when the battles come they quickly reconsider their vow of commitment to apartness.

The Hebrew word used here for ‘reconsider’ comes from the primitive root בָּקַר **baqar** – Strong’s H1239 which means, ‘to seek, inquire, make inquiry, meditate’.

We need to consider our words before we speak them and not be rash in speaking and then later reconsider what we said, for then we may have already been caught by the words of our mouth and therefore have to fulfil what we have said.

Another thing we need to realise is that vows do not need to be vocalised in order to be in effect!!! As soon as we say it in our hearts, יהוה knows and expects us to keep it!!!!

**Ma’asei/Acts 5** is a great example for us in the account of Hānanyah and his wife, Shappirah – they made a vow when laying down the money as if it were all they had received for the land they sold, but it wasn’t and יהוה saw it in their hearts! The interesting thing to note here too is that nobody forced them to sell the land – they made this vow voluntarily yet still did not follow through with total obedience and we know what happened as a result!!! **Shemu’el Aleph/1 Samuel 16:7** tells us that man looks at the eyes, but יהוה looks at the heart!

Hānanyah was a fool, who not only wanted the praise of men, but also wanted the money that by his own vow was no longer his – he lied to יהוה and paid the price for it.

**Debarim/Deuteronomy 23:21-23** “When you make a vow to יהוה your Elohim, do not delay to pay it, for יהוה your Elohim is certainly requiring it of you, and it shall be sin in you. 22 “But when you abstain from vowing, it is not sin in you. 23 “That which has gone from your lips you shall guard and do, for you voluntarily vowed to יהוה your Elohim what you have promised with your mouth.”

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 12:35-37** “The good man brings forth what is good from the good treasures of his heart, and the wicked man brings forth what is wicked from the wicked treasure. 36 “And I say to you that for every idle word men speak, they shall give an account of it in the day of judgment. 37 “For by your words you shall be declared righteous, and by your words you shall be declared unrighteous.”

יהושע teaches us that we must keep our word by letting our yes be yes and no be no!

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 5:33-37** “Again, you heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to 34. יהוה But I say to you, do not swear [vainly] at all, neither by the heaven, because it is Elohim’s throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Yerushalayim, for it is the city of the great Sovereign; 36 nor swear by your head, because you are not able to make one hair white or black. 37 “But let your word ‘Yea’ be ‘Yea,’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No.’ And what goes beyond these is from the wicked one.”

What יהושע was saying hear is not that you cannot make a vow, for He didn’t nullify Torah, but rather that when you make any form of vow do not do it “falsely” or ‘vainly’ as the Torah tells us! Don’t say yes when you really mean no and vice versa. One thing we see today is that people keep their options open by saying “maybe” – we need to learn to commit to yes and no being yes and no, anything other than that is falsehood and falsehood is from the evil one! To swear falsely is to profane the name of יהוה!

When we take a look again at Yiphtaḥ’s ‘vow’, we see that it was twofold – ‘whatever’ would meet him when he returned home would be dedicated to יהוה, if it was a person; and if it was an animal it would be sacrificed! Why do I say that? Well, when you look at Scripture and understand that Yiphtaḥ knew the Torah then this passage makes great sense. He was met by his only daughter, and he gave her or dedicated her to יהוה – to serve יהוה at the tabernacle.

We do know from Scripture that women did serve at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting (**Shemoth/Exodus 38:8 & Shemu’el Aleph/ 1 Samuel 2:22**). His daughter having been the first to greet him was now to remain a virgin, never marry, never have kids – never know the joy of motherhood and continue her father’s line of inheritance in Yisra’el. This was enough to cause her and her friends to spend 2 months grieving. What did she mourn? Her virginity! Nowhere in Scripture do we see that Yiphtaḥ actually killed his daughter, nor do we see anyone mourning her death. The emphasis is placed on the fact that she would remain a virgin.

It is hard to believe that they would establish a custom to commemorate a sacrifice of a human being; but it is very clear that they would commemorate and celebrate the devotion and obedience of Yiphtaḥ's daughter in helping her father fulfil his vow. She certainly deserves to stand with Yitshaq as an example of a faithful child, willing to obey her father and יהוה, no matter the cost.

In **Shophetim/Judges 11:31** the word translated “and” is the Hebrew letter ו' (waw, pronounced – ‘vav’) which can be translated as ‘and’ but also as ‘or’.

So, what we can see from this account is that Yiphtaḥ is saying that whatever comes out – if it is a person then that person would be dedicated to service unto יהוה ‘or’ if it is an animal it will be offered up as a sacrifice to יהוה presuming that it is a clean animal that is!!!

His daughter comes out and she is then dedicated to lifetime service unto יהוה and she willingly obeys – she understood what Sha’ul writes about in **Romiyim/Romans 12** – that we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, set-apart and well-pleasing to Elohim – for this is our reasonable act of worship!

When we have accepted יהושע as Saviour and Master, we must realise the cost of that commitment that has been brought forth out of our hearts and spoken from our lips – our word to Him must be kept!!! As we can learn from Yiphtaḥ – it doesn’t matter the circumstances of our upbringing or where we come from – we can know יהוה and be used by Him!

What we have to understand in this account is that Yiphtaḥ knew Torah and child sacrifices were against the Torah:

**Deḅarim/Deuteronomy 12:31** “Do not do so to יהוה your Elohim, for every abomination which יהוה hates they have done to their mighty ones, for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their mighty ones.”

**Deḅarim/Deuteronomy 18:10** “Let no one be found among you who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practises divination, or a user of magic, or one who interprets omens or a sorcerer, ...”

Human sacrifices were an abomination to יהוה and Yiphtaḥ knew this – he would not willingly make a vow with יהוה that was an abomination to יהוה! The law of vows permitted monetary redemption of persons vowed to יהוה, but a person devoted to יהוה could not be redeemed. Yiphtaḥ committed his daughter to lifelong service to יהוה at the tabernacle, and only priests would have been allowed to offer sacrifices, and Yiphtaḥ was not a priest and the priests would not have sacrificed a human!

In **Shophetim/Judges 11: 40** we see that every year the women would ‘lament’ for four days – possibly during one of the feasts. The word we have translated as lament is the Hebrew word תָּנָה **tanah** – **Strong’s H8567** meaning, ‘recount, rehearse’, which is only used twice in Scripture and should be correctly translated as **celebrated** or **commemorate** or **praised** and **rejoiced**. This leads us to correctly assume that the women would go every year to rejoice and celebrate with Yiphtaḥ's daughter who was serving at the tabernacle.

I have mentioned these critical points in order for us to understand that Yiphtaḥ was not rash or foolish in his vows and then kills his daughter, no he was a man who knew the Torah, lived by it and followed it wholeheartedly by faith and that is what got him listed in the faith hall of fame in **Ib’rim/Hebrews 11**.

Why I share the accounts of Yiphtaḥ in relation to this Torah portion is simply because he is a great example for us to learn from in terms of keeping our word and our vows to יהוה, and not breaking our commitment to Him for any reason whatsoever!

It is not evil to make vows with יהוה, especially when in pursuit or expectation of His mercy. To make vows to יהוה in terms of acceptable service to him, not as a purchase for favour we desire, but as an expression of gratitude to Him and the deep sense we have of our obligation to render unto Him our complete worship according to what he has done for us, is good and pleasing – we must keep our word!

### **Verse 3-15 – vows and agreements of a woman**

In the rest of the chapter we see the clear instructions regarding the words that are expressed as vows or agreements by a woman. Firstly, if a woman is still in her father’s house, her father has the authority to nullify her vow or agreement by which she has bound herself, only on the day he hears of it. If he keeps silent after hearing her vow or agreement she has bound herself by, then her vow or agreement stands. Silence implies acceptance and consent!!!

If her father, however, forbids her on the day he hears of it, then none of her vows stand and she is pardoned from her vow or agreement by יהוה, because her father nullified it – on the day he heard it!

A father does not have the option of being ‘lazy’ by not making a decision right away, but rather has a responsibility as head of the home to ensure that what is said by his daughter will in no way cause disruption or break the unity within the home.

This is a vital lesson in the life of any home – firstly the man of the house must step up and be the head of the home that he is called to be and ensure that any words, vows or agreements that are made from any of his family does not go against the Torah or else he must nullify it immediately; and secondly we see here that children must obey their parents!

**Eph'siyim/Ephesians 6:1 “Children, obey your parents in the Master, for this is right.”**

**Qolasm/Colossians 3:20 “Children, obey your parents in all, for this is well-pleasing to the Master.”**

What is interesting to note here is that these verses deal specifically with a woman who is still under her father's covering. In Scripture a man is not expected to act on his own until he is of fighting age, which is 20 years old, however if he marries before that he becomes the head of a new home, however a woman remains under authority as long as she is still in her father's house (that is that she has not married) and here we see the responsibility of the man of a house and how he must manage his household well, and nullify any rash words of his daughter on the day he hears it. It does not necessarily mean that he may hear of it on the day that she makes the vow, but rather when he hears of it (which may only be days later) he must make an immediate decision – nullify or keep quiet!

**Verse 6-7** speaks of a woman who is married and belongs to her husband and may also refer to one who is betrothed, and may not yet be living with her husband as they are in their betrothal period. She is under his authority from the point of betrothal, and he also has the responsibility to either nullify any rash vow or agreement or show consent by remaining silent. This is very interesting as we do not see this being carried out in the world today. The world may call this period ‘engagement’ and for many they do not see this phase or period of engagement as binding, yet in Scriptural terms and in the eyes of Torah, when one becomes ‘betrothed’ the parties are in fact legally married even though they are not yet living together and the groom carries the authority to nullify any rash words spoken by his bride, on the day he hears it!

At the point of agreement to marry, which her father did not nullify, the authority over her is transferred from her father to her husband!

This authority is a great picture of יהושע as Husband over us His Bride, as He has the capacity to nullify any rash words or agreements we make, on the day he hears it! By the husband nullifying the vow or agreement made by his bride, she is pardoned by יהוה. We are the Bride of Messiah under His authority!

We see that when Yisra'el said the ‘I do’ at Mount Sinai – that day she made the vow to marriage which was announced with the first shofar:

**Shemoth/Exodus 19:8 “And all the people answered together and said, “All that יהוה has spoken we shall do.” So Mosheh brought back the words of the people to יהוה.”**

On that day, we must clearly recognize that יהוה, The Husband, never nullified the vow of His Bride and so it stands!!!

When Yisra'el ‘joined’ herself to Ba'al Pe'or we see how יהוה nullified it that day by putting to death the leaders:

**Bemidbar/Numbers 25:3-4 “Thus Yisra'el was joined to Ba'al Pe'or, and the displeasure of יהוה burned against Yisra'el. 4 And יהוה said to Mosheh, “Take all the leaders of the people and hang them up before יהוה, before the sun, so that the burning displeasure of יהוה turns away from Yisra'el.”**

יהושע tells us that He has given us authority to bind and loose, yet what we must recognise is that if a person vows to ‘never’ eat meat (becoming a vegetarian) then they are in fact, by their vow, ‘nullifying Torah’ which commands us to eat Lamb at Pēsah (Passover)!

**Verse 9** tells us that a widow or divorced woman has no direct authority over her and is in a sense expected to be mature enough to watch her words and whatever she binds herself to stands.

**Verse 13** – Every vow and every binding oath to ‘afflict’ her being her husband must confirm or nullify!

The word used here for ‘afflict’ is עָנָה anah – Strong's H6031 meaning, ‘to be bowed down or afflicted, humbled’.

We are commanded to ‘afflict our beings’ on Yom Kippur and this word עָנָה **anah** can also carry the meaning ‘**to be occupied or busy with**’. Busy or occupied with what? Well the next word tells us – our beings! And that is the word נֶפֶשׁ ‘nephesh’ H5315 which is ‘**a soul, a living being, the inner being of a man**’.

This phrase ‘to afflict our being’ we see in Scripture is a clear link to fasting, as seen in the command to do so on Yom Kippur, yet also we see in:

**Tehillah/Psalm 35:13 “But I, when they were sick, I put on sackcloth; I humbled my being with fastings; And my prayer would return to my own bosom.”**

We are told in **Yeshayahu/Isaiah 58** that the purpose for fasting is to break yokes as well as to feed the hungry and clothe the naked – in other words fasting is a means of breaking any yokes to the security of ‘self’ and ‘fleshly securities’ that keep us from being faithfully yoked to Messiah!

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 58:6-7 “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loosen the tight cords of wrongness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to exempt the oppressed, and to break off every yoke? 7 “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, and cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh?”**

A husband has the authority to confirm or nullify his wife’s vow or oath to afflict her being for the poor and needy! Of course we certainly recognise that he should not nullify the afflicting of his wife’s being on Yom Kippur, for that would go against the Torah, but here it is in reference to any other times that a wife may ‘fast’ and give of her food and clothing and invite the poor to the house to eat. He has the right to nullify her vow or oath, especially if he sees that her oath or vow may endanger the home in any way, and so once again clearly pictures for us the great responsibility that a man has over his household in protecting and guarding his wife and children in every way. If he confirms her choice to ‘afflict her being’ by ‘being silent’ on the day that he hears it, then he acknowledges her choice as being within the clear lines of Torah and accepts her vow or oath by which she binds herself.

**Verse 15** – if the husband nullifies the vow or oath after he has heard, he shall bear her crookedness!

The word used for ‘after’ in the Hebrew is אַחַר **ahar** – **Strong’s H310** meaning, ‘**the hind part, following part, after, afterwards, behind, following**’, and in its primitive form means, ‘**to remain behind, tarry, delay, linger**’. What we see here is that this verse is speaking of when a husband nullifies the oath or vow only after – having delayed making a decision – then he bears her crookedness. In other words when he kept quiet when he heard and then afterwards (perhaps a day or so later) says ‘**No, you are not allowed to do...**’, then he must bear her crookedness. This is the price a husband pays for not doing anything immediately after hearing a foolish or rash vow or agreement that his wife has made!

This is a powerful picture for us of our Husband and Saviour, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah, who bore our crookednesses – for He kept silent!

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 53:7 “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, but He did not open His mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, but He did not open His mouth.”**

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 53:11 “He would see the result of the suffering of His life and be satisfied. Through His knowledge My righteous Servant makes many righteous, and He bears their crookednesses.”**

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah certainly nullified the oaths that our forefathers made to all the pagan mighty ones which they worshipped, yet since the day had already passed, he had to bear the crookednesses of the Bride He loves!!!

**Marqos/Mark 15:15 “But יְהוֹשֻׁעַ still gave no answer, so that Pilate marveled.”**

**Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2:24 “who Himself bore our sins in His body on the timber, so that we, having died to sins, might live unto righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed.”**

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ our Husband had the authority to nullify our rash vows and oaths!!!

Our Husband, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Messiah, had to and does bear our crookednesses that we may be pardoned and restored to right standing in Him, and we ought to therefore take very careful care of the words we speak, lest we nullify His work over us by making rash vows and oaths and sinning after having received a knowledge of the Truth – for then by our adulterous acts we may just be ‘**put away**’, where there is no more a sacrifice left for us; and as we have seen - a divorced woman’s words by which she binds herself stand against her!!!

**Ib’rim/Hebrews 10:26-27 “For if we sin purposely after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a slaughter offering for sins, 27 but some fearsome anticipation of judgment, and a fierce fire which is about to consume the opponents.”**

## CHAPTER 31

### Verse 2 – Take vengeance on the Midyanites

Mosheh was given a clear instruction before he would be gathered to his people – in other words, before he would die he was given a clear instruction, and that was to take vengeance for the children of Yisra'el in the Midyanites. The words used here for 'take vengeance' in the Hebrew are – נָקַם נְקָמָה – 'naqam neqamat'.

The primitive root for both these words is נָקַם naqam – Strong's H5358 which means, 'take vengeance, avenge, take revenge'. The first word is the verb and the second is the noun – 'take vengeance', and here the instruction is clear – 'punish with a vengeance!' In other words, give them no space to breath, cramp their style!

The actions being called for here are extreme actions as these were the people who seduced Yisra'el into whoring after Ba'al. This is a call to avenge all that seeks to lead Yisra'el astray!

What we can learn from this today is better understood when we see that the meaning of 'Midyanites' is:

הַמִּדְיָנִים 'the (ha) Midyanites' from Strong's H4084 which comes from the same word as מָדוֹן madon – Strong's H4066 which means, 'strife, contention'; and so we can understand that the Midyanites were a people of 'strife'; and when the Torah (Mosheh) instructs that we must give no space for 'strife' to breath before we can be gathered to our people, then we see how clear this is for us today as we 'wash ourselves' and make ourselves ready as a prepared Bride by putting off all strife and contentions!

Give no room to strife and put an end to it is the call for us today!

**Titos/Titus 3:9 "But keep away from foolish questions, and genealogies, and strife and quarrels about the Torah, for they are unprofitable and useless."**

We would do well to heed this instruction – stay away from strife and quarrels about the Torah! The enemy is always seeking an opportunity to get us into a heated debate and argument over matters of the Torah; and while we are to certainly proclaim the Truth and defend it and guard it by doing it, we must be careful not to fall into useless arguments that just cause strife, which many who refuse to hear the Truth want to do! Give no room for strife!

In Hebrew, the word for 'strife' or 'strive' is רִיב rib – Strong's H7378 which means, 'strife, or to strive, contend, complain, argue, dispute, quarrel' and in the Greek, the word for 'strife' is μάχομαι machomai – Strong's G3164 which means, 'to fight, argue, quarrel'.

Sha'ul tells Timotiyos where strife comes from – it comes from verbal battles – in speaking of one who teaches falsely he says in:

**Timotiyos Aleph/1 Timothy 3:9 "he is puffed up, understanding none at all, but is sick about questionings and verbal battles from which come envy, strife, slander, wicked suspicions"**

We must steer clear of 'verbal battles' that lead to strife, slander and all forms of wickedness. And so, what we clearly see from the beginning of this chapter in Bemidbar/Numbers 31 is that while we have just learnt to be careful with our words, we must not give any room for strife as a result of verbal battles!!!

Vengeance belongs to יהוה, so what we can see here is that our ability to be 'slow to speak, quick to listen and slow to become angry' will allow us the opportunity to 'squash out' strife, giving room for the vengeance of יהוה to rightfully run its course!

The work of the Torah is to gather us in a legitimate way and put an end to strife so that we can take possession of our coming inheritance!

Mosheh commands the people to 'arm' themselves for the campaign of taking vengeance on the Midyanites, and here we see that it is everyone's responsibility to be 'armed' with the Torah to make sure no room is given for strife in the camp!

He then chooses 12 000 armed ones (1 000 from each tribe) to go and take vengeance! Why only 12 000 and not the whole army? This was a sure way to make sure all the surrounding nations would see the power of יהוה, whose vengeance it is to put to death and keep alive!

So, 12 000 armed men against 5 kings and their armies would be a very powerful display of the mighty and power of יהוה. Each tribe had a 1 000, showing that each tribe is equally responsible in their role of guarding safety in the body and refuting all forms of strife, no matter how big or small you are!

Pineḥas was sent with the 12 000 and this is a powerful picture of Messiah, who is our Captain and Chief Priest who leads us and fights for us, and Pineḥas is certainly a picture of being an agent of salvation, as it was through his boldness of standing up and putting to death the whoring in the camp that the plague of death had stopped, therefore representing for us the need for us to always be armed for battle with Messiah as our head. To try to fight any battles without Him would be in vain – but with Him we need not fear the size or strength of the enemy!

Pineḥas had the trumpets for sounding in his hand and this too is a picture of Messiah, who calls us to battle:

**Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 14:8 “For indeed, if the trumpet makes an indistinct sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?”**

We are told in:

**Deḥarim/Deuteronomy 20:4 “for יהוה your Elohim is He who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.”**

**Neḥemyah/Nehemiah 4:20 “In whatever place you hear the sound of the ram’s horn, join us there. Our Elohim fights for us.”**

Pineḥas represents for us a physical and visible sign of the presence of יהוה who leads us and fights for us!

What we must also take very clear note of here is that not one of the 12 000 armed men were injured!!!

During the battle, the Yisra’ēlites succeeded in killing every man, including Bil’am. The women who followed Bil’am’s advice and caused the moral decay in the camp of Yisra’ēl, however, were captured and brought *into* the camp along with the children, herds, flocks and plundered goods. When Mosheh saw how יהוה’s vengeance had not been upheld, he ordered the killing of all young boys, as well as women who had slept with a man, while the virgin girls were to be spared and kept alive.

#### **Verse 8 – 5 kings killed along with Bil’am**

We are told in this verse that Yisra’ēl killed the sovereigns of Miḏyan and as we look at each one’s name we can see how this represents a victory we can have as we walk in unity under the leading and guidance of the Torah, walking of course as יהושע Messiah did, who is “The Living Torah”. Each of these 5 kings represents for us the very things that ‘rule’ a ‘striving people’!

Let us look at their names and meanings:

1 - עִוִּי Ewi – Strong’s H189 meaning, **‘my lust/my desire’**.

2 - רִקְמָה Reqem – Strong’s H7552 meaning, **‘having many colours’** which comes from the primitive root רִקַּם raqam – Strong’s H7551 which means, **‘to variegate, embroider, skilfully wrought’**. To **variegate** means **‘to diversify in external appearance’**! This can speak of putting on a variety of masks and not being true to who you are, but ‘putting on a show or display’ to appease others and pictures for us a type of ‘hypocrisy’!

3 - צֹרַר Tsur – Strong’s H6698 meaning, **‘rock’** and we know that it was his daughter, Kozbi (which means **‘my lie’**), that was the Miḏyanite woman who was struck by Pineḥas! So while his name means ‘rock’ it is a picture of a **‘false rock’**!

4 - חֹרֶן Hur – Strong’s H2354 meaning, **‘hole’** and comes from the primitive root חָוַר ḥavar – Strong’s H2357 meaning, **‘to be or grow pale, turn pale’**. One turns pale when you are sick!

5 - רַבָּע Reba – Strong’s H7254 meaning, **‘four or fourth part’** and comes from the primitive root word רָבַע raba – Strong’s H7250 meaning, **‘to lie stretched out, lie down, breed together, mate’**.

When we recognize that Rome is the fourth horn that scattered the children of Yisra’ēl, we also see that we are not to ‘lie down’ with her! The word רַבָּע raba is only used 3 times in Scripture and twice is in the clear instruction for a woman to not ‘lie down’ with a beast and the other is to not let livestock mate with another kind! So this is a picture of whoring that is abominable and strictly forbidden.

As we consider all of these 5 kings, we can certainly begin to understand the very things that we must kill in order to keep ‘strife’ out of our midst. All lust of the flesh and fleshly desires we must put to death:

**Kēpha Aleph/2 Peter 2:11 “Beloved ones, I appeal to you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which battle against the life”**

We are to destroy all forms of hypocrisy from our midst:

**Romiyim/Romans 12:9 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Shrink from what is wicked, cling to what is good.”**

We also must not fall for the ‘false rock’ so to speak, whose daughter is ‘my lie’ and will do whatever it takes to corrupt the camp of Yisra’ēl.

**Debarim/Deuteronomy 32:31 “For their rock is not like our Rock – Even our enemies are judges.”**

The return of the two houses will be preceded by a time of distress – cries of fear and terror will be heard instead of cries of peace and Yirmeyahu describes this by comparing it with the anguish of men clutching themselves in fear to a women in labour, and so this coming calamity will not be nice, in fact there is none like it in comparison.

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 30:6 “Ask now, and see if a man is giving birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in labour, and all faces turned pale?”**

We must make sure that we do not lie down with the whore of Babelon and drink of her adulteries, but rather we must put to death and keep far from our tent all her temptations and falsehood:

**Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 6:18 “Flee whoring. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits whoring sins against his own body.”**

A great lesson for us, in ensuring that we keep ‘strife’ far from us!

What we also see here is that the false prophet Bil'am was put to death with these kings! And Bil'am means, ‘not of the people’ so in a nutshell we must kill and have nothing to do with all that is not of the people of Yisra'el!

And we must also give no room for the false prophets that are leading the charge against obedience to the Torah by falsely claiming it is of no longer importance – these prophets/ teachers/preachers who say such nonsense are not of the Truth and are proclaiming only falsehood and deceit, which we must stay very far from:

**Timotiyos Aleph/1 Timothy 6:3-5 “If anyone teaches differently and does not agree to the sound words, those of our Master יהושע Messiah, and to the teaching which is according to reverence, 4 he is puffed up, understanding none at all, but is sick about questionings and verbal battles from which come envy, strife, slander, wicked suspicions, 5 worthless disputes of men of corrupt minds and deprived of the truth, who think that reverence is a means of gain – withdraw from such.”**

**Verse 19 - be cleansed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and on the 7<sup>th</sup>!**

We see some the requirements in all that had killed a being or touched a dead body was to cleanse themselves on the third day and on the seventh day. When we see verses like this we must also take note of what Kěpha tells us to make sure we understand:

**Kěpha Bět/2 Peter 3:8 “But, beloved ones, let not this one matter be hidden from you: that with יהוה one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”**

Why Kěpha places a huge emphasis on this fact is that if we neglect to understand the Appointed Times of יהוה and how the 7 days of Creation reflect the 7 millennia and that by sticking to the much needed and required obedience of keeping His cycle of His Feasts then we will be lost and without a Shepherd!!!

Anyone who touches the dead is unclean for 7 days – well since Adam sinned, we have all been ‘born in sin’, since the uncleanness lasts for 7 days = 7000 years! It is only in the 8<sup>th</sup> day (8<sup>th</sup> Millennium) that we will see a total end to sin and death and a new heaven and new earth be established. In the 7-day period that we now find ourselves in, יהוה through His Torah provided a means for us to become clean. In this torah of being cleansed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> day we see the need for us to accept and apply the work of Messiah, who by the fulfilling of the red heifer sacrifice has provided for us the ‘water of cleansing’.

If we are not cleansed by the Blood of יהושע then we will not be able to reign with Him!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day - this speaks of the power of the resurrection of Messiah, who rose on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and so in effect to make oneself clean on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day is to accept the life, death and resurrection for Messiah, repent and be immersed in His Name for the forgiveness of sins.

**Hoshěa/Hosea 6:2 “After two days He shall revive us, on the third day He shall raise us up, so that we live before Him.”**

The 7<sup>th</sup> day speaks of the final work of atonement being completed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day when Messiah comes out of His Set-Apart Hěkal on Yom Kippur and treads the winepress of His wrath and gathers unto Himself a washed and cleansed Bride – that is those who have washed themselves in the 3<sup>rd</sup> day and have held fast to the testimony of Messiah and have guarded His commands.

This 3<sup>rd</sup> day and 7<sup>th</sup> day principle has varying pictures for us in Scripture which all point to the full and complete work of a Bride being made clean for Her Husband. In the ‘creation week’ we see that it was on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day that the dry land was brought forth and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, when יהוה completed His work and rested, we can see in type a bringing forth of the ‘heavens’ or rather His heavenly reign! His Kingdom Come – that is that on the 7<sup>th</sup> day – his rule and reign will be firmly established here on earth, and in the mean time we who live as sojourners here and have been cleansed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day so to speak by the work of Messiah, choose to live according to His Kingdom rules as set forth in His Torah.

Another aspect to the 3<sup>rd</sup> day and 7<sup>th</sup> day cleansing is seen at Mount Sinai when Yisra'el were given 2 days to get ready and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day present themselves at the foot of the Mountain. When we understand that it was on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of Creation that the lights were 'made' to rule the day and the night and the Appointed Times were established, we can recognise that **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**, the Light of the world, came on the 4<sup>th</sup> day to separate the light from the dark and call a people out of darkness and has given us the means and the garments to get ready for 2 days and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> be presented unto Him as a ready Bride without blemish! From the 4<sup>th</sup> day when He came we have been given 2 days – day 5 and day 6 – to get ready and on the 7<sup>th</sup> be dressed and be ready as a Bride prepared, when He comes down to take up His Bride to be with Him forever!!!

If we do not receive the cleansing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> day – we cannot be cleansed on the 7<sup>th</sup>!

The Torah of the red heifer has provided for us the necessary means to be clean and stay clean until our Messiah comes again!

**Verse 19** tells us that any who had killed any being or touched a slain one was to 'cleanse themselves'. The root word used here for 'cleanse' is **חָטָא** *hata* – Strong's H2398 meaning, '**to miss the mark, do wrong, incur guilt, fail to reach**', and when understand the root meaning of 'Torah' (point/aim in the right direction and move in that direction), one clearly sees that to sin (missing the mark) is to walk against or contrary to the Torah, for:

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 3:4 "Everyone doing sin also does lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."**

Now with these words here in **Bemidbar/Numbers 31:19** we recognise that we are to cleanse our lives and be done with sin and to be done with sin means that we choose to walk in His Torah and no longer be lawless!

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 3:6 "Everyone staying in Him does not sin. Everyone sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him."**

The way to be done with sin is to stay in the Master – and this is how we 'cleanse ourselves' – by staying in Him and walking in Righteousness – which is to hear, guard and do all His commands!!!

**Ya'aqob/James 4:8 "Draw near to Elohim and He shall draw near to you. Cleanse hands, sinners. And cleanse the hearts, you double-minded!"**

We are able to draw near to Elohim because of the red heifer sacrifice which, in a way pictures the fullness of all the sacrifices, which point to and foreshadow the complete work of Messiah! Cleanse hands is an idiom to clean up our 'works' and ways and cleansing our hearts is an expression that tells us to get deceit out and ensure that through the meditation of His Torah we guard that which He writes upon our hearts – His Torah – His Renewed Covenant in the Blood of Messiah that cleanses us and sets us apart in Him. When we recognise just what He has done and how He has cleansed us from all defilement – even burnt up all the 'dung' so to speak (red heifer sacrifice was burned with the dung), may we be careful to guard our hearts and minds in Messiah and keep ourselves from all defilement of the flesh as we stay in Him and are done with sin!

In understanding this concept of cleansing ourselves from sin, we see that by implication this renders the need to 'die to self' or in a sense 'lose oneself'; and Messiah makes it clear for us in:

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 10:39 "He who has found his life shall lose it, and he that has lost his life for My sake shall find it."**

### **Verse 20-23 – Purify all!**

There was a need to cleanse the plunder that had been brought from the spoils of their victory, and we see that all everything that could be passed through fire was to be passed through the fire to be cleansed and all other objects were to be washed with water for uncleanness, and what we see here is that all Midyan had to be cleansed out of everything – even their objects, so that no reminder of Midyan would be in the camp at all!

What is interesting to note is the clear mention of objects of leather, goats hair and wood – as these were materials used in the building of the Tabernacle and were materials used in the Most Set-Apart Place for the coverings; and what we can see here is that they were to purify all forms of Midyanite 'covering' so to speak in the camp and give no room for the leading of falsified teachings and worship practices of Midyan. We too must cleanse ourselves and our homes from all that which defiles and all that which we were previously submitted under!

### **Verse 27 – The spoil divided into two parts!**

The spoil was divided into 2 parts – between those who went out on the campaign and fought and the rest of the congregation. Only after everything was purified did the Yisra'elites proceed to divide up the spoils.

Before taking possession of the goods, the army was to set aside a “levy” to יהוה through El’azar the priest of 1/500 (1 for every 500) of man, cattle, donkeys and sheep. The levy that was offered to יהוה by the Yisra’elite community to the Lěwites before taking the goods for themselves was 1/50 (1 for every 40) of man, cattle, donkeys and sheep. The word used in this chapter for ‘levy’ is מְקָסָם mekes – Strong’s H4371 meaning, ‘*computation, proportion to be paid, tax, levy*’. What is interesting to note is that this word is only used in this chapter and is used 6 times, and each time it refers to the levy unto יהוה! What we can learn from this is that we must in all things recognise that what we have is as a result of it being given to us by יהוה, and we must acknowledge Him in all. This was a commanded levy and we see that those who did the fighting are not taxed nearly as much as those who did not.

This is what was taken in plunder besides all the booty of ornaments of gold, silver, garments etc.:

**Sheep – 675 000**

**Cattle – 72 000**

**Donkeys – 61 000**

**People – 32 000** (all women who had not known a man)

The portion given to El’azar from the half portion given to the men who went out on the campaign (1 for every 500):

**Sheep – 675**

**Cattle – 72**

**Donkeys – 61**

**People – 32**

The portion to the Lěwites from the half portion given to the congregation (1 for every 50):

**Sheep – 6750**

**Cattle – 720**

**Donkeys – 610**

**People – 320**

After all had been divided up and the levies paid, the commanders of the men who went to battle came and brought a voluntary freewill offering for יהוה, which amounted to 16,750 shekels of gold. What we must remember is that not one man was injured and here they came and gave freely in thanksgiving! One shekel is approximately 11.4 grams and so to put into perspective what they gave in today’s value at around R 557.88 per gram for the current gold price (2017), we can estimate that the value of their freewill offering was approximately 190kg’s of gold which at today’s price would be in the region of:

R 106,527,186 (over R 106 Million Rand and approximately just over \$ 80 million US Dollars) ... and this was just the gold that they gave as a freewill offering, besides the rest!

They recognised that this battle was called for by יהוה and the victory was יהוה’s and these men gave a thank offering that certainly declared their gratitude and thanks to Elohim who fights for us; and while we may not have millions to give, may we recognise that our whole lives (that is our gifts, talents, time, resources, intellect) must be given over to Him as a freewill thanksgiving offering on which we cannot place a price!!!!

## CHAPTER 32

After the allocation of the spoils, the children of Re’ubēn and Gaḏ saw that they had much livestock and wanted to settle in the land of Ya’zēr and the land of Gil’ad, which was a good land for livestock. We must bear in mind that each tribe had just received a great number of livestock – when you add the portion given to the 1000 men from each tribe who went to the campaign add the portion given to each tribe, you will see that each tribe received well over 55 000 sheep, almost 6 000 cattle, over 5 000 donkeys. It may be that Re’ubēn and Gaḏ already had a great number of livestock, that caused them to ask to settle in the land before them and not cross over Yārdēn. Now we are not told whether they had more than the other tribes, but what we do recognise here is the desire to settle their livestock sooner rather than later, possibly with the hope to increase their wealth as they saw room for their livestock to grow much bigger! Did they want to ‘stay out of the land’ for wealth???

We can certainly learn a great deal from these accounts – both positive and negative. In one sense this is a picture of 2 tribes who were looking at their wealth rather than at the promise, and were satisfied to settle where they were at. In a sense it was as if they thought to themselves, “we have arrived” and many today do the same thing when they let their lives become settled on the basis of their possessions and do not feel the need to move forward.

Having not yet even seen the Promised Land, these two tribes were certain that this land that lay east of the Yārdēn was better than what יהוה had for them across the Yārdēn! They would have certainly had many deep discussions over this matter before even approaching Mosheh, and they had in a way made their own decisions about their future and the future of their generations to come and took matters into their own hands so to speak.

How many times have so many of us done the same thing, by making decisions for ourselves and others that we are certain that יהוה would approve of, before even consulting Him and His Word???

There was certainly a danger of infecting the other tribes into wanting to stay this side of the Yārdēn too, while their request was done in a way that revealed how they were more focused on their wealth and because of this they were willing to give up the promise made to Abraham, in order to serve their possessions! Possessions are meant to serve us and not the other way round!

What is a very clear picture being given here for us to learn from is that one hand it seems as though these 2 tribes were willing to trade their rightful share in the Kingdom for security right now. As we consider this very real danger that so many face today, we must stop and ask ourselves if our possessions or even the desire and lust for possessions is keeping us from the fullness of the presence of יהוה?

**Mattithyahu/Matthew 19:23 “And יהושע said to His taught ones, “Truly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter into the reign of the heavens.”**

In regards to the rich man who had many possessions and came and asked יהושע what he should do to inherit everlasting life, he thought he was ok because he had kept the ‘letter’ of the Torah and when יהושע told him that he still lacked one thing – and that was to go and sell all his possession and give to the poor and then follow Messiah...: **Marqos/Mark 10:22-23 “But he, being sad at this word, went away grieved, for he had many possessions.**

**23 And יהושע, looking around, said to His taught ones, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into the reign of Elohim!”**

Are we there yet? Often when going on a long journey, many times the kids may ask repeatedly this very question and it is due to frustration and the need to get to where we need to be ... now! We must recognise that here at this stage of the journey it was not ‘home’ for the Yisra’ēlites, despite the adequate and exceeding provision that they had amassed!

Mosheh feared that their motives were all wrong, and while we have looked at some of the negative applications of their desire to settle where they were at, we can also see some great positive insights of how we are to be willing to fight for our brothers, who may not yet have received their inheritance, so to speak!

Mosheh was afraid that יהוה would do the same to Yisra’ēl as he did 40 years earlier when the spies brought back a negative report, and Mosheh rebukes them for their request.

What we can see here is a measure of maturity that is seen by the children of Re’uḇēn and Gaḏ, as they received the rebuke and were bold and confident that Mosheh would see their point of view, if they would just be able to explain their hearts behind their motives.

They made a great commitment to say that they would build shelters for their livestock and homes for their little ones while they would go armed before the rest of Yisra’ēl into the Promised land and would not return to their possessions and families until all Yisra’ēl had settled in their inheritance!

This relieved Mosheh and so he gave them the land they requested.

One of the primary lessons we can take from these events is this: we should not sit back comfortably while our brothers and sisters are fighting spiritual battles alone!

What is interesting to note is that these two tribes and the half tribe of Menashsheh who chose to stay on the east side of the Yārdēn, were the first to be taken into exile... 8 years before the others:

**Dibre haYamim Aleph/1 Chronicles 5:26 “So the Elohim of Yisra’ēl stirred up the spirit of Pul sovereign of Ashshur, even the spirit of Tiglath-Pileser sovereign of Ashshur. And he took the Re’uḇēnites, and the Gaḏites, and the half-tribe of Menashsheh into exile, and brought them to Ḥalah, and Ḥaḇor, and Hara, and the river of Gozan, unto this day.”**

Perhaps this was the result or consequence of their decisions taken before Yisra'el entered the Promised Land!

This generation was not like the last – they were committed to fight for their brothers and go before them armed, and we can learn something from this on a positive note. There are many of our brothers and sisters who have not yet fully grasped the truth and are still battling to get rid of the junk of Mitsrayim and Babelon twisted theologies; and we who have come out of these and are walking in the Torah, must fight for those who have not yet understood or accepted that the lies our father's inherited are lies that are keeping many out of the promises of the Kingdom, and we need to arm ourselves and fight the good fight, so that they can see the truth!

While we most certainly must fight and lead the fight against the enemies of the kingdom, what we must take from this passage is that the fact of the matter is that while the children of Re'ubēn and Gaḏ and the half tribe of Menashsheh received their allotment east of the Yardeḅ, we must understand that this was not the original plan and they could not fully receive their inheritance until they fulfilled their promise. They had to keep their word!!! They were also warned that if they did not do as they said, then their sin would find them out!

**Romiyim/Romans 6:23**

**“For the wages of sin is death, but the favourable gift of Elohim is everlasting life in Messiah יהושע our Master.”**

The children of Re'ubēn and Gaḏ and the half tribe of Menashsheh completed their mission as we see recorded in: **Yehoshua/Joshua 22:1-4** **“Then Yehoshua called for the Re'ubēnites, and the Gaḏites, and half the tribe of Menashsheh, 2 and said to them, “You, you have guarded all that Mosheh the servant of יהוה commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 “You have not left your brothers these many days, up to this day, but have guarded the Charge, the command of יהוה your Elohim. 4 “And now יהוה your Elohim has given rest to your brothers, as He promised them. So now, return and go to your tents and to the land of your possession, which Mosheh the servant of יהוה gave you beyond the Yardeḅ.”**

What we can take from this Torah portion is the clear fact that our words are very important and we must do all that we can to make sure that our words line up with the Word of יהוה. We also recognise how our commitment toward each other is vitally important for us to ensure the much needed unity for us as the Bride of Messiah to fully enter in and inherit the Promise of the Covenants of Promise, by which we have been brought near and grafted into by the Blood of Messiah. Let us also recognise that while we are sojourning as strangers in a foreign land, we have not yet arrived but rather we must ‘press on’:

**Pilipiyim/Philippians 3:12-14** **“Not that I have already received, or already been perfected, but I press on, to lay hold of that for which Messiah יהושע has also laid hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not count myself to have laid hold of it yet, but only this: forgetting what is behind and reaching out for what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of Elohim in Messiah יהושע.”**

It is time for us to arm ourselves in the Torah and fight the Good Fight of our Belief and not be settled in the comfort of our possessions but fix our eyes on Messiah:

**Ib'rim/Hebrews 12:1-2** **“We too, then, having so great a cloud of witnesses all around us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race set before us, 2 looking to the Princely Leader and Perfecter of our belief, יהושע, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the stake, having despised the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of Elohim.”**

May we also be reminded by what Kēpha tells us in **Kēpha Aleph/1 Peter 1:9** – that the goal of our belief is the deliverance of lives – so we must arm ourselves with the Torah and the Truth of the Word of יהוה, so that our words are pure and live giving:

**Kēpha Aleph/1 Peter 4:11** **“If anyone speaks, let it be as the Words of Elohim. If anyone serves, let it be as with the strength which Elohim provides, so that Elohim might be praised in it all through יהושע Messiah, to whom belong the esteem and the rule forever and ever. Amēn.”**

Herein lies the call to follow יהוה completely! In Bemidbar/Numbers 32:12 we see how Mosheh reminds the children of Gaḏ and Re'ubēn, that from the previous generation, it was only Yehoshua and Kalēb that followed יהוה completely!

**Bemidbar/Numbers 14:24** “But My servant Kalēb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me completely, I shall bring into the land where he went, and his seed shall inherit it.”

**Deḅarim/Deuteronomy 1: 35-36** “Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, <sup>36</sup> except Kalēb son of Yephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and his children I give the land on which he walked, because he followed יהוה completely.”

In Yehoshua/Joshua 14 we see that 3 times this terminology of following יהוה completely is being used of Kalēb – he followed יהוה completely. The reason why I am emphasising this is simply because it is very important for us to understand just how our walk ought to be in Messiah and the question remains continually for us whether we are following יהוה completely or not! Are you or are you not?

The Word ‘complete’, as an adjective, simply means ‘to have all the necessary or normal parts or components’. In other words you have it all. The word ‘completely’ is an adverb – that is, a word that serves as a modifier of a verb (in other words it is a ‘doing’ word); and strengthens that action of the verb. ‘Completely’ therefore means literally, ‘to a full extent; to be complete with everything necessary; highly proficient; thorough; total; absolute’.

Well then, in “following יהוה completely”, do we have all we need? The answer is a resounding yes – we have all we need, given us freely by His favour through the Blood of יהושע Messiah to all who believe in Him.

As we all know, faith without works is dead – faith without active living in obedience to His Word and His instructions – that is His Torah – is dead!!! Yoḥanan Aleph/1 John 2:6 tells us that if stay in Him then we are to walk as He did!

Yoḥanan 15 speaks of the vine and the branches - יהושע Messiah is the True Vine and we are told by Him that if we stay in Him we will bear much fruit for we can do nothing without Him and if we stay in Him then we may ask whatever we wish and it shall be done. If we do not stay in Him we will be thrown away and dry up only to be gathered for the fire!!! We are to stay in His love and this is love for Elohim – that we obey His commands and they are not heavy!

So, what am I saying here? Simply this – to stay in Him and to completely follow Him speaks of the same thing.

The Hebrew word translated as ‘completely’ is the root verb מָלַא male’(maw-lay) – Strong’s H4390 and carries the meaning, ‘to be full, to fill, complete, covered, dedicate, fulfil, ordain’. Kalēb was a complete and fully dedicated servant of Elohim!

When Kēpha was in prison and bound between two guards, the Messenger of יהוה struck Kēpha’s side and commanded him to follow:

**Ma’asei/Acts 12:8** “And the messenger said to him, “Gird yourself and bind on your sandals,” and he did so. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.”

The Greek word translated as ‘follow’ in verse 8 is ἀκολουθέω akolouthēō – Strong’s G190 and comes from: Α, α alpha – Strong’s G1 which is the first letter of the Greek language and is used here as a participle of union, along with the word κέλευθος keleuthos – which means, ‘a road, or way’ and therefore this word ἀκολουθέω akolouthēō expresses the intention to ‘follow closely or going behind someone who leads the way’ or ‘to attend, to accompany, to go with or follow a teacher’.

**Luqas/Luke 9:61-62** “And another also said, “Master, I shall follow You, but let me first say good-bye to those in my house.” <sup>62</sup> But יהושע said to him, “No one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the reign of Elohim.”

The equivalent expression in Hebrew for ‘I will follow you’ is - וְאַלְכָה אַחֲרֶיךָ – v’elka aharey’ka – and is from two root words: הָלַךְ halak – Strong’s H1980 meaning, ‘to walk, to go, to live, manner of life, cause to live’ and literally speaks of how one lives.

It is used as a verb indicating that it is an active expression of one’s life.

This verb is written in the 'qal active' tense and therefore renders the meaning, **'to go, to walk, come, proceed, depart, move, go away, to die, live, manner of life (figuratively)'**, and the other root word is אָחַר **ahar** – Strong's H310 meaning, **'the hind part, following part, after, afterwards, behind, following'**, which is used here in Bemidbar/Numbers 32:12 for **'followed'**.

And so, in the Hebraic mind-set to say that you will follow declares that you will live and walk as the one you are following, and do as they do. To follow Messiah is not for those who just want to go for a stroll to see what happens – it is a commitment to walk and live as He walks and lives!

You cannot follow the Master if you are not girded about with truth and have not put on righteousness, as you will be unable to walk as He walked! If you are not properly girded in the Truth and bound in your walk of uncompromised obedience, then even the greatest intentions to follow will be rendered as invalid, when the things of the world are still chained to you!

When one looks at this root word הָלַךְ **halak** - Strong's H1980 in the ancient pictographic text we are able to get a clearer understanding of how we are able to walk in complete obedience!

The root word for walk - הָלַךְ **halak** - Strong's H1980 in the ancient pictographic script looks like this:



**Hey – הָ:**

The ancient script has this letter pictured as , which is **'a man standing with his arms raised out'**. The meaning of the letter is **"behold, look, breath, sigh and reveal or revelation"**, from the idea of revealing a great sight by pointing it out. It also carries for us the meaning of surrender, as we lift up our hands and submit to יהוה as we lift our hands in praise, declaring His authority under which we humbly submit!

**Lamed - לָ:**

The ancient script has this letter as , and is pictured as a **'shepherd's staff'**, can give the meaning of **'to or toward'** and can represent that which pushes or pulls a flock in a direction, and can speak of **authority** or a yoke that is used to lead and guide, as well as the ability to bring back by Authority.

**Kaph - כָּ:**

The ancient form of this letter is  - meaning **'the open palm of a hand'**. The meaning behind this letter is **'to bend and curve'** from the shape of a palm as well as **'to tame or subdue'** as one has been bent to another's will (under their hand), as an open hand symbolises submission. This also can picture for us a palm or palm branch from the curved palm shape. The hand also speaks of one's work, or under whose hand you submit and obey!

When we look at the letters that spell out the root word that for **'walk'** we are able to see a great declaration:

### **BEHOLD THE STAFF IN THE PALM!**

With the picture of the shepherd's staff and the open palm of the hand we are able to see the concept of **'staff in the palm'** and we take note that a nomad that travelled on foot would have a staff in his hand in order to provide proper support in walking, as well as having a weapon in his hand to defend against predators and thieves!

A true functional taught one of the Master walks in integrity, no matter the circumstances they find themselves in, as they lean on and trust in Elohim!

### **Verse 15 – if you turn away from following Him!**

The clear warning is given here to the children of Gaḏ and Re'ubēn, and that is that if they were to turn away from following יהוה, they will cause many to be destroyed in the Wilderness! From this we must learn to be careful of not making short-lived promises that are quickly broken, for this will affect many! What flows from our lives, in word and deed, can either bring life to others or pollute them. This was a scary thought that was given to these two tribes, and so it should be to us as well. Just think how our short lived and vain promises could actually causes many to not enter into the Promises of Elohim!

We have been given the wonderful opportunity to take up the Torah and walk wholeheartedly in it by following יהוה completely, and if we do not do this, we may be the cause of not being able to enter into the promised reign, not only for ourselves, but for others too!

The Hebrew word that is translated as 'turn away' is תשובה – **teshubun** which comes from the root word שוב **shub** – **Strong's H7725** which means, '**to turn back, return, repent, recover, come or go back, return unto**'. And so, we see that while שוב **shub** speaks of a repentance and a turning back to Elohim, we see the opposite in the word תשובה – **teshubun**, which expresses a turning away from Elohim.

They had been following יהוה in the Wilderness, under the instructions of Mosheh, and if they were to turn away from following Him then they would all perish in the Wilderness! This is a very severe warning that was being given here and is one that needs to be heard today, as many are finding themselves turning their ears away from the Torah and as a result they are risking the reality of being destroyed when our Master comes back in His wrath.

The sad reality that we continue to see is how many who have experienced the love of Elohim and have walked in obedience, are so easily turning away from Elohim and are not repenting and turning back to Him.

In terms of this warning against turning away from Elohim, I would like to take a closer look at a verse from:

**Hoshĕa/Hosea 11:7** "**My people are bent towards backsliding from Me. Though they call to the One above, none of them exalt Him.**"

Another translation writes this verse as follows:

**"Moreover, My people are sticking to their turning away from Me. Though they call out to the Elohim on high, all of them alike fail to lift Him up."**

In a time when there are many people claiming to call upon the Most-High Elohim, what we find is that most are actually failing to exalt Elohim as He should be exalted, and this is due to a continual backsliding that they cling on to so tightly, as the grip of false traditions has their hands firmly locked in to inherited lies and assimilated worship practices.

What יהוה is making clear here in **Hoshĕa/Hosea 11:7** is that His people are depending upon apostasy and while they call Him "**Most High El**", He will not raise them up and will not hear their call!

The Hebrew root verb that is translated as 'bent' is תלה **tala** – **Strong's H8511** which means, '**to hang, hang on to, bent towards, cling to**', and also carries the meaning, as a part of speech, '**to suspend; figuratively (through hesitation) to be uncertain; and by implication (of mental dependence) to habituate; that is – to be bent, hang (in doubt).**'

This means that they were holding fast to that which they had become so accustomed to doing, and in the process, had suspended the required called for set-apartness unto Elohim. This process of hanging on to assimilated practices that are falsely taught is often due to the result of people not fully trusting in יהוה, but rather find themselves putting their trust in man and as a result they hesitate in walking in total obedience because of uncertainty and therefore clearly compromise the clear standards set forth in the Torah! And while doing this they firmly believe that they are not doing anything wrong!

The Hebrew word used for 'backsliding' is משובה **meshubah** – **Strong's H4878** which means, '**turning back, apostasy, faithless, faithlessness, waywardness, backsliding**', and comes from the root word שוב **shub** – **Strong's H7725** which means, '**to turn back, return, repent, recover**'.

The continual turning away or waywardness of the simple is what kills them, as they do not turn to the One who gives life! משובה **meshubah** can also be understood as, '**the state of rebellion against authority**', and as a result of this rebellion against authority there is a break in a previous relationship bond, which is a figurative extension of turning aside off of a correct path! We clearly see this in Yisra'el's backsliding that caused יהוה to issue a certificate of divorce, as we read in:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:8** "**And I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Yisra'el had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Yehudah did not fear, but went and committed whoring too.**"

The House of Yisra'el, also referred to in Scripture metaphorically as Ephrayim, had turned aside from the correct path of complete obedience and set-apartness, by adulterating herself with the nations – and this brought about a break in the marriage bond with יהוה.

This word מְשֻׁבָּה meshubah is used 12 times in Scripture. Twice it is used in Hoshĕa/Hosea – the verse we have read and then again in **chapter 14:4**, which we will look at shortly. It is used 9 times in the book of Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah, and once in Mishlĕ/Proverbs, which we will look at in more detail:

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 1:32** “For the turning away of the simple kills them, and the complacency of fools destroys them.”

Here the word מְשֻׁבָּה meshubah is translated as ‘turning away’. The LXX (Septuagint – Greek translation of the Tanak) uses the word ἀδικέω adikeō – Strong’s G91 which means, ‘do wrong, be an offender, to act unjustly or wickedly, to sin, to have violated the laws in some way, to hurt, damage or harm’. We see this word being used in: Hazon/Revelation 22:11-12 “He who does wrong, let him do more wrong; he who is filthy, let him be more filthy; he who is righteous, let him be more righteous; he who is set-apart, let him be more set-apart. 12 “And see, I am coming speedily, and My reward is with Me, to give to each according to his work.”

In Sha’ul’s letter to the believers in Colossae, he told them to bear with one another, and to put on love and to let the Word dwell in them richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing with pleasure in their hearts to the Master in psalms and songs of praise and spiritual songs, and whatever they do in word or deed, to do all in the Name of the Master יהושע. He then clearly instructed that proper submission and obedience should be observed by all – wives to their husbands, children to their parents and servants to their masters, and then writes in:

**Qolasim/Colossians 3:23-25** “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Master and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Master you shall receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Master, Messiah, you serve. 25 But he who does wrong shall be repaid for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality.”

Why I am mentioning these verses is simply to highlight the need for us to walk in love, as we guard to obey all the commands of Elohim and not turn away from doing what He has commanded us to. Those who hear, guard and do will be rewarded by the Master, while the wrong will be repaid and there is no partiality with Elohim! Justification for compromise will not get the wrong to escape the just reward for compromise and complacency! Rejecting any authority of Elohim is a form of backsliding, and to refuse to submit to walking as a body together in unity, by each one doing whatever seems right in their own eyes is also a form of backsliding! יהושע Messiah is our King, and His Kingdom has rules (His Torah) and His Kingdom has order, by which He has appointed some to teach and equip the body unto maturity, and any refusal to submit to the teaching and the admonishing of each other through the wisdom of Elohim will simply reveal one as being ‘simple’!

**For the turning away of the simple kills them:**

The Hebrew word for ‘simple’ is פְּתִי pethi – Strong’s H6612 which means, ‘open minded, foolish, simple, naïve’, which comes from the root verb פָּתַח pathah – Strong’s H6601 and means ‘easily deceived, enticed, to be simple or to be in a state of holding a wrong view about a situation’. The message here is clear – do not be deceived or enticed into holding a wrong view about any situation. In Hoshĕa/Hosea 7 Ephrayim is referred to having become a simple dove:

**Hoshĕa/Hosea 7:11** “And Ephrayim has become a simple dove without heart, they have called on Mitsrayim, they have gone to Ashshur.”

Here Ephrayim is symbolically used in referencing the House of Yisra’ĕl that had gone astray and been enticed by the nations! Ephrayim was easily deceived and enticed into a mode of pagan influenced worship.

It also means ‘to be naïve’ – and boy, how many today are so naïve about the corrupted practice of Christianity as an assumed means of pure worship, when it is nothing more than a man-made twisted blend of truth and pagan influence; which according to Torah is clearly an abomination in the eyes of יהוה. Ephrayim, which represents us today, had become naïve and in their naïve state they called to Mitsrayim and went to Ashshur. They had gone to the world for advice and learnt their ways as they were without heart or rather “understanding” – the very thing we are to seek from יהוה.

Simple people lack heart – they lack understanding as they neglect to do what is commanded, as we recognise that understanding comes in the doing of the Word, and when anyone compromises the pure standard of the Torah they lack heart and will find themselves easily giving in to the pressures of the world around them and look to worldly ways and reasonings as to how they can assimilate a form of worship that they deem acceptable to Elohim, when in fact it does not measure up to the clear plumb line of His Truth!

Backsliding kills the simple! The Hebrew word used for ‘kills’ is הָרַג harag – Strong’s H2026 meaning, ‘to kill, slay, destroy, ruin’.

Being naïve for not guarding the Word of Truth on a continual basis, and being gullible to worldly ways that run contrary to the Truth and seem right at the time of a crisis, without having been tested against the truth, will cause one to drift and backslide away from the narrow path of set-apartness, and as a result will lead one on a broad path of destruction. One's own backsliding destroys them:

**Mishlê/Proverbs 8:36** **“But he who sins against me injures himself; all who hate me love death!”**

**The complacency of fools destroys them:**

The Hebrew word for ‘complacency’ is שְׁלוֹוָה *shalvah* – Strong’s H7962 which means, *‘quiet, at ease, complacency, time of tranquillity’*. This is certainly a blessed character trait in anybody’s life as we see in speaking of the ‘rest’ that shall be in Yerushalayim:

**Tehillah/Psalm 122:7** **“Peace be within your walls, rest in your citadels.”**

What we must be careful of is that unguarded quietness and rest can become an open door for disaster. This ‘unconcerned’ ease was the problem with Sedom:

**Yehezqël/Ezekiel 16:49** **“See, this was the crookedness of your sister Sedom: She and her daughter had pride, sufficiency of bread, and unconcerned ease. And she did not help the poor and needy.”**

The lack of concern in one’s peace can result in carelessness, and it is the carelessness of fools in their unconcerned ease that destroys them as they are caught unaware when facing punishment for sin and lawlessness!

As wise maidens that have oil in their trimmed lamps we can be at rest in our Master, as we diligently guard His Word, yet ‘fools’ who are at ease in their foolishness will be destroyed!

The Hebrew word for ‘fool’ is כְּסִיל *kesil* – Strong’s H3684 which means, *‘fool, stupid fellow, dullard (which is a stupid and unimaginative person)’*, and comes from the root verb כָּסַל *kasal* – Strong’s H3688 which means, *‘to be or become stupid, foolish’*. So, we can clearly see that while we are able to become ‘wise’ if we pay attention to the proper hearing, guarding and doing of the Word of Elohim, we also realise that we can quickly become stupid if we do not listen to and obey His Word, and can be a fool if we refuse to accept the disciplining of His Word.

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘destroys’ comes from the root word אָבַד *abad* – Strong’s H6 which means, *‘to perish, destroy, lose, put to death, blot out, do away with, to give up as lost, vanish, be lost or strayed’*.

We are commanded in Scripture to utterly destroy all forms of abominable and pagan worship, lest we are destroyed for not doing so!!!

The Torah makes it clear that we are to destroy the names and titles of false mighty ones out of our midst, something that so many are unwilling to do as they are ‘bent on’ clinging to what they have known all their life!

Yisra’ël were bent on backsliding, by holding fast to false worship practices that they had learnt from the nations that they were supposed to have destroyed, and held fast to the calling upon of false names and titles of false mighty ones, while at the same time they were under the impression that they could and were calling upon the Most-High Elohim. This is the same problem we see happening in varying degrees today. While we recognise that Christianity has totally got it wrong, there are still some who claim to be on the Torah path that are unwilling to let go of false pagan rooted titles of false mighty ones, and here יְהוָה makes it very clear – He will not raise them up!

Those who disregard the importance of studying and meditating upon and walking in the Torah of Elohim, and disregard the need to be calling upon, praising and making great the True Name of Elohim Most High, are not being heard by יְהוָה!

**Tehillah/Psalm 50:14-17** **“Offer thanksgiving to Elohim, and pay your vows to the Most-High. 15 “And call upon Me in the day of distress – let Me rescue you, and you esteem Me.” 16 But to the wrong Elohim said, “What right have you to recite My laws, or take My covenant in your mouth, 17 “While you hated instruction and cast My Words behind you?”**

Backsliding and complacency, even in the slightest manner, destroys and kills!!! The Aramaic rendering of **Hoshéa/Hosea 11:7** gives us the understanding of being bent towards backsliding as being **“undecided about returning to the Law”**; and with none being exalted, the Aramaic is understood as saying that those who are like this will **“not walk erect or upright”**!

Anyone who is undecided about living a completely set-apart life will never walk upright, and it is only the upright that shall see His face!

**Tehillah/Psalm 11:6-7** **“Upon the wrong He rains snares, fire and sulphur and a scorching wind are the portion of their cup. 7 For יְהוָה is righteous, He has loved righteousness; the upright shall see His face.”**

What we can clearly see from the words of Elohim to a backsliding Yisra'el, is that their walk did not reflect their talk! People with lips that assume to be honouring Him, while their hearts are far from Him, for the Torah is clearly not in their hearts AND mouths to do it!

**Debarim/Deuteronomy 30:14** **“For the Word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart – to do it.”**

The verses that follow this is where Mosheh makes it very clear that he has set before us life and good, and death and evil, and commands us to love יהוה, walk in His Ways, guard His commands, laws and right-rulings, for then we will live; yet if we turn away from doing this we will perish!

Our choice is simple – be wise and choose life, or be a fool and choose death – which path are you on? The path that leads to destruction or the narrow path that leads to life? You cannot be on both! You cannot have one foot on one path and the other foot on the other! If both feet are not firmly grounded in the narrow path of life and complete set-apartness, due to some compromise or form of complacency and a slight backsliding then you are on the broad path of destruction!

To exalt Elohim as we should we have to cease from all backsliding and complacency!

Let me just run through the other verses that contain the Hebrew word for ‘backsliding’ – מְשֻׁבָּה meshubah:

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 2:19** **“Your own evil instructs you, and your backslidings reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter that you have forsaken יהוה your Elohim, and that My fear is not in you,” declares the Master יהוה of hosts.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:6** **“And יהוה said to me in the days of Yoshiyahu the sovereign, “Have you seen what backsliding Yisra’el has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there committed whoring.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:11** **“And יהוה said to me, “Backsliding Yisra’el has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Yehudah.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:12** **“Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, ‘Return, O backsliding Yisra’el,’ declares יהוה, ‘I shall not look on you in displeasure, for I am kind,’ declares יהוה, ‘and I do not bear a grudge forever.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:22** **“Return, O backsliding children, I shall make your backslidings cease.” “See, we have come to You, for You are יהוה our Elohim.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 5:6** **“Therefore a lion from the forest shall smite them, a wolf of the deserts ravage them. A leopard is watching over their cities, whoever comes out of them is torn in pieces. For their transgressions have been many, their backslidings have been numerous.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 8:5** **“Why then has this people, Yerushalayim, turned away in a continual backsliding? They cling to deceit, they refuse to turn back.”**

**Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 14:7** **“O יהוה, though our crookednesses witness against us, act, for Your Name’s sake. For our backslidings have been many, we have sinned against You.”**

**Hoshĕa/Hosea 14:4** **“I shall heal their backsliding, I shall love them spontaneously, for My displeasure has turned away from him.”**

As we read these verses together, in establishing the clear pattern of warning against backsliding, we are able to see the promise of healing from any such backsliding, and that is given to those who return to יהוה. The Hebrew word for ‘return’ is the root word שׁוּב shub – Strong’s H7725 which means, ‘to turn back, return, repent, recover’, which we have already mentioned as being the root from which מְשֻׁבָּה meshubah and תְּשׁוּבָה teshubun comes from.

In the ancient pictographic letters שׁוּב shub – Strong’s H7725 looks like this:

שׁוּב

Shin - שׁ:

This is the letter ‘shin’ which in the ancient script is pictured as, שׁ, which is ‘two front teeth’ and carries the meaning of ‘sharp or press, chew or devour’; which is what the teeth do, and also speaks of the sharpened word that comes forth from the mouth, as the teeth ‘chew’ or ‘meditate’ on the Truth, making what comes forth pure and sharp! It also carries the understanding of consuming or destroying – as teeth do to food.

## Waw/Vav – ך:

This is the Hebrew letter 'waw' or 'vav' which in the ancient script is pictured as  , which is a peg or 'tent peg', which was used for securing or tying down of the tent or other items. The possibility of it having a Y-shape is to show that it prevents the rope from slipping off. The root meaning of this letter is 'to add, secure or hook'.

## Beyt – ב:

The ancient script has this letter as  , which pictures a tent floor plan and means, 'house' or 'tent'. It represents family and the importance of those who are inside the tent as opposed to the tent structure itself.

When we understand the combination of these pictures as rendering a returning or recalling to mind, we are able to recognise that the **teeth** which speaks of a 'pressing', and the picture of the **peg** that **secures**, and the **house** which speaks of **dwelling**, we are able to understand this representing the following:

### 'THE SECURE DWELLING PLACE THAT IS TO BE RETURNED TO'.

This word in the ancient form represents for us a:

## Returning to the secure House where we are fed, as we meditate on the Word of the House

In a clear and wise call to return being given to a people who had backslidden and strayed from following יהוה, Shelomoh says in:

**Dibre haYamim Bět/2 Chronicles 30:9** "For if you turn back to יהוה, your brothers and your children shall be shown compassion by their captors, even to return to this land. For יהוה your Elohim shows favour and compassion, and does not turn His face from you if you turn back to Him."

As we carefully consider the words that we have read from **Hoshĕa/Hosea**, **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah** and **Mishlĕ/Proverbs**, in regards to the very real and present dangers of what backsliding and complacency does, let us be on guard to ensure that we are like 5 wise maidens/virgins who have not only trimmed their lamps (which all 10 had done) but also have made sure that our lamps are filled with oil and that we are walking in the Spirit, as we hear, guard and do His Torah, keeping our garments of righteousness clean in living completely set-apart lives unto the Master, as we cling to Him and His Word.

If we turn away from following Elohim we will not enter His reign! This warning of turning away that was given to the Tribes of Re'ubĕn, and Gađ is still a very loud warning being given to all who claim to be followers of Messiah today!

In keeping with the theme of the severe warning against turning away from Elohim, we are also told very clearly that anyone who turns their ear away from hearing the Torah will not have their prayers being deemed as acceptable before Elohim, as we take note of the words of Shelomoh in:

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 28:9** "He who turns away his ear from hearing the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination."

This parable is one that many have turned their ears from hearing, literally! So many today claim that the Torah is no longer valid and simply view the Torah and the prophets simply as good stories while they do not recognise the need to hear, guard and do what is instructed therein!

This parable is a severe warning against turning one's ear from hearing the Torah! The concept of turning one's ear from hearing the Torah implies one who does not hear and do what the Torah says. There are many who may hear the words of the Torah and even read the 'stories' of what they call the 'Old Testament', yet by their refusal to guard to do what is commanded therein is also understood as turning one's ear from hearing the Torah!

The Hebrew root verb for 'turns away' is סור sur – Strong's H5493 meaning, 'turn, turn aside, depart from a way, avoid, be removed from, put away', and is used in Scripture in reference to 'putting away' that which we should not be associated with, which highlights the truth that many who claim that the Torah has been 'done away with' and is no longer necessary to keep are turning away from hearing the Torah!

The Hebrew word used here for 'ear' is the word זֶן ozen – Strong's H241 which means, 'an ear, hear, attentive, closely, recite, reveal' and comes from the root verb זָן azan – Strong's H238 which means, 'to give, ear, listen, pay attention, perceived by ear', and while this also carries the meaning to listen and listen attentively, it literally means to 'cup the ear' – in other words give your complete attention and be obedient to take it all in.

The Hebrew word that is translated here as 'hearing' is שָׁמַע 'shama' – Strong's H8085, which carries a far greater meaning that to simply just hear something as it is understood to mean, 'to hear with attention and comprehend and discern and give heed to what is being spoken'.

**Shemoth/Exodus 19:5-6** “And now, if you diligently **obey** My voice, and shall **guard** My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession above all the peoples – for all the earth is Mine – 6 ‘and you shall be to Me a reign of priests and a set-apart nation.’ Those are the words which you are to speak to the children of Yisra’el.”

These verses make it very clear – for us to truly be a treasured possession of the Most-High, we are to make sure that we obey His voice and guard His Covenant.

In the above verse, the root word שָׁמַע ‘shama’ is used twice in a row, which means to ‘hear, listen and obey’. The structure is as follows:

אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ - ‘im-shamoa tishmau’ which literally translates as: “If hearing, you shall hear” and this reminds me of how often we see the term being used in Hazon/Revelation to the assemblies: “He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit says.”

Everybody has ears! Despite this physiological truth many do not use their ears to hear attentively as they should! Shelomoh highlights for us the dangers of turning one’s ear from hearing the Torah as he makes it clear that anyone who does this does not have an effective prayer life, for even his prayers are an abomination!

We have looked at the Hebrew word for ‘Torah’ in **verse 4** and recognise that to turn one’s ear away from hearing the Torah is to turn one’s ear to hearing the clear and vital instructions of Elohim. Those who do this seek out false teachers who will tickle their ears with things they want to hear and reject the clear Truth of the Torah of Elohim that is to be heard and obeyed!

**Timotiyos Bět/2 Timothy 4:3-4** “For there shall be a time when they shall not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desires, they shall heap up for themselves teachers tickling the ear 4 and they shall indeed turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to myths.”

Refusing to hear the Torah of Elohim and guard to do what His Torah instructs will result in one’s prayers not being heard, as we also take note of the clear rebuke given to s stubborn people who refused to listen to the Torah:

**Zekaryah/Zechariah 7:11-13** “But they refused to listen, and they shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears from hearing. 12 “And they made their hearts like flint against hearing the Torah, and the words, which יהוה of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great wrath came from יהוה of hosts. 13 “And it came to be: as He called and they did not hear, so let them call, but I shall not hear,” said יהוה of hosts.”

In **Ma’asei/Acts 15** it is made clear that every Sabbath the Torah of Mosheh is read and this is how the nations who were being grafted in would be able to hear and learn how to live set-apart lives. Those who refuse to remember to guard the Sabbath and set it apart are, in essence, also turning their ear from hearing the Torah, which renders their assumed prayers and fruitless and an abomination!

The Hebrew word that is translated as ‘prayer’ is תְּפִלָּה tephillah – Strong’s H8605 and comes from the word פָּלַל palal – Strong’s H6419 which means ‘to intercede, intervene, make supplication, and judgement made favourable’ and in essence carries the meaning ‘to apply to a judge for a favourable decision’.

The Hebrew word used here for ‘abomination’ is the noun תוֹעֵבָה to’ebah – Strong’s H8441 which means, ‘abomination, abominable thing, detestable thing, object of loathing’.

We also take note of what Shelomoh tells us in:

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 15:8** “The slaughtering of the wrong ones is an abomination to יהוה, but the prayer of the straight is His delight.”

Those who turn away from the hearing of the Torah, which implies a hearing and a guarding to do what is heard from the Torah, are being vain in their attempted prayers, for their prayers are an abomination to יהוה!

Those who hear, guard and do the commands of Elohim are heard by Elohim:

**Yohanan Aleph/1 John 3:22** “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we guard His commands and do what is pleasing in His sight.”

**Mishlĕ/Proverbs 15:29** “יהוה is far from the wrong ones, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.”

The reason for me highlighting this is to present the clear truth that to turn away from following Elohim leads to the sure sentence of destruction and while many claim that they are following Him, their refusal to hear, guard and do the Torah of Elohim and their working of lawlessness reveals that they have turned away from Elohim!

**Back to Bemidbar/Numbers 32:**

In **Verse 18-19** the children of Gaḏ and Re'ubēn told Mosheh that they would fight for their brothers, and set aside their inheritance until they made sure that their brothers had inherited their possession across the Yardēn. They had now made a very clear 'vow', and they were told very clearly that if they break it, they would suffer!

**Verse 20 – arm yourselves before יהוה for battle!**

The word for 'battle' is מִלְחָמָה *milḥamah* – Strong's H4421 meaning, '**battle, war, warfare, military**' comes from the word לָחַם *laḥam* – Strong's H3898 which means, '**to fight, do battle, conquer**' and can also carry the meaning, '**consume, to use as food, eat**', and it is from this root word that we get the word לֶחֶם *leḥem* – Strong's H3899 which means, '**bread, food, provision**'. Understanding that the word for war/battle comes from the same root word from which bread comes from, which as we know is Scripture that bread is a symbol or picture of community, then it helps us further understand how when we stand up and fight against 'self' and the lusts of the flesh that wage war in our lives then we are in fact feeding the community with growth as we conquer that which does not belong in order to enrich the community or body we are made a part of!

The root word for 'arm' in **verse 40** is חָלַצְתָּ *ḥalats* – Strong's H2502 and means, '**be equipped, armed, to draw out, plunder, remove, tear out**'.

We have a huge responsibility for each other in the body, and we are to be daily 'armed for battle', as we stand dressed in the armour of Elohim, and walk in His Torah!

**Kēpha Aleph/1 Peter 4:1-2** "**Therefore, since Messiah suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 so that he no longer lives the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but according to the desire of Elohim.**"

Let us now take a closer look at what Kēpha is telling us when he says that we are to arm ourselves with the same mind as Messiah, who suffered in the flesh!

The Greek word used here for 'mind' is ἐννοια *ennoia* – Strong's G1771 which means, '**intent, mind**', and implies, '**the act of thinking or consideration and meditation**', relates to one's, '**thinking, or moral understanding**'. It comes from the compound of 2 words: 1) - ἐν *en* – Strong's G1722 which is a primary preposition denoting position, and is translated as, '**in, on, at, by, with**', and 2) - νοῦς *nous* – Strong's G3563 and means, '**mind, understanding, reason, intellect**', and speaks of the faculties of the mind that perceives and comprehends.

This word ἐννοια *ennoia* – Strong's G1771 that Kēpha uses, is only used twice in Scripture: here in this chapter that we have just read and is translated as 'intentions' in:

**Iḥ'rim/Hebrews 4:12** "**For the Word of Elohim is living, and working, and sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through even to the dividing of being and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**"

We are to 'arm' ourselves with the 'mind' of Messiah, and the Greek word translated as 'armed' is ὀπλιζῶ *hoplizō* – Strong's G3695 which means, '**to arm oneself, furnish with arms**', and metaphorically has the meaning, '**take on the same mind**'. This word comes from the primary word ὅπλον *hoplon* – Strong's G3696 meaning, '**a tool, implement, weapon, instruments, armour**', and speaks of any tool or instrument used to prepare something, and is used in:

**Romiyim/Romans 6:12-13** "**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, to obey it in its desires, 13 neither present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to Elohim as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to Elohim.**"

Here it is translated as 'instruments' and it is translated as 'armour' in:

**Romiyim/Romans 13:12** "**The night is far advanced, the day has come near. So let us put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.**"

Furthermore, we see this word ὅπλον *hoplon* – Strong's G3696 being translated as 'weapons' in:

**Qorintiyim Bēt/2 Corinthians 10:4-6** "**For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly but mighty in Elohim for overthrowing strongholds, 5 overthrowing reasonings and every high matter that exalts itself against the knowledge of Elohim, taking captive every thought to make it obedient to the Messiah, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is complete.**"

What I am simply trying to highlight to you here is the clear need for us to be good soldiers who are ready to fight the good fight as we stand firm in our Master who has given us all we need for life and reverence and has equipped us to suffer hardship as a good soldier. This simply boils down to the sobering question of whether our minds are as Messiah's or not, or better perhaps even better put, **"Is your attitude right?"**

In order to have the same mind as Messiah, we need to be ready and armed to suffer as a good soldier, for He Himself suffered in the flesh, and he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin!

The Greek word used for 'suffered' is πάσχω paschō – Strong's G3958 which means, **'suffer, be vexed, to be affected, endured sufferings'**. This word is used 42 times in 41 verses in the Renewed Writings, and is mostly used in reference to the suffering of Messiah Himself – a suffering that He had to go through, as it was written!

**Luqas/Luke 24:26 "Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these and to enter into His esteem?"**

**Ma'asei/Acts 3:18 "But this is how Elohim has filled what He had announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that His Messiah was to suffer."**

This word is also used in referring to the sufferings of believers for Messiah's Name, and in speaking of Sha'ul, Messiah says in:

**Ma'asei/Acts 9:16 "For I shall show him how much he has to suffer for My Name."**

We, as believers are to share, not only in each other's rejoicings, but also in each other's sufferings:

**Qorintiyim Aleph/1 Corinthians 12:26 "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is esteemed, all the members rejoice with it."**

Sha'ul writes to the Philippians and says in:

**Pilipiyim/Philippians 1:27-30 "Only, behave yourselves worthily of the Good News of Messiah, in order that whether I come and see you or am absent, I hear about you, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one being, striving together for the belief of the Good News, 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose, which to them truly is a proof of destruction, but to you of deliverance, and that from Elohim. 29 Because to you it has been given as a favour, on behalf of Messiah, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same struggle which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me."**

It has been given, as a favour, to suffer for His sake!!! Yet we take note that Messiah is able to help those being tried:

**Ib'rim/Hebrew 2:18 "For in what He had suffered, Himself being tried, He is able to help those who are tried."**

Our Master learnt obedience through what He suffered (Ib'rim/Hebrew 5:8).

Kěpha teaches us that we find favour when suffering for doing good – that is doing what we are commanded to do as we guard to do the good works that have been prepared beforehand for us to do – which is to walk in righteousness, and are always hearing, guarding and doing the commands of Elohim!

**Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 2:20-21 "For what credit is there in enduring a beating when you sin? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure, this finds favour with Elohim. 21 For to this you were called, because Messiah also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps"**

**Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 3:14-18 "But even if you suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not fear their threats, neither be troubled." 15 But set apart יהוה Elohim in your hearts, and always be ready to give an answer to everyone asking you a reason concerning the expectation that is in you, with meekness and fear, 16 having a good conscience, so that when they speak against you as doers of evil, those who falsely accuse your good behaviour in Messiah, shall be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the desire of Elohim, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 Because even Messiah once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to Elohim, having been put to death indeed in flesh but made alive in the Spirit"**

As we consider all these verses that I have mentioned and come back to **Kěpha Aleph/1 Peter 4:1-2** and recognise that since Messiah Himself suffered in the flesh, we better arm ourselves with the same mind, let me ask you...

How is your mind? How is your attitude?

We need to 'think like Messiah', and we need to 'walk as Messiah walked' and 'love like Messiah loved'!

Understanding this then, we need to have the same mind that Messiah has toward sin!

How is your attitude toward sin? Have you, **'in the intent of your mind'**, ceased from sin?

**Yoħanan Aleph/1 John 3:6 "Everyone staying in Him does not sin. Everyone sinning has neither seen Him nor known Him."**

**Yoħanan Aleph/1 John 5:18 "We know that everyone having been born of Elohim does not sin, but the one having been born of Elohim guards himself, and the wicked one does not touch him."**

Kěpha makes it clear – having the same mind of Messiah is clearly reflected by one who has ‘ceased’ from sin, and the Greek word translated as ‘ceased’ is **παύω pauō** – **Strong’s G3973** which means, ‘**to cease, leave, refrain, no longer stirred by its incitements and seductions**’. Have you truly ceased from sin, or do you find yourself being stirred by the incitements and seductions of the flesh that scream for your attention and focus?

The Hebrew word that can be seen as the equivalent to this Greek word for ‘ceased’ is the root word **שָׁבַת shabath** – **Strong’s H7673** which means, ‘**to cease, desist, rest, observe, observe the rest, put an end**’, which expressed as a causative action can be understood as meaning, ‘**to cease or put an end to, remove, exterminate, destroy, cause to desist from**’. We are told in **Shemoth/Exodus 12:15** to cause leaven to ‘cease’ from our houses for 7 days, which we know is for the Feast of Matzot beginning with the Pěsaḥ Meal. This Feast reminds us and pictures for us the beginning of the redemptive work of our Master, and therefore symbolically recognises for us the starting point of the work of Messiah in our own lives, as we are to be rid of sin and cause sin to cease from our lives. It is only then that the ‘good leaven’ of the Word can be worked in us and cause us to be waved as an acceptable and ready Bride before our Elohim, as we live our lives as a daily living offering!

In **Wayyiqra/Leviticus 2:13** we are told that we are to bring salt with all our offerings. Salt preserves, so it is a picture of eternity and the perpetuity of the covenant. A covenant of salt is part of a meal in which one promises to protect the one who is sealing the agreement through a meal. As we partake in the Pěsaḥ Meal we are committing our lives to walk upright and cause sin to cease from our lives.

As followers of **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** Messiah, being a daily living offering, we are called, in a sense, to be ‘salty’ believers’. Salt also represents a person’s willingness to do what **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ** demands of His talmidim (disciples).

**Luqas (Luke) 14:34-35** “**The salt is good, but if the salt becomes tasteless, with what shall it be seasoned? 35 “It is not fit for land, nor for manure, they throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”**

What the Master is basically saying here is that if the willingness turns into unwillingness – in other words – if a taught one (disciple) returns to worldly ways after experiencing the truth and joy of following **יְהוָה**’s way – what else is left to restore him? NOTHING!

As we live as a daily living offering we must never lack salt! We must never lack the willingness to do what is required, and this comes down to a right attitude and having the mind of Messiah, and not giving up because of the suffering we face for His Name’s sake!

What I want to highlight to you, in the reason for sharing the Hebrew equivalent for the Greek word for ‘cease’, is that this Hebrew word **שָׁבַת shabath** – **Strong’s H7673** is the primitive root from which we get the word for **שַׁבָּת Sabbath** – **Strong’s H7676**, which is the intensive form of **שָׁבַת shabath** – **Strong’s H7673** and refers specifically to ‘the’ Sabbath, as in ‘the’ 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week.

**Iḅ’rim/Hebrew 4:9-11** “**So there remains a Sabbath-keeping for the people of Elohim. 10 For the one, having entered into His rest, has himself also rested from his works, as Elohim rested from His own. 11 Let us therefore do our utmost to enter into that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.”**

**Sabbath-keeping** is vital for us, as it is a sure sign of us ‘ceasing’ from our own works, our own ways and words!!!

**Yeshayahu/Isaiah 58:13-14:**

“**If you do turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My set-apart day, and shall call the Sabbath ‘a delight,’ the set-apart day of יְהוָה ‘esteemed,’ and shall esteem it, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, 14 then you shall delight yourself in יְהוָה. And I shall cause you to ride on the heights of the earth, and feed you with the inheritance of Ya’aqob your father. For the mouth of יְהוָה has spoken!”**

And as we remain steadfast in entering into the completed work of the Master we are to make sure that we have ceased from sin!!!

**Qolasis/Colossians 4:6** “**Let your word always be with favour, seasoned with salt, so that you know how you ought to answer each one.”**

With the need for our words to be seasoned with salt we are able to learn and recognise the importance of guarding the Truth and not speaking idle words of a dead faith that has no backing of an obedient life, and we therefore recognise how important it is for us to have ears to hear the Truth, so that we can faithful guard to do His Torah and not risk being cast away, as workers of lawlessness and those who have turned away from following Elohim and the hearing of His Torah!

### Verse 23

Here we are given the reality of how one's sin will be found out. If you claim to be walking in the Master and have committed your life to standing firm in Him, committed to being dressed in His Armour and walk as a faithful priesthood in service to one another, then you better make sure that you do not miss the mark, because when you do, you will be found out! Mosheh then commands them to go and do what they have promised, and in the Hebrew this is literally rendered as, **'do what goes forth from your mouth'**, and further emphasises to us here that the Torah clearly teaches us to keep our promises!

When we neglect to do what we have promised to others, we sin against יהוה, and it will catch up to you, even when you may have forgotten about it!

The children of Gaḏ and Re'ubēn confirmed their acceptance of this, as they answered Mosheh by saying that they will do as יהוה has commanded them! They proved this day that they were indeed a different generation to the one who had perished in the Wilderness for disobedience! They were not only willing to help their brothers, but they also were eager to go in first and displayed a true 'following' heart that יהוה seeks!

As we consider this chapter that speaks of the commands given to the tribes, and the necessity of ensuring that we keep our promises and commitments faithfully, we must take care to be a people who do not swear falsely, but do all, whether in word or deed, in the name of our Master:

**Qolasim/Colossians 3:17 "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Master יהושע, giving thanks to Elohim the Father through Him."**

**Qolasim/Colossians 3:23-25 "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Master and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Master you shall receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Master, Messiah, you serve. 25 But he who does wrong shall be repaid for the wrong which he has done, and there is no partiality."**

Shalom!