

PARASHAT VAYIKRA

(HE CALLED)

LEVITICUS 1:1-5:26 [6:7]

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

Isaiah 43:21–44:23

Testimony of Yeshua

On our victory over sin through Messiah: **Romans 8:1–13**

Yeshua's better sacrifice: **Hebrews 9:11–28; 10:1–22; 13:10–16**

Overview of the Book of Leviticus/Vayikra

☞ Key Points of Leviticus

- Leviticus stands at the center of the Torah.
- Its narrative covered probably only a month.
- It is the first book of Torah that religious Jews start teaching their young children, since it is believed that those who are pure in heart (i.e., children) should be engaged in the study of purity (i.e., the laws of purification and atonement)—the central themes of Leviticus.
- Even today, Leviticus remains the foundation for Jewish life, since it includes the laws pertaining to diet, the feasts, sex, marriage, family purity, and our relationship with our fellow man.
- Leviticus is at the heart of the modern Jewish synagogue service, and forms the basis for the daily devotions of religious Jews. Jewish liturgical prayer is largely based on the tabernacle service outlined in this book.

☞ Outline of Leviticus

- The five main offerings (Lev 1–7)
- The ordination of priests (Lev 6:8–7:38)
- Laws of cleanliness (food, childbirth, diseases, etc., Lev 11–15)
- Day of Atonement (Lev 16–17)
- Moral laws regulating relationships between humans (Lev 18–20)
- Regulations for priests, the offerings of the annual feasts (Lev 21:1–24:9)
- Punishment for blasphemy, murder, etc. (Lev 24:10–23)
- The Sabbatical year, Jubilee, land laws, slavery (Lev 25)

- Blessings and cursings (Lev 26)
- Regulations pertaining to vows made to YHVH (Lev 27)

🕊️ Themes of Leviticus

- Holiness (set-apartness) is the key theme of Leviticus. The set-apartness of YHVH and the need for man to become set-apart (Heb. *kadosh*; Lev 11:44).
- The offerings and other ceremonies served to show the holiness of YHVH.
- YHVH can only be approached through proper and prescribed protocols.
- In Leviticus, spiritual set-apartness (holiness) is symbolized by physical perfection. All blemishes or defects symbolize man's spiritual defects, which break his spiritual wholeness. Therefore, the religious system in Leviticus required:
 - Perfect animals for sacrifices (Lev 1–7)
 - Priests without physical deformity (Lev 8–10)
 - A woman to be ritually purified from hemorrhaging after childbirth (Lev 12)
 - Ritual purification from sores, burns, baldness (Lev 13–14)
 - Ritual purification from a man's bodily discharges (Lev 15:1–18)
 - Ritual purification after a woman's menstrual cycle (Lev 15:19–33)
- Those with certain diseases or ailments had to leave the camp (symbolic of leaving YHVH's Presence—like Adam and Eve leaving the Garden of Eden after they had sinned). Israelites could be readmitted to the camp (symbolic of returning to YHVH's Presence) only after certain protocols had been performed and the person had been pronounced whole by the priests.
- In Exodus 19:6, YHVH calls for Israel to be a kingdom of priests. As such, they were to be a light to the nations and to show Elohim's glory to the world (Deut 4:4–8). Israel was to be YHVH's representation of YHVH's kingdom on earth. Leviticus showed Israel how to walk in a set-apart (*kadosh* or holy) manner before YHVH and the world.

🕊️ All Was Overseen by the Priests

- The priests (Heb. *kohenim*) oversaw and controlled the sacrifices, rituals, ceremonies, and everything pertaining to the tabernacle.
- It was their job to establish Israel as a *kadosh* (set-apart) nation, and to instruct Israel in spiritual cleanliness and set-apartness (holiness), to preserve them spiritually, and to present them to YHVH as a pure and righteous people.

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 1:1 YHVH Calls Out to His People From the Tabernacle; Gives Instructions on How Man Can Be Reconciled to Him Through the Elevation/Burnt (*Olah*) Offering (*Karban*): A Picture of the Work of Yeshua at the Cross
- 1:3 Elevation or Burnt Offering From Cattle
- 1:10 Elevation or Burnt Offering From Sheep and Goats
- 1:14 Elevation or Burnt Offering From Fowl
- 2:1 Meal (*Minchah*) Offerings of Finely Ground Wheat Flour, Olive Oil and Frankincense
- 2:13 Every Meal Offering to Be Salted
- 3:1 Peace (*Shelamim*) Offering as an Expression of Gratitude, Love for YHVH's Goodness
- 4:1 Sin (*Chatat*) Offering to Aton for Sins; to Be Accompanied by a Repentant Heart
- 4:3 Sin Offering for the Anointed *Kohen* (Priest)
- 4:13 Sin Offering for the Entire Assembly
- 4:22 Sin Offering for a Ruler

- 4:28 Sin Offering for an Individual
- 5:1 The Variable-Cost Sin Offering for the Sin of Contaminating Set-Apart Things, False or Unkept Oaths or Touching a Contaminated Thing
- 5:4 A Sin Offering for an Unfulfilled Spoken Oath
- 5:14 Guilt/Trespass (*Asham*) Offering for an Error (Missing the Mark)—Inadvertent or Careless Sin
- 5:17 A Guilt Offering in Case of Doubt (For Inadvertent Intentional Sin)
- 5:20 (6:1) Guilt Offering for Thefts

Torah Explorers

THE NEXT FIVE STUDY POINTS ARE QUOTED directly from *Torah Explorers*, which is our Torah study guide for youth. In it, we have tried to explain the ancient sacrificial system in simple terms by showing why it was necessary, how it was insufficient to fully atone for man's sin, how it pointed to Yeshua the Messiah, and how he became man's ultimate sin sacrifice when he died on the cross.

Yeshua said that except we become as little children, we will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3). This statement can be taken several ways, but one thing is certain: the gospel message of Yeshua's atoning death should be so easy to understand that even a child can comprehend it. Below is that message. Please take a moment to review it before proceeding to our main Torah study where we discuss in fuller detail the sacrificial system.

Introduction

When we break men's laws it's illegal, there is a penalty to pay. When we break YHVH's laws, it is called sin (1 John 3:4). The penalty is that our sin separates us from YHVH, and our sin places us at odds with him. If we persist in sin, we become his enemy. If we fail to repent or turn from our sin, the ultimate penalty is death for eternity. To become YHVH's friend again, the penalty for the sins we have committed must be paid, and then we must turn from our sins. YHVH made a way for the Israelites to do this through sacrificing innocent animals in the Tabernacle of Moses. Animals could die in place of sinful humans, for the wages (the price to be paid) of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and YHVH requires the death penalty for one who sins (Ezekiel 18:4). The sacrificial system caused the death of an innocent animal instead of a guilty human, and at the same time prophetically pointed to the time when a Man would be born whose life was worth more than all humans combined, and who would become the ultimate sacrifice for sinful humans. That Person was Yeshua, the Messiah, the Son of Elohim, the Son of man, and the Creator of man.

1 The Purpose of the Sacrificial System: YHVH's Love for His Children

When reading about the sacrifices in the Tanakh (Old Testament) many have the idea that YHVH required this of the Israelites because he was angry with them because they had sinned, and that somehow, sacrificing an animal assuaged YHVH's anger toward the hapless sinner. In reality, this was not the purpose of the sacrificial system. YHVH loves his people, and it hurts his heart when they sin against him. Sin causes man to be separated from YHVH so that man and YHVH cannot have a close and loving relationship. Offering sacrifices was a way YHVH provided for man to get right with YHVH again after he had sinned. An innocent animal would die instead of the sinner having to die; it was the penalty payment necessary for man's sin. Once paid, justice was satisfied, and YHVH would extend mercy and forgiveness to the sinner, and relationship was re-established.

☞ Have you ever sinned? Have you ever done something that your parents told you not to do? Have you ever lied, stolen something, said something bad about someone else, thought a bad thought, been dishonest, hurt someone, or dishonored your parents? Did you get caught? Was there a penalty for your sin? Did your parents spank you, deprived you of some special privilege, talk sternly to you, or discipline you in some other way? After the discipline, did your parents then hug you, and tell you that they forgave you and reaffirm their love for you? Did they stay angry with you? Do you know that when they disciplined you they did it because they loved you, wanted you to do the right thing, and wanted things to go well for you?

Your parents discipline you because they love you. YHVH does the same thing. He is our loving Parent in heaven who is trying to teach his children to follow the rules (his laws). When we obey him, we are blessed; when we disobey him this is called sin, and we have to pay a price and receive discipline.

2 Could Animal Sacrifices Really Pay for Men's Sins?

☞ Who was required to bring a sacrifice and when did YHVH require the Israelites to sacrifice an animal? (Read Leviticus 4:2,3,13,22,27; 5:1,4,15,17–18; 6:2.)

Just about every time someone sinned in ancient Israel, they had to offer a sacrifice or offering of some sort. This was a never-ending process, for as long as a person lived.

☞ Imagine that every time you lied, disobeyed your parents, broke one of YHVH's laws, or any other kind of sin, you had to bring a kosher animal before YHVH to be sacrificed. How large of a flock of sheep or cattle would you personally need to have—just for your sins alone? How large would your family flock have to be for your parents and all your brothers and sisters? You might have to own a huge ranch to supply all those sheep, goats and cattle depending on how often you and your family sinned! Isn't that kind of a scary thought? Yet this is the problem the Israelites were faced with.

3 All the Sacrifices Had Some Common Themes

Though there were several different kinds of sacrifices, they all had some things in common. See if you can discover what they were. We will give you the Scriptures where you can find the answers.

- ☞ What type of animals were required for the sacrifices? (Read Leviticus 1:5,10; 3:7; 4:3; 5:6,11,15,18; 6:6.) What did all these animals have in common? Were they clean or unclean animals?
- ☞ In what physical condition were these animals to be? (Read Leviticus 1:3,10; 3:1,6; 4:3,23,28,32; 5:15,18; 6:6.)
- ☞ Blood was an important part of the sacrificial system. What was done with the blood of the animals? (Read Leviticus 1:5,11,15; 3:2,8,13; 4:6,7,16–18,25,30,34; 5:9.)
- ☞ What did the sinner do to the animal before it was sacrificed as a symbolic act of transferring their sins from themselves onto the animal? (Read Leviticus 4:15; 8:14,22; 16:21.)
- ☞ How were the animals prepared before the sacrifice? (Read Leviticus 1:9,13; 9:14.)
- ☞ How were the sacrifices cooked and what fuel was used for the fire? (Read Leviticus 1:7–9,12–13.)
- ☞ How did YHVH view the sacrificial offering made by fire? (Read Leviticus 1:9,13,17; 2:2,9,12,3:5,16; 4:31; 6:21; 8:21,28.)
- ☞ What happened to the ashes of the animals? (Read Leviticus 4:12; 6:11; Numbers 19:9.)

The altar of sacrifice in the outer court of the tabernacle was the place where the animals were killed and offered. The altar was like a giant barbecue grill. Sometimes the animals were totally burned up (called a burnt offering), and sometimes the meat was barbecued and then eaten by the priests and the people. The priests used as cooking utensils a long three-pronged fork and a flat shovel-like tool that resembled a large spatula. The high priest (*kohen hagadol*) wore a large hat called a turban as part of his official uniform that resembled a chef's hat, and he wore a fancy robe called an *ephod* that resembled an apron. Perhaps you have seen your dad dress in a similar manner when he barbecues some meat on his backyard grill.

4 All the Sacrifices Pointed to One Who Would Die, Once and for All for Man's Sin

As we mentioned above, sacrifices had to be made every time an Israelite sinned. They did not permanently pay for man's sin. Every time a person sinned, he fell out of relationship with YHVH and had to offer another sacrifice to pay the penalty for his sin so that he could come back into a right relationship (friendship) with a righteous and sinless Elohim (God). There had to be a better and more permanent solution to fixing man's sin problem. What was that solution?

- ☞ Who became a sacrifice to pay for the sins of men, and did so once and for all time? (Read John 3:16; Hebrews 7:24–27; 9:11–14,24–28; 10:10–12.)

5 How Did the Sacrificial System of Old Point to Yeshua's Death?

- ☞ Only a kosher or clean animal like a lamb was slaughtered under the sacrificial system. How does this point to Yeshua? (Read John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 13:8.)
- ☞ The animal was to be perfect and without blemish and was washed in water before being sacrificed. This is a picture of Yeshua being perfect and without sin. (Read 1 Peter 1:19; 2:22.)
- ☞ The sinner laid his hands on the animal as if to transfer his sins to the innocent beast. Similarly, Yeshua took our sins upon himself to die in our place. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:4–6,11; Romans 8:3; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5.)
- ☞ In the ancient sacrificial system, blood was sprinkled on the altar. Blood represents human life, for it is our blood that keeps us alive. Blood had to be spilled in order for one innocent and sin-free life to substitute for or pay the sin-penalty price of another sinful life. Scripture teaches in Leviticus 17:11 that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and that the blood is to be sprinkled on the altar of sacrifice to pay for and to cover over (or atone for) man's sins. How did Yeshua fulfill this? How did he shed his blood? (Read Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:16; Revelation 5:9; Ephesians 1:17; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Titus 2:14.)
- ☞ The animals to be sacrificed were laid on wood and then burned in fire on the altar. How does this point to Yeshua, the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for man's sins? (Read Matthew 27:32–35.) As the animal to be sacrificed was laid on wood and tied to the altar with cords (Psalm 118:27), so Yeshua was nailed to a wooden cross. As the blood of the animal was sprinkled on the Altar, so Yeshua's blood ran down the cross onto the ground. Blood came from the nails in his hands and feet, from the crown of thorns on his head, from the whipping to his back that laid open his flesh, and from the Roman spear that was thrust into his side.
- ☞ The animal was burned in the fire. Similarly, a person being crucified burned with thirst and pain in the hot sun. While Yeshua was in this state of suffering while hanging on the cross, someone had pity on him and tried to give him something to ease his pain and thirst. (Read John 19:28–29.)

These examples are just a few of the ways that the sacrificial system that YHVH gave to the Israelites pointed to Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim, who was to come and to take away the sins of the world as the ultimate, perfect and final sacrifice for all time and for all mankind.

After Yeshua's death on the cross, his disciples spread the good news (gospel) that YHVH had provided his Son as the ultimate and final sacrifice for their sins. They taught that when we place our faith in Yeshua we could be saved from the penalty of sin, which is death, and through Yeshua, we could have eternal life, and have a place reserved for us in his spiritual kingdom. Yeshua was the perfect and final Lamb of Elohim who came to take away the sins of the world.

As a result of Yeshua's disciples teaching the good news message of hope, many Jews put their faith in him as that ultimate and perfect sin sacrifice to which the ancient sacrificial system had so long pointed.

At the same time, there were many Jews who did not believe the message of the gospel as taught by the disciples of Yeshua. They continued to look to the sacrifices made in the Temple in Jerusalem for atonement for their sin. From the death of Yeshua and onward for forty years, the message of the gospel continued to spread. But in A.D. 70, the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans thus ending the sacrificial system for good. To this day, the Jews who have refused to put their faith in Yeshua have no means of atoning for their sins. Only through faith in Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, do men have atonement (covering or payment) for their sins. He remains our Savior and Redeemer (the one who saved us from our sins by paying the death penalty for our sins and by dying in our place). Have you placed trusting faith in him?

Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion)

- 1 1:1, *And YHVH called [Heb. vayikra]*. Who is calling whom? Isn't it strange to think of YHVH calling unto Moses and, by extension, the children of Israel? Don't we usually think of man calling on YHVH in prayer

and in his time of need? What does this teach us about our Father's love for his people and his desire to have a relationship with them? (Compare this idea with those expressed in Exod 25:8; Matt 1:23; John 3:16; 1:14 and Rev 21:3.)

Throughout the Torah, only the name *YHVH*, the name representing YHVH's attribute of mercy, is used in connection with offerings and never the name *Elohim*, which represents his attribute of judgment.

The ancient pagans and many Christians believe that the purpose of animal sacrifices was to appease an angry and wrathful God. Such a concept is foreign to Hebraic thought, which views the sacrificial system as a means to draw near and be reconciled to YHVH. The Tanakh (Torah, Prophets and Writings or Old Testament) is full of such expressions of the mercy and grace of YHVH; therefore, grace and mercy as being attributes of YHVH's character are not *only* delineated in the Testimony of Yeshua, as some have been led to believe.

What are some other expressions of YHVH's grace and mercy in the Tanakh? (Read Gen 6:8; 18:20–33; Exod 34:6–7, and Psalms such as 103 and 51, as well as many Messianic prophecies, especially in Isaiah such as Isa 53:1–12 and 61:1–3, for example.)

2 1:16, Beside the altar on the east part. It is interesting to note that in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount, the east side of the altar of sacrifice in the temple faced the Mount of Olives, the base of which is only a few minutes walk (less than 1000 feet) down from the Temple Mount and across the small Kidron Valley. This area is known as the Garden of Gethsemane and is located (also at the base of the Mount of Olives just above the Kidron Valley). Where did Yeshua pray and sweat great drops of blood just prior to his crucifixion? (See Luke 22:44.) Directly above this same spot is where the altar of the red heifer was located (see *Mishnah Parah* 3:6c and *The Temple, Its Ministry and Service*, p. 283, by Alfred Edersheim). Furthermore, the writer of Hebrews links the place of Yeshua's crucifixion to the spot where the red heifer was killed (Heb 13:12–13 cp. 9:13). And finally, we know that from the place of the crucifixion, the front of the temple was clearly visible (Luke 23:45,47). We see clearly that the sprinkling of the blood on the east side of the altar (on the side of the altar facing the exact spot where Yeshua died on the cross) is a prophetic shadow picture pointing to the eventual death of Yeshua the Lamb of Elohim slain from the foundation of the world to take away the sins of the world once and for all!

3 1:1–17, The burnt offering is a picture of Yeshua's death on the cross. All aspects of the sacrificed animal, the altar itself and the service surrounding the sacrifice are a prophetic shadow-picture pointing to the Messiah's death on the cross and what the redeemed believer must do in relationship to this work to receive Elohim's atonement for his sins.

How many times and when each day did the priests sacrifice this sin offering? (Read Exod 29:38–42 and Num 28:1–8.) The Jews, since the time of the destruction of their temple in the first century, have known that these two offerings prophetically represent the prayers of the righteous ascending to the throne of the Almighty twice daily. In rabbinic Judaism, the morning prayers are called the *shacharit* prayers, while those in the afternoon are called the *minchah* prayers. These prayers can be found in a Jewish prayer book called a *siddur*. These twice daily sacrifices picture our need to come to our Father in heaven morning and evening through the shed blood of Yeshua to confess our sins and to offer thanks and praise. (Read Heb 13:15; Pss 107:22; 116:18 cp. 113:3; 141:2; Hos 14:1–2; Mal 1:11.)

It is interesting to note in Leviticus 1:9 that YHVH required the legs and inwards of the animal to be washed in the bronze laver. What does this represent spiritually in the redeemed believer's life? Read the Testimony of Yeshua passages for Parashat Vayikra (listed at the head of this study guide) to get a clear understanding of what these offerings pointed to prophetically and how they relate to us.

4 Chapters 2–7, Along with the burnt offering there were five other types of offerings each representing different aspects of a follower of Yeshua dealing with sin in his life. They are listed in Leviticus and elsewhere in the Torah. They are:

- the meal or cereal offering (Lev 2; 6:14–23)
- the guilt or sin offering (Lev 4; 6:24–30)
- the trespass offering (Lev 5:14–6:7)

- the peace or wave offering (Lev 3; 7:11–21)
- the drink offering (Exod 29:40–41; 30:9; Lev 23:13; Num 6:17; 15:5,7,10,24; 28:7–10,15,24; 29:16,22,25,28,31,34,38)

In these offerings, there is great spiritual symbolism. For example, the oil, salt, flour, frankincense and baking over fire of the meal offering all point to Yeshua. In scriptural poetic symbolism, oil represents the Set-Apart (Holy) Spirit of Elohim and the Torah, fine flour speaks of the righteousness of Yeshua who is the Bread of Life, while salt is a metaphor for purity and taste enhancement, and frankincense speaks of prayers of the saints. This offering contained no leavening agent; it was unleavened bread, for leavening is a scriptural metaphor for sin. It contained no honey, since honey overpowers the real flavor of something. This prophetically points to the words spoken by Yeshua; they were not “sweetened” to blunt their real truth or intent. Is the Word of Elohim ever compromised to placate the human palate? (Read John 6:60; 3:34; 8:28; Rev 1:5.) The meal offering was baked by fire. What does this spiritually point to in the life of Yeshua and in that of the believer? Discuss how Yeshua fulfilled this offering. (See Isa 53:5–12; compare with Ps 22:15; Luke 23:56–24:1; John 3:14; 12:32.) How are believers to fulfill this prophetic symbolism by becoming like “living sacrifices”? (See Rom 12:1; Matt 5:10–13; John 16:33; 2Tim 3:12.)

5 Ponder for a moment the laboriousness of the sacrificial system and how it gloriously pointed to our need for a Redeemer. Aren't you thankful that Yeshua came for you and me to be our sin sacrifice once and for all (Heb 10:10,14)? The sacrificial system was a bloody mess, but now we live under Yeshua's blood spiritually and overcome sin and the devil by his blood (Rev 12:11). Are you under his blood? Is your name written in the Lamb's book of life? If not, or if you're not sure, then repent of your sins today and receive the atoning work of Yeshua when he laid down his life for you at the cross/tree of life to set you free from the penalty of your sin, which is death, and to give you new or eternal life in himself. Do you stay under his blood every day (1John 1:9) and overcome the world, the flesh and the devil by his blood (Rev 12:11)? How can we accomplish this on a daily basis spiritually as ancient Israel did physically on a daily basis?

6 In light of the above discussion, please read 1 John 1:7–2:2; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; and Hebrews 9:28. Have you repented lately? How often do you repent? Daily, weekly, monthly, or never? Passover is rapidly approaching. Are you ready to renew your spiritual and covenantal commitments to Yeshua as a clean and pure vessel before him? Now is the time to take stock of your life as you prepare to renew your marriage vows with Yeshua at the upcoming Passover meal.

7 **4:1–33**, Let's now discuss atonement for unintentional sin. Listed in this chapter are the steps the priests (verses 3–12), the people (verses 13–21) and the leaders (verses 22–26), or the people of the land (verses 27–35). These four categories cover all people on earth: the priests, the Israelites, the leaders of Israel, and everyone else (all the Gentiles). The steps to make atonement for unintentional sin prophetically point to Yeshua's death as a sin offering for man. Certainly, Yeshua's vicarious death for man is sufficient to cover *all humans*. This passage lays out six steps that are necessary to atone a man for his sins. Each of these steps point directly to Yeshua's work on the cross. They include offering a young bull on the altar (i.e., Yeshua's death on the cross), the sinner laying their hands on the bull (i.e., confession of one's sins and transferring those sins to Yeshua), sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice before the veil of the holy of holies (i.e., a picture of Yeshua's blood being presented before the throne of Elohim on man's behalf), sprinkling blood on the altar of incense (i.e., Yeshua interceding on the sinner's behalf before the throne of Elohim, and the sinner himself worshipping YHVH and offering up prayers of repentance), the blood is then sprinkled on the ground at the base of the altar of sacrifice (i.e., the earth is cleansed from defilement because of man's sin.)

Have you tagged all six of these bases in your spiritual walk with Yeshua? Are you sharing with others, whenever given the opportunity, the good news of how man can receive atonement for his sins and come into a loving and personal relationship with his Father in heaven through Yeshua the Son? To not share the gospel message with others is in itself a sin. It is a violation of Yeshua's command to go into all the world and to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations! (Read Matt 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–18.)

8 **4:2**, *Sins unintentionally*. This chapter deals with the sin offering for unintentional or inadvertent sins that come through carelessness. There is no animal offering to atone for an intentional sin (*The ArtScroll Tanach*

Series Vayikra Commentary, p. 72). Elsewhere, the Torah spells the fate for those who sin presumptuously or intentionally. It is to be cut off from Israel, or death (Num 15:30). Why did YHVH pronounce such a severe penalty upon the willfully disobedient sinner? (See Num 15:31.) After this exhortation in Numbers, the Torah then gives an example of one who sinned willfully, and what became of him. (Read Num 15:32–36.) What does the Testimony of Yeshua say about those who sin intentionally? (Look at Heb 10:26 cp. 6:4–6.)

A Brief Study of the Sacrificial System

Words and Definitions

(These words are the Hebrew words behind the English words *offering* and *sacrifice* as translated in the KJV):

- ☞ **Asbam/אָשָׁם**: (*Strong's* H817/*TWOT* 180b) meaning “guilt, offense, sin, guiltiness, trespass, fault, compensation (for offense), trespass or sin offering.”
- ☞ **Chag/חַג**: (*Strong's* H2282/*TWOT* 602a) meaning “festival, feast, pilgrim-feast, festival-gathering, festival sacrifice.”
- ☞ **Chattab/חַטָּאת**: (*Strong's* H2403/*TWOT* 638e) meaning “sin, sinful, sin offering, condition of sin, guilt of sin, punishment for sin, purification from sins of ceremonial uncleanness, sinner.”
- ☞ **Isbshab/אִשְׁשֵׁה**: (*Strong's* H801/*TWOT* 172a) meaning “burnt offering, offering made by fire, fire offering.”
- ☞ **Korban/קָרְבַּן**: (*Strong's* H7133/*TWOT* 2065e) meaning “offering, oblation, sacrifice.”
- ☞ **Minchab/מִנְחָה**: (*Strong's* H4503/*TWOT* 1214a) meaning “to apportion, to bestow, gift, tribute, offering, present, oblation, sacrifice, meat or grain offering (Gen 4:3–5).”
- ☞ **Necek/נִסֵּךְ**: (*Strong's* H5262/*TWOT* 1375a) meaning “drink offering, libation, molten image, something poured out (Gen 35:14).”
- ☞ **Nedabah/נְדָבָה**: (*Strong's* H5071/*TWOT* 1299a) meaning “voluntary, free-will offering.”
- ☞ **Olab/עֲלֶה**: (*Strong's* H5930/*TWOT* 1624c,d) meaning “whole burnt offering/sacrifice, ascent, stairway, steps, to go up (Gen 8:20; 22:2,3,6,7,8,13).”
- ☞ **Qatar/קָטַר**: (*Strong's* H6999/*TWOT* 2011e,g) meaning “to sacrifice, burn incense, burn sacrifices, make sacrifices smoke, incense, incense altar.”
- ☞ **Shelem/שְׁלֵם**: (*Strong's* H8002/*TWOT* 2401b) meaning “peace offering, requital, sacrifice of alliance or friendship, voluntary sacrifice of thanks.”
- ☞ **Tenuwphab/תְּנוּפָה**: (*Strong's* H8573/*TWOT* 1330b) meaning “swinging, waving, wave offering, shaking.”
- ☞ **Terumab/תְּרוּמָה**: (*Strong's* H8641/*TWOT* 2131i) meaning “a heave offering, any offering; an offering of grain or money, etc.; contribution, oblation.”
- ☞ **Zebach/זָבַח**: (*Strong's* H2077/*TWOT* 525a) meaning “sacrifices of righteousness, sacrifices of strife, sacrifices of dead things, the covenant sacrifice, the Passover, annual sacrifice, thank offering.”
- ☞ **Zabach/זָבַח**: (*Strong's* H2076/*TWOT* 525) meaning “to slaughter, kill sacrifice, slaughter for sacrifice” (Gen. 31:54; 46:1).

YHVH instituted the biblical sacrificial system at the fall of man, and it pointed to the coming of Yeshua the Messiah, the Redeemer and Savior of mankind. Depending on how one understands the passages recording the vision of Ezekiel’s Temple (Ezek 40–48), there may or may not be a reinstatement of part of or the whole sacrificial system during the millennium. Some believe that Ezekiel’s Temple is only an allegorical picture of Yeshua on the cross and speaks to YHVH’s plan of salvation and therefore will never be built. Others feel that it is yet to be built. This author favors the former thesis.

After the fall of man, YHVH made Adam and Eve coats or garments of skins or leather (Gen 3:21). Though the Scriptures don’t tell us, we can guess these were made of leather from a kosher animal such as a cow, sheep or

goat. In other words, YHVH probably sacrificed an animal to cover their physical and spiritual nakedness. This would have marked the beginning of the sacrificial system and thus pointed to Yeshua's atoning death on the cross through his shed blood—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The next occurrence of a sacrifice was that of righteous Abel in Genesis chapter four. After that, animal sacrifices become a common occurrence with the male head of each family acting as the officiant or priest for his family. It was not until the golden calf incident (Exod 32) that the responsibility of the male head of the family to perform sacrifices passed to the Levites, thus, initiating the Levitical priesthood with its sacrificial system.

The Daily (Morning or *Shacharit* and Evening or *Minchah*) Sacrifices (Lev 6:1–6; Num 28:1–8)

☞ ***Olah*** is translated as “burnt offering” and sometimes as “whole burnt offering.” The word *olah* (*Strong's* H5930) means “a step or (collectively, stairs, as ascending); usually a holocaust (as in going up in smoke) and is translated in the KJV as “ascent, burnt offering (sacrifice), go up to.” The word *olah* is derived from the verb *alah*, “to go up.” It may mean “that which goes up to the altar” (Knobel, Wellhausen, Nowack, etc.), or “that which goes up in smoke to the sky” (Bahr, Delitzsch, Dillmann, etc.) The term applies to a beast or fowl when entirely consumed upon the altar, the hide of the beast being taken by the priest. This was perhaps the most solemn of the sacrifices, and symbolized worship in the full sense, i.e. adoration, devotion, dedication, supplication, and at times expiation” (from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Electronic Database, 1996 by BibleSoft). Every day, in the *olah* offering, a male lamb was sacrificed, morning and evening (Exod 29:38–42).

☞ ***Tamid*** (*Strong's* H8548) is from an unused root meaning “to stretch; properly, continuance (as indefinite extension); but used only (attributively as adjective) constant (or adverbially, constantly); the regular (daily) sacrifice,” and is translated in the KJV as *alway(s)*, *continual(ly)*, *daily*, *ever(more)*, *perpetual*. The word *tamid* was used to emphasize personal devotion (1 Chr 16:11; Pss 34:1; 40:1; 71:6,14; 72:15; 119:44; Hos 12:6). It describes Elohim (Num 9:16) and his care for his people (Isa 58:11). If one visits a synagogue today, one would notice the *ner tamid* or eternal/continual light burning near the ark containing the Torah scroll in the front of the sanctuary (*KJV Hebrew Greek Key Study Bible*, p. 1675).

As the morning and evening sacrifices were offered at the beginning and end of each day, this is an example to us of what pleases YHVH regarding our twice-daily devotions to him in the morning and evening. The morning is a time to start the day out by worshiping him, and by seeking his guidance and wisdom through prayer and the study of his Word. The evening, on the other hand, is a time to thank him for the day he just helped you get through. Before retiring for the evening ask YHVH, the Guardian of Israel, to watch over you and your loved ones, and to place your life in his safe keeping as you sleep (Ps 4:8). Daniel prayed to YHVH three times a day (Dan 6:10,13). David praised YHVH seven times a day (Ps 119:164).

Six Types of Offerings (*Karban*) Offered on the Altar (Lev 1–7)

(Some of this information is derived from *Matthew Henry's Commentary; The Law of the Offerings* by Andrew Jukes; *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*; and from *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*).

☞ **Burnt or Elevation (*Olah*) Offering** (Lev 1:3–17)

This offering involved the burning of the entire animal. This was not a partial burning with what remained to be eaten by the priests and/or worshippers. According to Jewish tradition, this offering was for intentional sin for which the Torah does not prescribe a punishment, or for someone who failed to perform a positive commandment. The burning of the animal prophetically pictures the sufferings of Yeshua, the Son of Elohim, for the sins of the world. The burning of the animal was but a faint representation of the punishment that all sinners deserve and that which unrepentant sinners will experience in the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:11–15). Yeshua took that punishment upon himself at the cross.

Here are some examples of how the burnt offering pointed to Yeshua (and how he fulfilled it):

- The animal sacrificed was a clean or kosher male bull, ram, goat, or pigeon or turtledove, that was without blemish. Similarly, Yeshua was the perfect and proper Lamb of Elohim who was, in his sin-free state, without spiritual defect.
- The owner of the animal was to offer it of his own free will. Messiah willingly offered himself for us.

- It was to be offered at the door of the tabernacle—another picture of Yeshua—where the brazen altar was located, for the sinner was unworthy to enter the tabernacle. This shows that without the shedding of blood—without faith in Yeshua’s shed blood to pay for one’s sins—the sinner can have no communion with YHVH.
- The offerer was to lay his hands upon the head of the animal to be sacrificed signifying a transfer of guilt for sin to the innocent animal, so that now the animal represented himself and was making atonement for him. Redeemed believers must identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Yeshua to have salvation and eternal life (Rom 6:3–14; Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 5:17).
- The animal was to be killed before YHVH signifying that the sinner’s flesh must be crucified with its corrupt affections and lusts. The offerer slaughtered the animal while the priest sprinkled the blood on the altar. The offerer would then skin the animal and wash its parts before giving it to the priest to lay on the altar for it to be totally burned up.
- The priests’ sprinkling the blood upon the altar is significant, for the Scriptures teach us that the life of the animal is in the blood, and that it is the blood that makes an atonement for sin (Lev 17:11). It is Yeshua’s blood shed at the cross when spiritually sprinkled on sinners that atones for their sins.
- The animal was to be divided, laid on the altar and burned. This pictures the intense sufferings of Yeshua prior to and while on the “altar” of the cross.
- This offering was a sweet savor to YHVH, even as the offering of Yeshua was well-pleasing to the Father (Isa 53:10).
- The *olah* offering could be offered in times of joy, celebration or spiritual rededication (2 Chron 29:20–24) as a gift to express joy and reverence to YHVH (Gen 8:20; 1 Sam 6:14). The *olah* could also accompany petitions for Elohim’s intervention in time of need (Judg 21:4; Jer 14:12). In all these cases, there is an overriding awareness for the need to give homage and honor to a righteous and set-apart Elohim.

☞ **Meal (Meat, KJV) (*Minchab*) Offering** (Lev 2:1–16; 6:14–23)

The name *minchab* implies a tribute to a superior and proclaimed the offerer’s acknowledgement that his life is in Elohim’s hands. This offering was made of finely ground flour mixed with oil, salt and frankincense (and water). It was brought by people too poor to afford anything else.

These offerings contained no leaven, which is a picture of the sin of pride, malice and hypocrisy, nor did they contain honey, which is a picture of sensual pleasure. These character defects were not to be found in Yeshua, who, by contrast, was the epitome of humility, love and sincerity, and was free of all those evil works that leaven pictures. This offering was made of fine flour. The priests would grind grain into flour and then sift it consecutively through smaller and smaller sieves until only the purest and finest flour remained. This represents the purity of the character of Yeshua who, while in the flesh, was tested and tried in all points, but without ever sinning (Heb 4:15).

Pure olive oil was mixed in with the fine flour along with frankincense, which denotes the fruits of the spirit mixed with wisdom and humility. Frankincense speaks of the prayer and intercession of Yeshua as the Mediator between his people and the Father. All the sacrifices were seasoned with salt, without which the unleavened bread would be unsavory. Without Yeshua, man’s life is unsavory, and without the saints full of Yeshua living on earth it would become an unsavory place (Matt 5:13).

This offering could be baked or fried. If fried it was done so in oil and broken into three pieces with oil poured over it. This offering speaks of Yeshua’s death, burial and resurrection with which the believer must identify when he eats the elements of communion.

This is the offering that Cain brought to YHVH (Gen 4:4–5). The Scriptures say that Abel offered to YHVH the choicest portions of the animal reflecting his heartfelt commitment to obey YHVH, while Cain merely offered the fruit of the ground. YHVH rejected Cain’s offering as a mere religious formality lacking heartfelt commitment and true submission.

☞ **Peace or Fellowship (*Shelamim*) Offering** (Lev 3:1–7; 7:1–36)

This was a voluntary offering expressing the offerer’s desire to express thanks to Elohim and to seek friendship or communion with him. The priests and the offerer consumed the flesh of this offering in a meal that also

included unleavened bread with oil and fine flour. This offering was a sign of a healthy and loving relationship between the offerer, the priests and Elohim. There can be no peace between a man and his Creator until a man's sin is first atoned for. This only can occur through the work of Yeshua, the Prince of Peace (*Sar Shalom*). Therefore, for the peace offering to occur, one had to be in a spiritual state of peace, good health or balance before Elohim with regard to sin. This teaches us that only when we are in a sin-free state can we have true fellowship with our Heavenly Father, and this occurs through the sacrificial work of Yeshua the Messiah and a man's identification with or appropriation of that work to himself (of which immersion or baptism for the remission of sins is a picture [See Rom 6:3–6.]). In this regard, read Ephesians 2:14; Philippians 3:10; 2:5–8; 4:2; 2:14. What is one of Yeshua's Messianic titles that speaks of his peacemaking mission? (See Isa 9:6.)

This offering is like that of the *olah* except that only the fat around the intestines, kidneys, liver, and the fat of the sheep's tail were burned on the altar. The rest of the animal was shared by the priest and offerer. The priest received as their part the breast and right leg. The rest was shared by the worshipper, his family and guests. Whatever remained after three days was to be burned. This seems to prefigure the idea that from the time of Yeshua's appearance on earth as the perfect atoning sacrifice for the men's sins, men would have three days or three thousand years to become redeemed or saved from their sins. After that, the opportunity for salvation is closed. This would carry us forth three thousand years from Yeshua's death and through the Millennial period just prior to the white throne of judgment and the second death in the lake of fire.

☛ **Sin (*Chatat*) Offering** (Lev 4:1–35; 6:24–30)

This offering involved a bull or a lamb offered on the altar and was eaten by the priests. It speaks of man's sinful nature leading to sinful (unintentional) deeds, or sins committed in ignorance for which man (including believers) needs atoning on an ongoing basis (see 1 John 1:9). In the majority of cases, the *chatat* denoted a sin against man or against Elohim. Sin is disobedience to the will of Elohim and exploitation or disregard of the rights of other people. Sin was a serious matter and could only be atoned for by the creative act of YHVH's mercy and forgiveness coupled with the sinner making restitution for the evil done.

Sin offerings were made for the priest, the rulers, and for the whole congregation. No person is infallible and above sinning no matter the office. John said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Whoever says he is without sin is doubtless guilty of the most heinous sin of all—the sin of pride, which tops the list of the "seven deadly sins" in Proverbs 6:16–19. YHVH calls pride an abomination! Beware of such people. As Matthew Henry states, such is of the spirit of Antichrist.

The ashes of the beast burned up in the sin offering were carried outside the camp to illustrate the detestable nature of sin and the fact that it needs to be removed far from us. Yeshua himself being the ultimate sin offering (Isa 53:5–12) and was offered as such *outside* the city walls of Jerusalem (Heb 13:11–13).

If leaders sinned causing the people to err, then an offering had to be brought for them so as not to bring judgment against the whole congregation.

The sinner was required to lay his hands upon the head of the beast to be sacrificed as if to transfer his guilt to the innocent animal, and leaders were to do this on behalf of the entire congregation. (Lev 4:15; 8:14,22; 16:21).

Sin cost the sinner something. Under the sacrificial system YHVH granted forgiveness to the repentant sinner, but there was still a price to pay. Restitution had to be made. The cost might be an animal from one's flock, a monetary penalty, stoning, lashes or being put out of the camp of Israel. Sin always has a price to pay. When restitution is made, atonement is granted, and the sin is forgiven.

Matthew Henry says, "From all these laws concerning the sin-offerings, we may learn to hate sin, and to watch against it; and to value [Messiah], the great and true sin-offering, whose blood cleanses from all sin, which it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away. For us to err, with the Bible in our hands, is the effect of pride, sloth, and carelessness. We need to use frequent self-examination, with serious study of the Scriptures, and earnest prayer for the convincing influences of [the Spirit of Elohim]; that we may detect our sins of ignorance, repent, and obtain forgiveness through the blood of [Messiah]."

☛ **Trespass or Guilt (*Asham*) Offering** (Lev 5:14–19; 6:5–7; 7:1–7)

This offering was for specific known sins or for "missing the mark" involving inadvertent sin caused by carelessness in areas that were not of utmost gravity.

The offering was for sins or wrongs committed against Elohim and one's fellow man and amends for harm done. An act of evil was committed by which someone was injured. This sin involved not a state of being (what a person was), but an act of evil (what one had done). The emphasis is not on the sinner, but on the act of wrong committed.

Restitution for a trespass sin involved paying money to the injured party, plus a penalty of one-fifth. This is different than the sin offering where no monetary damages were paid. This teaches us that when we sin against our neighbor, we also sin against our Creator, for the sinner was required to make amends with YHVH (by offering a sacrifice) and with his neighbor (by paying restitution).

The sinner also brought an offering of a ram without blemish, which the priests roasted and then ate in the set-apart place of the tabernacle.

☞ **Drink (Necek) Offering** (Gen 35:14; Exod 29:40–41; Num 28:7–10, 14–15, 24, 31)

This offering was made of strong wine poured out upon an existing offering and prefigured the blood of Yeshua being poured out for us. The drink offering is the antetype of the wine of communion, of which the redeemed partake today to represent the blood of Yeshua. This offering can also signify consecrating one's life to Elohim or pouring one's life out for his service, even unto martyrdom, if necessary (Phil 2:17).

The drink offering was usually presented along with burnt and meal (cereal) offerings. Daily at the morning and evening burnt offerings, a drink offering was poured out to YHVH (Num 28:7–9). This occurred on the Sabbath, the new moons, Feast of Unleavened Bread (*Hag HaMatzot*), Day of the First Fruits (*Yom HaBikkurim*), Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot*), the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*), the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) and the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*). The drink offering was also a part of the ceremony that terminated the vow of the Nazarite.

Paul refers to himself being poured out like a drink offering to the service of YHVH while he was imprisoned (Phil 2:17 and 2Tim 4:6).

How Yeshua's Atoning Death Covered Our Sins and Fulfilled the Need for Offerings and Sacrifices

- **Isaiah 53:5**, He was wounded for our **transgressions** [*pesha*, H6588].
- **Isaiah 53:5**, He was bruised for our **iniquities** [*avown*, H5771].
- **Isaiah 53:6**, He has laid on him the **iniquity** [*avown*, H5771] of us all.
- **Isaiah 53:8**, He was cut off from the land of the living, for the **transgression** [*pesha*, H6588] of my people was he stricken.
- **Isaiah 53:10**, You shall make his soul an offering for **sin** [*asham*, H817].
- **Isaiah 53:11**, For he shall bear their **iniquities** [*avown*, H5771].
- **Isaiah 53:12**, He was numbered with the **transgressors** [*pasha*, H6586].
- **Isaiah 53:12**, He bore the **sin** [*khate*, 2399],
- **Isaiah 53:12**, And made intercession for the **transgressors** [*pasha*, H6586].

Defining the Types of Sin Spoken of in Isaiah 53

☞ **Asham/אָשָׁם** (*Strong's* H817/*TWOT* 180b) means “guilt, offense, guiltiness, sin, trespass, fault, trespass or sin offering.”

“[T]he root *asham* includes acts of sin, responsibility for them, punishment and its aftermath or, as an alternative, atonement. The word denotes any breach of God's covenant with Israel and any divine act of dealing with it, whether punishment or atonement” (*TWOT*, p. 79).

☞ **Avown/אָוֹנָה** (*Strong's* H5771/*TWOT* 1577a) means “perversity, depravity, iniquity, guilt or punishment for iniquity; the root of this word means to bend, twist, distort, to deviate from the way; perversity.”

“The remarkable ambivalence between the meanings of *sin as an act* and *penalty* shows that in the thought of the OT sin and its penalty are not radically separate notions as we tend to think of them. Rather in the OT the action of man and what happens to him are presupposed to be directly related as one process within the basic divine order.... The root *chata* displays same ... basic concept; e.g. Num 32:23: ‘but if you fail to do

this, you will have sinned (*chata tem*) against [YHVH], and you may be sure that your sin (*chatta t'kem*) will find you out.' The second occurrence, the nominal form of the root, denotes *the penalty* for the act (cf. Num. 12:11). Thus sin had the inevitable effect of destroying the individual and/or community and must be rooted out" (TWOT, p. 651).

Avown is not a character trait of Elohim nor of his dealings with man (Exod 20:5; 6; 34:7), but is an overwhelming trait of man's character and actions, including consequences of those actions. (Ibid.)

☞ **Chet/חַטָּה** (*Strong's* H2399/*TWOT* 638a) means "sin, guilt for sin, punishment for sin; lit. to miss, to miss the mark or way, incur guilt, forfeit, purify from uncleanness."

"Thus like other words related to the notion of *sin* it assumes an absolute standard or law. But, whereas *pesha* signifies "a revolt against the standard," and *awa* means either "to deviate from the standard or to twist the standard," while *chata* means "to miss, to fall short of the standard (Ibid.)."

☞ **Pasha/פָּשָׁע** (*Strong's* H6586/*TWOT* 1846) means "to rebel, transgress, revolt" (*pesha* [*Strong's* H6588] is a cognate meaning the same thing).

"The fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationship, civil or religious, between two parties. In a context of international relationships, the verbal form designates a casting off of allegiance, a rebellion against rulers.... By analogy, but in a religious sense, Israel was accused of rebelling against her divine king and the established covenant between them (Isa 1:28; 48:8; Ezek 2:3; Hos 8:1). Obviously, God is never guilty of committing this act since there is no higher authority than himself; hence, this is a trait of human activity (Hos 14:9), and is sometimes set in contrast to the actions of faithful (Prov 28:21) and righteous (Ps 37:28) men" (Ibid. p. 741).

HAFTORAH READING—ISAIAH 43:21–44:23

YHVH to Redeem His People From False Religious Systems and Idolatry

1 **43:21ff**, Religious service is the flower or result of a life of devotion and service to YHVH and our fellow man. It is not the religious service itself that matters to YHVH, but the condition of one's heart and the life of righteousness that precedes resulting in the religious service that counts. Israel had lost sight of this, and their religious service had become empty, ritualistic and meaningless to YHVH. Additionally, the offering presented to YHVH had to cost the offerer dearly. Though Yeshua fulfilled the sacrificial system by his death at Calvary by becoming the ultimate sacrifice (and it cost him dearly), if we are in Yeshua we must follow in his footsteps. How is this? (Read Ps 51:15–16; 34:18; Isa 66:1–3; Rom 6:3–13; Gal 2:20 and Heb 13:15–16.) Remember, it is not *what* we do, or *how* we do it that matters to YHVH as much as *why* we do it. Why do you do what you do in your spiritual exercises? If it is for any other reason than to draw near to our Father in heaven, to love him, and to become like him, then your motives may be questionable.

2 **43:23–24**, The purpose of the offerings was to bring the offerer nearer to Elohim. Israel had lost that perspective and therefore YHVH states, "Not for me have you brought the lamb of your elevation offering ..." What were the wrong motives on Israel's part with which YHVH took exception? What are your motives for obeying YHVH? In the church world, the need for "fire insurance" against the fires of "hell" is a major though sadly misguided motive for many. For some who are returning to the Hebrew roots of their faith, obedience may be simply a knee-jerk reaction *against* some of the false teachings of the church, or it may be about proving to others that they are better or more righteous than others. Or maybe we're doing it so seek the approval of others? Perhaps it is to earn points with YHVH, making our obedience a works-based legalism. What is at the root of your motives?

3 **44:3–4**, *Pour water on him that is thirsty*. In the Scriptures, water symbolizes both the Torah-Word and Spirit of Elohim. Is your innermost soul like parched ground that is begging for water? (Read Pss 63:1–11 and 84:2.) Is this your heart-cry and desire? When our offerings are presented to YHVH out of right heart motives, then heaven and earth align to bless the offerer. The physical land will be blessed with rain in due season, even as YHVH will bless the spiritual land of our lives with spiritual rain from the highest heaven.

When YHVH blesses his people, they sprout between the blades of grass and become like willow trees by a river. Grass grows thickly and what can possibly squeeze between blades of grass, much less grow? But YHVH can pour out his Spirit on your life and you will literally shoot up to tower over the grass like a willow tree. Willows require much water and will grow quickly into large trees. Some species of the willow such as poplars and cottonwoods can easily grow to be 130 feet tall with trunks that are six feet in diameter if they are planted on a riverbank. But these mighty trees started out as an indistinguishable sprout amongst the blades of grass in the brush and weeds along the river. Cry out to YHVH for his divine river of life to flow into your life so that you can rise heavenward above your circumstances and setbacks. (Read Luke 11:9–13.) Isaiah is addressing the plight of the descendants of Jacob while in their spiritual captivity in the *galut* (in exile). We are collectively in the *galut*. But if each person individually begins to break out of his or her personal *galut* through the power of the resurrected Redeemer of Israel—Yeshua, through whom we are more than conquerors (Rom 8:37), then the entire body-politic of the nation of Israel will move forward spiritually out of exile and toward the Promised Land. Soon there will be a mighty forest of willow trees. (Read Ps 1:3.)

- 4** **44:6–8**, *I am the first and the last ... Is there any Elohim beside me? Who is the First and the Last?* (Read Rev 1:11,17; 2:8; 22:13.) In the first part of verse six, we find the interesting phrase: “Thus says YHVH the King of Israel and his redeemer YHVH of Hosts; I am the first and the last ...” To whom is this a clear reference? Who is redeeming Israel collectively and as well as one life at a time? With redemption comes deliverance, victory and eternal life. There is no possibility of defeat in the end when the one and only Elohim of the universe is on your side!
- 5** **44:9–20**, These verses discuss the absurd futility of idol worship. How would we define modern-day idolatry? Quite simply, it is anything in your life that takes precedence over your relationship with YHVH-Yeshua. What do you spend most of your time, thought life, energy and resources pursuing—Elohim or mammon? Be honest and do not lie to yourself. Your heart will convict you. Down deep you know the real answer to this question. Many people put YHVH into a box and let him out of that box once a week when they are with other believers, and then put him back into that box when they are back alone. This is gross idolatry and hypocrisy. Idolatry is the religion of those in spiritual exile. They are those who worship the created instead of the Creator (read Romans 1). YHVH’s people have gotten mixed up in these false religious concepts and must come away from them (Rev 18:4).
- 6** **44:21–23**, Read and meditate on these verses. This is our destiny. This will happen and is happening, for YHVH has declared it. Who eternally remains at the center of Israel’s redemption and glorious future? (Read Acts 17:28.) Do you love him with all your heart? If not, ask YHVH to enlarge (or widen, make room) your heart, as David prayed (see Ps 119:32).

