

#39 Chukat Numbers 19:1-22:1

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * What do we think authenticates truth?
- * People lead us in ways that don't result in a good life; a life which has no basis.
- * God reaches down and wants to give us truth and goodness; instead we get the added entanglement of mankind's ways.
- * God can reach us and speak to us through the darkness that we think sustains us.

Chukat means, "ordinance of" or "decree." This portion begins with God telling Moshe (Moses) the details about the sacrifice of the red cow. It is to be without blemish and never to have had a yoke on it. Not having a yoke on it probably means it wasn't to be used inappropriately. It is to be sacrificed outside the camp. The ashes are to be kept for the water of purification. When anyone touches a corpse, they are to be sprinkled with the ashes mixed with water. Anyone who comes in contact with a corpse is unclean for 7 days. Miriam dies in this portion in the desert in Kadesh.

There are many symbolic things in the Old Testament portion that the people back then could understand as being symbolic. There are also things done in the Old Testament portion that symbolically refer to our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ). The offerings were to be without blemish so also the people understood they were to stay away from the blemish of sin. Yeshua sacrificed himself for our sins as an offering without blemish. 1 Peter 1:18-19 CJB says, "You should be aware that the ransom paid to free you from the worthless way of life which your fathers passed on to you did not consist of anything perishable like silver or gold; on the contrary, it was the costly bloody sacrificial death of the Messiah, as of a lamb without defect or spot." "Lamb" is a reference to Yeshua in Isaiah 53:7 NKJV; "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter."

Just as the offerings at the Mishkan (the Tabernacle in the desert), we are to be pure. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said in Romans 12:1 NKJV, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." Shaul was Jewish so his writings have their basis in the Old Testament portion.

Also, we see another symbolic shadow picture of Yeshua in the red cow. Just as the red cow was to be killed outside of the camp, Yeshua gave His life outside the gate to make us holy. "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered **outside the gate**;" Hebrews 13:12 NKJV.

We should talk a little about the example and substitution that God instituted in the Bible. As we can see, there are some definite spiritual pictures that God made. God gave us spiritual pictures so we do what is right; there are some spiritual pictures that are about the Messiah Yeshua. Some people go to extremes though and look for things that God never intended and they come up with symbolic applications of the Bible that cater to our "itching ears." These extensive applications divert us from working on living out God's commandments and instead focus on satisfying our curiosity. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV says, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

We are to teach the scriptures (there was no New Testament at the time) and learn how to apply them. There are consequences for getting off track. Some have told me they don't have to know what the Bible says because they can just look at the Hebrews letters and their ancient meaning. They are off track; don't waste your time on their wrong teaching. Instead learn to keep God's commandments and be a productive person. Help others; be a blessing; actually do something. Some read only the New Testament and then take it out of its Jewish biblical context. God gave us commandments in the Old Testament; why wouldn't

they still be good for mankind? They are from God; Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." Some of you are going to have a nasty awakening when you stand before God.

Yeshua also said that going to extremes by reading in between the lines was wrong. "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me;" John 5:39 NKJV. They were reading between the lines instead of understanding the scriptures properly. God expects us to live out His instructions and not just look between the lines for things that God never intended. Some of these things can be instructive and fun and were intended by God, but be careful you don't take reading between the lines too far.

The Israelites then complained that they had no water and God tells Moshe to speak to the Rock and tell it to bring forth water. Instead, Moshe speaks to the people and then strikes the rock twice. Water pours out of the rock even though Moshe disobeyed God, and the people drink and water their livestock. God told Moshe and Aharon they would not be allowed to enter the land because they did not trust Him and hit the rock instead of speaking to it.

God can do things for us even if we don't have the right motive. He is a merciful and good God. Parents do not withhold their love from their children. In the same way, God will do things for us even though we are not perfect or have the right intentions. It is always best though to seek the right motive in all we do.

Hitting the rock the first time was symbolic of Yeshua dying for us. The rock provided water and rescued their lives. Shaul (Paul) refers to this symbolism in 1 Corinthians 10:4 CJB, "For they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah." The second time, Moshe was to speak to the rock because when Yeshua comes again he will not suffer, but be among us (Revelation 21:3). Yeshua the Messiah rescues¹ us because He died for the forgiveness of our sins and through Him, we can receive the Holy Spirit; those who trust in God and work at keeping His commandments, will receive eternal life. Faith requires action the Bible says (James 2:17). As we can see by this Torah portion, God expects us to actually do what He tells us. Some say we don't have to; that is false teaching. God expected Moshe to do exactly what He said.

Moshe then asks Edom if they may pass though, but Edom refuses. So, they traveled to Mt. Hor where they made El'azar high priest because Aharon was about to die. Aharon died there at Mt. Hor and they mourned him for 30 days. Some of the Kena'ani in the Negev attacked Israel and God allowed Israel to attack them and destroy their cities.

Israel went around Edom. Then some of the people complained, so God sent venomous snakes. God had Moshe make a bronze snake and put it on a pole and anyone who was bitten looked on it and was healed. About 900 years later, the Bible tells us in 2 Kings 18:4 that Hezekiah had the bronze snake destroyed because people were worshipping it. Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV says, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image —**any likeness of anything** that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations." Even in our era, so called believers pray to statues, crosses, pictures, and so-called saints (dead people) instead of God and this abomination is passed down from generation to generation. Shaul (Paul) said no idolaters will be allowed in the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21).

¹ The Hebrew word malat used for saved (sozo) in the New Testament always means to escape. "h4422. מָלַט mālat; a primitive root; ... to release or rescue." – Strong's Enhanced Dictionary. See Joel 2:32; although translated saved in Joel, מָלַט always means escape.

The snake being lifted up for the healing of the people is also symbolic (a picture) of what Yeshua did for us. Yeshua explains to Nicodemus that he must die for us. Yeshua says of Himself, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life;" John 3:14-15 NKJV (also see John 12:32).

Israel then went through the desert with Moav on the east. Israel came to the land of the Emori (Amorites) and Israel asked them if they could pass through, but Sichon, King of the Emori would not let them pass. Instead, the Emori attacked them. Israel defeated them and took control of the land. Sichon was a Nephilim and the brother of Og also a Nephilim (Deuteronomy 3:11). Because of this, Og the king of Bashan came to fight Israel. God said He would be with Israel and they defeated Og and took control of his land. After that Israel camped opposite the Yarden (Jordan) River near Jericho.

The Haftarah portion is Judges 11:1-33. In this Haftarah portion, Amon had attacked Israel so the leaders of Gil'ad went to get Yiftach (Jephthah) and asked him to lead them and told him if he did that, he could be their leader. He had been banished because he was the son of a prostitute. They made him their leader and Yiftach told Amon that God had given them the land and that they should go home. The people of Amon didn't listen to Yiftach and he ended up defeating them.

Yiftach said if he won, he would sacrifice the first one to come out of his house when he came back. His daughter came out first. Some say he didn't sacrifice her, but the Bible doesn't talk about the matter any further. We know that killing others is forbidden in the Torah and is murder. He should have known better; after God helped him, he possibly failed miserably. Sometimes God heals people and they go back to their old sinful ways afterwards; and similarly, they fail miserably.

Yeshua's death was different. God allowed Yeshua to be crucified by the Romans (all the Jewish leadership were appointed by Rome and they didn't want to lose their Roman appointments; both Herod and the Chief Priest were appointed by Rome)² and since He was not due punishment for anything He did, God rose Him from the dead. Kefa (Peter) said in Acts 2:24-25 CJB, "But God has raised him up and freed him from the suffering of death; it was impossible that death could keep its hold on him. For David says this about him;" In Psalm 16:10b NKJV David said prophetically, "Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." This proves the Messiah was to give Himself for us (also see Isaiah 53).

Deceitful people explain Yeshua's death as human sacrifice; Yeshua rose from the dead, is still alive, and the Bible says He will judge those who do not believe in Him. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad;" 2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV. If you haven't accepted Him as the Messiah, don't wait. The word translated "seat" from the Greek is the word "bema." The Bema is where the Torah is read in Jewish synagogues. Notice it says we will be judged for the good and the bad. Have we done good and kept the Torah?

What do we think authenticates truth? Some 600 years before Yeshua came, Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the

² Even those who were accusing Yeshua were paid to do that by the Roman leadership in Jerusalem. The Romans turned the tables on what the scriptures say and accused the Jews. It was the Romans that killed Yeshua and not the Jews. Their religion is steeped in idolatry; Shaul said no idol worshipper will enter the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21) and perhaps it is still paying for its killing of the Messiah Yeshua and the killing of the true believers at that time to create their false religion and its lie.

iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth;" Isaiah 53:6-7 NKJV. I was watching someone interviewing people in Israel and they were asking the people there who this is referring to. Almost everyone was shocked and said that is sounded like Yeshua (Jesus). The rabbis turn this around and lie to protect their false religion. The Christians are no better. They don't want to understand the Bible in its Jewish context and create their own false religion too.

Last week we talked about Shaul's (Paul) teaching on the "ayin tova" (Hebrew for "good eye"). This is a typical Jewish teaching.

Philippians 4:8-9 NKJV:

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

The God of peace will not be with those who have negative attitudes. I watched the news a little last night and they talked about all the murders occurring in the United States. They have forsaken God and made themselves into God. It says in the Bible that murderers will be cast into the lake of fire at the time of judgement. "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone;" Revelation 21:8 NKJV.

How we view things is important. If we want truth, we must be willing to accept what the Bible teaches and understand it properly in its Jewish context. I've heard people say the Bible doesn't have anything to do with being Jewish. How ridiculous. Yeshua (Jesus) was the Jewish Messiah to the whole world. All the writers of the Bible were Jewish. Luke's Jewish name at the top of his Hebrew gospel of Luke was Lukah. The Hebrew gospels were first put together around 150 AD.

People lead us in ways that don't result in a good life; they lead us to a life which has no basis. Is there a basis for violence and murder instead of cool heads that try to work out solutions? Do we want anarchy and destruction that results in subservience? What do people think anarchy turns into? That's what they saw in the USSR back in the early 1900s and it resulted in oppression and murder, and the communist system of control and dictatorship; they went from one system of control to another. Their communist system was no better than the monarchy they had. It is said that the Russian communist dictator Stalin executed some 20 million people. That was the result of their anarchy and unrest.

What is wrong with doing things God's way instead of mankind's way? Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV says, "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water." God's Torah (Torah means instruction) gives us an endless supply of good refreshing water and a good life. Man though creates their own ideas (cisterns) that can only give us a limited supply of water, but they are broken ideas (broken cisterns) that leave us nothing in the end.

God's ways give us life. "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, ... that you may prolong your days in the land." Deuteronomy 11:8-9 NKJV. God wants us to accept His truths. It says in Proverbs 3:5-8:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD

and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones;" Proverbs 3:5-8 NKJV.

Why not trust in God completely? Mankind is not getting the job done. Don't rely on your own way, but acknowledge God's ways as your way to live. We are not as wise as God; so, respect Him and don't lean toward evil. God's ways bring health and wellness. Ask anyone who is terribly sick and they will tell you they'd do anything to be well again. Why not trust in God? His ways will prolong your days. They will give you health and strength.

God reaches down and wants to give us truth and goodness; instead, because we want to do things our way, we get the added entanglement of mankind's ways.

Proverbs 1:29-32:

"Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them."

This was written a long time ago; perhaps some 3,000 years ago. It's still true today. People go after things the wrong way and what they do turns on them. We see it over and over in history. If we simply did things the right way, how much better we'd all be.

At times, the people of Israel resisted God, but God continued to be with them and help them. God can reach us and speak to us through the darkness that we think sustains us. We live in a dark world where mankind does things their own way and allows the influence of the demonic. Yeshua sent Shaul (Paul), "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;" Acts 26:18 NKJV. People need God, and need to be rescued.

God has spoken to us through His word to rescue us; He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit which the Messiah Yeshua gives us. If only we will hear His voice and listen and obey Him. Ya'akov said in James 1:19-22 NKJV, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

Our God is there and He wants us to be in fellowship with Him; we need to decide to listen to Him and not any crazy ideas. Listen to God's words which are able to help us and keep us. People think they can be savvy and know what's best and what they should do. There are lots of ways to live, but only the true God knows what's truly best for us. Don't just hear God's words and not do them or you will be living in deception. It is God that sustains the world and not us.

Some of the Old Testament portion scriptures are pictures of spiritual things. The sacrifices of the Israelites were to be pure which is a picture for us to be pure. Yeshua the Messiah was pure. Moshe strikes the rock instead of speaking to it. He was not able to enter the promised land because of what he did. We should remember that God expects us to do exactly what He says. If we want truth, we need to be able to accept what the Bible says. People often come up with their own ideas of life instead of the truths from the Bible. God wants what is best for us instead of the failure of mankind's ways. He can reach us even in the darkness of this world.