

Torah Portion - Emor
Leviticus 21:1 – 24:23

The Hebrew word *emor* means “say” or “speak” from the first verse of scripture, “and the LORD said to Moses, speak to the”

In this reading we see that the LORD gives regulations for the conduct of priests. In order to prevent from profaning the Name of YHVH, the priests were given specific instructions regarding service in the temple. They were given a high calling and were obligated beyond the ordinary Israelite. For example, they could not touch a dead body, they could not marry a divorced woman or a widow. A High Priest could not even bury a close relative.

Why were the priests to do these things? Because they were required to be holy and they were never to profane the Holy Name.

The Kohanim were priests before the LORD, they had to come directly from the line of Aaron. The Levites were helpers to the priests in the temple. They were descendants from the tribe of Levi but not from Aaron. So, every priest was a Levite, from the tribe of Levi, but every Levite was not qualified to be a priest. They had to come from Aaron, Levi's son, to be a priest.

Why were the Levites chosen above other Israelites to serve in the Tabernacle/Temple? Because they did not participate in the sin of the golden calf at Sinai. They rallied with Moses and the LORD and slew 3000 of those who had sinned.

In chapter 23 the Moadim, Appointed Times, of the LORD are given. Notice that these are called the Feasts of the LORD and not the feasts of the Jews.

The Feasts are listed as follows:

The Weekly Sabbath

The Passover

Unleavened Bread

Feast of Firstfruits

Shavuot – Pentecost – Feast of Weeks

Feast of Trumpets

Day of Atonement/Covering – Yom Kippur

Feast of Tabernacles/Booths

The Eighty Day – Shemini Atzeret

In addition, instructions were given by the LORD regarding the care of the Menorah, Table of Shewbread. All of these pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle represented Yeshua.

In 24:10-23 we read the story about a man who was stoned for blasphemy/cursing.

What does this story reveal to us? This young man was a half-breed, the son of an Egyptian father and an Israelite Mother. He would have been one of the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with the Israelites (Exodus 12:38). According to Biblical Commentaries like Gill and Guzik, it was common for Egyptians to speak evil against, or curse (defame) the name of their Egyptian gods. Perhaps this young man recalled his life in Egypt and certainly forgot that this was not acceptable to the Hebrew God.

In his rage this man spoke the revered name of the LORD and defamed it, or attacked God with his words. According to the Torah this was to bring death.

When we think of cursing in the Western world we think of speaking a forbidden, dirty, or curse word. However, curses in the Bible go much deeper. This man brought insult to the name of the LORD, something God would not tolerate.

Our conversations are full of slogans and phrases that take the Name of God in slight, make light of it, or insult His name. Many times Christians use such slogans without giving it any thought. We should guard our words much more carefully.

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