

Sermon for Saturday

This week's Torah portions: Exodus 30:11-34:35; 1 Kings 18:1-39; Ezekiel 36:16-38; Mark 9:1-10; 2 Corinthians 3:1-18 (<https://bit.ly/3mInv4Q>).



Shabbat Shalom. This week's Torah portion readings are all interrelated, and they set up a theme that we know will only be fully realized at the second coming of Messiah Yeshua. While our early Exodus readings in chapters 30-31 contain a lot of symbology we can get into another time, and in fact, I might recommend www.thetabernacleman.com, as a good resource for considering the symbology of the tabernacle, Exodus 32-34 shows Israel in outright rebellion against God in the iconic story of the golden calf, and then we read how God forgave the people who were caught up in the lies of the false prophets who deceived them and gave them yet another chance to serve Him on account of Moses's prayers of intercession for them. After this, the Lord declared His most Holy Attributes that stand forever and delivered His commandments in written form to the world a second time, establishing them as permanent Truth. Later in 1 Kings 18:1-39, Elijah faced another rebellious generation of Israel, and God used the prophet to show His signs and wonders again to change the people's hearts and minds. The Lord grew old of this pattern, however, and exiled the people in judgment from the promised land, explaining that in the latter days He would pour His Spirit onto them to help them keep His Word. In Mark 9:1-10, Yeshua unveiled the Kingdom of God, which is in our midst if we live out the Torah and the Prophets by following our Lord's example when He came to dwell with us in the flesh. The Apostles who witnessed God's glory later present this Truth to the World and explain how we can come to experience it. Finally, the writings of Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 reveal that in Messiah Yeshua, God gave us a full revelation of what this whole

creation has been about, and now He leads us by His Spirit toward the life He has promised all along, in the Promised Land of His Kingdom.

Today's message is not much more than a review of our Torah Portion readings that I shared with you in our bulletin on Thursday, and I think God has allowed me to struggle with the preparation of this message to remind all of us that His Spirit dwells in each of us, and we are not here to watch any of the leaders of the Church give a performance each week, regardless of which church it is. Ultimately, we come here on Shabbat to meet with God, and God presents His message through me if and when He chooses, and I am merely His servant. If He reaches you today through these words I share with you, then praise His Holy Name. I believe we should come here each week with an expectation to spend time with God, to offer Him praise and thanksgiving, as well as our prayers and petitions, and to hear from His Word. We also come here to encourage and exhort one another, and to help each other remember to put God first as we face all of the battles that this world sends our way. It is my hope that we all can look to Him alone to bring the Truth that He has for us each week, and that together we help each other walk more closely with our God. All that being said, I will present the readings from this week in an order that rang true for me, and I pray in Yeshua's name that the Holy Spirit helps you see what God wants you to see in this message.

First let's take a look at Israel's rebellion in Exodus 32-34. While Moses was up on Mt. Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights communing with God and receiving His commandments for how we ought to live, including the commandment not to worship an image in place of God, a group of men rose up to discredit both the prophet and the God he explained to them in the eyes of all the people. Paul is among those who warn us this will happen in Acts 20:29-31, when He writes, "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears." This wasn't a new thing, but these are the "thorns and thistles" we must face in our walk with God on account of the curse from the Garden of Eden. The whole nation was being tested during this 40-day period, a time of transition, and on account of "certain men," they failed the test. They could not wait just 40 days for Moses to return as he said he would, and they also could not worship God without the image they created with their own hands. I find this disheartening to some degree, because they had just asked Moses to intercede for them with God, fearing God's awesome glory, and now they were forgetting that God was even there. How soon they forgot God and His intercessor. It is clear that they

lacked the faith that God was there with them, even though He had showed them so many signs and wonders and was still visible even at this time on the top of the mountain in their midst. Let us remember the Lord our God and our intercessor Yeshua always, without wavering.

In Exodus 32:1, we read, “Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, ‘Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’” I want to take us back a few chapters to Exodus 24, because there we see the Lord call Moses up to the mountain with his servant Joshua to receive the commandments so he can teach them in verse 12 and 13, and importantly, he said in verse 14: “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.” They watched him ascend the mountain and they saw the glory of the Lord as if it was “a consuming fire” on the top of the mountain. So how was it so easy for Aaron when the people came to him to fall away and do what they asked of him? Did they think Moses had died? Did they think he was not coming back, even though he said, “wait here for us until we come back to you”? Did Aaron trust in the ways of those certain men instead of the ways of God that he had just learned? What can explain Aaron’s actions other than a complete lack of faith and courage to do what the Lord commanded in the face of pressure? The people said, “we do not know what has become of Moses,” so let us make our own gods to go before us. We read Aaron respond to the people’s request in Exodus 32:2-4, “Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” Not only did Aaron craft this idol, but He also declared the following day a feast day to the Lord and built an altar before it. We read in verse 6: “Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” Clearly, this event did not please the Lord. He was ready to destroy the whole lot of them until Moses plead for them and offered his own life in exchange for theirs.

In Exodus 32:10, the Lord says, “Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.” Moses had an opportunity to become the new Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who would have descendants as great as the stars of Heaven. He had the opportunity to give up

all that he had done to this point for this people and just start over again; to throw the whole thing out and trust in the Lord's Word to make him great, and Moses had trusted in the Lord to this point. But Moses was a humble man, and while he did not want to see all of the people He was caring for put to death; more than this, Moses did not want to see the glory of the Lord he served to be diminished. In Exodus 32:11-14, we see Moses intercede for the people in his prayer before the Lord. We read: "Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?' Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people."

Later, as Moses records in Deuteronomy 32:26-29, the Lord explained why He relented on account of Moses's prayer: "I would have said, 'I will dash them in pieces, I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,' had I not feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should misunderstand, lest they should say, "Our hand is high; And it is not the Lord who has done all this. For they are a nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them. Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"

In other words, Moses's intercessory prayer was effective. He reminded God of His promises and showed by His faith that he believed in them. He was even willing to give up his own life to save the people, not for their benefit alone, but also for the glory of God. And it was for God's glory that he asked God to save the people of Israel. Later, upon ascending the mountain a second time, Moses prayed to the Lord in Exodus 32:31-33: "'Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.' And the Lord said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.'" This is a verse we truly need to pay attention to, for we know that John writes in Revelation that the names written in the Lamb's book of life are reserved only for the obedient and faithful through the end of the age. In Revelation 21:27, we read a stark reminder that this reality of God from Exodus 32 is still true for us today: "But there shall by no means enter [the holy city]

anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." To be preserved for everlasting life, we cannot be blotted out of God's book.

Before Moses went back up the mountain to intercede for Israel, he had come down from the mountain and brought judgment to the people. He called all of the men of Israel who would still follow the Lord to Himself and sent them throughout the camp to destroy anyone responsible for bringing the false idol into their midst, except Aaron. Had Aaron repented? He and all the sons of Levi joined with the Lord on Moses's side and killed the three-thousand people who had led Israel astray. Only those wolves in sheep's clothing were held responsible, but the Lord had mercy on Israel as well as their high priest, who repented. Many like to discuss the 3000 who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Shavuot) following Christ's resurrection as a type of reversal of God's judgment of Israel in the wilderness, and we absolutely should tie this scene in to the big picture in this way, but ultimately, I wonder, is the story of Messiah's return to Earth going to be all that different than when Moses came down from the mountain? What will we all be doing?

In Luke 18:7-8, the Lord speaks to this question. He says, "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" Let Him find ours here, brothers and sisters, and let us cry out day and night to Him.

This whole story reminds me of something we read in 2 Peter 3:1-15a, where the Apostle wrote: "Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward

us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.”

Yeshua, you see, is our “prophet like unto Moses,” as we read about in Deuteronomy 18:15-18, and Moses explains in the wilderness that this Messiah is coming to the children of Israel: “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.’ The Lord said to me: ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.’”

The Israelites at the foot of Mt. Sinai did not want to hear from God directly, for they feared they would lose their lives in the consuming fire, but God is a non-consuming fire to those who believe. False prophets took advantage of this fear and taught them to worship idols, a false representation of God. While God destroyed the ones responsible and will continue to destroy these scoffers, He did come in the form of a man just like the Israelites asked of Him so they would not fear for their lives. Yeshua took things one step further than Moses and literally saved the lives of us all through His own sacrifice on the cross, for He became the fulfillment of Moses’s prophesy. After being raised from the dead, Yeshua ascended back up to the mountain of God and is now delayed in coming back, just as Moses was. What manner of men and women ought we be as we await His return? Peter tells us: “be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.”

It’s interesting when we look at our reading in Mark 9:1-10 that we have a glimpse of what Yeshua is really like in all His glory, and we will see His glory on the Last Day.

We read, “Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.” Peter spoke at this time about building tabernacles for Moses, who represents the Torah, and Elijah, who represents the prophets, and these men were standing beside God Most High who had given the entire Word to Israel. Now He was here in the flesh, shining bright in His glory, to give Israel and all of the nations His example to live by. We read, “Peter did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.” At this time the Father testified about His Son, explaining that He is the “prophet like unto Moses,” and “you must listen to Him.” “Hear Him,” the Father said from the clouds of Heaven. These three men got a glimpse of “the kingdom of God” that is “present with power,” and they were terrified by the consuming fire, and so God replaced the veil over their eyes and they saw Yeshua standing there alone. He told them not to speak of the event again until He had risen from the dead. The Lord had been through this one time before and He was not going to allow His followers to go astray in fear. Later He would promise to send His Holy Spirit to dwell within them after His resurrection, and on the day of Pentecost this came to pass as He had promised. The Holy Spirit would teach the Apostles as well as all of us who believe and obey the Word of God all things concerning life and godliness and remind us of the things Christ said and did when He came to dwell with us in the flesh. Those who lack the Holy Spirit today on account of disbelief or disobedience are stuck in the same rut as those Israelites in the wilderness who hid their faces from the voice of God when He gave His commandments to them. Will they rebel as Israel did and create their own gods? I think we can expect nothing less, and perhaps we’ve even borne witness to such a thing.

Over the ages in Israel, the nation had fallen away and had been restored multiple times. We read of one of the greater apostasy’s in our reading in 1 Kings 18:1-39, when under King Ahab and the evil Queen Jezebel, 450 prophets of Ba’al and 400 prophets of Asherah, the false demon gods of Canaan, ate at the Israeli king and queen’s table, while the prophets of Yahweh, who is God Most High, were hiding in caves. One day Elijah the prophet challenged these false teachers to a spiritual duel. Which god would come and lap up their prophets’ sacrifices with fire? We read in verses 25-39: “Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, ‘Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, for you are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.’ So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, ‘O Baal, hear us!’ But there was no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had

made. And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy [relieving himself], or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.' So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention. Then Elijah said to all the people, 'Come near to me.' So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, 'Israel shall be your name.' Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, 'Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.' Then he said, 'Do it a second time,' and they did it a second time; and he said, 'Do it a third time,' and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water. And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, 'Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.' Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'Yahweh, He is God! Yahweh, He is God!'"

Elijah proceeded to destroy all the prophets of Ba'al, just as Moses and the Levites had destroyed all those who encouraged the worship of the golden calf as well as the golden calf itself. And it is stories like this that build our faith. Yes, God is there. Yes, God hears our prayers. And yes, God answers them and comes through and does miraculous works in our lives, and when we see such signs and wonders, we recognize that Yahweh is God, and Yeshua is Yahweh, to the Glory of God the Father, and that we serve the living God who is with us, who loves us and who simply wants us to love Him back. But like Israel, who fell away again to the point where God grew so angry He allowed the Assyrians to take the nation into captivity, we too can risk falling into a rut where we turn away from Yeshua because we may not see Him active in our lives; we don't see His signs and wonders, if you will, and maybe He allows us to face trial and tribulation from time to time to remind us that we need to turn back to

Him if we want to live. We need to stand firm—to endure in our faith in Yeshua as well as our obedience to the commandments of God.

It's interesting, our reading in Ezekiel 36:16-38 prophesies that the people of God, whether the physical Israel of history or the living spiritual Israel of today with Gentiles grafted-in to her, would continue to fall away. After many years of apostasy and return and ultimately exile from the promised land on this Earth, God explained that for His glory, He would once again save His people Israel for Himself, but now they would be made up of all who come to have faith in Him.

We read, “Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying: ‘Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. Therefore I poured out My fury on them for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols with which they had defiled it. So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord, and yet they have gone out of His land.’ But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord,” says the Lord God, ‘when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.” He continues and repeats again, “‘Not for your sake do I do this,’ says the Lord God, ‘let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!’ ‘Thus says the Lord God: “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable you to dwell in the cities, and the ruins shall be rebuilt. The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden; and the

wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.’ Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the Lord, have spoken it, and I will do it.”

Today, Israel dwells within a portion of the land that was promised to her, and it came about in a day, May 14, 1948. This itself is a miraculous fulfillment of prophecy, but there is still another level of fulfillment to come. One day when Messiah returns from the Mountain of God, He will pour out His wrath on all who have led His people astray to go after false gods yet again, this is the consuming fire of God, and He will bring all of those who endure in their faith and trust in Him to the promised land forever, and He will light eternity with His non-consuming fire. God’s judgment came in the wilderness, when Moses and the Levites poured out God’s wrath on 3000, and then God sent a plague to take out the rest who rebelled against Him in their hearts. Yet, for His glory, He preserved His people Israel in the wilderness, so that no one could say that He is not God. And it’s no coincidence, that as God is showing His mercy and faithfulness to an unfaithful people time and time again, He describes who He is to Moses, the prophet who would serve as an archetype for the Messiah to come.

In Exodus 34, when Moses had ascended back up the mountain, the Lord wrote His commandments on new tablets of stone, and we know that where there is a testimony of two or three, there is a Truth being established. As He was doing this, God said this about Himself: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” And this is the Truth of who God is. It always has been and it always will be. Our Lord Yeshua, who is God who came in the flesh, said this about Himself in Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” It is the commandments that God has given us that Yeshua considers the light yoke He refers to, for His desire is to bless those who come to Him with more than they can imagine. And while Yeshua surely is merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, He will also by no means clear the guilty, and He will bring His judgment on those who do not abide in His Word. Here’s a story Luke tells about this very thing in Luke 13:22-29: “Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, ‘Lord, are only a few

people going to be saved?’ He said to them, ‘Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us.’ But he will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.’ But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’ There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.’”

We are at an advantage over others who came before us to join our Lord at that feast, but we also face much more pressure to turn our backs on Him. As we read about in the prophesy of Ezekiel 36, which is similar to what we’ve read often in Jeremiah 31, and in so many New Testament passages, on account of Messiah Yeshua, and what He has done for us, we now can accept the law written on our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. Yeshua defines how to accept this Truth in John 14:15-18: “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” As noted earlier, this Holy Spirit will teach us all of the Truths of God’s Word and remind us what Yeshua has said and done for us. In other words, this Holy Spirit will do what God promised in the prophesy; He will help us to keep God’s commandments. But our wholehearted desire must be to love our God Yeshua before He will do this for us. We must love Him and trust in Him; what He has done and what He has promised to do.

The Apostle Paul goes through a rather complicated explanation of this advantage that we have in 2 Corinthians 3. As faithful believers in Messiah, who follow Him in all His ways, we “are an epistle of Christ ... written not with ink but by the Spirit of the Living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart,” Paul writes. Just as God prophesied, our sufficiency is from God for His glory. We interpret the “Spirit and Truth” of Scripture, just as we now worship in “Spirit and Truth.” Paul writes, “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,” reminding us that the law’s purpose is to define sin. As we know, the one who sins will be blotted out of the Book of Life. But in the Spirit, which we receive through our faith and trusting obedience to God, we will have everlasting Life by following our Lord’s example.

Paul then goes on to explain what we read about in Exodus 34; namely, “Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with [Aaron]. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.”

Without the Spirit of God, which Moses possessed, we cannot see the Truth of God’s Word without fear, for as Paul wrote, the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Moses had the Spirit, so when He was with God, he removed the veil so that he could understand the full Truth of what God wanted to provide to those who love Him. When he was with the people who were perishing, he covered the full Truth of God with a veil, for they did not have the Spirit to help them understand it.

Paul puts it this way as we continue from Verse 7 to 18 in 2 Corinthians 3: “But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious. Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of

the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

To conclude, it is because of our faith and trust in Christ and our desire to obey God’s commandments that He puts His Holy Spirit in us, just as He prophesied, not for our glory, but for His glory. And it is our faith in Christ, in the salvation we have through His blood, that wipes our slate clean and makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God, again for His glory. This faith in Christ for salvation is what removes the veil from our eyes and allows us to read the Old Testament with the Spirit, interpreted through the prism of love and by the example of Christ as laid out in the New Testament. It is our instruction in righteousness that leads us to life in Messiah Yeshua. The Spirit is also what allows us to share in the glory of God with those we encounter and ultimately dwell with God in His Glory for all eternity, upon His return. Through our faith, it is possible for us to obey on account of the gift the Lord has given us. But our faith must be sincere and we must persevere in our desire to follow our Lord. Whether Jew or Gentile, we no longer have a veil blinding us to the Truth when we have this faith. We no longer fear God’s consuming fire so much that we run to representations of Him that diminish His glory and infuriate Him, but we have our intercessor, Yeshua, sitting on His throne as a non-consuming fire, helping us to see God and worship Him for who He is, with true reverence, humbly accepting the fact that our own actions cannot save us, but only by His blood are we healed. And it is on account of our perseverance in faithfulness, obedience to God and faith in Yeshua, that we will enter into His Kingdom. Shabbat shalom.