

# TORAHSCOPE: Tazria (She Conceives)

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Leviticus 12:1-13:59

## “What Did Yeshua Do?”

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: “When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed”’ (Leviticus 12:1-4).

One of the many blessings for Believers is the completed understanding that comes from a diligent, consistent, systematic study of the Torah. Even when we come upon sections of Scripture where a comprehension of physiology and/or medical procedures would be beneficial, we should be able to connect some of the dots that embolden our faith. *Tazria*, meaning “she conceives,” is just one of those portions.

In this section, which in most years is coupled with the following *parashah*, *Metzora*, the writings continue to focus on the importance of holiness. In particular, this Torah portions focuses on the requirement to be “clean” (Heb. *tahor*, טָהוֹר), rather than “unclean” (Heb. *tamei*, טָמֵא), before the Lord. You will recall that as the last portion was concluding, the strong admonition to all Israel about what was ingested was declared:

“For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy.’ This is the law regarding the animal and the bird, and every living thing that moves in the waters and everything that swarms on the earth, to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean, and between the edible creature and the creature which is not to be eaten” (Leviticus 11:45-47).

Now that Moses has laid out the restrictions on what is to be considered edible food, he now turns to outward physical signs of being “unclean” before the Most High. The two specific instructions regarding the blood of childbirth and the handling of leprosy are considered in this section.

## Proper Parental Influence

While reflecting on this portion, and how little I knew about postnatal care or the intricacies of skin afflictions, the most dominant thoughts that came to mind were the recollections from the Apostolic Scriptures on the actions of Yeshua and His parents. It was somewhat comforting to realize that our Savior, and His parents Joseph and Mary, were obeying the commandments set forth in the Torah. We must remember that the parents of Yeshua needed to be Torah observant in order to have the Messiah comply with the basic commandments regarding His birth. If we look at the infancy of Yeshua as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, we will discover that Joseph and Mary were following the instructions we see in this Torah portion, when they brought Him to the Temple in Jerusalem for His dedication:

“And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD’), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, ‘A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS” (Luke 2:21-24).

In this account, we note that Joseph and Mary were obeying the instructions regarding circumcision and dedication before the Lord:

“Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me...you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD” (Exodus 13:2, 12).

We can also discern that they were relatively humble in their means, because of the less expensive offering that is made:

“But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean” (Leviticus 12:8).

This unique account should give us great comfort that the family chosen by the Lord to raise His Son was Torah observant. They apparently followed the requirements regarding His appointed times faithfully:

“When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up *there* according to the custom of the Feast” (Luke 2:39-42).

It is also interesting to note that in Luke’s account, the Torah principle of confirming something by at least two witnesses is mentioned. Both the testimonies of Simeon and Anna attest to the revelation that they would behold the Messiah of Israel (Luke 2:34-36). As you reread these accounts in light of *Tazria*, much more light is shed onto what for years you may have considered just an interesting set of coincidences. But of course—now that we are applying the Torah to our lives—these actions and responses are more fully understood!

## Yeshua's Torah Obedience

As you continue reading this Torah portion, you are now given a very detailed account of the laws regarding how to deal with the disease commonly referred to as leprosy (although other forms of skin eruptions are also being described). As I read these passages, my mind flashed forward to the recorded times that Yeshua healed the lepers during His ministry. The ability to heal a leper was one of the signs that the Messiah had come:

“Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Messiah, he sent *word* by his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?’ Yeshua answered and said to them, ‘Go and report to John what you hear and see: *the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.* And blessed is he who does not take offense at Me” (Matthew 11:2-6).

It is also important to note that Yeshua obeyed the Torah, and instructed those He healed to do the same:

“And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Yeshua stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Yeshua said to him, ‘See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them’” (Matthew 8:2-4).

“And a leper came to Yeshua, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Moved with compassion, Yeshua stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, and He said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them’” (Mark 1:40-44).

Yeshua knew the instructions that had been given in *Tazria*. Even though He knew that the leper’s affliction had been completely cleansed, He obeyed the requirements to let the priest’s inspection bear witness to the cleansing:

“If in his sight the scale has remained, however, and black hair has grown in it, the scale has healed, he is clean; and the priest shall pronounce him clean” (Leviticus 13:37).

As we read and reflect upon *Tazria*, we can be reminded that Yeshua, as well as His parents, were following the commandments in the Torah portion that we are studying this week. It does not appear from these testimonies that Yeshua attempted to circumvent the Torah of Moses. This brings me to the contemplation of the thought in the title I have ascribed to it: **What did Yeshua do?**

## WWJD?

Many of us in the community of faith are aware of the popular acronym WWJD that has been fashioned into bracelets, tee shirt monograms, and a variety of other commercially viable forms for sale in the evangelical world. Now I do not intend to belittle the movement that has used the simple admonition to remember, “**What Would Jesus Do?**” I am convinced that many people have been prompted to do many positive things that have benefited a great number of circumstances from the WWJD acronym. However, as a Messianic Believer I am taking the time to read and study the Torah—as I hope you are—on a regular basis so that I can better understand just exactly what Yeshua did, as opposed to what I think He would do. Let me explain.

If I did not take the time to read and study the Book of Leviticus, I might not know that certain basic things are required for those who are being conformed to the image of the Messiah. We must remember the foundational statement that Yeshua made to His Disciples regarding the Law of Moses:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19).

Here, Yeshua states that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but He came to fulfill the Torah of Moses. Many of those who wear the WWJD bracelets misinterpret this Scripture and conclude that Yeshua “fulfilled and thus abolished” the Torah of Moses. They often state, “we as New Testament Believers do not have to be concerned with any of the restrictions on our lives imposed by adherence to an antiquated list of do and don’ts.” **How far from the truth is this?** This interpretation of theology has done great harm to the Body of Messiah, who out of their ignorance, suffer many of the consequences of not following God’s instruction.

Let us take the simple rules laid out last week for a proper Biblical diet. There are clear instructions from Leviticus 11 describing what is considered food and what is not considered food. One would think that the Creator would know what is best for His creatures to ingest, and here He tells us what not only keeps us holy before Him, but also according to some scientific conclusions, minimizes the problems associated with eating certain products taken from the animal kingdom. Our only problem is that we as His creatures need to believe that the instructions are for our own good and obey them. If we are seeking holiness before the Creator God, watching our diet should not seem like a difficult thing to do. In fact, by our desire to be obedient, our Heavenly Father should know that we are sincere.

Sadly, the truth is that many of those who are wearing the WWJD bracelets are eating bacon and eggs and shrimp cocktail, not knowing that pork and shellfish are not food. If we were better informed, as many Torah students become through time, we would be better served to change the acronym to be WDYD? In other words, “**What Did Yeshua Do?**” would better reflect our willingness to be conformed to His image. From Yeshua’s own testimony and the recorded actions we have in the Messianic Scriptures (New Testament), it is obvious He was perfectly Torah obedient. He would not have been eating the unclean. In fact, when the *Pesach* (Passover) came, He would be celebrating the feast in a way consistent with the Biblical records. He would

not be eating a baked ham with yeast rolls after having watched children hunt for Easter eggs. This would not be consistent with His lifestyle in obedience to the commands of His Father.

The list of examples I could give can go on and on. And please understand, I am not trying to unfairly criticize those who are still in ignorance about what should and should not be done by a true follower of Yeshua the Messiah. Most of us can relate to our experiences in different types of settings where adherence to the Torah of Moses was not even considered. We need to pray for those who are still following those errant ways. We need to lovingly encourage our Christian friends to consider the solution offered by the wise counsel that came out of the meetings that took place in Jerusalem over 1,900 years ago. Acts 15 records how the Jewish Apostles instructed the early non-Jews who were coming in to the community of faith. The half brother of Yeshua, James the Just—who grew up in the same Torah observant household as Yeshua—had this to say in conclusion to the Jerusalem Council:

“After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, ‘Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, ‘AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’ SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:13-21).

Is this not where many of us find ourselves? Are we not finally attending fellowships on *Shabbat* and learning the Torah for our own benefit? Is this instruction not a wonderful blessing to our households as we are being *fully conformed* to the image of the Messiah? Are we not learning just exactly what Yeshua did do and applying it to our lives? Are we not blessed for this?

We need to pray for those who are seeking the truth. If they are still trying to figure out “what Jesus would do,” rather than “doing what Yeshua did,” we need to be patient and remember the days when we did not understand or know about the differences between the clean and the unclean, or perhaps any of the commandments of the Torah. **Our intercession and example of love will communicate to them that we are indeed doing what Yeshua did, by letting Him do through us what He wants to do!**

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