

PARASHAT TAZRIA

(SHE CONCEIVES)

LEVITICUS 12:1-13:59

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

2 Kings 4:42-5:19

Testimony of Yeshua

Mary fulfills the laws of purification after Yeshua's birth: **Luke 2:22-24**

Yeshua heals the "lepers": **Matthew 8:1-4; 11:2-6; Mark 1:40-45**

Yeshua on the misuse of the mouth: **Matthew 15:11, 17-20; Mark 7:18-23**

On the defilement of sin: **Romans 6:19-23**

The apostles on the evil use of the tongue: **Ephesians 4:31; James 3:1-12; 4:11-12; 1 Peter 2:1**

Overview of Parshiot Tazria-Metzora (Lev 12-13 and 14-15)

Often these two *parshiot* are combined in the yearly Torah reading cycle depending on how the Jewish calendar falls for the year. Their combining together is likely due to the fact that each is relatively short and deals with related subjects: namely, the ritual purity laws. As we shall see, the causes of ritual impurity involve sin issues. The Torah prescribes procedures that the afflicted person had to follow in order to be deemed cleansed and thus be readmitted into the camp of Israel. All the rituals prophetically pointed to Yeshua's atoning death on the cross.

These two *parshiot* dealing with diseased and unclean persons immediately come after the laws concerning clean and unclean meats (Lev 11). What the Israelites ate as well as the state of their physical bodies was an important aspect of holiness in the eyes of YHVH.

From these two *parshiot*, we learn that an unclean person could only become clean through the atoning blood of a sacrificed animal or through ritual cleansing of water by which he was reconciled to Elohim and brought back into the camp of Israel. What can we learn from the juxtapositioning of these subjects (i.e., the laws pertaining to unclean meats and unclean people) in the Torah? Simply this: Man can easily become impure and defiled because of his innately depraved, crooked, and wicked heart that is at enmity with the laws of Elohim (Jer 17:9; Rom 8:7). Since the fall of Adam, man has been in a state of impurity from Elohim. Thus, sin separates him from the presence of Elohim and from his fellow Israelites. Only the sin-atoning blood of Yeshua can bring him to a place of purity where he can be reconciled to the *Kadosh* (Holy) One of Israel, and become part of the camp (i.e., the congregation of the saints or *kadosh* ones) of YHVH.

Leviticus 12:1-8 deals with the purification of women after childbirth. Adam Clarke in his commentary states that in the woman's having to bring a sacrifice after the birth of her child, Elohim keeps up the remembrance of the

fact that through woman, sin entered the world. He also keeps up the memorial of sacrifice to show that the state of a sinner, howsoever deplorable, is not hopeless. In every ceremony, we may see both the justice and the mercy of Elohim. Hence, while we have the knowledge of our spiritual impurity, we have also the knowledge of our cure—the sacrifice of an innocent animal, which always points to Yeshua who once and for all, in his sacrificial death, cleansed us from sin's impurity.

Leviticus 13–14 deals with the disease of *tzara*. The noun *tzaarath* means “disease” or “skin disease” and is from the root *tzara* meaning “to be stricken, strike down, to smite heavily.” This is another disease that pictures the ravages of sin.

It was up to the priests to diligently inspect each diseased person—based on YHVH's instructions and criteria—to determine whether one was unclean or not, and whether one was fit to remain in the camp of Israel. The priests were not to be hasty in their judgments, but were to make determinations based on diligent inquiry and to follow the exact protocols as outlined in the Torah. This teaches us that YHVH is exacting as to how sinners can be cleansed spiritually from sin and thus become part of the spiritual camp of the righteous redeemed. The Torah is the standard of righteousness that will judge all men. It also defines sin (1 John 3:4), and will determine one's rewards in YHVH's eternal kingdom (Matt 5:19).

Today, from time to time, those involved in gross sin must be put out of the congregation of the righteous. This is the duty of the leaders who must inspect individuals and make righteous decisions. Yeshua discusses this in Matthew 18:15–19 where he instructs leaders on how to deal with sin in the camp.

In ancient Israel, when disease or sin entered into the camp, it had to be dealt with, so that the plague wouldn't spread. It was the priests' job to keep the camp clean physically and spiritually. In ancient Israel, the focus was on ritual, physical and moral purity. In the Testimony of Yeshua (and in our times) the focus is on spiritual and moral purity, and in protecting the congregation of the righteous from that which could harm or defile it spiritually. The apostles in their letters were constantly dealing with spiritual issues such as heretics, false teachings and philosophies that threatened to harm the body of believers. A healthy human body has defense mechanisms by which it can protect itself against disease pathogens. As the priest of old protected Israel from disease, even so, the shepherds or pastors of our day are to be the protectors of the body of Yeshua. Our Master talks about the good shepherd who is willing to defend the flock even if it costs him his life (John 10:7–14).

How did the apostolic leaders deal with the disease of grievous wolves who, like disease pathogens, threatened YHVH's flock? To answer this question let us simply allow the truth of the Scriptures to speak to us. Very little commentary is needed here to make the point:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [to look at, observe, direct one's attention to] them which cause divisions [sedition (incitement or rebellion against lawful authority), dissension] and offences [a stumbling block, an occasion to fall] contrary to the doctrine [teaching or instruction] which ye have learned; and avoid [turn aside or shun] them. For they that are such serve not our Master Yeshua the Messiah, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (Rom 16:17–18)

From this simple expanded version of the text based on the meaning of the Greek words, is it not clear what is to be done with such individuals as described above? We are to be aware of what they are doing and then to have no contact with such individuals. There can be no place in the local flock or assembly for spiritual pathogens. Paul continues:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Master Yeshua the Messiah, that you withdraw [remove depart, abstain from familiar intercourse] from every brother who walks disorderly [out of ranks (as with a soldier), deviating from the prescribed order or rule] and not according to the tradition [precept, teaching or instruction] which he received from us. (2Thess 3:6)

Be not deceived: evil companionship corrupts virtuous character. (1 Cor 15:33)

And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note [to mark, distinguish by marking] that person, and do not keep company [intimate friendship] with him, that he may be ashamed. (2Thess 3:14)

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with

such a person. (2 Cor 5:11)

A man that is an heretic [schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine] after the first and second admonition [exhortation] reject [avoid, refuse]. (Tit 3:10)

Who should make the determination whether someone in the congregation is a grievous wolf, is causing sedition or offense, bringing in false teachings and resisting lawful authority? What is the role of the shepherd if not to protect the sheep of his flock? Who should pick up the rod and defend the sheep against the individuals involved in the activities listed above? Who should be the one to warn the offending party, urge them to repent and, if they refuse, to remove them from the flock? Biblically, this is the role of the shepherd overseeing the flock. In following the example of Yeshua the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, the under-shepherds of Yeshua are to do the same, if necessary, in protecting the flock from wolves (John 10:10–14).

In ancient Israel when a person was deemed to be unclean, he was cut off from Israel. This effectively put a stop to his secular business and cut him off from his friends and relations. In order to be pronounced clean and be let back into the camp, the *metzora* (the diseased and impure person) had to accept humbly the verdict of the priests, and accept his punishment. In being put out of the camp of Israel, the unclean person was effectively cut off not only from communion with YHVH's people, but from YHVH himself whose Presence resided in the tabernacle.

How the Torah mandates that the *metzora* be dealt with teaches us much about the contagious and evil nature of sin. It must be put out of our individual lives and out of the congregation of the righteous redeemed, so that it won't contaminate others.

The skin diseases described in Leviticus 13 and 14 not only defiled the individual, but threatened to contaminate the individual's house and possessions as well. From this we learn that sin not only defiles the sinner's conscience, but it brings stain upon his possessions and home.

The priests couldn't cleanse the sinners; he had to cleanse himself (Lev 13–14). They cleansed themselves through right living and washing with water. When cleansed, the priests simply examined the person to determine if the disease was gone. They then officiated at his cleansing rituals, determined whether he was clean or not, and whether he could be readmitted him into the camp of Israel. These cleansing rituals prophetically pointed to Yeshua's atoning death on the cross (as discussed below).

When a person was deemed to be free of their skin disease and had been pronounced clean by the examining priests, they were welcomed back into the camp of Israel. By comparing physical skin diseases to sin, we can deduce that when we withdraw from those who walk disorderly, when they repent, they must be welcomed back into our midsts with tenderness and joy and sincere affection. Care should always be taken to insure that sinners may not be encouraged, nor penitents discouraged. We see the example of this in Paul's dealing with the sinning man in the congregation in Corinth. He was put out of the congregation, and upon repentance was brought back in again (1 Cor 5:1–12 cp. 2 Cor 2:3–11).

Parshiot Tazria-Metzora teaches us that the "leprosy" of sin ruins families and churches. Sin is pernicious and pervasive and can easily be interwoven into the fabric of human society and relationships. This is why those in positions of spiritual responsibility and authority (heads of families, ministries and congregations) must diligently protect those under their charge from the pervasive influences of the leavening of sin.

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 12:1 The Laws of Human Contamination
- 12:2 Childbirth and Purification
- 13:1 The Basics of *Tzaraas* (skin disorder, e.g. swelling, scab or a bright spot) and the Procedure to Verification
- 13:4 *Babaares* (white spots on the skin)
- 13:9 *S'eis* (skin that appears to be white like wool and sunken)
- 13:18 Inflammation
- 13:24 Burns
- 13:29 *Tzaraas* of the Head or Face

—13:40 Baldness at the Front and Back of the Head

—13:45 The *Metzora* (i.e., the individual with the skin disorder) Isolation

—13:47 Afflictions of the Garments

Overview of Parashat Tazria

Some Hebrew Terms Relating to This Passage:

- ☞ *tzaraas*: skin disease (improperly translated as “leprosy” in some Bibles)
- ☞ *niddah*: someone who is separated or menstruous
- ☞ *tumah*: spiritual impurity
- ☞ *metzora*: one with a skin disease; a contraction of the Hebrew word *motzi* and *ra* meaning “one who speaks slander”

THIS PARASHAH DISCUSSES VARIOUS SKIN DISORDERS. The KJV says *leprosy*, but this is a mistranslation. The Jewish sages teach, as does Matthew Henry in his commentary, that these skin disorders “[were] a plague often inflicted immediately by the hand of God” (*Matthew Henry Concise Commentary*, p. 111). Before you react by saying that Elohim doesn’t do this (we will cite some biblical examples of this below), consider for a moment that perhaps sickness is an act of the loving hand of Elohim, a judgment-unto-repentance, to bring you, his child, out of sin and back to him. Next time you have an ailment, a trial, a setback, or some other problem in life, before ascribing its occurrence simply to time and chance, you might ask yourself several hard questions. Is there unconfessed sin in your life? Is Elohim trying to get your attention? Perhaps you are ill because of wrong living (e.g. an unhealthy diet, not following the biblical dietary laws, or not caring for your body by depriving it of necessary exercise). Sickness as a form of a cause-and-effect judgment can also come on a person because of the sins of witchcraft, rebellion, pride, gossip, slander, bitterness, unforgiveness or anger. Perhaps poor health is the result of smoking, excessive alcoholic consumption, sexual promiscuity or violating some of YHVH’s Torah commands that you know you should be keeping.

The Jewish sages (and Christian commentator, Matthew Henry) teach that the skin disorder mentioned in this Torah portion is a result of sins of the mouth such as slander, gossip, murder with the mouth, false oaths and pride as well as sexual immorality, robbery, and selfishness. [*T*]zaraas is not a bodily disease, but the physical manifestation of a spiritual malaise, a punishment designed to show the malefactor that he must mend his ways. The primary cause of *tzaraas* is the sin of slander” (*The ArtScroll Tanach Series Vayikra*, p. 190). For proof of this, the Jewish sages cite the similarity between the Hebrew word for *skin disorder* (*metzora*) and the word for *one who spreads slander* (*motzeyra*). They say that these skin disorders are “[d]ivine retribution for the offender’s failure to feel the needs and share the hurt of others. YHVH rebukes this antisocial behavior by isolating him from society, so that he can experience the pain he has imposed on others—and heal himself through repentance” (*The ArtScroll Chumash*, page 610). They then cite the examples of Miriam’s skin turning white when she slandered Moses as well as the examples of Gehazi and King Uzziah.

It would be well for us to pause at this moment and to consider our own behavior with respect to our tongue. Thankfully, we’re under the grace of Elohim. But in the book of Acts, Ananias and Sapphira found out what happens when one sins with one’s mouth and Elohim pulls back his hand of grace. They were instantly struck dead!

As we get closer to the end of this present age and to the return of Messiah, **it is likely that Elohim will begin to require greater spiritual accountability of his people**, especially of leaders in the areas we are discussing. He wants to instill within people the true fear of YHVH-Elohim and a repentant and contrite heart, and to turn people away from spiritual lukewarmness (Rev 3:14–21). It is likely that such rapid judgments as happened to Miriam, Korah and his company of malefactors, Gehazi, Ananias and Sapphira and others in the Scriptures will begin to occur soon, in our day, and may already be occurring.

What steps are you taking to sanctify your tongue, to break any bad habits that you may have in this regard that may bring curses on you or sow seeds of discord among the brethren thereby bringing a curse upon the assembly? May YHVH’s Spirit help us all to not sin with our tongue, and may we hold ourselves accountable and responsible to walk in the fear of Elohim at all times.

The time for playing fast and loose with our mouths and other members of our bodies is finished. We are all

being called to account by Elohim. Be hot or cold. Not in-between! Yeshua is *not* coming back for a Babylonian (half-world and half-Word-orientated lifestyle), sin-spotted bride—but one who is without spot and wrinkle. Where are you at?

This week's parashah is also a continuation of the subject of human contamination and delineates what could seem to be a lot of irrelevant and archaic, if not arcane, regulations relating to childbirth and skin diseases. Why is YHVH so concerned about "human contamination"? What is the greater picture here to help us gain understanding into the Father's intent and heart behind these Torah-laws? The Jewish sages teach that man must not forget that even the gnats and earthworms preceded him in the creation. This is to teach man humility. But conversely, each stage of Elohim's creation added something to that which had been created previously and that man was the final, crowning touch that would pull all the creation together to fulfill its purpose of spirituality in the performance of Elohim's will. Man is therefore the last of the creatures to be created, but the first in significance because he is the purpose of it all and that if man is not worthy of his calling, then he has added nothing of substance to YHVH's handiwork (*The ArtScroll Tanach Series Vayikra*, p. 184).

All this is to say that YHVH has a plan to redeem man from his sinful or depraved (animalistic) state. Man can choose to be elevated to this higher spiritual plane or to remain in a state no better than that of a gnat or a worm having added nothing to the creation's spiritual betterment. The Jewish sages teach, and I think we can all agree, that the creation of human life is the most sublime phenomenon in the universe. By doing so, man and woman become partners with Elohim (Ibid., p. 185). But this is a mixed blessing, for it creates a blessing and a problem. While one new person is created in the image of Elohim, one new sinner is in need of redemption from his fallen or separated state from Elohim (a result of Adam and Eve's sin). This new life is created in a state of spiritual impurity (or fallenness) and the fact of life itself is not sufficient to raise man above the level of the gnat or worm, or to better the world spiritually. The sin issue must be dealt with at the beginning, and hence we find the laws of ritual purification as outlined in the following chapters of the Torah. Offering of atonement must be made for the past sins while one dedicates oneself to live in a state of spiritual purity in the future (Ibid.).

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

- 1 **12:2, *Unclean*.** One may rightly ask why new life begins in *tumah* or spiritual impurity? Could this have anything to do with David's statement in Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The basic premise of all the false religions and humanistic philosophies of the world is that man is innately good and that any evil attributes he may possess are largely due to his evil environment. Do you believe this? Or have you taken responsibility or ownership of your own sin and the sin nature in you?
- 2 **12:5, *Two weeks*.** One may also ask why a woman remains in a state of ritual impurity only seven days for a male child and two weeks for a female child? To some of our minds that may have been "leavened" by the "women's rights" agenda of the 1960s, this may seem sexist. One thing is certain, YHVH is not a respecter of persons. He does not value one gender above the other. Both male and female were made in his image (Gen 1:27). Therefore, Elohim is both male and female. For Elohim to view women as inferior, he would be showing favoritism to one part of himself over another, and this is not possible.
One explanation the Jewish sages give for the eight-day compared to the 14-day period of ritual impurity is that a male child has to be circumcised on the eighth day. A *brit m'lah* is to be a joyous occasion. If a woman were still in a state of ritual impurity she would not be able to participate in her son's circumcision (*The ArtScroll Tanach Series Vayikra*, p. 187).
- 3 **12:6, *She shall bring*.** Why did the new mother have to bring a sin offering for her newborn child—after all isn't childbirth a glorious and joyous event? To answer this question we will ask a question. What was one of the curses Elohim placed on Eve for her part in bringing sin into the world? (Gen 3:16) Labor pains were decreed upon woman for punishment for her part in original sin. The Jewish sages teach that the sin offering Torah demands her to give after giving birth is to atone for that. As believers in Yeshua, we might rather see this offering as pointing to ancient Israel's need for atonement from sin in the Person of Yeshua the Messiah, who was yet to come. Does this not underscore the seriousness YHVH places on sin and that all have sinned

and fallen short of his glory (Rom 3:33), and that we are all in desperate need of a Redeemer who would deliver us from that “certificate of sin debt that was against us” and nail it to his cross (Col 2:14)?

4 13:45, *Cry, “Unclean, unclean”*. A skin disease was like a red flag, which if a person had it was regarded as a judgment from Elohim for the sin of slander, gossip, murder with the mouth, false oaths and pride as well as sexual immorality, robbery, and selfishness. That person was considered to be physically and spiritually contagious and so was put outside the camp of Israel until the disease was gone. According to Samson Hirsch, quarantine was a means of shocking the sinner into recognizing his moral shortcomings and his need to repent (*The ArtScroll Chumash*, p. 613).

What if each time we sinned with our mouth we were quickly struck with a visible sin disease for all to see resulting in our being quarantined and shunned? Perhaps the incidences of *lashon hara* (the evil tongue) would greatly diminish. If you received heaven’s judgment each time you misspoke, how would you change your speech habits and heart attitude toward others? Now live your life from this point on as if the next time you spoke evil of someone (without a righteous and biblically justifiable reason) you would be instantly judged by YHVH in a visible and public way.

5 What is the connection between Leviticus chapters 11 and 13? Both involve the mouth. The former Torah passage deals with uncleanness that *goes into* the mouth through what we eat. This defiles the man from within. The latter passage deals with what *comes out* of the mouth and how the man with a defiled heart corrupts society through the wrong use of his mouth. What did Yeshua say about this in Mark 7:14–23? What were the penalties in the Torah for eating unclean meats? (Read Leviticus 11.) Though the Torah calls eating unclean meats an abomination and declares that doing so defiles a person, interestingly there are no stated penalties for doing so. Now what are the penalties for speaking gossip and slander? It is a skin disease and required excommunication from the camp of Israel. Both eating unclean meats and speaking gossip and slander are sins to be sure, but the penalties for the one is much greater than for the other indicating the seriousness YHVH places on the right usage of the mouth. Ponder this for a moment: How easy it is for us to overly focus on what goes into our bellies, while at the same time ignoring the raw sewage spewing out of our mouths.

In conclusion, lest anyone think that clean and unclean meats is not a serious issue, YHVH clearly states in Isaiah 66:17 that in the end times during the day of Elohim’s wrath (referred to as the great and terrible day of YHVH), those who are found to be eating swine’s flesh and other abominable foods will be consumed by the fire and sword of YHVH Elohim. We can infer from this that by then if people still have not repented of their sins and are refusing to turn to YHVH and obey him, they probably deserved to die because of the rebelliousness of their hearts. This all the more underscores the fact that the mouth—what goes in and what comes out of it—are difficult issues for humans to deal with, but YHVH demands that we take personal responsibility for the use of our mouths.

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matt 12:36)

HAFTORAH READING—2 KINGS 4:42-5:19

Humble Yourself That You May Be Lifted Up

1 5:5, *Ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothing*. According to the NIV Study Bible, this equates to 750 lbs. of silver and 150 lbs. of gold. By comparison, King Omri of Israel paid only two talents of silver (approximately 150 lbs.) for the hill of Samaria upon which he built the capital of his kingdom (1 Kgs 16:24). In today’s market, that is \$360,000 in silver (at \$30 per ounce), and \$4,080,000 in gold (at \$1700 per ounce). This raises two questions: First, what will a person pay to have good health? This is something that sometimes all the money in the world cannot purchase. If you are healthy, how thankful are you for it? Second, how many ministers or ministries in the church are there who would turn down a \$4.5 million charitable donation if YHVH said to do so? Would you? Maybe such a heart of obedience and such ambivalence to wealth and materialism is what contributed to the prophet Elisha having such a powerful

prophetic and healing anointing in the first place. What can we learn from this if we are seeking to be used of YHVH in a greater capacity in the ministry?

- 2 Although Elisha was a mighty prophet in Israel and by the world's standards was worthy of wealth and prestige, his chief concern was the feeding and healing of those in need, without respect of persons or nationality, as this haftorah portion evidences. YHVH had blessed the prophet with powerful and miraculous spiritual gifts, yet fame and glory had not tainted him. What was his primary ministry focus? How does this compare with that of Yeshua's—and ours?
- 3 Israel was a vassal state of Syria, and though the two nations were technically at peace, bands of Syrian marauders still ravaged some of the border towns of Israel. This, however, did not stop Elijah from blessing his enemy, Naaman, a military man. Yeshua addresses the issue of blessing our enemies in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:43–48). As difficult as that may be, this is the higher way to walk. When was the last time you blessed your enemies? How often do you do it?
- 4 Elisha did not cater to Naaman's pride, which dictated that pomp and pageantry accompany the healing. YHVH, through his servant, dealt with Naaman's physical sickness, as well as his sin of pride. The Torah teaches that the sins of pride, selfishness, and robbery are root causes of the skin disorder that plagued the Syrian. This story demonstrates that YHVH is as concerned with the root causes of an ailment as much as the ailment itself. Many of Yeshua's miracles demonstrated this same concern. Humility and self-negation were the cures to what ailed Naaman. As Matthew Henry states in his commentary, "When diseased sinners are content to do any thing, to submit to any thing, to part with any thing, for a cure, then, and not till then, is there any hope of them." The same is true of the lost sinner in need of Yeshua, the Savior and Redeemer. Henry continues, "The methods for the healing of the leprosy of sin, are so plain, that we are without excuse if we do not observe them. It is but, believe, and be saved; repent, and be pardoned; wash, and be clean. The believer applies for salvation, not neglecting, altering, or adding to the Saviour's directions; he is thus made clean from guilt, while others who neglect him, live and die in the leprosy of sin."

So often our pride clouds our ability to clearly see and then uncover the root causes of sickness and other ailments plaguing our lives. Do you have a pride problem?

When was the last time you took a hard and serious look at yourself? When was the last time you confessed your sins to someone else? James 5:16 says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Perhaps your pride will not allow you to do this, and therefore keeps you from being healed! Let's follow proud Naaman's example, humbly wash in the humble Jordan River of Yeshua's forgiveness and healing. The root of the Hebrew name *Jordan* (Heb. *Yarden*) literally means "to go down or to descend." One always went *down* to the Jordan, which at the Sea of Galilee is more than 700 feet below sea level and at the Dead Sea into which it empties is some 1400 feet below sea level. At this spot, the Jordan river is the lowest spot not only in Israel, but on planet earth! What does this tell us that we must do in our spiritual walk in order to be lifted up spiritually? James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Master, and he shall lift you up."