

Messianic Rabbi: Once Saved, Always Saved?

For most believers in Yeshua (Jesus), the third book in the Bible is named Leviticus, and when they open the pages of Leviticus, they see a long list of dry commandments.

Because they see this long list of commandments in a book titled Leviticus, they have come to believe erroneously that this long list of dos and don'ts was the means in which Old Testament Jews worked their way to salvation. The false understanding that the Torah taught salvation based on works of obedience is the product of many things. One of those things is the very fact that the third book in the Torah is, in most Bibles, named Leviticus, when in the Jewish Bible, it is named וַיִּקְרָא *VaYikra* ("And Called" or "And He Called").

We don't always think about titles and headings, but these words or phrases are designed to instruct the reader how they are to interpret the information following the title or heading. For instance, in most Bibles, the event recorded in Matthew 26 and Luke 22 usually has the heading "The Last Supper," which in reality should be headed with the phrase "Yeshua's Last Passover Seder." By calling it The Last Supper, the writers of the headings removed the biblical context and spiritual significance of the meal that Yeshua was eating with His disciples.

Likewise, when we read the title Leviticus, our minds immediately believe that the intended focus of the book is on the Levites, the tabernacle and the sacrificial system. However, the book's name, "And He Called," draws our attention to G-D's eternal calling of and to Israel.

At this point, you may be asking yourself, "What does this have to do with 'eternal security'?" I am glad you asked. If

the book of Leviticus' focus is about the calling of Israel and not the priesthood and the sacrificial system, maybe it also isn't about how Israel was to "get saved" or "work their way to salvation." What if Leviticus was written to "an already-saved people" about the calling that G-D placed upon their lives so they would remain saved?

First, I believe that you would agree that there is no other way to be saved but through the atonement provided by the blood of Yeshua. In other words, we are saved by the blood of the Lamb.

However, being saved by the blood of the lamb is not a New Testament concept; it comes from the book of Exodus (also not named the book of Exodus in Hebrew, but rather the book's name is "Names," but that is another topic for the future). If we read in the book of Exodus, we find that G-D commands the children of Israel to paint the blood of the lamb on their doorposts so that death may pass over their houses.

Notice that G-D didn't require anything from them other than to put their trust in the blood of the lamb—no works of righteousness, no tabernacle or priesthood. They had no requirement beyond applying the blood to the doors in order to participate in the redemptive work that G-D provided. After they spent the night in their homes, G-D led them out of Egypt through the Red Sea and into the wilderness.

This was the redemption, or salvation, of Israel, which had nothing to do with a long list of 613 commandments or working their way to salvation. Their redemption was completely based upon the blood. In other words, they were unqualified to be redeemed until the blood made them qualified.

However, because they were redeemed by G-D, G-d gave them a calling to be a "light to the nations." This calling is what we read about when we read the book "And He Called," or Leviticus. This book is not about how one became part of

Israel; it is about how one remains part of Israel. The penalty for not obeying Torah was that your name would be blotted out of the Book. There isn't a place in Torah that says: "If you obey Torah, your names will be written down."

That is why we read verses like Romans 11:20-22 (TLV):

"True enough. They were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but fear— for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you. Notice then the kindness and severity of God: severity toward those who fell; but God's kindness toward you, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise, you too will be cut off!"

Notice that these natural branches were a part of the tree (they were saved by the blood of the Lamb), but because of their unbelief, they were broken off of the tree. Likewise, the wild branches were grafted into the tree (saved by the blood of the Lamb), but if they do not continue in His kindness, (His calling, or *Vayikra*), they will also be cut off.

If we change the name of a book of the Bible, it will change what we perceive to be the focus of that book. In this case, "And He Called," which is about the calling of G-D given to His people, was changed to Leviticus, which diverted our attention from our calling to the works of our calling—away from the blood of the Lamb to the works of the tabernacle, and away from the truth that from Genesis until Revelation, everyone was saved by faith to a calling. We read in Matthew 24:11-13:

"Many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved."{eoa}

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