

## 19 – Tzav – Outline

### Tzav Summary

- “Tzav” means “command:” “Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the burnt offering...”
- a complimentary portion to Vayikra; they both address the types of korbanot
  - Vayikra introduces each with “If a person brings such and such an offering,” while Tzav introduces each with “This is the Torah of (such and such offering)”
  - Tzav places an emphasis on the portions from the korbanot due the priests
- chapter 18 shows the inauguration of the priesthood – Aaron and his sons

### Commands and the Mode of Receiving

How does Tzav fit into the calendar?

- Our current place in the calendar
  - this is a time of death and rebirth, leaving the last situation behind
  - we are transitioning from a time of the greater independence of the bride as we reflect back to God the light He poured out on us earlier in the year to a mode of dependence and receiving, the mode of youth
- “Command” is an appropriate way to address the very young
  - 3 variations of a formula: “And Adonai spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and say to them..’”
    - “Speak to the children of Israel...” – most common, medium strength
    - “Say to the children of Israel...” – softest
    - “Command the children of Israel...” – strongest, uncommon, first used here in parsha Tzav, the origin of the name of the portion
  - Connotations of “Command”
    - you don’t need to understand; just do it
    - do it quickly
  - encouragement to listen to His voice now and move with alacrity (but not TOO fast! – be sure it’s from Him)
- “Command” is appropriate for the korbanot system, which is an elusive topic for us
  - we don’t need to understand it to do it
  - if the korbanot picture Yeshua’s sacrifice, do we think we can ever completely understand that sacrifice?

### The Power of the “Tzav” Commandments

- the Sages say there is an extra measure of power attached to these commandments given with “tzav” to affect all generations
  - perhaps this includes even previous generations, since God is outside of the timeline of human history and can look down on the timeline and allow offerings in our time and Abraham’s offerings to affect each other

### A Certain Level of Understanding Is Necessary

- on the one hand, we just do because we are commanded, and on the other, we need to have some understanding because in order to do, we need at least a base-level knowledge

### Knowing While Knowing That We Don't Know

- Uncomplicated obedience (unhindered by the need to understand) is not only a trait of the very young but also the very old
  - the end of the cycle is “enwedged” in the beginning of the cycle – overlap
  - the truly mature will also keep constantly before them how little they truly do understand in the grand scheme of things
    - the mature will know themselves as simultaneously old and young
    - there is a kind of shalom found in knowing ourselves to be both knowledgeable and ignorant at the same time
    - this kind of humility maintains the *mystery* of life and the Torah and God’s commandments
      - and mystery leads to wonder, which leads to joy, which leads to understanding
    - the constantly growing, fading, and re-growing moon speaks to us that we are always old and always young
  - Tzav is connected to both the beginning and the end in that in most years it is read just before Passover, but on a leap year, it is read just before Purim

### Explaining the Salvation Pattern

- The beginning of a new cycle is a good time to further explain this idea, which comes from the Word and the creation and is foundational to the whole Spiritual Seasons series
- What is the salvation pattern?
  - the pattern of growth, development, built into everything in creation
  - big picture: unity, separation, reunification (echad)
- First place for teasing out finer details: our own salvation journeys
  1. we start with an innocent faith
  2. we go through a phase of strong temptations and upheaval, leading to an awakening
  3. there’s a moment of turning from the world, a conversion
  4. then there’s a process of learning God’s ways more and more deeply
  5. this leads to us progressively see ourselves better, which leads to deeper repentance
  6. God graciously does a deeper work in our soul, a deeper work of cleansing that often comes by way of our married lives, being a spouse and parent
  7. and this leads, eventually, to a life more focused on others and more intimacy with God, too
- Second place to look for teasing out the pattern: the annual mo’edim
  - they are particularly powerful because they align with the physical seasons and the agricultural calendar
  - these 3 calendars are a particularly rich set of overlapping progressions

- examples:
  - freedom from Egypt (1<sup>st</sup> mo'ed) overlaps with spring (first physical season) – they are speaking about the same point in the story
  - the “dark side” of the annual mo'edim (none given in winter) coincide with the dark side of the physical calendar
    - but mankind has added Hanukkah and Purim indicating that's a time for man to step up and reflect the light
  - the agricultural calendar shows us two great harvests of seed in the year
    - “naked” seed in the spring; “flesh-covered” seeds in the fall
    - 2 harvests overlap with 2 equinoxes and 2 great mo'edim seasons (Passover and the Fall mo'edim)
- Adding in other progressions
  - the patriarchs
  - human development (birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood)
    - a particularly helpful picture of salvation because we are all so familiar with this journey
  - the Torah cycle
  - the layout of the Tabernacle (a spatial progression)
- We layer the progressions, trying to tease out the root of each step, and developing theories
  - the theories grow and change
- Why should everything in creation be speaking the same story, salvation?
  - it is all made through the Word, which is Yeshua; therefore, it all bears the mark of Yeshua, Who is Salvation

### A Salvation Pattern Reading of the Korbanot

- though our obedience does not depend on our understanding, it is still good to try to understand, as long as our obedience is not being hindered by that pursuit
  - it pleases God when we dig and discover what He has hidden
- 2 orders:
  - parsha Vayikra: whole burnt offering, grain offering, **peace offering**, sin offering, guilt offering
    - I'll use this order
  - parsha Tzav: whole burnt offering, grain offering, sin offering, guilt offering, **peace offering**
  - perhaps the change of order reflects two halves of the salvation pattern – peace moves from the middle to the end
    - when sin enters the picture, it must be dealt with before the final peace can be achieved, so there is a different order in the second half of the salvation pattern (peace comes last)
- 1<sup>st</sup> impression
  - the grain offering, listed second, seems different and almost out of place



- the 3 weeks is a period of mourning in high summer that is focused on the great sins of the past
  - begins on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz with the the golden calf (resulting in the breaking of the tablets – the breaking of the covenant) and ends 3 weeks later on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, the day the 10 spies gave the evil report
- guilt offering and the fall mo'edim
  - “guilt” implies that a judgment has happened and the verdict is “guilty”
  - the 10 Days of Awe are focused on God’s impending judgment
    - this idea comes from tradition, but the tradition is based on Scripture – the chronology of Moses’ 3 trips up the mountain, 40 days each time starting at Shavuot – brings us right to Yom Kippur for his final descent with the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of tablets (which are not broken)

### Applying the Salvation Pattern to Details of the Olah

- Having a bit of a framework for the korbanot helps us to wade through some of the rabbis’ discussions regarding details in Tzav
- the change of clothing
  - for the olah only, a priest must change his clothes and remove the ashes of the olah to a clean place outside the camp
  - clothing is a prominent them at the end of a cycle and the beginning of the next cycle
    - costumes of Purim, multiple mentions of clothing in Esther
    - parsha Tetzaveh near the end of the cycle – focused on garments of the priests
  - we take something with us into a new cycle: our deeds, which are like clothing
    - “Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (Revelation 19:7-8)
- the olah burns through the night
  - this is unique to the olah
  - a quality of the beginning step of a cycle is that God provides a **touchstone**, a seed which contains the whole picture of salvation and becomes a strength for us when the going gets tougher; we remember this seed of salvation
    - the Passover story is a touchstone for Israel; how many times do we read, “I am the Lord your God Who took you out of the land of Egypt...”?
    - it’s often miraculous, like a deliverance upon conversion
    - the touchstone is especially valuable when the darkness comes and we begin to doubt
      - one in a “dark” place could look down at night into the courtyard of the Temple and see that olah flame burning through the night

and be reminded that God's salvation is as real now as it was at first

- God has designed ways to give us hope
- the small "mem" in "mokdah"
  - in a word translated "flame" or "fire" in the verses about the olah: "This is the law of the olah – the olah which burns on the fire on the altar all night..."
  - "mem" means "water"
  - R'Raskin teaching: the letter mem is connected to the exodus story ([https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video\\_cdo/aid/1809865/jewish/Redemption-and-the-Letter-Mem.htm](https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/1809865/jewish/Redemption-and-the-Letter-Mem.htm) (7:30m)):
    - Moshe, Miriam, matzah, maror
    - Egypt = "Mitzrayim"
      - begins and ends with the letter mem
      - perhaps a contraction of "metzar yam," "constraints of the sea"
      - Egypt is built on the flooding of the Nile, the waters escaping their river boundaries
      - it's like Egypt is the chaotic waters of Genesis 1 that smother the land until God brings boundaries to them and establishes dry land
        - when God brings Israel out, He has them display mastery over these waters, splitting the sea, and they come through "on dry land"
        - Moses is named by Pharaoh's daughter for being drawn out of the water. He is the one chosen to lead the nation out of the chaotic waters of Egypt, so his entire essence is linked to this idea, and this is reflected in his name. "When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water.""  
(Exodus 2:10)
  - the small mem is Egypt becoming small, mastery over Egypt, the decimation of Egypt
    - as we look at the flame of the olah, we are to see in it how God makes Egypt small, "not one of them remained"

### **Yeshua and the Progression of the Korbanot**

- "Mary" is "Miriam" in Hebrew, two mems in Yeshua's mother's name. Mary is connected to Egypt: Hosea 11:1, Matt 2:15 – "Out of Egypt I called my Son." In the same way that God's people are born from the earthly mother Egypt, Yeshua is born from the earthly mother Miriam, Mary. He is born from the waters of bitterness, which are the waters of the physical world that smother and hem us in. But He transcends that birth into physicality. He comes out of that place, and we follow Him in doing that.
- If Yeshua is what the korbanot picture, what does it mean that there's a progression of korbanot?
  - Yeshua's sacrifice covers us at every step

- we walk imperfectly, and each step is imperfect, and what He did for us applies in many ways as we walk our salvation journeys
- The progression also means that we must die to self at every step
  - like Yeshua
  - we particularly focus on bringing boundaries to the animal soul, the nephesh, which is being particularly pictured in most of the korbanot
    - our pursuit of pleasure must be hemmed in and turned to good purposes

#### Additional Topic:

- see 19b-Thoughts for Tzav Torah Service.docx for three steps to salvation from parsha Tzav,
  - 2 from the korbanot:
    - it begins with Yeshua, His sacrifice
    - it continues with our own sacrifice, identifying ourselves with the animal
  - 1 from the inauguration of the priesthood
    - the fruit of the sacrificial system is the service of the priesthood
    - service for which we are individually designed is the fruit that comes from laying down our lives
      - until we can express who God made us to be, we are not entirely free

## Tzav Transcript (not exact)

Welcome to Beth Tikkun and this series of teachings called “Spiritual Seasons.” In these teachings, we are looking into the weekly Torah portions in the light of God’s yearly curriculum for spiritual development connected to the calendar. This week we are in parsha Tzav, Leviticus 6-8.

### Summary

“Tzav” means “command.” The name of the portion comes from the second verse of the portion, which begins, “Command Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the law of the burnt offering...’” The portion is a complement to parsha Vayikra, the previous portion. In Vayikra, the various types of sacrifices, or korbanot, are laid out. In Tzav, each of these types is addressed a second time, and we get more information. In Vayikra, each type of korban is introduced with “When” or “If a person brings such and such an offering,” whereas in Tzav, each type is introduced with, “This is the law of,” (“the Torah of,”) this or that offering, and then we’re given additional information. Another distinction in Tzav is that there is an emphasis on what the priests receive from the korbanot, the priests’ share. After the korbanot commandments, in

chapter 8 we see the consecration of Aaron and his sons actually being accomplished according to the instructions given earlier in the Torah. Those instructions were given in parsha Tetzaveh. It is a momentous scene there as the priesthood on earth begins. Moses ceremonially washes Aaron and his sons with water and dresses them in the holy garments. He then slays and presents a bull as a sin offering, a ram for a whole burnt offering, and a second ram as a special ordination offering, and he instructs Aaron and his sons to stay in the Tabernacle for seven days. And so begins a new class of human being, those who have God's permission to perform the holy functions of connecting together in these special ways mankind and God at God's home on earth.

### **Commands and the Mode of Receiving**

Let's think now about how Tzav fits into the calendar. We're in an important transition now as Adar has given way to Nissan. It's a time of death and rebirth. We're seeing rebirth all around us in nature right now, but any kind of birth means that the last situation has to end, and you have to leave it behind. The trees are dormant. The dormant state of a tree over the winter is something like being in Egypt, in exile: the half life, the life that isn't life. For them to enter into another cycle of growth means that they have to leave that dormant state behind and start building again. So, in a way, that's a kind of death to the previous situation for them. As we make this transition now from the end of one cycle to the beginning of another, we're moving from a place of the bride who acts with a higher degree of independence and gives back to God from a heart of love to a mode more focused on dependence and receiving, the dependence and receiving of a child. There's not a sharp line between the two phases, though. The two are enmeshed, connected.

Why might we have a portion now named "Tzav," meaning "command?" The word "tzav" used here is actually a bit unusual, but we only see that when we compare it to similar verses throughout the Torah. We often see in the Torah this formula that is usually, "And Adonai spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them..'" The phrase is usually "SPEAK to the children of Israel," "daber," but there are two variations. One is "SAY to the children of Israel," the verb "amar," instead of "speak." And just six times in the Torah this stronger wording of "COMMAND the children of Israel," is used, our word "tzav," and this portion is the first time we see this variation. The word also sticks out because it's the name of the portion. (Kehot Chumash, Tzav)

Once again, the three words used in the formula are "say," "speak," and "command." The Sages say that the softest of the three is "say to the children of Israel," and "speak" is a bit stronger. "Command" is obviously the strongest. Think about a parent commanding a child to do something. The idea of "command" puts an emphasis on the fact that God is very high and the children of Israel are very low. And it carries with it something of the idea that this commandment isn't really for you to ponder over and digest and cogitate about. It's not necessary for you to understand. Just do it. Do it with some speed, even. And this is honoring to God when we do what He commands simply because He commands it.

It's not hard for us to see how this portion title fits into the calendar. As we lean now to the mode of a child that obeys, a child that absorbs a new situation and a new teaching, a new "light" if you will, the wording of the Torah shifts in this place to "command," which is appropriate for a child. The child doesn't have the capacity to understand the newness yet. There are situations in life where we must recognize that we have little capacity to understand, but we must submit anyway. Maybe your spiritual leadership makes a decision that seems baffling to you, but you set those questions aside and simply obey, as long as the leadership is not asking you to go against God's Torah. And there is even a portion of the year where God's design EMPHASIZES this kind of obedience, asking fewer questions and simply trusting, moving when He says move. And that time is now.

Let me encourage you to listen to His voice now and move with alacrity when He says move. Leave the cogitating for later. I should add here, though, that we always wait long enough to be sure we are genuinely hearing from the Lord, and that may involve seeking counsel from others. But once we know it's from the Lord, don't hesitate. There will be a time for greater understanding later. We spend years learning to obey as a child, but there does come a time of adolescence when God puts it into us to start DEEPLY ASKING WHY we are being commanded to do this or that. This is God's design. The design is not meant to hide anything from us, but all in its proper time.

And this idea of "tzav" is very appropriate for the sacrificial system, in particular. It's an elusive topic that feels especially alien to us in modern times. By using the word "tzav" here, it's almost like God is saying, "I know you're going to have a lot of questions about the korbanot, but I just want you to do it." In some ways, though we can try to understand what we can about the korbanot, and we should try to understand, we also accept that these commands are coming from a deep place within God's will such that He gives them with little means of understanding them. God is the parent saying, "I know you can't understand this right now; just do it. It is my will for you." Thus, the sacrificial system is somewhat impenetrable for us. And there's a kind of peace that comes with recognizing the depth of these commands and their impenetrable quality. If we are given the opportunity tomorrow to bring korbanot at a rebuilt Temple, we don't need to understand deeply what we are doing. We do because He commands, period.

We know that the sacrificial system is a shadow of what Yeshua did for us on the cross. Do we expect to ever really understand how God looks at that act? I don't think so.

### **The Power of the "Tzav" Commandments**

And the Sages say there is a kind of extra measure of power attached to these commandments given with the word "tzav." Obedience in these cases actually comes from a place of a great deal of faith in God and His goodness, the faith of a child in the parent. In fact, the rabbis say that doing these commandments in particular have the ability to affect all generations. I'm not sure if they mean past generations or just present and future, but in truth, all that we do ripples out into time both past and future, and the rabbis say that the korbanot make a particularly strong ripple. Think about that – if you were able to bring a korban today, that act sends an especially strong ripple through time, the whole timeline of world history. It affects the whole

world right now, and it continues out into the future. And even more mind-blowing, that act today would even reach back to the past and effect the past. Think about the fact that what you do now could affect the children of Israel as they are walking in the wilderness, or the generation of King David, or Abraham and Sarah. Since God is outside of time, at one-and-the-same time, God can look down at the timeline and see Abraham making an offering to Him, and He can also be seeing you bringing an offering in 2024 at a restored Temple, and He allows the two to effect each other! It's wonderful to think that we can have that kind of connection with these people we read about in the Word.

### **A Certain Level of Understanding Is Necessary**

So, on the one hand, we just do because we are commanded. But on the other hand, we **MUST** have a certain level of understanding so that we can even know how to do what we're doing; am I to bring an olah or a shelamim? How do I do it? How do I **PREPARE** to do it? There are some practicalities that must be understood on a certain level.

### **Knowing While Knowing That We Don't Know**

But let's look at this idea of uncomplicated obedience from another angle, too, because this kind of obedience is not only a trait of the child but also a quality of the mature. Remember, the end and the beginning of the calendar are enwedged, meshed together. With maturity comes understanding, **BUT THE TRULY MATURE WILL ALSO KEEP CONSTANTLY BEFORE THEM HOW LITTLE THEY TRULY DO UNDERSTAND.** They will have the ability to continuously know themselves as both the mature adult and the young child, simultaneously. Further, they understand that having these two states of consciousness – knowing ourselves as having grown into adulthood while knowing that we still have so much further to go – keeping these two always in mind creates a kind of internal wholeness, a shalom, because the two states of being complement each other.

We need to always keep in our consciousness the idea that we do any of the commandments firstly because they are commanded, period. At the same time, in the complexity of our thought life, we can also be trying to gain understanding. God desires for us to uncover what He has hidden in the mitzvot. And understanding helps us to be passionate about what we're doing. And yet, even as much as we gain understanding, we must be humble and remind ourselves that we can never understand more than a drop in the ocean and that there will always be **MYSTERY**. So, along with the kind of calming sense of surrender to God the Father that this admission of not knowing brings, it also brings out the glow of mystery surrounding the commandments. And this sense of mystery is valuable because mystery is connected to wonder, and wonder is connected to joy, and joy is actually connected to deeper understanding. So the sense of mystery is actually a kind of starting point for the process of understanding. But we must always have within our being and within our consciousness that childlike sense of wonder and mystery even as we retain a maturity and a dignity.

The moon speaks to us of this idea that we are constantly going back and forth in our maturity of knowing and our newness of beginning again. The moon is always growing into fullness and fading into nothing, only to begin again. Let the moon be an encouragement to us that we are

always to carry with us the mature clarity of the full moon and the newness and sense of wonder of the sliver of the moon beginning its growth journey once again.

One of my points here is to show that though Tzav speaks to this phase of rebirth and starting again as a child who receives commands, the portion also reaches back to the end of the last cycle. Tzav is connected to both Passover and Purim, both the beginning and the end of the calendar, because, though it is usually read just before Passover, in a leap year, it is read just before Purim. And so we can see this duality in the very idea of “tzav,” that simple obedience is a trait that the young must abide by and the old must never let go of.

### **Explaining the Salvation Pattern**

We’ll get back to Tzav shortly, but I’d like to focus now on this idea that I’m calling the “salvation pattern,” giving some further explanation of what it is and how we build it and explore with it. After this explanation, we’ll apply the salvation pattern to the korbanot. This is a good time to do this sort of foundation work because the cycle has now flipped and we begin again. The salvation pattern drawn out of the Word of God is the root of this Spiritual Seasons study.

So, what is the salvation pattern? One way to understand it is that it’s a pattern of growth that God has designed into creation. Everything develops according to the pattern called “salvation.” This means that everything in creation is on a journey that begins with unity in God, moves through a phase of falling away, and comes back together with God in a deeper echad. Those are the big movements of the pattern.

One of the first places we can look to start teasing out some finer details of the process is our own salvation journeys we are walking out with the Lord. The details for each person’s story will be different, of course. But the root progression is largely the same. Ideally, it starts with a carefree childhood of simple faith, then turns to a rough period of adolescence when we really struggle with temptations and turmoil of all kinds. We begin to sense deeply that our path is not leading to life. And there’s a moment of turning more whole-heartedly back to the Lord and walking away from the world, what we might call a moment of conversion and maybe also baptism. As salvation continues, we move on to progressively learning more of God’s ways, and over time we see ourselves and our inward motivations better, and this better view of ourselves helps us to even know how to repent more deeply as the problems become clearer. The deeper repentance leads to an outpouring of God’s grace as He does a deeper and deeper work in our souls which leads, eventually, to a life that is increasingly focused on others, and it also leads to a greater intimacy with God over time. And that’s the pattern. Let me repeat that quickly:

1. we start with an innocent faith
2. we go through a phase of strong temptations and upheaval, leading to an awakening
3. there’s a moment of turning from the world, a conversion
4. then there’s a process of learning God’s ways more and more deeply
5. this leads to us progressively see ourselves better, which leads to deeper repentance

6. God graciously does a deeper work in our soul, a deeper work of cleansing that often comes by way of our married lives, being a spouse and parent
7. and this leads, eventually, to a life more focused on others and more intimacy with God, too

That's the general gist of the salvation pattern. And I think we can all identify with that journey. Now, the approach we're taking to God's yearly calendar is that that same salvation story is playing out for us every year, and the annual mo'edim are milestones on that yearly journey. Other than looking at our own lives, the calendar is probably the clearest picture of the pattern. Salvation is not just something we experience over the course of a lifetime. We experience the whole of it every year in miniature, and even every month, and even every day.

The calendar is particularly useful for digging into the salvation pattern because it is so rich with connections to other pictures of salvation. So, while on the one hand we have these details about Passover and Shavuot and Sukkot in the Word, on the other hand, since these mo'edim are connected to the calendar, we're also seeing the same story play out in the physical seasons around us, and on top of that, we have a whole agricultural calendar that's giving us more clues as to what these mo'edim are picturing. The three are deeply connected, the three being the mo'edim, the physical seasons, and the agricultural calendar. We don't have to wonder how these three align. They are already aligned in time, and they help to illuminate each other.

By just layering two of them, the mo'edim and the physical seasons, we already start to sense that there's an underlying pattern there, that there are themes that the mo'edim and the changing seasons have in common. We start to notice things like freedom from Egypt coincides with the rebirth of spring. We might further notice that when the calendar grows dark, in the winter, God also didn't give us the light of any annual mo'edim on that side, as these great mile markers all occur from the 1<sup>st</sup> month to the 7<sup>th</sup> month. But then we realize that mankind added the holidays of our own in this dark period, Hanukkah and Purim. So we start making these early connections. And when we begin to consider the agricultural calendar with the other two, we notice that there are two great harvest times in Israel, and these harvest times are connected to the great festival periods in the first and seventh months, and that's also when we're hitting the two equinoxes in the year according to the seasonal calendar. And we're making more and more connections.

Eventually we start bringing in other progressions, like the sequence of the patriarchs. If Abraham is early, being the first patriarch, and Passover is early, being the first of the annual mo'edim in the year, what do these two have in common? We might see in that comparison that God takes a very strong Fatherly role in both Abraham's story and in the Passover story. And so we associate GOD THE STRONG FATHER with that early point in the story. Now we have a lot of overlapping ideas: Passover, Abraham, God the strong Father, spring, and the barley harvest. All of these are picturing in their own realms the first stage of growth. And now this first stage begins to carry a certain feel to it.

And on it goes. We get a lot more light when we align the progression of human development with these others – birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood. And there are many others we can add to the growing picture like the Torah cycle and the layout of the Tabernacle as we move from space to space, which is a kind of spatial progression. When we understand that each progression is really picturing the same story as the others, they each begin to illuminate each other, and the underlying pattern starts to emerge.

And we develop theories. Maybe the root of this middle step is this or that. And over time, with God’s leading and much more thought, we refine and we add and tweak and tweak the theory some more. And it’s a work in progress. But it’s nothing less than the study of Yeshua, salvation. And somehow in there, as our understanding grows, we are being drawn closer to Yeshua.

Eventually we are able to apply the pattern to less obvious progressions to see if we find a resonance there. So, that is what I want to do today with the korbanot, the sacrifices, which are presented to us in a certain order in Leviticus. That order is an important progression. So we’ll look at that today.

But let me finish this little summary by speaking a bit more about the idea that everything in the universe is telling the same story, the story of salvation. Why should that be? It is because everything in creation was made through Yeshua, Who is the Word by which creation is made, and “Yeshua” means “salvation,” of course. We can almost imagine it that when God speaks out the creation, the word He is speaking is “Yeshua.” So if God does the work of creation through Yeshua, by means of Yeshua, through the vessel of Yeshua, then all of creation bears the mark of salvation. It all has an imprint of the story of the One through Whom it is made. We just need to become sensitive to how everything around us and in the Word is speaking that story. And this includes the korbanot, the sacrificial system.

### **A Salvation Pattern Reading of the Korbanot**

So let’s turn now to the korbanot. We said earlier that the korbanot are here introduced with the word “tzav,” which partly means, “You don’t have to understand; just do it,” but now I’m going to try to dig a bit deeper into them, just a little. It’s not that we can’t try to understand, but it’s that our obedience is not based on understanding. God delights when we dig and discover the gems He has hidden in creation, as long as we’re hustling to DO with our hands and feet, too.

What I want to do now is a salvation pattern “reading” of the korbanot, and then apply that reading to some details here in parsha Tzav. Let’s see if the korbanot fit the salvation pattern.

The description of the sacrificial system in Vayikra, which is where the korbanot are first introduced, starts with the whole burnt offering at the beginning and ends with the guilt offering. In the middle we have the grain offering, the peace offering, and the sin offering. Once again, Vayikra’s order is the whole burnt offering, grain, peace, sin, and guilt. And you can see these in the outline posted beneath the video. Now in this week’s portion, Tzav, it’s almost the same order, but the peace offering moves from the middle to the end, after the sin and guilt

offerings. I believe this is because Vayikra is addressing the first half of salvation, and Tzav is addressing the second half, and so the order is affected. Today I'm going to apply the first order, from Vayikra, so we'll just be looking at the first half of the salvation pattern.

One thing that jumps out at me when I see the progression in Vayikra is that the second type of offering seems different from the others because it is a grain offering and not an animal sacrifice. When we see that, if we are sensitive to God's pattern of salvation, we will feel the echo of the calendar there. The calendar begins with the emphasis on the lamb at Passover. Much later in the calendar we'll have a focus on two goats at Yom Kippur and 70 bulls at Sukkot. But just after Passover, the focus shifts away from the lamb and onto what? Grain is associated with the whole period of the omer. The omer count begins the evening after the seder. "Omer" is, in fact, a measure of GRAIN, the barley that is brought at Firstfruits, which is the day after the seder. That whole week that begins at the seder is the week of Unleavened Bread, and matzah is another way to focus on grain. We count the omer during the barley harvest all the way to Shavuot, where TWO LOAVES OF BREAD made from wheat are offered on the altar. Do you see all this focus on grain at this early point in the calendar?

So right away, we're seeing this connection between the second of the korbanot, the grain offering, and the omer period in the calendar. This leads us to back up to the first step for each and compare them. The first mo'ed is Passover, and first of the korbanot is the whole burnt offering, the olah (I'll just call it "olah," which is a lot easier to say than "whole burnt offering").

Let's think a bit about the qualities of the first step and see if we can find some of these qualities in the olah. The first in any salvation pattern progression contains the others. It's the seed of the others. It's the flash of lightening at the beginning, the inspiration, the big picture. And don't we immediately sense that there's something about the olah that feels like it's the basis of the others? For one, it's first. Second, it is to burn all through the night, including both day and night – so it contains this fullness in it of a whole daily cycle. And third, we can also see in the text that some of the others refer to the olah as they are being explained, like this: "This is the law of the sin offering, in the place where the OLAH is slain the sin offering shall be slain before the LORD." So, the place for slaughtering the sin offering is given in terms of the place of slaughter for the olah. The olah sets the rule. And there is this sense that the essence of the sacrifices is giving of yourself to God entirely, and this essence is seen most clearly in the olah, the whole burnt offering that is entirely given to God except the skin of the animal. And isn't entirely giving ourselves over to God what Passover is about, too? If we belong to the kingdom of Egypt, then coming out of that and becoming part of God's kingdom requires turning from Pharaoh and dedicating ourselves to God. And there's really no going back from that point. When Israel follows God out of Egypt, the die is already cast. God might propose to them like a Groom later at Mt. Sinai and give them a choice to join Him in deeper intimacy, but they're standing out there in a desert without much to eat or drink. They're at His mercy, and their free will is a bit limited at that point. The choice was really made when they took to the road out of Egypt.

Let's move forward now. After the olah comes the **grain offering**, and we've already connected that one to the period of the counting of the omer, which ends at Shavuot.

The third in the list is the **peace offering**, the shelamim, from the word "shalom." "Shalom" means "complete," "whole." And after the omer, we have arrived in the calendar at Shavuot, itself. Shavuot is known as the holiday of the giving of the Torah. And it is through the Torah that a kind of shalom happens, a marriage, the coming together of Groom and bride. Shavuot has a kind of "twinning" aspect to it, like in the two tablets of the 10 commandments and the twin loaves offered on the altar. It's about the joining of right and left, heaven and earth, God and His people. It's about being raised to a higher level of union, and that's a kind of early shalom.

After the shelamim offering comes the **sin offering**, the chatat offering. What happens when we are joined to God through the Torah? We are held to the standard of the Torah. And what is the standard of the Torah? You don't cheat on God. You don't become an adulteress by sinning. If you sin, you die. If you break the Torah, that's sin. And what we see following Shavuot in the calendar is the period called "The Three Weeks." It's a time of tragedy growing out of Israel's sin. Events that are said to have happened during the Three Weeks include the Golden Calf and the breaking of the first set of tablets as well as the evil report of the spies on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av.

After the sin offering comes the **guilt offering**. And in the calendar, we have come to the fall mo'edim. The connection here is not hard to see. Guilt implies that a judgment has been rendered, and the verdict is "guilty." And what is the focus of the 10 Days of Awe from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur? It is the judgment, which is said to happen on Rosh Hashanah but is delayed until Yom Kippur as we are given the chance to repent before the Lord. Now, I know that this association with judgment grows out of the Oral Law, but it doesn't come from nowhere. It's based on the chronology of Moses' trips up the mountain, three times for 40 days each. Add those to the date of Shavuot, and you come out right at Yom Kippur, which is when Moses comes down the mountain with news of a gracious judgment from God and the second set of tablets. And so the guilt offering aligns with the period of judgment in the calendar.

Honestly, it's a wonder to see these things. What God has designed is marvelous.

### **Applying the Salvation Pattern to Details of the Olah**

It would take a lot of thought to really dig into what the korbanot have to add to the overall picture of salvation. I'll leave that thinking for another time. But what I want to do now is to spend some time just dipping into a few of the topics the rabbis like to talk about in parsha Tzav to see if we can shed a little light on them now that we have the beginnings of a framework for understanding how the korbanot relate to each other.

The first has to do with a change of clothing. Some address in this portion the fact that the priest who carries out the ashes of the olah to a clean place outside the camp is to change his clothes. From the verse, it's implied that this should happen in the morning after the olah has burned all night long and has been reduced to ashes. Now, when I see "clothes," it makes me

think of the end of a cycle and the beginning of the next cycle. We talked about clothing with the costumes of Purim and the many mentions of clothing in the book of Esther and with the recent parsha Tetzaveh, which talks at length about the priestly garments. Those are all coming near the end. Here we have this olah that's at a new beginning. It's first. And as we have been saying, the end and the beginning are connected and share many qualities. Here we have this talk of changing the clothes at the beginning of the korbanot. When a cycle comes to a close, we take something with us into the next cycle. We take with us the new clothing that we have fashioned in that cycle, and that clothing is the deeds that we have done. In Revelation 19 – so, a Scripture very near to the end of the Bible that is describing end-time events and the beginning of a new epoch of world history, we read, “Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints” (Revelation 19:7-8).

So, you see what we're doing here. We're taking the theme of clothing that we have teased out as being particularly strong at the end of a cycle and the beginning of the next cycle, and we have put that together with a detail from the beginning of the korbanot progression.

Let's do another. Let's talk about this idea that the olah is to burn all through the night. One idea that emerges quite strongly from the pattern is that God gives a touchstone of salvation near the beginning of the process. He gives us a little mini-picture of salvation early as a free gift. It's the seed, and it's often miraculous. And we take that early gift, and we cling to it. Some people may experience a miraculous deliverance right at that point of conversion. And that picture of salvation becomes a touchstone that we are able to go back to. And especially when the going gets tougher, and it will if our salvation is worth anything, when the way grows darker, we think back to that early light, and we say, “I KNOW I DID NOT IMAGINE THAT. It was miraculous, and it was God. It was God's salvation. And if He did it then, He will do it now.” The whole Passover story is just this sort of touchstone. How many times in Scripture does God remind Israel of this story by saying, “I am the Lord your God Who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God!”

Now, here we have this unique detail that the olah is to burn all night long, and this is followed by the commandment to have a continual flame on the altar. Why this talk of all-night flames attached to the olah? Well, from the salvation pattern, we can see why. The olah is the touchstone, and it is to burn all through the day and all through the night, when it gets dark. At night, it would be even more visible, even, in the way that that even a small amount of light is visible from far away when it is very dark. Imagine that you are in Jerusalem and you've had a rough go of it lately. God is squeezing you, and you're not quite sure how things will turn out, and there's cause for fear. You're there in the dark on one of the hills surrounding the Temple Mount. And in that state, you look down at the Temple, and burning there in the courtyard is a small flame. It's the flame of the olah offerings burning through the night. It's saying, “Don't forget what happened when you first started following God, when God was more tangible for you, when you knew in the depths of your soul that He was guiding you.” It's really quite a breathtaking connection coming out of the salvation pattern here. Our God is a God Who wants

to give us hope when He brings us into the darkness for His good purposes, and He has gone to the trouble of designing these almost mundane but deeply impactful ways to speak hope to us.

Let's talk about one more. In written Torah scrolls, there's a small letter mem here in these verses about the olah. It's in a word translated "flame" or "fire." The verse goes like this: "This is the law of the olah – the olah which burns on the fire on the altar all night..." That word for "fire" is "mokdah," and in Torah scrolls, the mem at the beginning is written small. There's some talk about this mem. But being able to fit the olah into a bigger picture helps us to filter through some of that conversation.

First of all, the letter "mem" means "water." And the teaching that sticks out at me regarding this mem comes from R' Raskin. He points out that this letter is strongly connected to the story of coming out of Egypt through such words and names as "Moshe" and "Miriam" and "matzah" and "maror." And the word "Egypt," itself, begins and ends with a mem, "Mitzrayim." And Egypt's connection to water is even stronger if the word "mitzrayim" is understood as a combination of the words "metzar" and "yam," which together mean "constraints of the sea." It's almost like Egypt is being described as waters that smother, like the chaotic waters at the beginning of creation before God gave them boundaries and created dry land on Day 3 of creation. Ancient Egypt was built on the flooding of the Nile. And in escaping Egypt, what did God have Israel do? He had them display mastery over the waters and walk out of Egypt on dry land, a phrase that emphasized in that story of crossing the sea. Moses is named by Pharaoh's daughter for being drawn out of the water. He is the one chosen to lead the nation out of the chaotic waters of Egypt, so his entire essence is linked to this idea, and this is reflected in his name. "When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."" (Exodus 2:10)

What is the small mem? It is mastery over Egypt – again, this touchstone story, the archetype of redemption. And where do we find the small mem? It's connected to the olah that burns in the darkness. It's such a beautiful picture here, once again. When we are in a dark place, we are to look to the flame of the olah burning through the night in the courtyard of the Temple, and we are remember that when everything looked dark there in Egypt, God made Egypt small, brought Egypt low; He devastated Egypt and crushed Pharaoh's army. Not one of them remained. From this angle, that flame in the darkness is saying to us, "Remember how God delivered you from Egypt, and know that He will do it again, and it will be even greater, and the fruit will be even more life-giving. Cling to that little beacon in the night. It is real, and what it represents is real, and it will bring you hope. It's so simple and beautiful. Are you beginning to see some of the power for understanding and encouragement that comes out of being able to connect together this picture of salvation and that one? If we can connect together the olah with the Passover and coming out of Egypt, the text starts to open up in new ways. It's mind boggling. And it just makes you stand in awe of the God Who designed all of this.

### **Yeshua and the Progression of the Korbanot**

"Mary" is "Miriam" in Hebrew, two mems in Yeshua's mother's name. Mary is connected to Egypt: Hosea 11:1, Matt 2:15 – "Out of Egypt I called my Son." In the same way that God's

people are born from the earthly mother Egypt, Yeshua is born from the earthly mother Miriam, Mary. He is born from the waters of bitterness, which are the waters of the physical world that smother and hem us in. But He transcends that birth into physicality. He comes out of that place, and we follow Him in doing that.

We've been focusing here on some details of the olah in particular, but let's zoom out again as we shift our focus a little more squarely to Yeshua. Not just the olah, but all of the korbanot are picturing Yeshua, the One Whose name is "salvation." What does it mean, then, that one way to see Yeshua is as the progressive salvation of the olah first, the grain offering second, then the peace offering and the sin and guilt offerings? I think what seeing this pattern here says is that Yeshua's sacrifice IS A COVERING FOR US EVERY STEP OF THE WAY on our salvation journey. Do we walk perfectly? No. Do we walk ANY STEP OF SALVATION perfectly? No. Praise the Lord that there is One Who did, and His blood covers us. He covers us at every step, in fact.

Going a bit further, the idea that the korbanot reflect the steps of salvation speaks TO WHAT WE MUST DO in following Yeshua on this journey. Yes, He covers us. But every step of salvation requires us also dying to self, and we see that in the korbanot. Every step of growth requires a dying to self especially when it comes to our own pursuit of the pleasures that satisfy our nephesh, our animal soul, and we see that emphasis on the nephesh because most of these are animal sacrifices. When we put more boundaries around the animal soul and put our nephesh to work for a good that includes others and is especially oriented outward, each time we do that, we have taken another step into the redeemed life, the saved life.

So, Yeshua covers us every step of the way, and we also follow Him in giving up our lives every step of the way. We won't make a single step of progress without Him, and we won't make a single step of progress without dying to self as Yeshua did.

Well, that's plenty for today. Thanks again for listening. Once again, you can download an outline below. May God make us people who are always searching for understanding but who, at the same time, always retain a sense of wonder at Him and His ways. May we be a people who truly live up to the calling to be a living sacrifice. May we be a people who look to Adonai for hope when He brings darkness into our lives. And may He make us into the people He wants us to be. Shalom.