

Mishpatim (Ordinances) **Exodus 21:1-24:18**

This week's Parasha should be considered a continuation of last week's reading of the Ten Words/Commandments. The first **letter** of Exodus 21:1 is a **vav** (ו), commonly translated as "**then**" in Christian translations. However, the proper translation is "**and**" thereby you would see the phrase change from this:

Now these are the judgments" to this: "**And** these are the judgments"

The difference is that the **vav** (ו) is a **connecting term** in Hebrew. It is indicating that what is **coming** is a **continuation** of what was just said. In other words, the **ordinances** that are about to be expounded on are **connected to** – not separate from – from **the Ten Words/ Commandments**. And lest you think that any of these **ordinances** are done away with:

Psalm 119:160 The entirety of Your Word *is* truth, and every one of Your righteous **ordinances endures forever**.

Now I would like to spend the rest of the time focusing on these verses from our reading:

Exodus 24:12 Then יהוה (Yahwey) said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the Torah and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." **13** So Moses arose **with his assistant Joshua**, and Moses went up to the mountain of Elohim..... **15** Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. **16** Now the glory of יהוה rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. **17** The sight of the glory of יהוה *was* like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

We generally think of Moses going up on the mountain by himself, but verse 13 indicates that his assistant, **Joshua** went with him. With **Moses** being synonymous with **Torah** and **Joshua** being a shadow of **Yeshua**, we see the two of them traveling up the mountain in agreement and in **unity**. Everything is focused on what is about to happen on this mountain. The small phrase that mentions Joshua is easy to miss. This is so like Yeshua who always pointed towards the **Father**:

John 8:50 "And I do not seek My *own* glory;

As we return to our Hebrew roots, we sometimes are accused of spending more time in Torah than focused on Yeshua, yet these verses in Exodus point to Yeshua being on that mountain though He did not take the **glory**. We know that when our eyes are open, we can find the humble Yeshua everywhere we look in the Hebrew Scriptures, just as He said:

John 5:46 "For if you believed **Moses**, you would believe Me; for he wrote about **Me**.

Exodus 24:15 tells us that a **cloud** covered the mountain. **Clouds** are an interesting thread that runs throughout the entire Bible and we will spend some time on this topic. Perhaps what you learn about **clouds** will help you **hear** from the Father in the coming years. Let's take another look at this verse:

Exodus 24:15 Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a **cloud** covered the mountain.¹⁶ Now the glory of יהוה rested on Mount Sinai, and the **cloud** covered it **six days**. And on the **seventh day** He called to Moses **out of the midst of the cloud**.

We'll let the Bible define how יהוה uses **clouds**, both in the **past** and in the **future**. I'll give you the verses, then briefly comment so you'll know where I'm going with the thought.

Genesis 9:13 "I set My **rainbow in the cloud**, and it shall be for the **sign of the covenant** between Me and the earth.¹⁴ "It shall be, when I bring a **cloud** over the earth, that **the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud**;

But you didn't notice before that it's the rainbow **IN THE CLOUD** that's the sign of the covenant between יהוה and the earth, not just the rainbow.

Exodus 13:21 And יהוה went before them by day in a **pillar of cloud** to lead the way, and by night in a **pillar of fire** to give them **light**, so as to go by day and night.... **Exodus 14:19** And the Angel of Elohim, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the **pillar of cloud** went from before them and stood behind them.²⁰ So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a **cloud and darkness to the one**, and it **gave light by night to the other**, so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

Make sure you see the difference between what the **Egyptians see from the pillar of cloud (darkness and no direction)** vs. what the **Israelites see (light and direction)**....not to mention the **protection** provided the **cloud**.

Exodus 19:16 Then it came to pass on **the third day**, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a **thick cloud** on the mountain; and the sound of the **shofar** was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled.

The **thick cloud** actually translates "**a cloud of glory**". The **Presence** of the **Almighty** is evident in the **cloud**.

Leviticus 16:2 and יהוה said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for **I will appear in the cloud** above the mercy seat.... **Leviticus 16:13** "And he shall put the incense on the fire before יהוה, that **the cloud of incense** may **cover** the mercy seat that *is* on the Testimony, lest he die.

The **cloud** conceals the Presence of יהוה for the protection of the Priests. The word **cover** (סָכַף) is the root for the word **sukkah** (סֻכָּה), the temporary dwelling we live in during the Feast of Sukkot.

Psalm 18:2 יהוה is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My Elohim, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.³ I will call upon יהוה, *who is worthy* to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.... **Psalm 18:11** He made **darkness His secret place**; His **canopy** (הַכָּפֹּרֶת) around Him *was dark waters* **And thick clouds** of the skies.

The word “**canopy**” is actually **sukkah**, telling us that the **thick clouds and dark waters** form יהוה’s **sukkah – His secret place**. The nature of the sukka is that it is a **temporary dwelling**, so the implication is that He will not be **hidden** in the **clouds forever**.

Psalm 68:4 Sing to Elohim, sing praises to His name; extol Him who **rides on the clouds**, By His name YAH, And rejoice before Him.... **Psalm 68:34** Ascribe strength to Elohim; His excellence *is* over **Israel**, And **His strength is in the clouds**.

Psalm 97:2 **Clouds** and darkness surround Him; **Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne**.

Amazing details, don’t you think? And the word “**justice**” is the same Hebrew word for “**ordinance**” (the name of our Torah portion). Let that sink in....**justice (mispatim)** or the **ordinances** found in this week’s Torah portion are the **FOUNDATION of His throne!** Since **יהוה is the same yesterday, today, and forever**...seems like these **ordinances** should still be pretty important!!

Joel 2:2 A day of darkness and gloominess, **a day of clouds and thick darkness**, like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. A people *come*, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; nor will there ever be any *such* after them, even for many successive generations.

Now we’re talking about the tribulation.

Zephaniah 1:15 That day *is* **a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,**

Yes, it’s the tribulation, but we’ve already seen **WHO is in the clouds**, right?!! That should give us much to hang on to if we find ourselves **in the midst of those dark and cloudy days!**

Let’s go on to see what the New Covenant Scriptures have to say about **clouds**:

Matthew 17:1 Now **after six days** Yeshua took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on **a high mountain** by themselves;² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the **light**.³ And behold, **Moses** and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.⁴ Then Peter answered and said to Yeshua, "Adonai, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three **sukkot**: one for You, one for **Moses**, and one for Elijah."⁵ While he was still speaking, behold, a **bright cloud** overshadowed them; and suddenly **a voice came out of the cloud**, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **Hear Him!**"

Look at these details! After **six days**...that's how long Moses had to wait (Exo. 24:16). Since "a day is like a thousand years", that's how long we expect to wait also! **A high mountain, light, sukkot, Moses, bright cloud, and a voice out of the cloud!** And Yeshua is up on this mountain, just like **Joshua** was there with **Moses!!** And notice the command to "**Shema**" (**hear**) Him!

Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a **cloud** received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Yeshua, who was taken up from you into heaven, **will so come in like manner** as you saw Him go into heaven."

Looks like we should expect to see Him **return in the clouds!**

Matthew 24:30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds** of heaven with power and great glory.

Revelation 1:7 Behold, **He is coming with clouds**, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Baruch Hashem יהוה! That was a quick trip through the Scriptures following **clouds**, and now I'd like to do the same with **fire**. Let's review the next verse in Exodus:

Exodus 24:17 The sight of the **glory of יהוה** was like a **consuming fire** on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

The children of Israel witness the **glory of יהוה** and to them it was like a "**consuming fire**" on top of the mountain. Forty years earlier on the same mountain, Moses had a similar witness of the **glory of יהוה**:

Exodus 3:2 And the Angel of יהוה appeared to him in a flame of **fire** from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with **fire, but the bush was not consumed.**

Odd, don't you think that the bush that Moses sees "**was not consumed**", while what the children of Israel witnessed was "**like a consuming fire**"? Any thoughts on that?

Exodus 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because יהוה descended upon it in **fire**. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a **furnace**, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

Earlier we saw that **Mount Sinai was covered with a cloud**. Now we see it also described as "**completely in smoke.**"

Deuteronomy 4:24 "For יהוה your Elohim is a **consuming fire, a jealous Elohim.**

Fire is connected with **jealousy**, and **implies judgment.**

Deuteronomy 4:36 "Out of heaven He let **you hear His voice, that He might instruct you**; on earth **He showed you His great fire**, and you heard His words out of the midst of the **fire**.

Now **fire** is connected with **His instructions**. And with instructions always comes a **choice**. **Choosing to disobey will bring about judgment....judgment by fire.**

Deuteronomy 5:25 'Now therefore, why should we die? For **this great fire will consume us**; if we hear the voice of יהוה our Elohim anymore, then we shall die.

The Israelites feared the **judgment** of יהוה. They feared that He would be “**a consuming fire**”.

Jeremiah 23:29 "Is not **My Word like a fire**?" says יהוה, "And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?"

Psalms 119:105 Your Word *is* a lamp to my feet **And a light to my path**.

Two different ways of looking at the Word. You can be on the side of the pillar that is **light**, or the side that brings **darkness and judgment**.

Exodus 14:24 Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that יהוה looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the **pillar of fire and cloud**, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians.

Genesis 19:24 Then יהוה rained brimstone and **fire** on Sodom and Gomorrah, from יהוה out of the heavens.

Exodus 32:20 Then he took the calf which they had made, **burned it in the fire**, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*.

Numbers 11:1 Now *when* the people **complained**, it displeased יהוה; for יהוה heard *it*, and **His anger was aroused**. So **the fire of יהוה burned** among them, and **consumed some** in the outskirts of the camp.

The above are all examples of **judgment** associated with “**fire**”. Next let’s take a look at some **prophecy concerning fire**. The first verses have to do with **judgment on Egypt**. **Egypt** is the paradigm for everything belonging to **this world’s system**:

Ezekiel 30:1 The word of יהוה came to me again, saying,² "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says Adonai יהוה: "Wail, 'Woe to the day!"³ For the day *is* near, Even **the day of יהוה is near**; **It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles**.⁴ **The sword shall come upon Egypt**, And great anguish shall be in Ethiopia, When the slain fall in Egypt, And they take away her wealth, And her foundations are broken down.⁵ "Ethiopia, Libya, Lydia, all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword."⁶ ' Thus says יהוה: "**Those who uphold Egypt shall fall**, And the pride of her power shall come down. From Migdol to Syene Those within her shall fall by the sword," Says Adonai יהוה.⁷ "They shall be desolate in the midst of the desolate countries, And her cities shall be in the midst of the cities *that are* laid

waste. ⁸ Then **they will know that I am יהוה, When I have set a fire in Egypt** And all her helpers are destroyed.

Joel 2:30 "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and **fire** and **pillars of smoke**. ³¹ The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before **the coming of the great and awesome day of יהוה**. ³² And it shall come to pass *That whoever calls on the name of יהוה shall be saved*. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be **deliverance, as יהוה has said, among the remnant** whom יהוה calls.

Wow! **Pillars of smoke!** Definitely looks like **the exodus from Egypt** all over again! This time the **remnant** that is **delivered** is in **Jerusalem!**

Zephaniah 3:8 " Therefore wait for Me," says יהוה, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations To My assembly of kingdoms, To pour on them My indignation, All my fierce anger; **All the earth shall be devoured With the fire of My jealousy**. ⁹ "For **then I will restore to the peoples a pure language**, That they all may **call on the name of יהוה**, To serve Him with one accord.

There's that "**fire of My jealousy**" again. But look at what's happening while the earth is being **judged by fire...**there is a **pure language being restored** to a people so that they may **call on the Name of יהוה!** The **fire** is bringing about **judgment, restoration, and deliverance** all at the same time!

Isaiah 66:15 For behold, יהוה will come with **fire** and with His chariots, like a whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with **flames of fire**. ¹⁶ For **by fire and by His sword יהוה will judge** all flesh; and the slain of יהוה shall be many.

Revelation and Hebrews tell us that the **sword** is the **Word of Elohim**. So **all flesh is judged by fire and by His Word**.

Matthew 7:19 "Every **tree that does not bear good fruit** is cut down and thrown into the **fire**.

2 Peter 3:7 But the **heavens and the earth** *which* are now **preserved by the same Word**, are reserved for **fire** until the day of **judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.

Right now, the **Word preserves** the heavens and the earth. But there will be **fire on the day of judgment**.

Isaiah 10:17 So the **Light of Israel will be for a fire**, And his Holy One for a flame; It will burn and devour His thorns and his briars in **one day**.

It appears that **Israel** will be used as the instrument of יהוה's **judgment by fire**.

While **fire** is used as **judgment**, it is also used for **refinement of the believers**:

Zechariah 13:9 I will bring the *one-third* through the **fire** Will **refine** them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. **They will call on My name**, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'יהוה *is* my Elohim.' "

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; **I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.**

Malachi 3:2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a **refiner's fire** and like launderer's soap.³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to יהוה An offering in **righteousness.**

1 Corinthians 3:13 each **one's work** will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be **revealed by fire**; and the **fire will test each one's work**, of what sort it is.

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,⁷ that the **genuineness of your faith**, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is **tested by fire**, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua,

Judgment is coming. If you are a believer and you have accepted the free gift of salvation through the blood of Yeshua, then you will not receive the penalty of death for your sins. But we will be **judged** for **how we lived our lives** as believers. **Fiery trials** will benefit us by **purifying our faith** and leading us into **righteousness.**

Unbelievers will find that their **destiny** is the same as that of **hasatan**:

Revelation 20:10 The **devil**, who deceived them, was **cast into the lake of fire** and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Revelation 20:15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the **lake of fire.**

Now one more thought on a verse concerning **fire**:

Luke 3:16 John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will **baptize you with** the Holy Spirit and **fire.**

A **baptism** is a Hebrew "**mikveh**" which symbolizes a **change in status.** That makes sense, right? When you are **baptized**, your status changes from an unbeliever to a believer. Well, there were many other reasons for a mikveh, and we see them throughout the Scriptures. Many of them have to do with going from a state of "**unclean**" to "**clean**". I think you can see that to be **baptized with fire** has to do with the refinement and purification process as He brings you into a status of purity sometimes through the **furnace of affliction:**

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the **fiery trial** which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Messiah's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are reproached for the name of Messiah, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of Adonai rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if *anyone suffers* as a believer, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify Adonai in this matter. ¹⁷ **For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of Adonai;** and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of Adonai? ¹⁸ Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of Adonai commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

The last thing that was placed in the Garden of Eden was a **sword of fire** at the east end of the garden. That means **the only way that we can get back into the garden is to go through the fire**. When יהוה made His covenant with Abraham, a **flaming fire** moved between the cut pieces of the animals. And when He spoke to Moses it was through a **flaming bush**. **Fire** seems to be **the signature of the Almighty**. The **fire condemns us, or it can purify us**. Friend, if you find yourselves in the midst of a **fiery trial** do not be dismayed:

Isaiah 43:2 **When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned**, Nor shall the flame scorch you. ³ **For I am יהוה your Elohim, The Holy One of Israel, your Messiah...**

Jude 1:24 Now **to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,** ²⁵ To יהוה our Savior, Who alone is wise, *Be* glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.

Shabbat Shalom,
Ardelle