

Transcript – Are We To Judge?

Alrighty, shalom to all of those with us, and shalom to those who will hear this message later. Over the last month I've been doing some messages on some misinterpretation of Scripture and doctrine, I guess you could say, from a Christian perspective, maybe even some in the Messianic movement. And I want to continue with that today. I have a message called *Are We To Judge? ... Are We To Judge?*

Because one of the big things when a believer ... And I get a lot of letters of people telling me this ... When they go to the Christian world and they tell them, "According to Scripture, we're supposed to keep the Torah, and we have to be obedient to the Torah," and you get in the Christian world, "No, we're not to judge ... we're not to judge." You hear that many times.

And matter of fact, it's a whole politically correct **movement** that anything in the world out there, it doesn't matter if it's homosexuality, it doesn't matter what it is ... There's so much evil today, as we know, *in the days of Noah, in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the days we're living in*. But that's what you always get, whether it's adultery, whether it's whatever. "Don't judge," "Well, don't judge," "You judge me, you're going to be judged."

So, I want to go over that topic today because, actually, it's the very opposite, as we're going to see; that we are commanded to judge. And we're commanded to judge things very specifically according to Scripture. [Elder Don coughs] Excuse me. I want to start in Matthew 7 ... Matthew the 7th chapter. Because this is usually the scripture in the Christian world that they will start with.

And again, this is why a Bible translation really means a lot. Because sometimes in English ... I jokingly tell the story, that's true. Several years back, a born-again Christian that was talking to me, and he was trying to argue with me that the Bible is written in English. English is a language that's 400 years old. And here it is, we know for certain all the manuscripts we have that the Bible clearly, the First Testament, the Tanakh, was written in Hebrew originally. The Brit Chadashah, the New Testament, was written in Aramaic originally and then translated, which is fine because if you don't speak those languages, you want to have it translated. But he was trying to argue with me that the Bible was written in English! I mean, so some of these things that are not worth arguing with if you have somebody that's on the side of ignorance.

But on the other end, for believers, for the Congregation of Yahweh, we need to understand these. So, this is the one ... And in most translations, it says, *judge not, that you be not judged* in the King James translation. *Judge not, that you be not judged*. We correctly have this:

Matthew 7:1 *Do not condemn, that you not be condemned;*

Comment: *Do not condemn, that you not be condemned*. Because when you look up ... And it doesn't matter whether it's in the Greek or in the Aramaic, it's the same. And particularly in Hebrew ... I'm going to give you the Hebrew here, which is very similar to the Aramaic. But the word "to judge" is shaphat in Hebrew, like the word for judge. That's actually what a judge is called, a shophet, a judge ... So, **the verb form shaphat, to judge, is simply rendering a decision**. When you go to a court and there's going to be evidence on both sides and a judge is rendering a decision, that's what it's called.

Now on the other end, there's another word called rasha ... rasha—to declare morally wrong; to condemn; to depart ... to declare morally wrong; to condemn; to depart. So, that's a whole different word that's being used that's not over here. So, when you're looking at it, ... And again, this is from the Hebrew standpoint. The word in English "to judge" can mean both. When you're judging someone, you can be condemning them. When you're judging someone, you can be making a simple decision ... So, it has to be clarified what it is.

And like I said, we do agree, as we go further here to see, that **we are not to condemn people**. The Bible never tells us ... When you're condemning a person, what you're basically doing is you're giving the final judgment. Because that's what happens. When you go in a court, it can even be, let's say, a murder case, right? So now here's the person who's being accused. You have to bring witnesses. You have to bring testimony. And at the end, the judge is going to make a **final verdict**. And if the judge finds the person **innocent**, what happens? He goes free, and that's the end of it. But if the judge

will **condemn** that person, then that's it. That's final. That person goes on death row, or he's going to get the death penalty, or whatever it is.

So, in English, we want to make very, very clearly that when we use the word judge ... There is something we are told we are even to condemn, which certainly not people ... But when we're looking at this word, right off the bat, remember that we are—every day of our life, we make judgments. You make a hundred decisions. You wake up. What are you going to wear? What food are you going to eat? The job that you go to, the family you have, where you're living, these are all judgments. These are all **decisions** that you're making.

Supposedly, or hopefully, you're making these decisions to better your life as a believer. In every decision we made, like it says, *everything you do, do to the glory of Yahweh*. So, **every decisions made should be drawing us closer to Yahweh**. But at the same rate, like I said, we would never ... I want to say that right in the beginning, I'll repeat it as we go along ... **We are never to condemn people**. So, if we continue here, let's continue now. He says:

Matthew 7:2 *for whatever condemnation you judge, you will be judged; and whatever measure you measure, it will be measured back to you.*

Comment: That's not necessarily a bad thing. So, we're **cautioned** not to condemn other people because if you condemn another person to death, to the Lake of Fire, it can come back to you. But it says here, *whatever measure you measure, it will be measured back to you*. So, that's a good thing.

What it shows us is in all things ... The more love we give, the more it's going to come back to us. The more kindness we have and give out, the more it's going to come back to us. So, it's just basically a basic principle of Yahweh is how you give out is what comes back to you. And that's why even in Revelation where Yahshua's saying, those who pick up the sword will die by the sword. Basically, your outcome is going to be your belief system. It's that simple. Now we go to verse 3.

Matthew 7:3 *But why do you see the twig that is in the eye of your brother, and you do not see the log in your own eye?*

Comment: So, now we come to the crux of what Yahshua is saying here. He's basically talking to self-righteous people. He's talking to who? The Pharisees in His day that felt like they were above other people and because they're tithing and fasting three times in a week that they were better than other people. So, He's over here saying this.

And you can connect this, to one degree, to the Matthew 18 process. Because there are times we do have to go to our brother. I'm going to get into that later. But even then, **what we want to make sure is that if you're going to your brother with a sin that he may have, you want to make sure you're not committing the same sin**. So, how can you go to your brother that may be stealing something or whatever and you're going to correct him when maybe you're at work stealing something? You're showing up to work two hours late and stealing two hours of time, whatever it might be. So, this is what He's saying.

Matthew 7:3-5 *Why do you see the twig that is in the eye of your brother, but not the log in your own? Or will you say to your brother, Allow me to cast out the twig in your eye; and behold, the log is in your eye! Hypocrite, first remove the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the twig out of the eye of your brother.*

So again, it still is not telling us when our brother is in a sin, as we're going to see ... **We're commanded to go to our brother if we know our brother is sinning because sin brings death. So, if we're not doing that, we're not showing love to our brother. But at the same rate, we're told we do have to look at ourselves first**. We do have to go to Yahweh first. We want to make sure we're not doing the same thing. We want to make sure we're not self-righteously, which unfortunately happens a lot of time, that we're self-righteously putting somebody else down for something that may not even be sin.

Maybe that a woman is going to condemn another woman for the hem of her dress, that "My dress is down to my toe, and your dress is two inches less." And again, the Bible never tells us exactly how long it has to be, so that's self-

righteousness. We're putting something that's above the Torah. We're not using the Torah as our basis for what is sin and what's not. But we're using our **own** belief system and putting it above the Torah. So, let's go to Luke 18, and we'll see this. Luke 18, starting in verse 9.

Luke 18:9 *And He ... Yahshua ... also spoke this parable to some of those **relying on themselves**, ... Self-righteousness. They're not using the Tanakh, the Torah, for their righteousness, for their judgment, but they're going above that relying on themselves ... **that they are righteous, and despising the rest:***

And then He says:

Luke 18:10-14 *Two men went up to the sanctuary to pray, the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee was standing, praying these things to himself: Elohim, I pray to You that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, covetous, adulterers, even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week; I tithe all things, as many as I get. And standing at a distance, the tax collector would not even lift his eyes to Heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, Elohim, be merciful to me, a sinner! I say to you, This one went down to the house having been justified, rather than that one. For everyone exalting himself will be humbled. And the one humbling himself will be exalted.*

So, really, **this is what we're talking about in Matthew 7. It really has *nothing* to do with making judgments or judging sin, absolutely nothing. What it has to do with is self-righteousness.** It has to do with putting our righteousness above Yahweh's righteousness and taking things of ourself and telling people above the Torah and making it that ... whether it's healthy eating or maybe it's health things, natural health, these are all good things ... but actually, making it seem like somebody is sinning if they're not doing something the way you're doing it. So, that's what we're talking about here.

So again, the Christian world totally misinterprets Matthew 7, and they make it, "Don't judge ... don't judge." That when you're out there and you see divorce and remarriage, you see adultery, you see homosexuality, you see things that are clearly defined as sin in Scripture, they're making it sound as if you judge sin that you'll be judged by Yahweh; and it's the total opposite. It's actually the total opposite. Because we are told ... **The one thing we are told to not only judge but we're told to *condemn* is sin. We're told to condemn sin—not the sinner, but the sin.**

And when you go to your brother, it doesn't matter what he's doing. There's a brother that's out there maybe working on the Sabbath and you find it out. You happen to be going to services and you see this person working. What does the Bible tell us? You go to him privately in a humble spirit; you try to restore him back into the congregation. So, you don't condemn him, you condemn the sin. You show him from Scripture, where you say, "You're not to work on the Sabbath. You're not to do these things. That Yahweh defines that Sabbath breaking as sin." And you're doing it from a matter of love. Because what happens if the person doesn't repent? Then he will be judged.

There is a Judgment Day, as I'll show you at the end, but Yahshua will be the One to judge. And if we ***don't*** share with our brother, if we don't go to our brother and share with him when we see him in a fault, then we're not showing love to our brother, as we're going to see in a little bit here. So, 1st Corinthians 5. We're going to see that Paul, here, definitely condemns sin. 1st Corinthians 5. So, like I said, we're never to condemn a person, but we are to condemn sin. 1st Corinthians 5 and verse 1. He says:

1 Corinthians 5:1 *Everywhere it is heard that fornication is among you, ... And we know fornication is clearly a sin ... **and such immorality which has not been named even to the heathen**, ... Wow! So, here's people of congregation in Corinth that are doing worse sins than you'd even see in the world ... **so as for one to have his father's wife.***

Comment: Here it is, his step-mother, and there's bad relation going on here. And he says:

1 Corinthians 5:2 *And you are boasting, and you have rather not mourned, that he that did this thing might be removed from among you.*

Comment: And unfortunately, even today in the congregation at times, there'll be people in the congregation, unfortunately sometimes even elders, that will be grievously sinning. I've seen this even overseas sometimes, elders stealing money, lying to the people, and whatever. And the brethren think they're showing love and grace to not make the person be accountable. You're not showing love and grace. Because you want to know something? That person is still accountable to Yahweh.

If there's a thousand dollar offering given to a congregation in the third world, and an elder takes that money and puts it in his pocket, the people can say, "Well, we don't mind. We love our elder." But you know what? It's sin before Yahweh. And if the person doesn't repent, when Judgment Day comes, he's going to the Lake of Fire. So, holding somebody accountable for their actions is an act of love. And whoever doesn't do that, as we're going to see, you're not showing love to your brother. You really aren't.

That's not grace. **Grace is the fact that Yahweh doesn't judge us immediately.** Because when we do a sin, He could judge us immediately. No, **grace is He gives us time to repent.** The Christian world has this backward though. The Christian world thinks grace is just letting sin go, just saying, "Ah, don't worry about it," just loving the person in the sin. But what did we say? Yahshua came to save us **from** our sins, not in our sins.

And that's the opposite of love. Because that person will, if he doesn't repent, he will go to the Lake of Fire. Because the only thing that can take away your salvation is unrepentant sin, and that's what we're seeing here. So, look what he says. And here's what Paul says in verse 3:

1 Corinthians 5:3 *For as being absent in body, but being present in spirit, I have already judged the one who has worked out this thing, as if I was present.*

Comment: *Paul has already judged.* Are we to judge? Of course, we are ... of course, we are. Because if you don't have judgment in the congregation, you'll have chaos. It's like having a city with no policeman. It's like having a city, and a man is breaking in a house, and the policeman says, "Ah, no. Let him go. We're going to show him grace. We'll just love him through it." No, that's ridiculous. You have to have judicial order. You have to have law and order. Without law and order, you only have chaos. So, Paul is saying here, he's already judged as if he was there.

1 Corinthians 5:4-6 *In the name of our Master Yahshua Messiah, you being gathered together with my spirit also, with the power of our Master Yahshua Messiah, to deliver such a one **to Satan** for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Master Yahshua. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens all the lump?*

Right? So, here he's saying their boasting is not good. He's saying this person, you commit him to Satan. What does he mean by that? **He means you put him out of the body of the Messiah.** Because the only place ... It's Satan's world, right? **Satan is the elohim, or god, of this world, and the only place a believer is safe is in the body of Messiah.** And there is *one body, one faith, one doctrine*. So, you can't just leave the body of Messiah and think that there's no accountability to it.

So, **this is what Paul is saying. When you find somebody who's in a sin, you are to put him out of the body of Messiah and separate him. Why? So that he sees when he's separated, "I don't like this." He sees that it's not just the elder who's shunning him, everybody is shunning him. And that's showing love. Everyone is loving him, and they're shunning him because they want him to come back to the truth.**

But if only the elder puts the judgment out, you know what's going to happen? And the brethren, even after the person is put out of the congregation, the brethren keep contacting that person, the brethren keep befriending that person. What will happen is the person will only get bitter toward the elder. And they'll make it as it's something between the elder and the person that's put out of the congregation. And it's not that way.

The person was put out, not because of a personal grievance with the elder. The person was put out because of whatever sin it was that he was doing. And you are not showing love that if somebody who's been put out of the congregation, or

even rebelliously just leaves on his own, if you're keeping contact with that person. You're not showing love, because he'll never repent. Because what the human nature wants is acceptance. That's what human nature wants.

And I've had it happen to me in the past. Believe me, I've had it happen more than once. Sometimes even people that I had a good relationship with. But whatever happened, either they were sinning and had to be put out of the congregation or they got bitter over a doctrine or something and they left, and now they make it about me. And it's not about me.

And if the brethren stick together, though, and show the person, "No, the reason why we can't have a relationship with you is because we love you. You have to turn around, you have to repent of the sin, and you have to come back into the fold." Because *there's one body. There's one faith. There's one Father of all, and there's one Master.* And then the person, ... and we've had this happen, praise Yahweh ... as they're outside and they're ostracized on their own, they see this and they say, "I don't want to be on my own." And then they have time to think, they repent, and they come back. Praise Yahweh.

But other times where people have condoned it ... We had one situation where a woman left her husband. She was in an adulterous relationship. She was put out of the congregation. And she was almost to the point of repentance. Most of the people were shunning her. They didn't want any relationship. And she was almost at that point. And then one sister who said, "No, I want to win her over in love." One sister went to this woman and showed her acceptance, and then the woman never repented. She was **almost** there. She was just about there, because she didn't want to be separated from everybody. But when this one woman went on her own outside of judicial order against the ruling of myself and the congregation and showed acceptance to this lady for the adultery, the lady went the other way and she never came back.

So, this is a really important subject as we're looking at the congregation, that we need to understand this. Romans 8:2 and 3 ... Romans 8:2 and 3. It says:

Romans 8:2 *For the law of the Spirit of life which is in Yahshua Messiah set me free from the law of sin and death.*

Comment: So, we see here, there's two laws. There's the Torah of Yahweh, and there's the law of sin and death. The law of sin and death is the action that we take when we break the Torah. It's the opposite. It's like looking in a mirror. You have the Torah that is all the laws of eternal life, but you look in the mirror, and the opposite is the law of sin and death when we break it. And then verse 3 says:

Romans 8:3 *For the Torah being **powerless**, in that it was weak through the flesh, YAHWEH sending His own Son in the **likeness** of sinful flesh, and concerning sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**,*

So, this is what Yahshua did. Why is the Torah powerless? Because the Torah can tell you right from wrong, but it can't change your mind. The Torah can't make you do right. It can only tell you the difference of right and wrong. And that's why it's powerless in the flesh. **It's the Holy Spirit that can change you. It's the Holy Spirit that makes somebody stop sinning. It convicts somebody that their actions are wrong.** And that's what he's saying over here.

And we are, **like Yahshua, we are to condemn sin in the flesh.** Hate the sin, love the sinner, like they say. That's very simply. But we have to recognize that it's sin. If we're not recognizing sin, then what we're doing is we're making the Torah of none effect when we do that. Let's go to 1st Corinthians 15. We'll see this here. Remember, 1st Corinthians 15 is the resurrection chapter. And look what it says in verse 55. He says:

1 Corinthians 15:55 *"O death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?"*

Comment: This is right after he's talking about the resurrection, about Yahshua returning, about us losing our physical bodies, getting a glorified body. So, he's saying death has no power over the believer. But look in the next verse. He says:

1 Corinthians 15:56 *Now the sting of death is sin, ... Right? The wages of sin are death ... and **the strength of sin is the Torah;***

The strength of sin is the Torah? Did you ever read that and wonder what on earth does he mean by that? How could the strength of sin be the Torah? Because what is the definition of sin? **1st John 3:4**, *Sin is the breaking of the Torah*. So, of course, the strength of sin is the Torah because **the Torah defines sin**.

And don't you see that when you don't define sin, when you're saying, "No we're not to judge ... we're not to judge," and you're not judging sin, you're weakening the Torah. You're doing exactly what Christianity does. You're making the Torah of none effect. Because **the Torah tells us** whether it's adultery, whether it's rebellion, whether it's lying or stealing, whatever the sin is why somebody is separated, right? The Torah is the one that's telling us. And of course, it's always *in the mouth of two or three witnesses*. And it has a process like that.

But when we in the congregation don't accept those judgments by the leadership, right, ... Like I said, the one time where there was a woman had to be put out of the congregation. And clearly there was witnesses, everything went through. There's no doubt she was guilty. And then somebody, another woman stood up that had nothing to do with it. She wasn't a witness. And she said, "Well, *I* didn't see that." Wow! Yeah, that's why we didn't call her as a witness.

You have a congregation with thousands of people. You're not calling **everybody** as a witness. You're calling the people who saw what the person did wrong. If somebody stole money, the witnesses are going to be the one, "Yes, I saw him come in," "I saw him take the money," "I saw him put it in his pocket," "I saw him give it to somebody else." And if you didn't see it, then you don't judge it because you can't judge. You're not a witness.

But for someone to come out and make that statement, "Well, I didn't see that." You know what they're doing? Number one, they're calling the witnesses liars. And number two, they're calling the elder who made the judgment a liar. They're saying he didn't make a righteous judgment. And that's not for the people to decide. Yahweh put elders in the congregation. He put leaders in the congregation, and at times we do have to make our judgments. Are they always correct? Not always. But the brethren have to support that.

And when someone is put out of the congregation, like I said, and brethren will still befriend them, whether you're doing this wittingly or unwittingly, what you're doing is you're showing that person who's put out that you're not siding with the congregation. I've actually had that happen. Well, it's happened more than once, but I actually had a person say that one time to the person. "Well, if you believe in the leadership there, why are you even contacting me?" And the person was like, "Wow! Okay, I won't contact you anymore." They thought, "Well, I'm doing you a favor. I'm trying to befriend you. I'm trying to show love." But that's not showing love, like I said.

Because if you're really showing love, what you're going to do is you're going to hold the person accountable to their actions. And then when they repent, that's all anybody wants. You bring them back into the congregation. You forget it ever happened, and you move on. But if that person doesn't repent and they stay out of the congregation, they can lose their eternal life. Because *there's one body. There's one family of Yahweh. There's one congregation. There's one faith. There's one Father of all*. So, we see here, **Torah defines and exposes sin. And when we don't judge sin, we diminish the Torah.**

Leviticus 19 and verse 13 ... Leviticus 19 and verse 13. We see the same thing here. Leviticus 19 and verse 13. And this is false grace. This is the whole Christianity movement is based on the opposite of what we're talking about today. There's no accountability. There's no sin because they don't believe that there's any sin anymore. And what happens? The people in Christianity, they're living a lie because there's no repentance because they don't believe in their sin. So, if there's no sin, why would they repent? And they're living lives to the flesh and they're having sin heaped on top of sin.

And then what's going to happen? Without repentance the Judgment Day is going to come, and *many will say to Me in that day, "Master, Master," and I'll say, "I never knew you. Depart from Me you who work lawlessness."* So, in the congregation, we should know this. We should understand that sin has to be ratified. Sin has to be dealt with. Leviticus 19 and verse 13. He says:

Leviticus 19:13-14 *You shall not extort your neighbor, nor rob; you shall not allow the wages of a hired one to remain with you till morning. You shall not revile the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; for you shall revere your Elohim. I am YAHWEH.*

Comment: So, He's telling us how to deal with our neighbor, right? How we're supposed to love our neighbor as ourselves. We're not supposed to do these other thing. Then He says:

Leviticus 19:15 *You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; ... So, we are to judge, but we're to do it fairly. We're not to do unrighteousness ... you shall not respect the face of the poor, nor favor the face of the mighty; ...*

Comment: So, it doesn't matter. You're not going to feel sorry for somebody and judge on their side just because you feel sorry for them, or if it's even a relative or a child of yours. We had this recently in a third world country. Somebody's son was accused of something and had to be dealt with.

And it doesn't matter who the person is, Yahweh's judgment is blind in that sense. Like He says in **Isaiah 42**, *My servant is blind*. He doesn't mean physically blind. What He means is he doesn't see anything but righteousness. Either somebody that's doing it is right or wrong. It doesn't matter if the person is a friend or not a friend. It doesn't matter if they're rich or poor. The judgment should be the same. Either what he did was right, or what he did was wrong. He says:

Leviticus 19:15-17 *... but in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor ... in righteousness ... You shall not go as a slanderer among your people; you shall not stand up against the blood of your neighbor; I am YAHWEH. You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall certainly reprove your neighbor, and not allow sin on him.*

Comment: *You shall reprove your neighbor, and not allow sin on him.* So, **we have a responsibility**. It's not just the elders in the congregation. That's the **Matthew 18** process. You see your neighbor in a sin. You go to him privately and you share with him. "Look, I know what you're doing." And if he repents, great! You won your brother. If not, you have to take witnesses. And if he doesn't listen to the witness, then you have to bring it to the elders. But **sin cannot be allowed in the camp**.

And like I said, it doesn't matter whether it's adultery. It doesn't matter whether it's rebellion. It doesn't matter whether it's lying or stealing. Sin is sin. It makes no difference to Yahweh. When there's sin in the camp, it will destroy the congregation. And that's why it's showing love to your neighbor. Because look at the very next sentence. First, He says that *you shall certainly reprove your neighbor, and not allow sin on him*. He says:

Leviticus 19:18 *You shall not take vengeance though, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people; but you will love your neighbor as yourself; I am YAHWEH.*

So, the same as we were reading in Matthew. You don't do it out of bitterness. You don't do it out of envy. It's not about getting even with somebody. The judgment always has to be right. But at the end of the day, if there's sin or rebellion in the congregation, it has to be dealt with. It's that simple. And the elders are there. We have in our congregation, we have local elders, and then we have a council for each area or country, and then we have the five-man international council from Jerusalem. So, we deal with it. That's what we have there. But once something is dealt with, it has to be respected within the congregation.

So, if you love your neighbor, you are going to hold him accountable because it could take his eternal life away. We must have righteous judgment. We never judge by feelings or nepotism but by facts. That's why, *in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let everything be established*. But once the witnesses are there ... We had a situation recently where we had six to 10 witnesses. And I was even one of the witnesses, believe it or not. And still, some of the people didn't want to accept the judgment.

But it's that simple. If you have the witnesses and the person did something wrong, then it has to be accepted. Because if not, you're causing division. And it's actually rebellion against Yahweh. Because Yahweh set a structure for us to deal with

this within the congregation. And if we go against that structure, it's rebellion. It's that simple. There's no doubt about it. Your heart may be right, or your heart may not be right. It doesn't matter what your motive is. What matters is are you following the structure that Yahweh set up to handle these problems in the congregation, or are you going against it? And if there's six to 10 witnesses on an issue and that person, even if it's an elder, had to be put out of the congregation, then you have to support the leadership. It's that simple. John 7 and verse 24. He says:

John 7:24 *Do not be judging by hypocrisy, but rather judge with a just judgment.*

And what does Psalm **119:172** say? *All thy commandments are righteousness.* So, when we're making judgments ... And believe me, I make hundreds of them a year in congregations all over the world. I don't do that lightly. And there's times where I can tell very easily who is guilty and who's not. But I won't make a judgment unless I have witnesses, unless I have evidence. And if not, then I wait on Yahweh. Because I realize the seriousness of a situation. And I realize **I have to judge according to Torah, and I have to make these judgments according to Torah.** And I can't just make them according to myself, so I may ask questions.

I've done this before, even a few years ago at the Feast. We had a situation in one of the third world countries. We brought the people there. And literally it was like courtroom. I was acting as a judge. We had witnesses. And, you know, I could ask questions that may bring things out. But **unless** we have evidence and proof and witnesses against something, then you have to leave it to Yahweh. And in the end Yahweh will provide it.

Because I've had people that have left the congregation over something not going their way and then, all of a sudden, a few months later, a few years later, actually, it does come out that way. And where's that person that left? Where are they left? They're outside the truth. They're outside the congregation. They're out on their own. And Yahweh's congregation is not divided. When something doesn't go our way, it doesn't give us the ability to say, "Okay, I'll go out and start another congregation." No, *there's one faith. There's one congregation. There's one Father of all, and one Spirit.*

Exodus 18. And this is how this started. Let's go to Exodus 18 because let's see how the process of judgment started within the nation of Israel and came down to us today. Because today in the body of Messiah, in the congregation, we're just an extension of Israel. We're still part of it, but we're the spiritual nation compared to the physical nation. So, many of the things that we do in the congregation are parallel by what happened in Israel. Exodus 18 and verse 12 ... Exodus 18 and verse 12. And this is when Moses is judging with the Israelites in the wilderness.

Exodus 18:12-14 *And Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, took a burnt offering and sacrifices to Elohim. And Aaron and the elders of Israel came to eat bread before Elohim with Moses' father-in-law. And it happened on the next day that Moses sat to judge the people. And the people stood beside Moses from the morning until the evening. And Moses' father-in-law saw all which he was doing to the people. And he said, What is this thing which you are doing to the people? Why are you sitting by yourself, and all the people standing beside you from morning until evening?*

Comment: Can you imagine that? You're talking about two and a half million people, and he's sitting there morning to night judging, and judging, and judging.

Exodus 18:15-19 *And Moses said to his father-in-law, Because the people come to me to seek Elohim. And when they have a matter, they come to me and I judge between a man and his neighbor. And I make known the statutes of Elohim, and the laws from His Torah. And the father-in-law of Moses said to him, The thing which you do is not good. Surely you will wear out, both you and this people with you. For the thing is heavy on you. You're not able to do it by yourself. Now listen to my voice. I will advise you, and may Elohim be with you. You be for this people before Elohim, and you bring the matters to Elohim.*

Exodus 18:20-22 *And you warn them as to the statutes and the laws of the Torah, and make known to them the way in which they should walk, and what they should do. And you, you shall look out men of ability of all the people, who fear Elohim, men of truth, hating unjust gain. And you place these over them as rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers*

of fifty, and rulers of ten. And let them judge the people at all times. And it shall be that every great matter they will bring to you, and every small matter they shall judge. And you make it easy on yourself, and let them bear with you.

Exodus 18:23-26 *And if you do this thing, and Elohim command you, you will be able to stand; and also this people will go to peace in their place. And Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he said. And Moses chose men of ability from all Israel and made them heads over the people; rulers of thousands, rulers of hundred, rulers of fifty, rulers of ten. And they judged the people at all times; the hard matters they brought to Moses, and every small matter they judged for themselves.*

And again, we know that Moses' father-in-law Jethro was a Rechabite from that clan over there. And what's happening here? A Kenite. So, what's going on over here? This is somebody who's a priest of Yahweh, and he's bringing the way that Yahweh judges. And this is the way Yahweh meant it to be. That Yahweh is going to be the King, and there would be judges in the areas.

And it's exactly how we do it in the congregation. We have local congregations that make judgments. If there's a problem or something needs to go higher, then, like I said, every area has their own regional or country council of elders. And then we have the international five-man council of elders that come from Jerusalem to the nations in matters that may be harder than that. So, that's the way it's structured. That's the way it's set up.

Now, is it perfect? No, it's not perfect. But this is the system. This is the way the system of judges started in the congregation. So, we have to abide by this. And this is from Yahweh. This is the way that Yahweh had it set up. Deuteronomy 1 and verse 12 ... Deuteronomy 1 and verse 12. We see the same thing. He says:

Deuteronomy 1:12-15 *How can I by myself bear the load of you and your burden, and your strife? Give wise and understanding men, and those known to your tribes, and I will appoint them rulers over you. And you answered me and said, ... So, this is Moses saying to Yahweh. This is Yahweh's answer ... The thing which you have spoken is good and do. And I took the chiefs of your tribes, wise and noted men, and I gave them to be rulers over you, captains over thousands, captains over hundreds, captains over fifties, captains over tens, and officers, for your tribes.*

Deuteronomy 1:16-18 *And I commanded your judges at all times, saying, Hear between your brothers; and judge with righteousness between a man and his brother, and his alien. You shall not recognize persons in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid because of the face of a man, for the judgment is Elohim's; and the thing is too hard for you, you shall bring near to me, and I will hear it. And at that time I commanded you all the things which you were to do.*

So, very simple. Like we just said, everything we're saying, Yahweh commanded this. So, with Jethro telling this to Moses, this is something that Yahweh commanded. And we have to use righteous judgment. So, in the New Testament, is it any different? No. What do we have? In Ephesians we see ... What did Yahshua set up? Ephesians 4 and verse 11 ... Ephesians 4 and verse 11 says:

Ephesians 4:11-14 *Indeed He ... Yahshua ... has assigned some to be apostles; some prophets; some evangelists; some shepherds and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building of the body of Messiah, **until we may all come to the unity of the faith** and the full knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah, so that we may no longer be children, being blown and carried about by every wind of false doctrine of men, who through their craftiness are very skillful in deceiving the people;*

And wow, do we see that today! How many false doctrines that come, how many people that just go on the internet, they have no qualifications, they're not ordained, they're not elders, and they go out and they do this. So, we see very clearly that **Yahshua placed** in the congregation ... He places. And again, an elder is not a degree. It's not a school you go to and now you have your degree on your wall, and "I was five years in the Congregation of Yahweh, and then I went over here to this university where I worked for seven years, and then ..." No, no, no. An elder or a prophet or whatever we see here, apostle, whatever, **it's a job description**. And when someone is fulfilling that job description, they're considered that.

But if someone is no longer fulfilling that job description within the body of Messiah, then they're no longer that. And now whether that's something where an elder has disqualified himself, ... An elder is the husband of one wife. Well, if he goes out and leaves his wife and marries another, and now he has two wives, he can't be an elder anymore. Or if an elder either is put out of the congregation for a sin or just leaves the congregation in rebellion, whatever it may be, he's not an elder anymore. He's not fulfilling that role in the congregation.

Like I said, it's not a certificate that you put on your wall that you say ... It's a job description that you're fulfilling in the congregation. And that's why when we look at 1st Timothy 3 and verse 5 and 6 ... 1st Timothy 3 and verse 5 and 6 says:

1 Timothy 3:5-6 *But if anyone does not know how to rule his own house, how will he care for a Congregation of YAHWEH? He should not be a new disciple, lest being puffed up he may fall in the condemnation of the devil.*

And unfortunately, I've made that mistake at times. There's been times where I ordained somebody too early. They came in the congregation. They're doing good. They're serving well. And maybe there's a need, and you believe they're fulfilling that need. But they're still fairly green. They're new. And then they get ordained, and sometimes power goes to people when that happens. And they start wanting to build something for themselves or doing something for themselves. And that's why the Bible is very clear. We should not ordain somebody who's too young or too new, because pride. Pride can come in. It's that simple.

And unfortunately, ... unfortunately ... even with the Apostle Paul, he warned in Acts 20, which we'll go, that there will be people sometimes, even that are ordained, that may have started out on the right road, but in the end, whatever happens, whether it's cares of life or pride or whatever, that they'll actually, where they may have started out as an elder, they wind up even dividing the flock. Acts 20 and verse 17. Now this is ... Paul is getting ready to go to Jerusalem, and he's with these people, these brethren, for quite a time, and he's giving his ending dissertation to them. And it's very interesting what he says. Acts 20 and verse 17. He says:

Acts 20:17 *And sending to Ephesus from Miletus he called for the elders of the congregation.*

Comment: So, here it is. There may be brethren there too, but basically, he's calling for the elders. And this is what is his last thing he's telling these elders. And remember, they don't have email. They don't have internet. He may never see these people again, and this is what he's telling them. This is what he's passionately trying to convey the message.

Acts 20:18-21 *And when they came to him, he said to them: You understand, from the first day in which I set foot in Asia, how I was with you all the time, serving our Master with all humility, and many tears and trials happening to me by the plots of the Jews; as I kept nothing back of what is profitable, so as not to tell you, and to teach publicly, and from house to house, earnestly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward Elohim and faith toward our Master, Yahshua Messiah.*

Acts 20:22-26 *And now, behold, being bound by the Spirit, I'm going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things to meet me in it, but that the Holy Spirit testifies city by city saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I make account of nothing, nor do I hold my life precious to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Master Yahshua, fully to testify the good news of the grace of Elohim. And now, I know that you will see my face no more, all of you among whom I've traveled and preached the kingdom of YAHWEH. Because of this I testify to you on this day that I am pure from the blood of all.*

Acts 20:27-31 *For I did not keep back from declaring to you all the counsel of Elohim. Then take heed to yourselves and all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit placed you as overseers, to shepherd the congregation of Elohim which He purchased through His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure ... Listen what he says here: After Paul leaves ... after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and out of you ... out of the elders ... yourselves will rise up men speaking perverted things, in order to draw away the disciples after themselves. Because of this watch, remembering that I did not cease admonishing each of you with tears night and day for three years.*

So, it happens. You see it happens. It's a sad reality, but it happens sometimes. It's happened in our congregation before, that an elder may leave or go on his own. But like I said, Yahweh is not divided, and you cannot show me anywhere in Scripture where there's independent ministries; where when something doesn't go the way that somebody wants them to go, that they can just get up and go off and start their own thing, on their own, rebellious thing.

Because you want to know something? Like I said, the judgment in this system that Yahweh set up, it may not be perfect, but Yahweh is perfect. And you want to know something? We know in the Old Testament they had the Urim and the Thummim. The Urim and the Thummim were the lots that were there, and ... or it was actually, I'm sorry, it was on the breastplate of the priest. And when they would come to Yahweh with the Urim and the Thummim, it would actually light up and Yahweh would give them answers. This happened when there could be an adulterous woman, whatever it is. And can Yahweh ever be wrong? Of course not.

So, if Yahweh wanted perfect judgment in the congregation, He would have continued with that. Because very easily we could have that today. We could have that where a situation comes up and we have the Urim and the Thummim, and we come into Yahweh and the light will shine from the sun, or whatever it is, and show us what His will is. So, Yahweh is perfect, and then there would never be a mistake in judgment. But Yahweh didn't choose that. You know what Yahweh chose? Yahweh chose human beings.

And yes, we do have characteristics, very clearly, very stringent characteristics of an elder, that you have to be a certain way, like we were saying. But at times an elder will even make a mistake. Or sometimes it's just perceived he's making a mistake, and he's not making a mistake. But nowhere in Scripture do we have the ability that when we don't like the decision ... So, we're going to come and we're going to follow the elders. We're going to follow Jerusalem. Then all of a sudden, though, when a decision comes we don't like, we're going to just pick ourself up and go out on our own. You don't see that anywhere.

And this is what Paul says. It's a selfish way. Because whenever that happens, what's going to happen? You're going to divide brethren. And Yahweh is not an Elohim of division. He's not an Elohim of confusion. So, this is not something that He supports, nowhere! We don't find it. We're one body. We're one faith. We're one family. And what we do is when there's problems, we work it out. We come and we work it out. And if something doesn't go your way, then you simply trust in Yahweh and move on with it. You don't just say, "Well, I'm going to go out on my own and do my own."

And if somebody does, particularly ... I mean, we have brethren that do that. Same thing. Throughout history, Yahshua's congregation ... Read my book, *The Gates of Hell Will Not Prevail Against It* [should be *The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against Her*] ... Anytime the congregation grew to a certain point, you'd have a unrighteous element coming into the congregation and there'd be a split. It's happened for 2,000 years because of human nature. And the only way that you can assure to never have that happen is for the brethren to make a commitment to themselves to support the leadership.

Look at King David. Saul was not a righteous king. Saul was someone that was looking to kill David. And yet David comes to Saul and says, I will not put my hand to Yahweh's Messiah, to Yahweh's anointed. He bows down to him, not because of Saul, but because he respected the authority that Yahweh put in the congregation. Here we're reading in Ephesians. It's not man. It's not an organization. It's not me. It's Yahshua.

For the last 2,000 years, He ordained the 12 apostles. He literally, His physical human hands of Yahshua touched the heads of 12 men who touched the heads of others, who touched the heads of others, who touched the heads of others. And somebody who was in that line touched my head and ordained me. So, it's just like Yahshua ordained me. And like I said, even when Church of God fell apart, I wasn't looking to start Don Esposito Ministries. I wanted to stay within the realm of the body of Messiah.

Now, granted, if there's sin, like what happened with Church of God, if the congregation and the leadership in the congregation is sinning, they're going from Saturday to Sunday, the way Church of God did, then of course, you have to stay with the truth. You band together with all the leaders and whatever, and you are part of that remnant that moves on.

But apart from that, apart from outright sin that's being preached, there's no other reason to leave the congregation, whether you're a member or an elder. It doesn't make a difference. Because we're one body, and once you're leaving, you're on your own. And particularly if you're doing it in rebellion, particularly if you're against judicial order or you're rebelling against the leadership, there's no way on earth that Yahweh is going to respect something like that.

Deuteronomy 17 ... Deuteronomy 17 and verse 8. Because like I said, we see that Yahweh set a structure. *Captains over thousands, captains over hundreds, captains over tens.* And we see that, like we said, we have elders in a local area. A local area in Scripture is autonomous. They make their own decisions on these things. But maybe they make a wrong decision. Maybe the elder ... We've had this happen at times ... Maybe the elder is bad. Maybe the elder is doing something that's sinful. So, then it would come to the regional council of elders, and they would have to investigate it and make a decision.

And then there's times ... I have it happen all the time with me, probably close to once a month or at least once every two months, that the local council will come and say, "We're not sure how to deal with this. Elder Don, we want your help." And then it comes to me in Jerusalem. Because this is the final word. This is what Yahweh says. Deuteronomy 17 and verse 8.

Deuteronomy 17:8-11 *If a matter is too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between cause and cause, between stroke and stroke, matters of strife within your gates, then you shall rise and go up to the place which Yahweh your Elohim will choose (Jerusalem). And you shall come in to the priest, to the Levites, and the judge who is in those days, and shall inquire. And they shall declare the word of judgment to you. And you shall do according to the word which they declare to you from the place that Yahweh will choose (from Jerusalem). And you shall be careful to do according to all that they direct you. You shall do according to the mouth of the Torah which they direct you, and according to the judgment which they deliver to you. You shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, right or left.*

Comment: It's pretty simple. It doesn't say "only if you get the answer you want." I had this happen in Africa not that long ago. That an elder came to me, wanted this and this and that, "Respect you. Love you. I know you're the elder that Yahweh put in Jerusalem." We investigated, and it wasn't the answer he wanted. And when he didn't get his answer, what did he do? He picked up, and he left and went on his own. And I couldn't respect that because that's rebellion. That's rebellion! There's an answer that Yahweh brought to the leaders in Jerusalem. And someone, now, instead of respecting that answer and keeping unity in the body, they're picking up and going out on their own rebelliously.

And then what's the next thing they're doing? They're trying to befriend the brethren in the congregation to cause division. And that's why when an elder leaves like that, don't have to have anything bad, but we should separate. He's not an elder anymore. It's called rebellion. When somebody rebels against judicial order, they rebel against what Yahweh's doing. And like I said, what happened in Africa, I love the men. They're friends of mine. If they would repent tomorrow, I'd hug them, I'd love them, accept them back in the congregation. But until they do, I can't have any contact with them. Because if I accept them in the sin of rebellion, they're never going to learn ... they're never going to learn.

And that's what happens. And it's happened in Babylon. It's happened in other places where this will happen, and the brethren do befriend the person in rebellion. And then it becomes against me against the person, which it never was to begin with. So, we need to understand that. That like we said, according to Scripture, if we love the person, we're going to separate because we do love them. We'll share with them, "Hey, you know, you really need to pray about this. You really need to come back into the congregation. You need to be under headship." And that's what Yahweh tells us to do. And look what He says, you're not to turn to the right or the left.

Deuteronomy 17:12-13 *And the man who acts with pride as not to listen to the priest who is standing to serve YAHWEH your Elohim there, or to the judge, even that man will die; you shall cut the evil off from Israel. And the people shall hear, and fear, and not presume any more.*

So again, we're not a civil nation. We don't carry out capital punishment, but we do cut people off. We do have to put them out of the congregation until repentance is done. And like I said, we're the ministry of reconciliation not condemnation.

So, we're never condemning them. There's always that hope. And I've had it happen many times, that even after years, somebody repented and did come back. And we just hug them. We forget it. We move on. Because we're the ministry of reconciliation.

But if they don't recognize what they're doing is sin, they're never going to repent. What are they going to repent of? It's the Christian world. Why do we go to the Christians and we try to tell them they need to repent and keep the Torah, and they don't do it? Because they don't see it. They don't believe in the Torah. "The Torah is done away with. There is no more sin. Yahshua nailed the sin to the cross." Right? That's what they tell you. They're not seeing. No, there is sin. And there is righteousness and unrighteousness.

And unless we recognize our sin, what does it say in **Corinthians 11**? *If we would judge ourselves, we wouldn't have to be judged.* But sometimes the root of bitterness comes in and people feel they weren't treated right or their decision wasn't taken that they wanted. And that's pride. That's only pride. And then more pride comes in. So, like I said, unfortunately, sometimes that's the way it's going to work.

But **Proverbs 18:1**, *he who separates himself seeks his own desire.* So, it's never, we see, never, ever do we ever see in Scripture the example of when I don't get my way, I just go off on my own—**except**—except if the congregation itself was sinning; except if the council came together and said, yes, we're going to start keeping Sunday. And, of course, that's something totally different, which you'd never see. At least in our congregation, and hopefully the other branches of Yahshua's congregation, you would never see open sin like that. But that's a whole different situation.

But in a simple judgment ... Sometimes I've seen it over simple things of between two brethren over a car, a piece of property, something that happened. And they're fighting, and they can't solve it. And one or both of them will leave the congregation because they don't like it. And Paul actually dealt with this. Go to 1st Corinthians 6 ... 1st Corinthians 6. Because Paul deals with this. 1st Corinthians 6. He says:

1 Corinthians 6:1-2 *Does any of you having a matter against his brother dare to be judged before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge small affairs?*

Comment: The message is called *Are We To Judge?* Like I said, the Christians, "Don't judge ... don't judge." **We're going to judge the world. When Yahshua returns, we're going to be over all the countries. We're going to be kings and priests. We will have to make judgments on all kinds of things.** And like he's saying, if we can't make matters in these small things now, ...

And believe me, *much is given, much is expected; the more is given, the more is required.* There is a much bigger responsibility on my head as the leader of the congregation than the small person out there. But **Yahweh does expect the brethren in the congregation to support the leadership.** That's the least that the brethren can do when situations come up. But I'm really responsible because sometimes I have to make decisions. And that's why, like I said, I will always try to make the decision. I'll pray, and I'll look ...

And a matter of fact, I'm going to give a sermon soon on how to do that, how do we judge, the four or five principles that are involved with making these final decisions. Because they're not just off the top of your head. There's principles that are involved with making it. So, he says:

1 Corinthians 6:3 *Do you not know that we shall judge cherubs? ... Can you imagine? Fallen cherubs. We are going to be doing the judgment ... How much more than should we judge those who belong to this world?*

Comment: *How much more than should we judge those who belong to this world?* And he's talking about in the congregation, not outside the congregation. That's clear from Scripture.

1 Corinthians 6:4 *You have worldly affairs to be settled and yet you have put men of bad reputation in the congregation on the judgment seat.*

Comment: And I've seen it at times. I've seen at times in congregations where I had to go and overrule something. I'm saying, "How did this person ever make this decision? Look ... look according to Scripture. This is not right." Scripture, and witnesses, evidence has to be our guide.

1 Corinthians 6:4-6 *You have worldly affairs to be settled and you put men of bad reputation in the congregation on the judgment seat. I say this to you to make you feel ashamed. So, is there not a single wise one among you, who could settle dispute between brother and brother? But brother goes to court with brothers and this before unbelievers!*

Comment: Right? We've seen this happen. Sometimes believers, **brethren**, will take another brother to court instead of letting it be solved in the congregation. And why? Because they're not getting their way. Pride! Why does it have to be my way, right? Look what he says:

1 Corinthians 6:7 *Indeed, then, there is already failure **with you**, that you have lawsuits with yourselves. Why not instead be wronged? Why not instead be defrauded?*

Comment: Right? What does it say? Yahshua went before us, and He did no wrong, and there was no guile in His mouth. And yet He was falsely judged, and He didn't open His mouth. And He says He set us an example in all things. So what? What if you were wronged?

There was a situation years ago. When I was a new believer, I had a man that worked with me in my landscaping company, and he asked me on a Sunday to borrow my truck. It wasn't for work purposes. He was moving. He was doing it privately. And while he was privately using my truck, he broke the window. And I said, "Hey, you weren't doing this for work. If you were working, of course, it's my responsibility. But you're privately using my truck. I gave you the truck with a good window. You should bring it back to me with a good window."

Well, he didn't feel that way. He felt since he worked for me that I should pay for the window. I didn't believe it. And I had the scripture to prove it, that when someone gives you something to use, according to Torah you're supposed to give it back the way you got it. So anyway, we brought it before the elders, and they ruled against me. They said, "No, he works for you." And that was it. Even though I knew I was right, all I wanted was justice. But you know what justice was to me? It was having a system that I have the opportunity to share what my side was. That's all I wanted. The rest I leave to Yahweh.

And you know what? If Yahweh allowed me to pay for that window, even though I didn't think I did, that's a good thing. Because it humbles me, and it makes me realize everything isn't going to go my way. And you know what? Maybe I could be wrong. But am I going to come against the elders of the congregation? Am I going to get bitterness over a windshield? Of course not ... of course not.

Because I know it's not that elder that was judging. I know it's Yahweh's judging. And I know that Yahweh set that system up for judgment. So, I would **never** go against the judgment of the elders in the congregation **unless** they were telling me to break the Torah in some way, they were violating the Torah, which is a different matter. But that's what he's saying. *Why not be wronged? Why not be defrauded?*

1 Corinthians 6:8-11 *But you do wrong, and you defraud, and these things to brethren! Or do you not know that the unjust one will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim? ... And then he goes on telling ... idolaters, adulterers, corrupt, homosexuals, thieves, covetousness, drunkards, revilers, and extortionists will not inherit the kingdom of Elohim. And some of you were these things, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of our Master Yahshua, and in the Spirit of our Elohim.*

So very clearly, we all came from the world and sometimes we're not letting these things go. Sometimes people are bringing baggage into the congregation, even after years. And then when something comes up or there's a problem then these things come.

But at the end of the day, like we said, if Yahweh wanted perfect judgment, He could have had it. He could have kept with the Urim and the Thummim, and He could have kept perfect judgment. No, but He put men that, yes, do have to go through a rigid set of ideals in order to become an elder. But then that's it. And He put these people on the judgment seat, and we have to abide by that judgment, and it helps everybody.

Let's go to Numbers 16 ... Numbers the 16th chapter. Because here we see again a rebellion that's coming and the situation that should never be. It should never ever be. Like I said, there was a disagreement on the calendar not that long ago with somebody. And I said to them, I shared with them why they were wrong in what they were saying. But they didn't want to see it. They wanted to feel they were wronged. And I said, "Look, if Yahweh wanted your judgment on the calendar, He would have had you in Jerusalem." It's that simple.

And if I see that I'm wrong, we have people we counsel with on the calendar. There's many men who are very, very educated on it that we talk to. We go over things. But I believe our calendar is pretty good, if not perfect. Maybe there's still a few knicks and crannies to get out. But it's very good. The calendar book is a very, very sound doctrine. But yet there's people because you're not doing it their way ... There's people that the counting to the Jubilee, if you're not doing it their way, that they want to just get angry about it and rebellion. And that's not the way it is.

Yahweh has given each of us, within judicial order, a job. And if something is not your job ... If He gave me the job picking apples and there's somebody else over here who's making cherry pie, it's not my job to tell them how to make the cherry pie. Because my job is the picking of the apples. If I can give them some sound advice, great. That's good. There's nothing wrong with that. That's not what I'm saying. I'm talking about not giving sound advice to someone. I'm talking about somebody who's bitter whose advice is not taken on something that's not their responsibility, and then they're going to leave the congregation.

And even worse if it's a leader. Because then they're going to try to separate the people in the congregation. And that's why, like I said, an elder, it's not a certificate you put on the wall. It's a job description. And once you're not fulfilling that job description anymore, you're not an elder.

Numbers 16:1-2 *And Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, took also Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben; and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty rulers of the congregation, elect men in the assembly, men of name.*

Comment: So, these were not just everyday people. These were men of name. These were **leaders** in the congregation, maybe even what we call elders today.

Numbers 16:3-4 *And they were assembled against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much on yourselves! For all the congregation, all of them are holy, and YAHWEH is with them. Why then do you lift yourselves up above the assembly of YAHWEH? And Moses falls on his face.*

Comment: And he basically says he never took anything from them. And then what happens? As we go on here, verse 19.

Numbers 16:19-21 *And Korah assembled all the congregation against them, to the door of the tent of meeting, and the glory of YAHWEH was seen by all the congregation. And YAHWEH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from the midst of this company, and I will consume them in a moment.*

Comment: So, here it was, they were saying, Yahweh is on my side. Moses is saying, Yahweh's on my side. And Yahweh is saying, no. If I was to go against Moses, I'd be going against Myself. I'd be going against My own judicial order because I

set this structure up. Okay? So, it's not about whether I believe my way was right or wrong. It's about there's a structure that Yahweh set up that we have to live by. And it's that simple.

And like I said, **in my life, I have grown and I have learned more when I was actually right and suffered for it.** That's what the Bible says. If you're suffering for something you did wrong, what good is it? But **if you're doing something right and you suffer for it, this is where, just like what happened to Yahshua, that's where we learn. That's where we learn humility. And that's where we learn faith. Because we know ultimately it doesn't matter if I'm accused of something falsely and everyone in the world believes it, all that matters is whether it's true or not and what Yahweh believes.** That's all that matters. And that's the way the faith that we have to have in Yahweh. So, He says:

Numbers 16:21-26 *Separate yourselves from the midst of this company, I'll consume them in a moment. And they fell on their faces, and said, O Elohim, Elohim of the spirits of all flesh; shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation? And then YAHWEH spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the congregation, saying, You shall get away from the tent of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses went up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel. And he spoke to the congregation, saying, Please turn away from the tents of these wicked men, and do not touch anything that they have, lest you be consumed in their sins.*

Comment: So again, when somebody leaves Yahshua's congregation, when they leave the congregation, that's their decision. And if they don't like the leadership or they don't like something that was done or whatever, everybody can do what they want. But Yahweh is very clear. Once they do that and they separate themselves from the leadership and they are in rebellion, we are to separate from them. It's that simple. Why would you want to continue to listen to somebody that their mindset is rebellion against the leadership that Yahweh set up?

It's disloyalty, and it's traitorous. It really is. Because the person that's leaving is being a traitor. He's not leaving man. He's leaving Yahweh. He's leaving the structure that Yahweh set up. And Yahweh is saying, no, I'm not with that man. Yes, if they repent. We're the ministry of reconciliation, not condemnation. We want them to repent. We want them to come back. We want them in the fold. But if they don't come back in the fold, then we leave the judgment to Yahweh. But certainly, we don't want to be helping in the rebellion that's done.

Verse 28, *Moses said, By this you shall know ...* And then he says about what's going to happen, and the earth opens up. And verse 34 ... verse 33.

Numbers 16:33-34 *And they went down, they and all they [had], to Sheol, and the earth covered them; and they perished from the midst of the assembly. And all Israel who were around them fled from their cry; and they said, Lest the earth swallow us up.*

Comment: So, now, you would think ... Right? These people are coming to Moses. They're saying they're right. Moses is saying he's right. They go to Yahweh. Yahweh makes it very evident who was right. The structure He set up was Moses is the leader. These other men are in rebellion. Yahweh opens up the earth—something that's never happened before—and they go in. The people are scared to death, so you would think, wow, now the people are going to say, “Ah, Moses, I'm really sorry. I mean, I didn't know this.” But look what happens. Go down to verse 41.

Numbers 16:41 *And the congregation of the sons of Israel murmured on the next day against Moses and against Aaron, saying, You killed the people of YAHWEH.*

Wow! And that happens sometimes. Whether it's a brother or a sister that needs to be put out of the congregation for sin, or sometimes, like I said, unfortunately, even an elder that might be put out of the congregation or would leave the congregation, and brethren, even though they see that the person is in rebellion, sometimes they don't want to see it. You don't want to see it. But it's very clear here, even at this point the people did not see it. And what happens? Yahweh brings a plague on these people.

Yahweh is not with those, as we see in the story in Numbers 16, who left with a rebellious spirit and broke off from the congregation, or He would be dividing against Himself. All of us ... I'm not here for myself. I'm not here for something I started. I'm part of a chain that started with Yahshua and has been going on for 2,000 years. And if hands weren't laid on me for ministry, I wouldn't be here doing this. I'd be doing something totally different. And as I was for 15 years before I was ordained, I'd be supporting the people that Yahweh had in leadership. But Yahweh put me in leadership, started as a local elder, served any way I could. He brought me to Jerusalem to be the leader of the congregation from there, and I'm doing the best I can under the circumstances that we're in.

But clearly, division is not an option. It's just not something that Yahweh has. And we do have to stand up for it. Like I said, even for the fact of mailing lists, right? If you're on a mailing list of somebody that is in rebellion of the congregation, you're supporting that. We have a mailing list of thousands and thousands of people that goes all over the world. Now, I don't know everybody on that mailing list. But in my mind, I'm thinking if somebody signs up for this letter, they must be supporting me. Why would you sign up? If I wasn't supporting something, I wouldn't want to be on somebody's email list if I wasn't supporting it. So, in my mind, I'm thinking every single person that's on our email list is a supporter of me. And if you're not, then you take yourself off the list.

So, it's the same way. When somebody is teaching false doctrine, I say this all the time, we wouldn't go out there and be looking on somebody's internet site that is a false teacher. So, if somebody in rebellion has left the congregation or had to be put out of the congregation for sin, then certainly, why would we be on their email list getting their teachings? It's a contradiction, and it's a division. And it clearly is, it is something that is bringing division in the congregation. It's not bringing unity. So, unity is that we get together. And how do we get together? That the person who did the sin, the person in rebellion, would repent. He'd humble himself before Yahweh, and we forgive him. It's that simple. That's all Yahweh wants, and that's all we would want.

But there's a story, you probably ... some of you have heard it. That they said, when there's trouble, and they said, and first the soldiers that came for the Jews, but I wasn't a Jew, so I didn't stand up. And then they came for the Russians, but I wasn't a Russian, so I didn't stand up. And then they came for the Italians, but I wasn't Italian. They didn't stand up. And then when they came for me, there was nobody left to stand up.

So, I know at times people don't want to take a stand. They don't want to get involved. And a lot of times you shouldn't. If something ... Last point I want to go over here in a minute ... that if something doesn't pertain to you, you shouldn't. But if it's something in the congregation, if it's something dealing with our leadership, that pertains to every single person in the congregation. Because every single person in the congregation has willingly put themselves under the leadership of myself and all the other elders. Whether it's Africa, Asia, United States, South America, wherever it is, we have elders everywhere, and the people in this congregation have willingly put themselves under the leadership of that. So, when somebody rebels against our leadership, that concerns not just me, it concerns every single person in the congregation.

And we have to make ourselves committees of one, at least for the fact, like I said, not to be on somebody's email list if they're coming against the leadership and bringing condemnation against the leadership. That should be the least that we would think that we would do in the congregation, because we don't want to be divided. And that's the key how Satan will try to get us. Satan is a great divider. And let me tell you something. Division doesn't happen from nothing, and unity doesn't happen for nothing.

For years when brethren, or let's say outsiders, guests have come to our congregation in Jerusalem, and they've said, "I've never seen a congregation like this. I've never seen a congregation so loving and submissive and working together and all believing the same thing." I say, "Well, it didn't just happen. It can only happen if there's judicial order. Without judicial order, we wouldn't be that way." If every time somebody didn't get their way or didn't like a decision they went off and started a new congregation, we'd be just like the world. We'd be two million congregations out there.

The thing that makes our congregation different is we do believe in judicial order. We do respect the leadership. We do believe in the doctrine. We do follow our elders. And our elders lovingly try to serve the people. That's what makes us different. And if we break that, if we break that trend or allow Satan to use us to break that trend, ...

And I'll tell you something, I wouldn't care if somebody was my uncle. I wouldn't care if they were my brother. If they were an elder and they left the congregation and went out on their own, I would have to cut off contact with them. It's just that simple. I would talk to them. I'd tell them why. I'd ask them would they repent. And like the prodigal son, I'd be there every day waiting for them. But until the day repentance came, I would not divide the spirit of leadership that Yahweh puts in the congregation.

I wouldn't want to divide my loyalty two ways, because my loyalty is one way. My loyalty is to Yahweh, and my loyalty is to His people. It's the same way. I love the people of Yahweh, but when someone leaves the congregation, I'm not against you, but that's it. You left. You went on your own. I pray you come back. But there's only 24 hours a day, and my focus has to be for Yahweh's people and serving His people. And it's just the way things go. Matthew 18 ... Matthew 18:15. We'll end up here in a couple of minutes. He says:

Matthew 18:15-18 *If your brother is with you at fault, go to him, rebuke him, between you and him alone. if he listens to you, you won your brother. But if not, take one or two witnesses, "in the mouth of two or three witnesses, let everything be established." But if he fails to hear it, tell it to the congregation ... bring it to the elders ... And if he fails to hear the congregation, ... the elders ... then let him be as a tax collector or a heathen. Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on earth will be, having been bound in Heaven. Whatever you loose on earth will be, having been loosed in Heaven.*

So very clearly, we see how this works. We see very clearly. You try to go to somebody. You don't have to run to the elder every time somebody did something wrong. You go to them first. If they don't repent, you bring witnesses. If they don't repent, then you bring it to the elder, to the congregation. And like I said, unfortunately, sometimes somebody does have to be put out **until repentance comes**.

In the congregation, it's not like jail. You're not doing your time. It's not like you do jail 10 years. If you repented or not, after your 10-year sentence, you leave the jail. Jail doesn't ask you to repent. They just ask you to stay behind the bars for that time. In the congregation, it's not like that. In the congregation, it doesn't matter if you're out for a day or 50 years. If you didn't repent, you're not coming back in the body of Messiah. That's Yahweh's rule. So, if you repent quickly, you can come back quickly. If you didn't repent, then Yahweh's Word says you don't take the person back until he does.

And like I said, you're not helping a brother or a sister if you're denying your sin. That is not helping them whatsoever. The way you're helping them is if you bring the sin up to them in a humble way and you share with them why they need to change. And then you leave it up to Yahweh at that point. But **there has to be repentance before there's restoration**. Joel 2 ... Joel 2. This is the end time, right? Right before the Day of Yahweh. And look what he says. Joel 2 and verse 11.

Joel 2:11-13 *And YAHWEH shall give His voice before His army, for His camp is very strong. For he who does His Word is strong. For the day of YAHWEH is very great and fearful, and who can endure it? ... Right? This is the times we're living in ... Even now, though, turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, with wailing, declares YAHWEH. Yea, tear your heart, and not your robes; and turn to YAHWEH your Elohim. For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, ...*

Comment: That's what grace is. Grace is that He doesn't judge us immediately. It's not forgetting the sin. That wouldn't be justice. Yahweh never forgets the sin. It has to be paid for. And it's paid for by the blood of Yahshua when we accept that.

Joel 2:13b-16 *He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and He pities concerning the evil. Who knows if He will turn and have pity and leave a blessing behind Him, a food offering and a drink offering ... Right? We're at the end of the shmita ... Blow a shofar in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, gather the elders, gather the children, and those who suck the breasts. Let the bridegroom go out of his room; let the bride out of her bridal chamber.*

Comment: This is what we're preparing for. This is where we're at. **The bride of Messiah is getting ready. But it has to be a unified bride.** And Yahshua is coming back as the Bridegroom to get His bride.

Joel 2:17-18 *Let the priests, ministers of YAHWEH, weep between the porch of the altar; and let them say, Have pity on Your people, O YAHWEH, ... And I've done this. I've wept for Yahweh's people, and for repentance to be poured out ... and do not give Your inheritance to shame, for a proverb among those nations. Why should they say among the people, Where is their Elohim? Then YAHWEH will be jealous for His land and have pity on His people.*

Comment: This is part of bringing Ephraim back. There has to be a great repentance ... I've given many messages on this over the years ... before Yahweh returns His people to the Holy Land.

Joel 2:19, 21 *Yea, YAHWEH will answer and say to His people, Behold, I will send you grain, and wine, and oil, and you will be satisfied. And I will no more make you a disgrace among the nations ... And He talks about moving the army away. Verse 21 ... Fear not, O land, be glad and rejoice, for YAHWEH is doing great things.*

So, that's all Yahweh wants, and that's all as His leaders that we want. We want to hold people accountable because we know if they don't take care of that sin now, then they'll be accountable on Judgment Day. 2nd Corinthians 5 and verse 10 ... 2nd Corinthians 5 and verse 10. Because there's only One who can condemn. Like we said, we are to judge. We make judgments, which are decisions. We do judge sin. But as far as judging another human being, only Yahweh does that. 2nd Corinthians 5:10 and 11.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11 *For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad. Then, knowing the fear of the Master, we persuade men, and we have been known to Elohim; and I also trust that we have been understood by you.*

Comment: Right? If you don't repent of your sin now, you will pay the penalty of Judgment Day. Drop down to verse 17.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 *So then if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things become new! And all things are from Elohim, the One having reconciled us to Himself through Yahshua Messiah, and having given us the ministry of reconciliation, ... That's what we're doing. We're trying to get people to repent, to turn back to Yahweh and reconcile themselves back ... for YAHWEH was in Messiah who has reconciled the world with His majesty, not charging their sins against them, and has committed to us the Word of reconciliation. Then [on] behalf of Messiah, we are ambassadors, as Elohim is exhorting through us, we beseech on behalf of Messiah, to be reconciled to YAHWEH.*

And praise Yahweh, He has set me up from Jerusalem as His ambassador to the world. I've met with world leaders. I've met with many ambassadors. I've gone to many things. And this is the message we're giving. It's not a message of condemnation. It's a message of reconciliation.

But in the meantime, in the body of Messiah, we do have to make judgments. There is a system of judges that Yahweh set up. And unfortunately, there are times that people do have to be put out of the congregation. And when they are, it's always in the hope that, somehow, they'll repent and they will come back. And the last thing I'd like to just mention very, very quickly is just Proverbs 26:17. It says:

Proverbs 26:17 *One passing by, crossing himself over strife that is not his own, is like one who grabs a dog's ear.*

So again, what we're dealing with judgment, we always have to taper that with ... We don't want the talk show mentality that's in the world today, where everybody has an opinion on everything. That's gossip. That's not the way it is ... We want to make sure that our judgments are based on the things that pertain to us, or pertain some way in the congregation to something, or pertain to sin. And then, yes, we're commanded by Yahweh to make judgments.

But as far as people's personal lives, how people are living, what they're doing, how they're raising their children, all these things, these are not things, unless we're asked for advice, that we should be gossiping and making judgments on things that do not pertain to us. We are to judge sin, but we would never commit condemnation to another human being.

So again, I pray that this message was helpful. Because like I said, when we look at Christianity out there, this is the crux of the false grace: "Don't judge ... don't judge. The way you judge, you're going to be judged." And yet Yahweh says, no, we are. We are to render decisions. **We are to condemn *sin*, but we're not to condemn other human beings.**

So, I pray that this has helped. Like I said, I'm going to do, I don't know if you call it a part 2 or not, but it will deal with how do we do proper judging, what are the principles so that we can make proper judgments when the time comes. And I'll do that. I'll do that probably fairly soon. Hopefully, Yahweh willing, maybe within the next month. So, Yahweh bless. I pray that you're having a wonderful day, and one more month to the shmita. Rosh Chodesh. Happy New Moon, and blessings to all Yahweh's people.