

שְׁמִינִי

Sh'mini

(eighth)

Vayyiqra [Leviticus] 9:1-11:47

And They Fell on Their Faces

Vayyiqra (Leviticus) 9:24

And there came forth fire from before YHWH, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; and when all the people saw it, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

The seemingly insignificant fact of the people falling upon their faces before YHWH, when He manifested Himself to the entire nation by consuming the burnt offering and the fat, is actually quite important to us today. There is a similar incident which occurred in the life of Eliyah the prophet.

Malakim Aleph (1st Kings) 18:38-39

38 Then the fire of YHWH fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "YHWH, He is Elohim; YHWH, He is Elohim."

After three and a half years of no rain in the land at the word of Eliyah the prophet, he shows us and challenges the prophets of Ba'al to a showdown to see who was the one true Elohim, YHWH or Ba'al. This seemed good and right in the eyes of all the people. The prophets of Ba'al were not able to produce any results to show that Ba'al even existed. However, when Eliyah prayed a short prayer YHWH answered with fire and consumed the sacrifice, the stones of the altar and the water in the trench around the altar. It was a clear demonstration as to who was the one true Elohim. The people immediately responded by falling on their faces and worshipping YHWH their Elohim.

We are going to show several examples from Scripture to show that the proper response from those who are true followers of YHWH is to fall on their faces when He is present.

This next example is from the life of Mano'ah and his wife as they interacted with the Malak of YHWH.

Shophtim (Judges) 13:20

For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of YHWH ascended in the flame of the altar; and Mano'ah and his wife looked on; and they fell on their faces to the ground.

When the heavenly messenger came to Mano'ah and his wife to tell them that they were about to have a baby and that the child would be a boy and he was to be a Nazirite from birth, they offered up a sacrifice to YHWH and the messenger went up in the flame of the sacrifice. It was at that point that Mano'ah and his wife realized that they had been speaking to a messenger of YHWH. It was then that they fell on their faces in worship of YHWH.

Ha Divre Aleph (1st Chronicles) 21:16

And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of YHWH standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

When King David ordered Yo'av (Joab) to take a census of the men who drew a sword, he brought a curse upon the nation and YHWH sent a destroying malak (angel) throughout Israel, killing seventy thousand men. When the destroying malak came to Jerusalem YHWH saw that King David and all the elders of Israel were in sackcloth and ashes praying and He relented of the devastation. It was at that point that King David and all the elders saw the destroying angel standing before Jerusalem. They responded by falling upon their faces in worship of YHWH.

While some of the examples that we have in Scripture are those of people falling on their faces because of trials or some type of suffering, the following example is because the people were simply worshipping YHWH for His greatness.

Ha Divre Bet (2nd Chronicles) 7:3

And all the children of Israel looked on, when the fire came down, and the glory of YHWH was upon the house; and they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and gave thanks to YHWH, saying, "For He is good; for His lovingkindness endures forever."

After King Sh'lomo (Solomon) had finished all the work of building the temple in Jerusalem and was dedicating that great house for YHWH, YHWH came and filled the structure with His presence. When YHWH did this and the people witnessed it, they all bowed low on their faces to the ground and worshipped YHWH. This is right and proper for His people to do in acknowledgement of Him and His presence.

When Moshe was challenged by Korah as YHWH's chosen leader of Israel, Moshe fell on his face numerous times during the incident. The second time is given below.

B'midbar (Numbers) 16:20-22

20 And YHWH spoke to Moshe and to Aharon, saying,

21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, "Elohim, the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation?"

In interceding between YHWH and the nation of Israel, both Moshe and Aharon fell on their faces pleading for mercy for the people. It is doubtful that the people ever truly appreciated these acts of intercession from Moshe or Aharon. This is most likely because they did not understand the true awfulness of their own sins.

Now we want to contrast those who fall upon their faces in worship of YHWH with those who go or fall backward.

Yochanan (John) 18:6

When therefore He said to them, "I am He," they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Notice that these soldiers who came to arrest Yeshua, after He identified Himself as the person they were looking for, fell backwards.

Tehillim (Psalm) 40:14

Let them be put to shame and confounded together

That seek after my soul to destroy it;

Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor

That delight in my hurt.

There are many Psalms that reflect this idea of those who desire to do harm to YHWH's people being driven backward or falling backward or stumbling backward. But the main idea is that of moving backward.

Now let us reflect upon what Yeshua taught concerning this idea of going backwards.

Luqa (Luke) 9:62

But Yeshua said to him, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of Elohim."

Looking back with longing desire is a quick exit from His kingdom.

Luqa (Luke) 17:32

"Remember Lot's wife."

Yeshua even brought to our minds the incident of Lot's wife when after being sternly warned by the heavenly messenger not to look back at the city, did so anyway and was turned into a pillar of salt.

Looking back, going back, or falling back is a sure indication that a person is not a part of His kingdom.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 10:38-39

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, My soul has no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not of them that shrink back to perdition; but of them that have faith to the saving of the soul.

If we are going to be pleasing to our heavenly Father, then we need to be going forward, and not backward.

Philippians 3:12-14

12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Mashiach Yeshua.

13 Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before,

14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of Elohim in Mashiach Yeshua.

One of the places of importance in our lives that this can be seen is when one is immersed into Mashiach Yeshua. When many did this originally in the English name of our Messiah as found in Christianity, this immersion in water was done in a backwards motion. If you had it done like this as I did, then you need to have it redone in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach in a forwards moving motion.

May all things done be for the glory and honor of Yeshua our Mashiach.

ABBA YHWH, give us strength and wisdom to always be moving forward for You and Your kingdom; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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