

MIQDASH BETHEL COVENANT ASSEMBLY

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TORAH LAW EDUCATIONAL COURSE

The 613 Mitzvot of Yahweh

Bereishit • Shemot • Vayikra • Bamidbar • Devarim | The Tanakh Writings

LESSON 18

Positive Laws #72 & #73 | Negative Law #74

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:14–16

שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה כָּל-זָכוֹר
אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

Shalosh pe'amim bashanah yera'eh kol zechurcha et penei Yahweh Elohecha

"Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh your Elohim"

The Covenant Law of the Shalosh Regalim: Pilgrimage, Rejoicing, and Appearing Before Yahweh

Law #72 — To rejoice before Yahweh on the pilgrimage festivals (Devarim 16:14)

Law #73 — To appear before Yahweh at the place He chooses, three times a year (Devarim 16:16)

Law #74 — Not to appear before Yahweh empty-handed at the festivals (Devarim 16:16)

Four Spheres: Individual • Community • Nation • World

Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone

Standard: Devarim 19:15 — Two or Three Witnesses

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Course Framework & Methodology

Purpose of This Course: This educational course expounds the 613 Mitzvot (commandments) of Yahweh as revealed exclusively through the Written Torah and confirmed by the Tanakh Writings and Prophets. Each lesson examines a specific law or cluster of related laws in their original Hebrew, through lexical analysis, through the Two/Three Witness evidentiary standard of **Devarim (Deuteronomy) 19:15**, and through application across four spheres: Individual, Community, Nation, and World. Every lesson is audited through the Three-Religion lens — reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously. Torah alone is the authority. Talmud, Church councils, and hadith serve as historical reference only — never as binding authority above the Tanakh.

Three-Religion Standard: This course is designed to reach practitioners of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously. The Torah was given to all who would receive it. Where all three traditions uphold the Torah, their convergence is documented. Where any tradition departs from the Torah text, the departure is named and examined.

Why Lesson 18 — The Shalosh Regalim? Laws #72–74 belong to a cluster that is easy to dismiss as Temple-only legislation now that the Temple no longer stands. That dismissal is premature and covenant-dangerous. These laws reveal the structure of **Yahweh's** appointed times — the three annual covenant rendezvous between Israel and their Elohim. The obligation to rejoice before **Yahweh** (Law #72), the obligation to appear at the place He chooses (Law #73), and the prohibition against appearing empty-handed (Law #74) together define the posture of the covenant community before its King: present, joyful, and bearing the fruit of His blessing. These laws are not archaeological artifacts. They are the living rhythms of the covenant calendar.

SECTION I — THE HEBREW TEXTS

Law #72 — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:14 — The Command to Rejoice

וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בְּחֻגֶיךָ אֶתְּהָ וּבְנֶיךָ וּבִתֶּיךָ
וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ וְהַלְוִי וְהַגֵּר וְהִיתוּם וְהָאֲלֵמָנָה

"You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:14

Law #73 — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16 — The Command to Appear

שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה כָּל-זָכוֹרְךָ אֶת-פָּנָי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר

"Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim at the place that He will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall

not appear before Yahweh empty-handed." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16

Law #74 — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16 — The Prohibition Against Appearing Empty-Handed

וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה אֶת-יְהוָה רִיקִים

"They shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your Elohim that He has given you." — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 16:16–17

Companion Texts — Shemot (Exodus) 23:14–17 and 34:23

"Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to Me. You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. You shall observe the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall observe the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh Elohim." — Shemot (Exodus) 23:14–17

"Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh Elohim, the Elohim of Israel." — Shemot (Exodus) 34:23

SECTION II — PRIMARY LEXICAL ANALYSIS

שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְלִים — Shalosh Regalim (H7969 / H7272) — "Three Pilgrimages"

The collective name for the three pilgrimage festivals is **Shalosh Regalim** (שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְלִים) — literally "three feet" or "three times." The word **regel** (רִגְל) — **H7272** — carries the primary meaning of "foot" in the Tanakh (BDB: foot, leg). Its secondary meaning — "time, occasion" — developed from the concept of the foot-journey required for the pilgrimage. The Balashon Hebrew language resource confirms: the literal meaning of Shalosh Regalim is "three feet, three steps," from which arose the meaning "three times." The post-biblical usage of **regalim** specifically for the three pilgrimage festivals first appears in the Mishnah. Its root meaning of foot and journey is embedded in the very name: these are the festivals of the foot-journey — the walk to the place where **Yahweh** places His name.

HALOT confirms **regel** in its pilgrimage sense as "occasion, time" appearing in the phrase **shalosh pe'amim** (שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים — "three times") in Shemot 23:14 and Devarim 16:16. Both formulations — shalosh regalim and shalosh pe'amim — are used interchangeably in the Torah to command the same three annual appearances before **Yahweh**.

יֵרָאֶה — Yera'eh (H7200) — "Shall Appear / Shall Be Seen"

The verb at the heart of Law #73 is **yera'eh** (יֵרָאֶה) — Niphal imperfect of the root **ra'ah** (רָאָה) — **H7200** — "to see." The Niphal is the reflexive/passive stem: "shall be seen,

shall appear." BDB: "to appear before, to be seen by." This is the covenant language of an audience with the King: Israel comes to be *seen* by **Yahweh** — to stand in His presence and be recognized as His people.

The Talmud (Chagigah 2a, 4b) notes a profound grammatical insight: the same Hebrew letters — yera'eh — can be read as either the passive **yera'eh** ("shall be seen") or the active **yir'eh** ("shall see"). The Gemara deduces from this double reading: just as **Yahweh** comes to see Israel, Israel comes to see **Yahweh**. The pilgrimage is therefore a mutual covenant encounter — not a one-sided presentation of the people before a distant deity, but a covenantal meeting in which **Yahweh** and His people behold one another. As Chagigah 4b states: "A servant whom his master desires to see." **Yahweh** desires to see His people. The pilgrimage is the answer to that desire.

הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר — HaMakom Asher Yivchar — "The Place That He Will Choose"

HaMakom asher yivchar (הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר) — "the place that He will choose" — is the Torah's deliberate formulation for the central sanctuary that **Yahweh** would eventually designate. The Torah does not name the location in advance. It uses the future tense — "shall choose" — preserving the divine sovereign prerogative to establish the place of His name in His own time. That place, historically, became Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) and specifically the Temple Mount — **Har HaBayit**. BDB and HALOT both note that **bachar** (בָּחַר) — "to choose, select" — is the covenant verb for divine election. **Yahweh** chose the people (Devarim 7:6). He chose the tribe (Devarim 18:5). He chose the place (Devarim 12:5). The place of pilgrimage is not self-selected — it is covenant-designated.

וְשִׂמְחַתָּ — Ve'samachta (H8055) — "You Shall Rejoice"

The root of Law #72 is **samach** (שָׂמַח) — **H8055** — "to rejoice, be glad, be joyful." BDB: "to rejoice, be merry, take pleasure in." HALOT: "to be glad, rejoice." This is not optional sentiment. The covenant form **ve'samachta** — "and you shall rejoice" — is a *command*. **Yahweh** does not merely permit rejoicing at the festivals. He *commands* it. The joy of the covenant people before their Elohim is a covenant obligation — not a feeling that arises spontaneously, but a posture of the heart and body commanded by the King. Mishlei 17:22 confirms the covenant importance of joy: "A joyful heart is good medicine." The Shalosh Regalim are **Yahweh's** appointed prescription for the renewal of covenant joy three times per year.

רֵיקָם — Reikam (H7387) — "Empty-Handed"

Law #74 prohibits appearing before **Yahweh reikam** (רֵיקָם) — **H7387** — "empty, empty-handed." BDB: "emptily, without purpose, in vain, without success." HALOT: "empty-handed." This term appears in Bereishit 31:42 (Lavan sending Ya'akov away empty-handed) and Rut 1:21 (Naomi returning empty). In every Tanakh context, **reikam** conveys the absence of covenant reciprocity — the failure to bring back what one has received. The prohibition against appearing before **Yahweh** empty-handed is therefore a covenant statement: the people who have received from **Yahweh** — harvest, blessing, protection, covenant — must come before Him carrying evidence of what He has given. The gift is not payment. It is testimony.

חַג — Chag (H2282) — "Feast, Festival, Pilgrim Festival"

The word **chag** (חַג) — **H2282** — designates the pilgrimage festivals specifically. BDB: "feast, festival" — from the root **chagag** (חָגַג) — "to make a pilgrimage, keep a pilgrim feast, celebrate." HALOT confirms the festive-processional sense. The **chag** is not simply a commemoration or a day of rest. It is a living, moving, communal celebration involving the journey to the place of **Yahweh's** name, the offering of sacrifice, the eating of covenant meals, and the inclusion of the vulnerable — the Levite, the sojourner, the orphan, the widow — in the joy of the covenant people.

SECTION III — THE THREE COVENANT FESTIVALS

The Shalosh Regalim are not three arbitrary appointment times. Each festival is embedded in both the agricultural calendar of the land of Israel and the covenant history of Israel with **Yahweh**. Together they tell the story of the covenant in annual cycles: redemption, revelation, and provision.

Festival	Covenant Identity, Agricultural Witness, and Torah Command
<p>חַג — Pesach (Passover) Chag HaMatzot — Feast of Unleavened Bread Vayikra 23:5–8; Shemot 12; Devarim 16:1–8</p>	<p>COVENANT IDENTITY: The Exodus from Egypt — the foundational act of national redemption by Yahweh. "I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself" (Shemot 19:4). Pesach is the annual covenant renewal of the identity: we were slaves, and Yahweh redeemed us. AGRICULTURAL WITNESS: The beginning of the barley harvest. The Omer offering — a measure of barley — was brought to the Temple on the day after the Sabbath within Pesach, marking the first fruits of the spring harvest. TORAH COMMAND: Seven days of unleavened bread. The Paschal lamb. No chametz (leaven) in the home. This is the first of the three commanded pilgrimages — the foot-journey of freedom.</p>
<p>חַג שבועות — Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) Chag HaBikkurim — Feast of Firstfruits Vayikra 23:15–21; Shemot 23:16; Devarim 16:9–12</p>	<p>COVENANT IDENTITY: The giving of the Torah at Har Sinai — fifty days after the Exodus. Post-biblical tradition (confirmed in Jubilees and later rabbinic texts) identifies Shavuot as the anniversary of the Sinai covenant. The people who were redeemed from Egypt now receive the covenant law that defines their life before Yahweh. Redemption finds its purpose in instruction. AGRICULTURAL WITNESS: The end of the wheat harvest. Two leavened loaves — chametz for the first and only time as a Temple offering — were brought as firstfruits of the wheat harvest, along with animal offerings. The counting of the Omer (forty-nine days from Pesach) concludes at Shavuot. TORAH COMMAND: One day of sacred assembly. The second of the three pilgrimages — the foot-journey of revelation.</p>
<p>חַג סוכות — Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles/Booths) Chag HaAsif — Feast of Ingathering Vayikra 23:33–43; Shemot 23:16; Devarim 16:13–15</p>	<p>COVENANT IDENTITY: The forty years of wilderness wandering — when Yahweh provided for Israel in the desert, covering them with His cloud and feeding them with manna. Sukkot commands dwelling in temporary booths to remember the vulnerability and the divine provision of the wilderness years: "that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Vayikra 23:43). AGRICULTURAL WITNESS: The final harvest of the year — the ingathering of all produce before the winter rains. It is also called the Feast of Ingathering (Chag HaAsif). The Four Species — lulav (palm), etrog (citron), hadassim (myrtle), aravot (willow) — are taken and waved in covenant joy before Yahweh. TORAH COMMAND: Seven days of festival, with the eighth day (Shemini Atzeret) as a sacred assembly. The third of the three pilgrimages —</p>

	the foot-journey of provision and gratitude. Sukkot is specifically called "the time of our joy" — zman simchateinu — in Jewish tradition, reflecting Yahweh's own characterization in Devarim 16:14–15.
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The three-festival structure encodes the entire covenant narrative into the annual calendar. Pesach remembers redemption — who brought us out. Shavuot celebrates revelation — what He gave us. Sukkot practices provision — how He sustained us. A covenant people that observes all three annually has walked through the entire story of its relationship with **Yahweh** in the span of one year. The pilgrimage requirement is not a burden — it is the covenant's annual mechanism for communal memory, communal joy, and communal identity before **Yahweh**.

SECTION IV — TWO/THREE WITNESS CORROBORATION

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Shemot (Ex.) 23:14–17	First primary witness — the Covenant Code (Parashat Mishpatim): "Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to Me." All three festivals named by agricultural designation: Chag HaMatzot, Chag HaKatzir, Chag HaAsif. The obligation to appear three times stated as an explicit command given at Sinai.
Shemot (Ex.) 34:23	Second primary witness — the Covenant Renewal (after the golden calf): "Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh Elohim, the Elohim of Israel." The covenant was renewed after Israel's greatest early failure — and the three-pilgrimage command was included in the renewal, confirming its perpetual binding force.
Vayikra (Lev.) 23:1–44	Third primary witness — the full covenant calendar. All three festivals — Pesach (23:5–8), Shavuot (23:15–21), Sukkot (23:33–43) — are commanded within the Holiness Code as appointed times (mo'adim) of Yahweh. The word mo'ed (מוֹעֵד — appointed time, meeting place) frames all three festivals as covenant appointments between Yahweh and His people.
Devarim (Deut.) 16:1–17	Fourth primary witness — Moshe's covenant renewal address. The most complete Torah statement of the three pilgrimage laws (Laws #72, #73, #74) as a unified cluster. Includes the explicit command to rejoice (16:14), the three-times-a-year appearance command (16:16), and the prohibition against appearing empty-handed with the proportionality principle: "every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your Elohim" (16:17).
Tehillim (Ps.) 122:1–4	Nevi'im/Ketuvim corroboration: "I was glad when they said to me: 'Let us go to the house of Yahweh!' Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Yerushalayim... to which the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of Yahweh." The pilgrimage experience in the voice of the covenant people — joy, communal movement, covenant purpose.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 2:2–3	Prophetic world-level witness: "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of Yahweh shall be established as the highest of the mountains... and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the Elohim of

	Ya'akov." The Shalosh Regalim pilgrimage becomes the template for the eschatological gathering of all nations to Yahweh's mountain.
Zechariah (Zekhariah) 14:16	Eschatological corroboration: "Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Yerushalayim shall go up year after year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths." Sukkot specifically is named as the universal eschatological pilgrimage feast — the season of joy becomes the feast of all nations before Yahweh in the covenant's final restoration.
Tehillim (Ps.) 84:5–7	Witness to the joy of the pilgrimage: "Blessed are those whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs... They go from strength to strength; each one appears before Elohim in Zion." The pilgrimage journey itself — the hardship of the road, the building of strength, the arrival before Yahweh — is the covenant experience Law #73 commands.
Shemot (Ex.) 34:24 — Yahweh's Land Promise	Covenant infrastructure for Law #73: "No one shall covet your land when you go up to appear before Yahweh your Elohim three times in the year." Yahweh promises the protection of Israel's land during the three pilgrimages when all the men depart. This is the covenant basis for the legal exemptions and the theological trust required to obey Law #73 — leaving the land in Yahweh's hands while the men go to stand before His face.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 31:12–13	Prophetic covenant witness to the joy of restored pilgrimage: "They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of Yahweh... Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow." The joy of the Shalosh Regalim — commanded in Devarim 16:14 — is the joy Yahweh promises to restore.
Islamic Hajj — World Witness	The Islamic institution of Hajj — the annual pilgrimage to Mecca required of every able-bodied Muslim at least once in a lifetime — shares the covenant structure of Law #73: a commanded appearance before the Creator at the place He has designated, in a specific season, with offerings. The Arabic word hajj (حَجّ) carries the same root meaning as Hebrew chag (חג) — the pilgrimage-feast. This is the Abrahamic covenant pilgrimage impulse preserved across traditions.

SECTION V — FOUR-SPHERE COVENANT APPLICATION

Level	Sphere	Application	Torah Witness
INDIVIDUAL	Law #72 — Rejoicing as a Command	The covenant person is commanded to rejoice before Yahweh at the festivals — not merely permitted. Ve'samachta is a positive commandment. The individual who approaches the festival with a spirit of grudging attendance or covenant indifference has violated the covenant. Yahweh commands the posture of joy as a spiritual discipline: the annual renewal of covenantal delight in His presence, His provision, and His people.	Devarim 16:14; Vayikra 23:40

INDIVIDUAL	Law #73 — Appearing Before Yahweh	Historically, every adult male was obligated to make the physical pilgrimage to the designated place three times annually. In the present era, without the standing Temple, this law operates in its principle: the covenant person orients his annual calendar around the three appointed seasons of Yahweh. He does not allow the pilgrim festivals to pass as ordinary days. He marks them, observes them, and appears before Yahweh — in prayer, in covenant assembly, and in the keeping of the festival commands that remain applicable.	Devarim 16:16; Shemot 23:17
INDIVIDUAL	Law #74 — Not Empty-Handed	The covenant person does not come before Yahweh without an expression of gratitude for what Yahweh has given. In the Temple era this was a literal offering — the Olat Re'iyah (appearance burnt-offering). In the present era the principle governs: the covenant person approaches the festivals with tzedakah (giving to those in need), with firstfruits-thinking (acknowledging that the blessing came from Yahweh before allocating it for personal use), and with active generosity toward the Levite, the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow.	Devarim 16:16–17; Shemot 23:15
INDIVIDUAL	Covenant Mercy	The Gemara (Chagigah 9a) teaches that the obligation of re'iyah can be made up if missed on the first day of the festival — it may be fulfilled on any day of the festival week. This principle of tashlumin (making up / completing) reflects Yahweh's covenant patience: He desires that His people appear before Him, and He provides the full week of the festival as the window for that appearance. The covenant person who missed the first day is not lost — the door remains open through the appointed season.	Yechezkel 18:21–23
COMMUNITY	Covenant Assembly	The Shalosh Regalim are inherently communal. Devarim 16:14 explicitly includes the son, daughter, servant, Levite, sojourner, orphan, and widow in the joy of the festival. The covenant assembly does not celebrate in isolation. The festival is the community's annual gathering — and the community's responsibility to ensure that no one within it is left outside the joy. The one who cannot bring his own offering is brought into the covenant meal of those who can.	Devarim 16:14
COMMUNITY	Inclusion of the Vulnerable	The specific list in Devarim 16:14 — the Levite (who has no land), the sojourner (who has no tribal membership), the orphan, and the widow — defines the covenant community's festival obligation. The community's rejoicing before Yahweh is incomplete if these groups are excluded from or unable to participate in the joy. The festival is not a private celebration of the	Devarim 16:14; Vayikra 23:22

		prosperous. It is the covenant gathering of the whole community — the blessed carrying the vulnerable into the presence of Yahweh.	
NATION	Covenant Calendar	A covenant nation structures its national calendar around the three appointed seasons of Yahweh. The festivals are not merely religious observances for a subset of the population — they are the covenant architecture of the nation's annual rhythm. Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot mark redemption, revelation, and provision. A nation that honors these seasons — even in adapted form — keeps its annual identity rooted in the covenant story. A nation that replaces Yahweh's appointed times entirely with secular celebrations has abandoned the covenant calendar.	Shemot 23:14–17; Vayikra 23:1–44
NATION	Yahweh's Land Protection Promise	Shemot 34:24 contains one of the most remarkable covenant infrastructure promises in the Torah: "No one shall covet your land when you go up to appear before Yahweh your Elohim three times in the year." Yahweh guaranteed the protection of the land during the three annual pilgrimages when all the men departed. This is a national-level covenant security provision: obedience to Law #73 does not produce vulnerability — it produces divine protection. The nation that trusts Yahweh enough to obey the pilgrimage command discovers that He is capable of protecting what He commanded them to leave.	Shemot 34:24
WORLD	Universal Pilgrimage Vision	The eschatological vision of the Tanakh takes the Shalosh Regalim framework and projects it onto all nations. Yeshayahu 2:2–3 sees the nations streaming to Yahweh's mountain. Zechariah 14:16 names Sukkot specifically as the universal feast all surviving nations will keep. The three pilgrimages commanded for Israel are the covenant template for what all humanity will ultimately do before Yahweh. The foot-journey of Israel to Yerushalayim becomes the foot-journey of the nations to the mountain of Yahweh.	Yeshayahu 2:2–3; Zechariah 14:16
WORLD	Pilgrimage as Covenant Witness	The Shalosh Regalim, observed faithfully by the covenant community, are a world-level witness. The covenant person who marks Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot — who stops three times a year to remember redemption, receive revelation, and practice gratitude — is testifying to the watching world that there is a Creator who redeems, reveals, and provides. The three pilgrimages are not private religious observances. They are the covenant community's public testimony to the covenant character of Yahweh before all nations.	Devarim 4:6; Yeshayahu 2:2–3

SECTION VI — THREE-RELIGION COVENANT AUDIT

Judaism — The Covenant Custodian

Upholds Torah: Judaism has maintained the three pilgrimage festivals as central annual observances for three millennia — through Temple destruction, exile, and diaspora. The festivals are fully alive in Jewish practice: Pesach with the Seder and the seven days of matzah; Shavuot with all-night Torah study (Tikkun Leil Shavuot) and the reading of Rut; Sukkot with the building of the sukkah, the four species, and seven days of dwelling in temporary structures. The covenant memory of redemption, revelation, and provision is actively rehearsed each year across the Jewish world.

The Aliyah LaRegel in the Temple Era — Three Obligatory Offerings: During the Temple era, the aliyah la'regel (pilgrimage ascent) involved three specific offerings that together embodied Laws #72–74. The **Olat Re'iyah** (עֹלַת רְאִיָּה — the appearance burnt-offering) fulfilled Law #73 — appearing before **Yahweh** not empty-handed, a gift entirely consumed on the altar. The **Shalmei Chagigah** (שְׁלָמֵי חֲגִיגָה — the festival peace-offering) was a shared meal — portions to the priests, portions to the offerer and family — the covenant meal of the community before **Yahweh**. The **Shalmei Simcha** (שְׁלָמֵי שִׂמְחָה — the rejoicing peace-offering) fulfilled Law #72 directly: the commanded joy was expressed in the eating of sacrificial meat throughout the festival days. All three korbans could only be eaten within Yerushalayim — meaning the entire covenant family remained in the city for the full festival week.

Post-Temple Adaptation: Since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Judaism has preserved the festivals through prayer, home observance, Torah study, and communal gathering. The Seder replaced the Paschal sacrifice. The Tikkun replaced the wheat-harvest offering. The sukkah replaced the Temple courtyard. Maimonides (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Chagigah) codified the ongoing obligations of the festivals and the principle of tashlumin — making up missed obligations — within the festival week. The pilgrimage obligation to Yerushalayim remains in Jewish theology as a law awaiting Temple restoration.

Covenant Assessment: Judaism stands in the most direct covenant continuity with Laws #72–74 of any of the three traditions. The observance is alive, detailed, and rooted in the Torah texts. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position: the Torah commands these festivals as **Yahweh's** own appointed times (mo'adim). They remain binding on all who receive the Torah as their covenant authority.

Christianity — The Partial Inheritance

Where Christianity Upholds Torah: The earliest followers of Yeshua were Torah-observant Jews who kept the Shalosh Regalim as part of their covenant life. Acts 2 records that the outpouring at Pentecost (Shavuot) occurred precisely because the disciples were in Yerushalayim for the pilgrimage festival — exactly as Law #73 commanded. Acts 20:16 records Sha'ul (Paul) urgently sailing to reach Yerushalayim *by Shavuot*. The early covenant community's observance of the festivals was continuous with the Torah command. The festivals in the first-century context were not replaced — they were lived.

Where Christianity Departed: As the early movement separated from its Jewish roots — accelerating after the destruction of the Temple (70 CE) and the Bar Kokhba revolt (135 CE) — the three pilgrimage festivals were increasingly replaced with new observances anchored in a different theological calendar: Christmas replaced the winter season; Easter replaced Pesach; Pentecost Sunday replaced Shavuot; Sukkot was largely abandoned without replacement. The Council of Nicea (325 CE) explicitly separated Easter from the Jewish Passover calendar, severing the last visible connection between the covenant festivals and the dominant expression of Christian worship.

Covenant Audit Verdict: The Torah does not authorize the replacement of **Yahweh's** appointed mo'adim with other observances. Vayikra 23:2 states: "These are the appointed feasts (mo'adei) of **Yahweh**, holy convocations, which you shall proclaim." They are **Yahweh's** feasts — not the feasts of any institution, council, or tradition. Where Christianity abandoned Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot in favor of institutional replacements, it departed from the covenant calendar **Yahweh** Himself established. The Torah is the authority. The appointed times of **Yahweh** remain His appointed times.

Islam — The Preserved Pilgrimage Impulse

Upholds the Covenant Principle: Islam preserved the Abrahamic pilgrimage command in the institution of Hajj — the annual pilgrimage to Mecca commanded by the Quran as one of the Five Pillars. Surah Al-Imran 3:97: "Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by people who are able to undertake it." The linguistic connection is direct: Arabic **hajj** (حَجَّ) and Hebrew **chag** (אָחַד) share the same Semitic root — the covenant pilgrimage-feast. The Islamic tradition preserved the Abrahamic impulse of commanded appearance before the Creator at His designated place, in a specific season, with sacrifice.

Where Islam Departs: Islam redirected the pilgrimage from **Yahweh's** designated place — the place He chose in Devarim 16:16 — to Mecca, grounding this in the Islamic theological narrative of Ibrahim's (Abraham's) construction of the Ka'bah. The Miqdash Bethel covenant position: the Torah's specification of "the place that **Yahweh** your Elohim will choose" points to a specific place — Yerushalayim and the Temple Mount — not a self-designated alternative. The pilgrimage impulse is covenant-correct. The designated location in the Torah is **Yahweh's** prerogative alone to name.

Covenant Audit Verdict: Islam's preservation of the commanded pilgrimage as a central covenant obligation — with its requirement of sacrifice, the specific season, and the communal nature of the gathering — reflects the Abrahamic covenant inheritance more faithfully than much of post-Nicaean Christianity. The Miqdash Bethel covenant witness acknowledges this convergence while noting that the Torah's designated place and times remain authoritative.

SECTION VII — THE PRESENT-ERA COVENANT QUESTION

The question every Torah-observant covenant person must address: What do Laws #72–74 require in an era without a standing Temple?

The Miqdash Bethel covenant position draws from the Tanakh itself, from the principle of tashlumin preserved in Jewish legal tradition, and from the prophetic vision of the festivals' ultimate restoration:

A. The Festivals Remain Yahweh's Appointed Times

Vayikra 23:2 calls the three festivals **mo'adei Yahweh** — the appointed times of **Yahweh**. They are not Temple-dependent in their identity — they are covenant-permanent in their designation. The destruction of the Temple changed the mechanism of observance. It did not cancel the appointment. A covenant person who marked Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot simply to acknowledge that **Yahweh** designated those times — without a Temple, without the korbans — was still fulfilling the covenant memory and the covenant calendar that the festivals encode.

B. The Joy Command Remains Fully Applicable

Law #72 — the command to rejoice (**ve'samachta**) — is not contingent on the Temple. Joy before **Yahweh** in the covenant assembly, joy in the covenant meal, joy in the reading of the Torah texts appointed for each festival — these are expressions of the commanded simcha that do not require the Temple structure. The covenant community observes Pesach with joy, Shavuot with joy, Sukkot with joy. The joy is the Law. The mechanism adapts. The command stands.

C. The Empty-Handed Principle Becomes Tzedakah

Law #74 — appearing before **Yahweh** not empty-handed — adapts its expression in the absence of the Temple. Matan Torah (the rabbinic source at the Matan institute) cites the Yere'im, who teaches that **reikam** can be avoided without sacrificial offerings through tzedakah — giving money to those in need. "Each person with what is appropriate for them." The covenant person who marks each of the three festivals with an act of intentional giving — to the Levite, the sojourner, the orphan, the widow (the four categories named in Devarim 16:14) — is observing the principle of Law #74 in the present era.

D. The Pilgrimage Vision Points Forward

Zechariah 14:16–17 speaks of a future era when Sukkot will be kept by all nations, with consequences for those who refuse. The pilgrimage festivals are not merely past events or present adaptations — they are eschatological certainties. **Yahweh's** appointed times will be fulfilled in their fullness in the covenant restoration He has promised. The covenant community that marks the festivals now — however partially and adaptively — is positioning itself in the covenant arc that ends in universal pilgrimage before the King.

SECTION VIII — THE COVENANT VERDICT

The Shalosh Regalim are not ancient calendar artifacts. They are the heartbeat of the covenant year.

Three times a year, **Yahweh** says to His people: ***"Come. Stand before Me. Rejoice. Bring what I have given you back to where I am. Do not come empty-handed — because you are never empty-handed when I am your Elohim."***

Law #72 commands joy — not as sentiment but as covenant posture. The covenant people do not drift through the year in spiritual neutrality, punctuated by occasional religious feeling. They rejoice by *command* three times annually, before the face of the One who redeemed them, revealed His Torah to them, and provided for them in the wilderness.

Law #73 commands appearance — the physical, communal act of going to the place where **Yahweh** places His name. In every era, in every form that remains available, the covenant people orient themselves toward that place. They do not stay home when **Yahweh** summons them.

Law #74 commands non-emptiness — the recognition that every person who stands before **Yahweh** at His festivals has received from His hand. The blessing that came from Him returns to Him — through the offering, through the tzedakah, through the inclusion of the vulnerable in the festival joy. No one appears before the King of the covenant empty-handed. Everyone brings what they have received. And what they bring is testimony: **Yahweh** gave this.

The covenant verdict for all three traditions — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam — is the same: the appointed times of **Yahweh** remain His appointed times. The mechanism of observance adapts to the era. The covenant obligation does not expire.

*"I was glad when they said to me: 'Let us go to the house of Yahweh!'
Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Yerushalayim...
to which the tribes go up, the tribes of Yahweh,
as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of Yahweh."
Tehillim (Psalms) 122:1–4*

STUDY REVIEW & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Individual Level

1. The word ve'samachta ("you shall rejoice") is a covenant command, not merely an invitation. What does it mean to keep the Shalosh Regalim as a command rather than simply a tradition or sentiment? How does this change the posture of the covenant person during the festival seasons?
2. Law #74 prohibits appearing before Yahweh reikam — "empty-handed." In the present era, without the Temple offerings, how does the principle of reikam govern the covenant person's approach to each of the three festival seasons? What does "not empty-handed" look like in 2026?
3. The verb yera'eh can be read as both "shall be seen" (passive) and "shall see" (active). What does the double meaning of this word — that Yahweh desires to see His people as much as His people come to see Him — reveal about the nature of the Shalosh Regalim covenant relationship?
4. The Shalosh Regalim encode the entire covenant narrative — Pesach (redemption), Shavuot (revelation), Sukkot (provision) — into the annual

calendar. What would it mean for your personal covenant walk to mark all three seasons each year? Which of the three do you find easiest to keep, and which most challenging?

Community Level

5. Devarim 16:14 specifically names the Levite, the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow as those who must be included in the joy of the festival. What does this covenant list of the vulnerable teach about the nature of the pilgrimage festivals? Who are the equivalents of these four categories in the Miqdash Bethel community in 2026?
6. The aliyah la'regel required the entire covenant community to journey together to Yerushalayim — creating one of the largest annual communal gatherings in the ancient world. What does the covenant assembly lose when it does not gather communally around Yahweh's appointed times? What does it gain when it does?
7. The festival peace-offering (Shalmei Simcha) was eaten throughout the full festival week — meaning the whole family remained together in Yerushalayim for the duration. What does this extended communal stay suggest about the depth of covenant renewal Yahweh designed into the Shalosh Regalim? How does our modern approach to the festivals reflect or depart from this design?

National Level

8. Shemot 34:24 contains a remarkable covenant promise: Yahweh guaranteed that no one would covet Israel's land during the three pilgrimages when all the men departed. What does this promise reveal about the relationship between covenant obedience and Yahweh's provision of security? Does this principle speak to any national situation today?
9. The Shalosh Regalim were the three annual moments when the entire nation of Israel gathered in one place before their King. What function did this serve for national covenant identity, national memory, and national unity? What is the covenant cost when a nation loses shared annual gatherings around its defining story?
10. Islam's Hajj and the Shalosh Regalim share the same Semitic root (hajj / chag) and the same covenant structure: commanded appearance, designated place, specific season, with sacrifice. What does this shared pilgrimage inheritance across the Abrahamic traditions reveal about the universality of Yahweh's covenant pilgrimage design?

World Level

11. Zechariah 14:16 declares that in the eschatological era, all nations will go up to Yerushalayim annually to keep Sukkot — the Feast of Ingathering — before Yahweh. What does this prophecy reveal about the ultimate purpose of the Shalosh Regalim? How does the covenant community's present observance of the festivals participate in this eschatological vision?
12. Yeshayahu 2:2–3 sees the nations streaming to the mountain of Yahweh, saying: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the Elohim of

Ya'akov; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." How does the Miqdash Bethel covenant assembly — a ministry explicitly reaching Judaism, Christianity, and Islam simultaneously — understand its role in calling the nations toward this prophetic vision through the observance of Yahweh's appointed times?

- The three festivals together tell the story of Yahweh's redemption (Pesach), revelation (Shavuot), and provision (Sukkot). If the nations were to observe the Shalosh Regalim — even in principle, even in adapted form — what covenant reorientation would this produce in the global narrative? What would the world look like if Yahweh's annual appointed times shaped the human story?

SCRIPTURE INDEX — LESSON 18

Reference	Teaching / Witness
Shemot (Ex.) 23:14–17	First primary text — the Covenant Code at Sinai. Three times a year, all males shall appear before Yahweh Elohim. Three festivals named: Chag HaMatzot, Chag HaKatzir, Chag HaAsif. The pilgrimage command given with the covenant itself.
Shemot (Ex.) 34:23	Second primary text — the Covenant Renewal. The three-times-a-year appearance command confirmed after the golden calf episode, establishing its perpetual binding force.
Shemot (Ex.) 34:24	Covenant security promise: "No one shall covet your land when you go up to appear before Yahweh three times in the year." Yahweh guarantees national protection during the pilgrimage departures.
Vayikra (Lev.) 23:1–44	The full covenant calendar — all three festivals (Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot) named as mo'adei Yahweh (appointed times of Yahweh), holy convocations, in the Holiness Code.
Devarim (Deut.) 16:14	Law #72 — "You shall rejoice in your feast" — ve'samachta. The commanded joy of the pilgrimage festivals. Full inclusion list: son, daughter, servant, Levite, sojourner, orphan, widow.
Devarim (Deut.) 16:16	Law #73 — "Three times a year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim at the place that He will choose." The full pilgrimage command naming all three festivals. Law #74 immediately follows: "They shall not appear before Yahweh empty-handed."
Devarim (Deut.) 16:17	The proportionality principle of Law #74: "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of Yahweh your Elohim that He has given you." The gift is calibrated to the blessing received — not a flat tax, but covenant testimony proportional to Yahweh's provision.
Tehillim (Ps.) 122:1–4	The joy of the pilgrimage: "I was glad when they said to me: Let us go to the house of Yahweh!" The covenant people's voice in the aliyah la'regel — pilgrimage as the occasion of gladness, communal movement, and covenant purpose.

Tehillim (Ps.) 84:5–7	The strength of the pilgrim: "Blessed are those whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion." The pilgrimage journey itself — from strength to strength — is a covenant spiritual discipline.
Yeshayahu (Isa.) 2:2–3	The eschatological vision: all nations shall stream to Yahweh's mountain, saying "Come, let us go up." The Shalosh Regalim pilgrimage becomes the template for the universal covenant gathering of all humanity.
Yirmeyahu (Jer.) 31:12–13	The prophetic promise of restored pilgrimage joy: "They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion... Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry."
Zechariah (Zekhariah) 14:16	Eschatological law: all surviving nations shall go up to Yerushalayim annually to keep Sukkot before Yahweh. The feast of provision and joy becomes the feast of all nations in the covenant's final restoration.
Yechezkel (Ezek.) 18:21–23	Covenant mercy — even the person who has failed to observe the festivals as Yahweh commands stands before the same Yahweh who declares: "Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live."

"Is it My desire that a wicked person shall die? — says Yahweh Elohim. It is rather that he shall turn back from his ways and live."

Yechezkel (Ezekiel) 18:23

Witness: The covenant person who has not honored **Yahweh's** appointed times stands before the same **Yahweh** who established them — and who desires return above judgment. The next appointed time of **Yahweh** is always an invitation: come, appear before Me, rejoice, and do not come empty-handed. That invitation stands in every generation, in every era, with or without a Temple — because **Yahweh** Himself never cancels His appointments.

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Authority: The Tanakh — The Word of Yahweh Alone

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Next: Lesson 19 — To be determined by course framework