

## DEMONIC WEEDS

### A Devotional Meditation on Acharei Mot (After the Death) and Kedoshim (Holy Ones)

Leviticus 16:1-20:27; Amos 9:7-15;  
Mark 7:1-23; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 6:10-20; 1 Peter 1:14-16

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April 29, 2023

Lawn care hasn't been a concern for much of my life. That changed when we bought a house in a small town. The realities of home ownership and springtime in South Carolina quickly prevailed on me to relearn the fine points not only of mowing the lawn, but of removing whatever should not be there. That's how I acquired the new hobby of pulling weeds. I could take the easy way out and dose my yard with weed killer, but that might involve toxic chemicals that would create more problems. We could pay someone to do it, but that would take money away from other big projects around the house, and the person we hire might not do the job the way we want. That's why I resolved to go to war myself against the weeds.



*Portrait of a weed, by moccasinlanding,  
July 9, 2019, [via Flickr](#).*

It is like a war. For the first month, whenever I went outside, I would make it a point to pull up a few weeds. Most came up easily enough, but some required more effort and the assistance of my handy spade. Now I can dig out the most stubborn of weeds in a few moments. Except for the giant weeds, of course. Those are the ones in isolated corners that have grown undetected. They are prickly, sticky, stinky, and stubborn. I call them demonic weeds because they remind me of spiritual battles against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. It takes a bit more preparation, perseverance, and patience to remove that kind of weed.

Some unexpected lessons have come through this war on weeds. The demonic weeds get a lot of attention because they are so big, but most of my efforts go toward the multitudes of smaller weeds. At the beginning, they infested the entire yard, choking out the grass and making the outside of the house an unpleasant mess. I might pull up one weed only to find that it provided cover for two more of a different type, which often were more difficult to remove. The weeds would also hide among the good grass, disguising themselves as the desirable vegetation, or weaving themselves among the grass shafts so that I had to take care not to pull out the grass with the weeds.

Before long, I realized I could spend all my time on the weed war, to the neglect of my wife, my dog, and my responsibilities to others. In the process, I would become exhausted to the point of burnout. Yet it was still my battle. If I outsourced the battle to someone else, I would never know what was in my yard, never acquire a vision of what it should look like, and never develop a plan to get to that desired end state. That's why I resolved to go about the battle in increments, spending ten minutes here, an hour there, doing

what I could to remove the weeds as they came to my attention. Each time I clear a patch, the weeds come back in smaller numbers, and I can pull them up before they take root. That's especially helpful when I mow the yard. The weeds tend to grow back faster and taller than the grass, so a little vigilance on my part allows me to remove the new weed growth with ease.

Oh yes, vigilance. That's essential to staying on top of this battle. If I let the weeds get ahead of me, then I'll be right back where I started, wrestling with an interwoven network of demonic weeds and their supporting cast.

It really is like a spiritual battle. In that passage where Paul writes about putting on the armor of God to fight against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places, he also advises how to use that armor to good effect:

Pray in the *Ruach* [Spirit] on every occasion, with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, keep alert with perseverance and supplication for all the *kedoshim* [saints; holy ones].

Ephesians 6:18 TLV

The Holy Spirit is the one Who gives power and direction to the saints, the set-apart people of God. That's why we are supposed to support one another in prayer and in other ways. The Spirit lives in us because we are set apart, or holy. The Hebrew word for saints or holy ones is *kedoshim*. *Kedoshim* are supposed to be living sanctuaries where the Spirit of our Holy God lives. We're supposed to demonstrate His holy standards in the way we act, talk, and think. We can get dirty walking through this messy world, but if we are *kedoshim* being transformed by the renewing of our minds, then we will learn how to insulate ourselves from the dirt, and wash it off at the first opportunity. That's what Messiah Yeshua implied in a conversation about holiness:

Then *Yeshua* called the crowd again and began saying to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand. There is nothing outside the man that can make him unholy by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of the man that makes the man unholy. . . For from within, out of the heart of men, come evil intentions, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustfulness, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and make the man unholy."

Mark 7:14-15, 20-23 TLV

These are the weeds in our souls – the things that keep us from being full-fledged *kedoshim*. They are the nasty, stinky, interwoven, demonic weeds that continue to multiply and grow as long as we pay no attention to them. That's why so many saints fail to reach their potential, and why some fall away entirely into lifestyles that have very little connection to holiness.

This is a problem for people who are supposed to be holy just as our God is holy, as Peter writes:

Like obedient children, do not be shaped by the cravings you had formerly in your ignorance. Instead, just like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in everything you do. For it is written, "*Kedoshim* [holy ones] you shall be, for I am *kadosh* [holy]."

Peter's admonition comes from a section of Leviticus called *Kedoshim*, where Moses not only admonishes God's people to be holy, but explains what holy looks like. Obviously, holy people shouldn't be having sex with animals, or with close relatives, or with anyone of the same sex, and certainly not with anyone other than their husband or wife. Neither are holy people to sacrifice their children – whether on a pagan altar, or on a surgical table or any other altar of convenience (including the altar of our own precious time). Those are some of the demonic weeds infesting our human garden, and obviously God's people would not practice them, at least outside our thought life. But then, do we dishonor the aged, or defraud our employees and business partners? Do we cast justice out the window when the people involved are obnoxious to us? Do we really act righteously, and do we really know what righteousness is according to our God's definition?

This is where we face a shocking reality: although our Redeemer sets us apart for Himself when we declare our allegiance to Him, He does not instantaneously make us perfect. When we put our faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we inherit the tools to go to battle with those weeds inside us. Whether we go to battle, and how long and hard we fight, is up to us. It starts with a desire to be clean before our God so we can please Him. From there it moves into learning what exactly pleases Him, and what hinders us from being in His Presence. That's where the weeds are identified, but it's not until we actually start pulling them up that we make progress toward becoming the *kedoshim* our Redeemer desires. He's ready to do His part and supply all we need, but until we start the battle, we'll remain infested with demonic weeds.