

# **DA37. Empathizing with & Ministering to the Imprisoned.**

*We are to empathize with and minister to those who are imprisoned.*

This precept is derived from His Word (blessed is He):

## **Key New Testament Scripture**

Hebrews 13:3

*Remember those in prison and being mistreated, as if you were in prison with them and undergoing their torture yourselves.*

## **Additional New Testament Scriptures**

Matthew 25:36

Luke 21:12

Romans 7:22-25

2 Corinthians 3:17

## **Related New Testament Mitzvot**

AA10 Having Godly Compassion

DA32 Empathizing & Sympathizing with Our Neighbor's Joys and Sorrows

## **Supportive Tanakh Scriptures**

Psalms 69:34(33)

*For ADONAI pays attention to the needy and doesn't scorn his captive people.*

Psalms 102:20(19)-23(22)

*For he has looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven ADONAI surveys the earth to listen to the sighing of the prisoner, to set free those who are sentenced to death, to proclaim the name of ADONAI in Tziyon and his praise in Yerushalayim when peoples and kingdoms have been gathered together to serve ADONAI.*

Psalms 146:7

*He secures justice for the oppressed, he gives food to the hungry. ADONAI sets prisoners free*

Isaiah 42:6-7

*I, ADONAI, called you righteously, I took hold of you by the hand, I shaped you and made you a covenant for the people, to be a light for the Goyim, so that you can open blind eyes, free the prisoners from confinement, those living in darkness from the dungeon.*

## Zechariah 7:9

*In the past ADONAI-Tzva'ot said, 'Administer true justice. Let everyone show mercy and compassion to his brother.'*

## Comment

Scripture has much to say about prisoners and being imprisoned.<sup>1</sup> Some of the Scriptures are intended to be read as referring to physical prisons and prisoners, while others are meant as analogies to spiritual imprisonment or bondage. Such is the key Scripture in this *Mitzvah* #37, Hebrews 13:3:

*"Remember those in prison and being mistreated, as if you were in prison with them and undergoing their torture yourselves."*

On first reading, we might assume that Paul is merely calling us to have compassion for the plights of others and his reference to prisons is because the Roman prisons of his day were known as places where prisoner were commonly abused, It is especially so when one considers verses 1 and 2:

*"Let brotherly friendship continue; but don't forget to be friendly to outsiders; for in so doing, some people, without knowing it, have entertained angels."*

But from other Scriptures such as Isaiah 61:1 it is clear that imprisonment is often referring to the spiritual bondage of sin that separates us from God:

*"The Spirit of Adonai ELOHIM is upon me, because ADONAI has anointed me to announce good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted; to proclaim freedom to the captives, to let out into light those bound in the dark;"*

Yeshua spoke similarly in Luke 4:18-19 after reading from the Scroll of Isaiah:

*"The Spirit of ADONAI is upon me; therefore he has anointed me to announce Good News to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim freedom for the imprisoned and renewed sight for the blind, to release those who have been crushed, to proclaim a year of the favor of ADONAI."*

Not only did Yeshua employ the Good News to free those who were spiritually imprisoned, but we read in Luke 9:1-6 that he sent his disciples out to do the same:

*"Calling together the Twelve, Yeshua gave them power and authority to expel all the demons and to cure diseases; and he sent them out to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal. He said to them, "Take nothing for your trip- neither a walking stick nor a pack, neither bread nor money; and don't have two shirts. Whatever house you enter, stay there and go out from there. Wherever they don't welcome you, shake the dust from your feet when you leave that town as a warning to them." They set out and went through village after village, healing and announcing the Good News everywhere."*

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the word "captive" is used when meaning prisoner.

Considering the application of these Scriptures to Hebrews 13:3 – yes, we are called to minister to prisoners in governmental prisons, but considering the greater numbers of those who are imprisoned by their sin and by not knowing God and Yeshua, how much more are we, Yeshua’s latter day disciples, called to empathize with, and bring the Good News to, those who are spiritually imprisoned and headed for a sentence of death.

**Related Mitzvot in Volumes 1 & 2**

O04 Implementing the “Great Commission” Proclaimed by Yeshua