



**#46 Ekev Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25**  
**Torah teaching and teaching, God's Word is Important**  
**By Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Kefa – Peter  
Moshe – Moses  
Shaul – Paul  
Yeshua – Jesus  
Ya'akov – James  
Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)  
Yochanan – John

**Terms**

#46 – the 46<sup>th</sup> portion for 2019-2020  
Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets  
Mezuzot – plural of mezuzah; it contains scripture  
Parashah – (portion) one of 54 portions of the Torah  
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
Torah – 1<sup>st</sup> 5 books of the Bible

The Torah portion for today is Ekev and means, “because” or “if” (pertaining to “if you follow”). God’s people need to stay locked into living right and doing what is right. We often use the phrase “locked into” meaning to keep our focus or stay true to our plans. There are various ways that people make plans. They may stay locked into doing what is right – that is the best way to live. Some may stay locked into making money, or they may remain locked into some form of sexual perversion, or they may remain locked into some form of harmful political or societal rhetoric (philosophy of words).

The Bible has something to say about these things. For example, in regards to money, applying oneself and providing something helpful and meaningful to people in an honest and good way is a good way to provide for yourself. Being dishonest and taking advantage of others is wrong.

1 Timothy 6:9-11 NKJV

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness.

Shaul is obviously talking about an inappropriate desire for riches that causes temptation, harmful desires, and greed. A person without much money can also be inappropriate with money issues. Notice it says the love of money is at the root of many kinds of sinful actions. It does not say that having money is evil. Those who act inappropriately end in perdition<sup>1</sup> which is a loss of spirituality and therefore a loss of eternal life. Whether it is some form of sinful greed, sinful sexual desires, or harmful beliefs of some kind; those things will lead to a loss of eternal life.

For example, atheists have a belief system without boundaries which they can enforce any way they want. The result of their belief system has caused tremendous pain and death. Atheists will

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<sup>1</sup> Ruin or loss (physical, spiritual, or eternal); Strong's Dictionary.

say that religion has caused wars and death. They provide you with their mantra to control your thinking. They do not tell the other side of the story. In fact, atheist regimes have caused over 100 million to be executed in the name of their political atheist beliefs just in recent times.

Not long ago I watched a video about this supposed extremely intelligent person who thought it was okay to kill the unproductive in society. He is not so bright after all. Hitler was an atheist (who hated Christians, by his own account) who believed that it was okay to sway the people by any means possible to take control of Germany (he wrote about this in his book, "Mein Kampf.") and he proceeded to kill 11 million of his own people — 6 million of them were Jews. The atheist Stalin killed some 20 million people and the atheist Mao Zedong killed 70 million. And there were other murderous atheist regimes like the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia that killed some 2 million people. That is not to mention the wars they caused and the many more millions who died on their account. The atheist systems made religious wars and persecution look like child's play. If you are buying into false systems of rhetoric (words), you are playing with the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Shaul concludes in our scriptures in Timothy, **do what is right, be righteous.**

Be faithful to stay connected to God through doing what is right and the Holy Spirit. First, God's commandments are faithful and we can count on God. Psalms 119:86 NKJV says, "All Your commandments are faithful." Psalms 119:90-93 NKJV says, "Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants. Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction. I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life."

Yeshua tells us that there is more to life than all that we own. Matthew 16:26-27 NKJV, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." The word "soul" in the Greek is the word "life." All the stuff we have is worth nothing if we should die. What would a person be willing to pay to extend their life? How about keeping God's commandments so we receive eternal life in God's eternal kingdom.

Even so, what will we get from God when we rise from the dead? God will give us what we deserve. Shaul said in Romans 6:16 NKJV, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" People become slaves of their ideology. What is better, to be slave of sin that leads to eternal damnation or to be slave to do what is right which leads to blessings in the future kingdom of God? Psalms 133:3 NKJV, "It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing — life forevermore." God can give eternal life to those who want to do what is right and keep His commandments. He is God; He can do that!

Stay hot spiritually; don't go cold. In Genesis we see how Adam and Eve failed. They doubted the scriptures and they believed in lies. This was accomplished by adding and subtracting from God's words. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV tells us, "You shall not add to the word which I command

you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God." This is a common Jewish teaching.

God said:

Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The devil and Eve said:

Genesis 3:1-5 NKJV, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The devil first tries to subtract from what God said – 'Did God say?'

Eve says we may eat – the word freely is subtracted.

Eve said you shall not touch it – the word touch is added.

Eve said 'perhaps' they will die – subtracted from "surely die."

The devil then subtracts from God's word by contradiction and lies.

Do not add and subtract from God's commandments. Since He is God, He knows what is right and what is best. Do not let the greed of society take hold of you. Who do you allow to speak into your life? Do you allow lies to control how you think and act or do you do what the Bible says regardless of what society says?

God says:

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 NKJV

Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and **that you may prolong your days.**

Deuteronomy 7:9-10 NKJV

Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, **the faithful God** who keeps covenant and **mercy for a thousand generations** with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face,

Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who **goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.**

Exodus 19:5 NKJV

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant,<sup>2</sup> then **you shall be a special treasure** to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

### Torah Study

Ekev means, "because" or "if" (pertaining to "if you follow"). This Torah portion begins with Moshe telling Israel that God will bless them for being faithful to His commands. If Israel obeys Gods commands, He will keep His covenant of mercy with them; God will love them and bless their lives, family, work, and health. The same is true in this Messianic age. If we obey God, He will be merciful to us.

I have personally experienced blessing in my life because I was faithful to God. That is a promise to all who will keep His commandments. Israel was to go and take the land that God had promised them; that required trust in God and action. Ya'akov tells us that our faith requires action in James 2:17 NKJV, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

They were not to bring any idols into their houses. Bringing an idol into their house can bring a curse with it since devil spirits can attach themselves to idols. They were to remember their time in the wilderness; how God tested them and provided for them; Israel should learn that we don't live by food alone, but also through what God says. Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." Yeshua (Jesus) quoted this in Luke 4:4. We must always remember that our spiritual life is just as important as our physical life. This life is short compared to the eternity that is promised by God to those who keep His commandments.

The devil tempted Yeshua in Luke 4 and Yeshua used the scriptures to fight off the devil. We are to follow God and use His scriptures to help us have good godly biblical thoughts. Shaul said we need to get control of our thoughts, "Bringing every thought into captivity;" 2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV. We are in a spiritual battle and we need to take control of our thoughts and put the right thoughts into our mind.

Yeshua used the scriptures to stand against demonic powers as an example to us and we should also stand against any wrong thoughts that may enter our minds. Also, Ephesians 6:12-14 NKJV says, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore." So, stand strong. We are in a spiritual battle.

God was bringing Israel into a good land. They were not to get proud and forget Yĕhōvāh. They were to remember that God was blessing them. What does it mean to be proud? A proud person wants to do things their way. We should want to do things God's way. Being proud spiritually is thinking our thoughts and ideas are better than God's ways. It says that if they didn't keep God's commandments, they would perish like other nations had perished because of

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<sup>2</sup> Strong's Dictionary says that covenant **can also mean an alliance**. As we align ourselves with God, we are in covenant, in an alliance.

their sin; because they followed their own ways instead of God's good ways. God will help them to defeat nations greater than them. They were not to think it was because they were so good, but because the nations they displaced were so evil. They even sacrificed their children to the pagan god Molech. Also, God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham to return Israel to their land which is still in effect to this day.

Moshe reminds them of some who rebelled in the desert and his prayers for them that saved them; they should stop rebelling. God set apart the tribe of Levi to serve Him. In this portion He then tells them to follow God's commands for their own good and to circumcise their hearts (Deuteronomy 10:16). Just as circumcision reminded Israel of their agreement to follow God, their hearts needed to be circumcised and committed to follow God. Shaul quotes this and says we need to have circumcised hearts, "But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart;" Romans 2:19 NKJV.

Some say Shaul is saying that circumcision is no longer necessary; it is of the heart. He is quoting a scripture from the Old Testament portion that says we are to have circumcised hearts. He is not saying circumcision is no longer necessary; he taught circumcision, "And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution?" Galatians 5:11 NKJV. He taught the circumcision of male babies. The Bible says we are to protect life (Deuteronomy 22:4; Luke 14:5), even on Shabbat. Circumcising adult males is dangerous and should not be practiced. It was especially dangerous in ancient times. Shaul opposed adult circumcision based on the Torah.

Those in the 1<sup>st</sup> century who were pushing for adult circumcision were disobeying the Torah's command to save life. **They were Torah breakers.** Saving life means we value life and do things that protect life. For example, we should take our medicine unless we are healed. Watch out that you do not get caught up in superstitions against medicine. We had a foster child in our home that was being treated with vapor rub on her feet for her asthma by her abusive parents. She could have died! Be sensible. Consider the consequences of your thinking; could the superstitious values that you are passing on cause someone to die? I would not want that on my conscience. Also, we are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), so human life is precious.

God is a good and just; they were to also be good to foreigners because they were once foreigners in Egypt. In ancient times, strangers to the community could be a drain on resources and some people groups mistreated them. Israel was commanded not to mistreat foreigners. They have seen the power of Yĕhōvâh so they should keep His commandments. Remember, we have now found the correct pronunciation of God's name in 2,363 manuscripts as Yĕhōvâh. "This is My name forever;" Exodus 3:15 NKJV. When we learn something, we begin to practice correct doctrine. Those that are saying we cannot say God's name are treating God's name with disrespect. Believers used Yĕhōvâh's name appropriately. Some call God Hashem which means, "the name." It is like calling someone "it."

The eyes of Yĕhōvâh are always on the land of Israel it says and He will prosper the land if they keep His commands and put God's words in their heart. Do you want the eyes of Yĕhōvâh to be upon you? Keep His commands and put God's words in your heart too. Putting God's words on

their forehead meant they were to always have God's words on their mind; it was not meant to be literal as some take it. This literal practice of wearing tefillin did not begin until the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Also, they were to put God's words on the door frames of their houses. This portion ends with telling them that their territory would extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Sea to the Euphrates.

The portion for this week talks about God's mercy, forgiveness, and willingness to bless; this should give us great comfort. Moshe tells them that God gave His commands for their good and that they should circumcise their hearts. Shaul said in Rom. 2:29 that a real Jew (believer) has a circumcised heart. Believers in the Messiah considered themselves Jewish in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. They were a Jewish sect called Nazarene Jews.

Jewish people were to treat foreigners well and it is a misconception (lie) that they do not. For example, Israel sends Gaza food, supplies, and medicine and Gaza sends rockets into Israel to try to destroy Israel. Palestinians think it is okay to lie to spread their hate. They could easily take care of themselves if they instead focused on doing what is right. Yeshua said you will know what kind of people they are by their works.

Israel has seen God's power and we will too says Yeshua in John 14:12. Israel should have remained faithful based on their witness. Believers in the Messiah should also remain faithful based on our personal witness. Many of both Jews and Christians have failed though. They make God into their place of worship or say they believe in God, but do not listen to His commands. Since they do not listen to God, they disrespect God. Believing in God means we also believe and trust in what He says and do what God says.

Putting up scriptures on our entries is a commandment of God. Mezuzot are a practical way to put scriptures up at your entries and they remind us to obey God. As Messianic Jews we understand that just because the New Testament portion does not mention something, that does not mean we shouldn't do it. For example, honest weights and measures are not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, but that does not mean we shouldn't do that. The practice of treating a mezuzah like a rabbit's foot as some do is wrong. A mezuzah which contains scripture is to remind us to keep God's commands for when we leave our home and when we return (or we could put up a scripture instead of a mezuzah containing scripture). The man-made practice of touching a mezuzah and saying something to God when you touch it can help the mezuzah from becoming invisible to us. Some man-made practices are practical, but they are not commanded.

The Haftarah for Ekev is Isaiah 49:14 to 51:3. In this portion it says that God will never forget Israel; He has engraved them on the palms of His hands. In their captivity God will still help them and save them. They lost their land because of their sins. Yēhōvāh will not be put to shame though, and if Yēhōvāh helps us, who can condemn us it says? Yēhōvāh called just one person, Abraham and that blessing turned into many. God will once again turn Israel's desert into a garden (like Eden) and there will be joy, thanksgiving, and music there.

Shaul sees the Messiah in this section of Isaiah. He also says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31. He is obviously also relating Israel's travail to his travail and God's

blessing to what God is accomplishing in us through Messiah. Just like God will never forget Israel, He will never forget us.

Isaiah 50:7-10 CJB says:

"For Adonai ELOHIM will help. This is why **no insult can wound me**. This is why I have set my face like flint, knowing I will not be put to shame. My vindicator is close by; let whoever dares to accuse me appear with me in court! Let whoever has a case against me step forward! Look, **if Adonai ELOHIM helps me, who will dare to condemn me?** Here, they are all falling apart like old, moth-eaten clothes. Who among you fears ADONAI? Who obeys what his servant says? Even when he walks in the dark, without any light, he will trust in ADONAI 's reputation and rely on his God."

We have seen a number of verses from the Old Testament portion quoted in the New Testament portion in our studies. This portion also has verses from the Old Testament portion that are quoted in the New Testament portion. The New Testament believers reference for life is the Old Testament portion – that's why they quoted the Old Testament portion. If they Old Testament portion was of no consequence, they would not have used it to substantiate what they believed.

### **God's Word is Important (a teaching to accompany the Torah portion)**

Bible teachers can give us all kinds of interesting information and tell great stories, but we are to actually live by God's words and not just get stories and good advice. I remember listening to this one pastor teach and thinking he was just giving his personal advice. Good advice is not a bad thing, but we are to actually learn to keep God's commandments; the words that come from Yĕhōvâh.

Deuteronomy 6:2 NKJV tells us God's commandments prolong life, "That you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged." People will do all kinds of things to prolong their life; why not keep God's commandments. Notice it is the commandments in the Old Testament portion that prolong life. It is strange that people say the Old Testament has been done away with. I hope not; I trust in His words.

Just a few verses later, it says in Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." The word for "well" has to do with making well, beautiful, happy, successful, or right according to Strong's.<sup>3</sup> Wow, isn't that something! Also, it says that we are to do what is right before God. That in itself should motivate us. God sees us and we show God that we love Him when we keep His commands, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always.;" Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV. It is important to keep God's commands. Deuteronomy 11:32 NKJV says, "You shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments."

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<sup>3</sup>h3190. יָטַב yāṭab; a primitive root; to be (causative) make well, literally (sound, beautiful) or figuratively (happy, successful, right): — be accepted, amend, use aright, benefit, be (make) better, seem best, make cheerful" - Strong's Enhanced Dictionary.

The Holy Spirit is to be our helper, but first of all, we need to learn and keep what God tells us to do. We need to be strong and follow God's truths. The Bible is our manual for life and the Holy Spirit encourages us to follow the manual. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will say that I should use caution or that I shouldn't do something. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead me or encourage me. God expects us to know what we can know first in the Bible and then the Holy Spirit will help us with more specifics. Yeshua said, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you;" John 14:26 NKJV. The Holy Spirit woke me up in the middle of the night once because I had a fire in my house. The Holy Spirit saved me and my family. I would not be around if it wasn't for the help of the Holy Spirit.

Since God expects us to know His word and follow His word, it is a good idea to have some scriptures handy to help us in certain situations. A good scripture for fear is Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Perhaps when encountering some fearful thoughts we might say to ourselves, "Be strong and of good courage." Or, if feeling alone and afraid we could think, "He will not leave you or forsake you."

I take courage in knowing what God said to our forefathers and you can too. One of my favorite sections of scriptures is Proverbs 3:5-10 NKJV:

- 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;
- 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.
- 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil.
- 8 It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.
- 9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;
- 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Perhaps today you need verse 6 or you are feeling sick and need verses 7-8, "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones." Then pray to God and tell Him that you fear Him. Ask Him to help you and heal you in the name of Yeshua. Or, perhaps we just need to tell ourselves that we will not do any evil. Sometimes I say to myself, "I rebuke that evil thought in the name of Yeshua." Do not let just anything to go through your head. Remember, Shaul said to get control of our thoughts.

Be ready to do what is right; we need to have direction in life. Kefa said, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed;" 1 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV. Perhaps someone says to you, what good has believing in God done for you? I would say, "I believe in the creator God who helps me to do good and not evil. He is active in my life and even saved my life on several occasions. Believing in God has been more than worth it.

Perhaps someone says that all that congregations want is our money. You could say, God does not need our money; He is the creator and God asks us to give as recognition that He is our



provider and the creator. Perhaps an atheist says religion causes wars. We could say the true God wants us to be kind and caring (Ephesians 4:32). Atheist societies have executed over 100 million people in recent history. Thank goodness for believers who have good values. An atheist friend of mine told me he would trust a Christian before he would trust an atheist.

We need to have answers on how to live. We need to not only be able to explain what we are doing to others, but also be able to know within ourselves what is right and why. For example, those who hate me for doing good will not get under my skin, "No insult can wound me;" Isaiah 50:7 NKJV. Use the scriptures if you can instead of sayings or good ideas. Put your trust in God. Or perhaps, I am not going to fear because, "He will not leave you nor forsake you;" Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV. The possibilities and applications are endless. I now have 9 pages of scriptures that I have put together. As my list got longer, I began speaking one page a day into my life instead of all of them every day.

Base your beliefs in the Jewish biblical context of the scriptures; that is the biblically correct way to understand them; namely, the original way they were to be meant to be understood. This portion tells us that God will bless us for doing what is right. We need to be dedicated spiritually; spiritual things are just as important as the physical side of life; even more so. God is for us; why not trust in God and not just in good advice. We need to follow God's word first and foremost and then the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our helper and can even save our life. Have scriptures ready for life's situations to help you live right. Set aside your life for God.