



Shemini Atzeret, The Eighth Day
Torah teaching and teaching, Stay Faithful, Never Give Up
By Moshe Schwab

The portions for The Eighth Day often consist of reading the last portion of Deuteronomy and the first portion of Genesis. Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17 and Numbers 29:35-39 are also read.

As we have discussed before, we see no reason to do something extra on The Eighth Day as The Eighth Day seems to point to our eternal blessings in God's future kingdom. We could call it the "perfect day" because it points to a perfect future era. Just as God's creation was very good, believers and followers of the true God, His Messiah, and His commandments will be in a restored wonderful future kingdom of God.

We see that God's creation is referred to as a day in Genesis 2:4 NKJV, "This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." So, the word "day" can refer to a period of time and not just a day. The creation account in Genesis Chapter 1 suggests an exact day between events and that would be amazing in itself but that the word day is used as a summary of the entire creation account suggests the word for "day" can also be a period of time or an era. For example, Psalms 90:4 NKJV says, "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past." God can create everything in a second. God does not need a day since He is God. So, it is reasonable to think of the Eighth Day after Sukkot as pointing to and representing our eternal time or era in the future glorious kingdom of God.

Yom Teruah or Rosh Hashanah points to the return of our Messianic King Yeshua with the Trumpets blowing announcing His return. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 NKJV says, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God." Yom Kippur, also called the Day of Atonement, is a day of confession of sin, and points to the future time of judgement by God. Sukkot is often referred to as The Feast, and it points to our future celebration with our God and the Messiah.

Doing something other than resting on The Eighth Day then seems to distort the concept of eternal blessings in God's future kingdom. Since we follow the traditional Hebrew calendar, the Eighth Day this year falls on the Orthodox Shabbat. The real Eighth Day though begins at sunset right after Shabbat this year because of when the Moon reappeared (that is the when the real ancient months began; Israel has a standardized calendar, so most feasts are kept on

the wrong day). If you have been observing the feasts according to their actual day, this year we ended up with three sets of two-day Sabbaths with each beginning on a weekly Shabbat.

Stay true to your godly nature and be a person of goodness and peace.

There are lots of ways to approach life. Being patient, overlooking little things, and helping others in a respectful and kind manner are always the best way to encourage others. Even warning others in a kind manner about the judgment of God produces the best results. Sharing what the Bible says can make your approach better because we use God's words and not our words.

I have heard some say things like, what you are sharing is of the devil. They believed in not keeping the law and they do not like the idea of keeping God's laws. 1 John 3:4 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." So, sin is to not keep the law. It then says a few verses later, 1 John 3:8 NKJV, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." So, it is not keeping the law that is of the devil. Actually, Yeshua said that He will reject those who do not keep the law. Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

People take scriptures out of the context of the Bible and apply them wrongly. Yeshua kept the law, and we are to keep the law. 1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV says, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Shaul (Paul) imitated Yeshua and Yeshua kept the law. Those that take the scriptures out of the context of the Bible will contradict the scriptures and say that Shaul said all we need to do is have faith. They just do not know the scriptures. James 2:24 NKJV says, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." Those that misunderstand the scriptures say it is just by faith, but the Bible says it is not just by faith.

What are their motives? Perhaps they do not want to follow our good and all-knowing God who has our best interests at heart. They perhaps just want to do things their own way and they pick and choose what they want to follow from the Bible. They are not following God with their whole heart. One of the commandments in the Old Testament portion tells us in Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength."

Often though, these people who do not want to follow God the way He tells us have been fooled by false doctrine, man-made theology, or just a lack of knowledge. Hosea 4:6 NKJV says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you." Yeshua said in Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Those that teach false doctrine teach a wide gate and contradict Yeshua.

Let's talk more about our godly nature of goodness and peace. Jewish synagogues in the time of Yeshua were called "Schools of Virtue." That is because we learn good ways to do things by keeping God's commandments. In fact, the Bible says that God's commandments give us

wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and God's commandments are "right and good," (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). So, it is not true that they are a curse as some say. Not keeping them can be a curse. That is what theology does; it sometimes makes up doctrine. Theology can be a false system of error that is leading people to eternal destruction. 1 Peter 4:3-5 NKJV says, "For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

Do not follow their Gentile ways. They will say that we do not have to follow the law of God because they are a Gentile. They just do not understand the Bible. Would God's good laws only apply to the Jews? No, God's blessings through the law is for anyone who wants to follow the true God.

Learning to be kind, considerate, and respectful comes from God's Old Testament commands. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." So, keeping God's commandments as well as treating others how you would want to be treated is commanded by God and things like being gentle towards others and kind are commandments of God. For example, Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." We need to work on these things. If we resist these things, then the Holy Spirit which is given by the Messiah Yeshua to believers cannot work in us properly. We would be resisting God.

Even when we play games, we must follow the rules, or we lose the fun of playing the game. I was recently watching a sporting event on TV and the replay showed that one of the rules of the game was violated and nothing was done about it. Evidently, the referees who called penalties for those infractions did not see what happened. The TV broadcasters showed a number of people who were at the game being upset about the mistake the referees made.

Committing sin is evil because they bring pain and wrong into the lives of those they associate with. Those that accept sin into their lifestyle ignore the goodness of God and His "right and good" ways and they selfishly seek their own ways. They are like children who steal a baby's toy because they can get away with it.

They will not get away with their sin when they have to stand before God. Shaul (Paul) says that those who live in sin will be judged harshly by God. Romans 2:5-6 NKJV says, "But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds." Those who do not change and do not do what is "right" will experience God's wrath because of their sinful deeds. Instead, why not bring the goodness of God into the world, do what is "right and good," and be a people who look forward to God's future goodness in His eternal kingdom.

Torah Portion

V'zot Habrachah is the final portion of Deuteronomy and the Torah. These are Moshe's last words, and he blesses the people. Moshe warns the people over and over in the Torah. His true heart was to help people to do what is right. That is the attitude that we need to have. We should always want what is right and good not only for ourselves, but for others, and for all to come to know God's goodness and blessings. Moshe had their best interests at heart just like God has our best interests at heart. Jacobs last words to his sons were not all good, but in these last words from Moshe, we see the good desires of Moshe for God's people.

Moshe closes with reminding the people of the blessings that God has given them. They are to enjoy what God has given them and we too should be a grateful people who enjoy the goodness of God. The Hebrew word for "thanks" in the Old Testament portion is used 114 times and is a tremendous testimony to the goodness of God towards His people. We should never forget to have thanks towards God.

Psalm 28:7 NKJV says,

"The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him." "Praise" in this verse is the Hebrew word for thanks.

Psalm 30:4 NKJV says,

"Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name."

Psalm 119:7-8 NKJV says,

"I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments. I will keep Your statutes; oh, do not forsake me utterly!" "Praise" in this verse is the Hebrew word for thanks.

Psalm 119:62-64 NKJV says,

"At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You, because of Your righteous judgments. I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts. The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy; teach me Your statutes."

Have joy, appreciate God and his commandments, be thankful for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and have gratitude for all God has done. God did not have to help us, but God is a good God, and it is important that we recognize His goodness and do not reject Him. Get to know and understand that our God is good. We are indebted to our God for all we have, for all that the earth provides, and for His good intentions for us.

Stay Faithful, Never Give Up **(A teaching to accompany the Torah portion.)**

There was a silly comedy done years ago that had the saying, "never give up, never surrender." That's true for life and should be especially true for our spiritual life.

Seek God's light. Let His word direct us.

Moshe told Israel they would fail some day; he told them this so they would not give up. They came back to their land from Babylon and got their lives back together. This is a process we do over and over as believers in the true God. In this Messianic age, the first thing we are to do is to turn toward God by keeping His commandments and accept the Messiah. We are to receive the Holy Spirit. We can tell God we want His Holy Spirit and He will give it those who believe in the Messiah Yeshua. In the future, we may receive a spiritual gift that is associated with the Holy Spirit. My experience has been that everyone who seeks spiritual gifts, will receive them; so be patient and seek them. Shaul said, "Desire spiritual gifts;" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV.

Yeshua said we are to receive the Holy Spirit as our helper. John 14:15-16 NKJV says, "Keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever." The Holy Spirit is helping us to keep God's commandments. We need to turn to God, repent, keep His commandments, accept Yeshua as the Messiah, and receive the Holy Spirit as our helper (as well as God's gifts of the Holy Spirit).

Kefa said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39 NKJV. Isn't that great; it is a promise from God to us and our children and even those afar off. Perhaps Kefa never thought that people all over the world would be receiving God's Holy Spirit. I do not know what his idea of being afar off was. We are surely far from Israel and a couple thousand years later; God's calling is still true for us today.

We have both God's word to lead us and the Holy Spirit now in this Messianic age. As we saw in the scripture portions for today, we are to keep God's commandments and not sin. They told us to return to God; God wants to give us His mercy. He blesses us for following His instructions (Torah means instruction). Psalms 43:3 NKJV says, "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me." The idea of being led by God begins with keeping His commandments. Then the Holy Spirit helps us in the details of life and lots more.

Oddly, there are some people who think we are only being led by the Holy Spirit. The context of the scripture about the Holy Spirit is keeping God's commandments. Yeshua said first of all, we need to keep His commandments. "Keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He

will give you another Helper;" John 14:15 NKJV. Could it be any plainer? Over and over the Bible tells us to keep God's commandments.

Stay connected to God; His ways support us and are good.

God's word is a light to us and so is the Holy Spirit. Psalm 119 has many great scriptures about keeping God's commandments.

From Psalm 119 NKJV:

10 "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"

16 "I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word."

30 "I have chosen the way of truth."

40 "Behold, I long for Your precepts"

50 "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life."

65 "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments."

72 "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver."

162 "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure."

In order to grow spiritually, we may need to change how we do some things and even stop how we are doing other things.

Years ago, I tried to study the Bible and pray every day, but the business of life kept me from doing that. I had to form the habit of doing that every day. Now I do it automatically. If my day gets away from me, I spend my evening in study and prayer.

Psalms 5:3 NKJV says, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You." Talking about Yeshua, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed;" Mark 1:35NKJV. Mark 6:46 NKJV says about Yeshua, "And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray."

Let us form good habits. Hebrews 5:14 NKJV says, "Those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." 1 Timothy 4:7 NKJV says, "Exercise yourself toward godliness." We are to work at doing "good" and forming "good" habits ("good" means to keep God's commandments – see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). When we come up to a problem, then we will be ready to do what is "right."

Money is often a driving force in our lives. It speaks loudly to us.

When I first went out on my own, it was not well planned. I got a job; I got a place to live; and I had 2 dollars that I had borrowed to live on until I got my first paycheck. Some of you are probably thinking wow, that must have been hard. I sure learned the lesson of working for a living. I had to work, or I would starve.

We must also allow God to speak loudly into our lives.

Some can put all their effort into making money and not give God a proper place in their life. Remember what Psalm 119:10 NKJV said, "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!" Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says that, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." God tells us to live good and blessed lives; then someday we will be with Him for eternity. Hebrews 14:12 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

God knows what we do, and He is the almighty judge. We will have to give an account for our lives. Do we do good or evil? When I wrote down what I thought God wanted me to share today, I did not have any idea how things would fit together. I just shared about holiness and then I looked at the next thing God wanted me to talk about. "He is the almighty judge!"

It amazes me sometimes how flippant people can be with the Bible. Guess what, people who do not follow God's commands are bringing pain and evil into this world. God is just and He will judge mankind. Shaul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 NKJV, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Notice how it says, "terror of the Lord." I do not think we hear that in too many churches nowadays. It says we will be judged for the "good or bad" we have done. Strong's says the word "bad" means, "bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked." It is not just things we think are bad, it is what God says is wrong. This may come as a total surprise to you, but the word for judgment seat, is the Greek word bema which is the word Jews use for where the Torah is read. Shaul was Jewish and so is Yeshua. How about that! We will be judged by how we keep the Torah. Again, it says in Psalms 119:65, "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments." If you want to be dealt well with in eternity, keep God's commandments.

God does not want anyone to fail. He cares
about mankind; He is a God of mercy.

We have just finished observing three of God's feasts. God's feasts help us to connect with God on a regular basis. This present world will perish, but we have the opportunity to be raised from the dead to be with God in His future kingdom where we will be connected to God for all the time. Won't you believe in the Messiah Yeshua and keep God's commandments?

Kefa said in 2 Peter 3:5-9 NKJV:

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one

thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Isn't that great. God is a good God and does not want anyone to fail. Yochanan says he saw the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from heaven in the book of Revelation. Perhaps he had a slow-motion action future-play. God could restore Jerusalem in a split second. Perhaps God slowed it down for him so he could experience how it will occur sometime in the future. Yochanan also said, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone;" Revelation 21:8 NKJV. There is a lake of fire for those who do not obey God. This may terrify you, but better for you to know now than have to face that at your time of judgment.

God gave Israel a song so they would be reminded to be faithful to God. It is important that we remember to do what is right. God gave us His words in the Bible and the Holy Spirit to lead us and help us. Ritual is often not a commandment of God; misapplied commandments are not God's commands. Not all ritual is wrong. The portion tells us there has never been a man like Moshe, at least not until Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua even healed everyone in some cities.

As believers, we need to keep seeking God and never give up. Stay connected to God and His word. In order to grow spiritually, we may need to change some things in our lives. Money is often a driving force for us, but God should also be especially important. We will have to give an account to God for how we live. Stay faithful to our good and just God.

In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.