



**#39 Chukat – #40 Balak Numbers 19:1-25:9
Torah teaching and teaching, Listen to God
By Moshe Schwab**

Names

Kefa – Peter
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus' real name
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah
(There are also transliterations from Hebrew)

This week is a double portion of scriptures, Chukat and Balak. Chukat means, "ordinance of" or "decree." This portion begins with God telling Moshe (Moses) the details about the sacrifice of the red cow. It is to be without blemish and never to have had a yoke on it. Also, Balak means, "devastator," "empty," or "wasting" (reference Wiki). In the portion, Balak, Moav and Midyan were afraid of Israel so Balak, the king of Moav hired Bilam (Balaam) to curse Israel.

I would like to begin by talking about how God wants us to grow in truth. Everyone seems to think that their ideas on life are the right values for life. There has to be one truth and not many different truths. In math, $\$5 + \$5 = \$10$. If you go to the store and they ask you \$12 for something, you cannot buy it for \$5. There must be a mathematical exactness to truth just as there is for anything else. We learned how to communicate in life. We look up at the skyscraper from the ground and not down. People who say there are no truths are deluded.

What is truth? The Bible is God's word and is therefore truth. After all, God must know what is right, good, and true. Psalms 119:160 NKJV says, "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." God's word is truth for life and His right and good commandments are forever because He is God and we are not. Psalms 119:151-152 NKJV says, "You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever." For all of time, God's commandments have been shown to be truth. We need to accept them and do what is right. God will forgive those who are truly sorry for doing what is wrong and not following truth. We are to seek Yĕhōvâh with our whole heart.

Isaiah 55:6-9 NKJV says,

Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,"

says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Do not be confused by people who have been brainwashed into thinking that truth is whatever they think is truth. If you want to find the best way to live, seek God and His truths in the Bible.

In many societies, people are locked into finding satisfaction, excitement, happiness, accomplishment, and being at peace in many different ways. While these are not sinful in themselves, they can be used in sinful ways. Having an excessive drive in any of these areas regardless of how we achieve them often leads to wrong and evil behaviors. For example, a major driving force for some people is excitement. People will go to extremes to produce excitement in their lives. They take chances with life, they may spend a lot of their time playing games or watching TV, they may abuse drugs or alcohol, play mind games, and the list can go on and on.

Instead of being satisfied with what is right and good, they are trying to produce life through worldly behaviors. They do not live in reality and truth. One can achieve no greater satisfaction than living out the truths that God gave us. Those that avoid God, are trying to find life through means that will not produce satisfying results, their efforts are fleeting. Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV says, "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water."

It says God's people do evil by forsaking God's truths that are like a refreshing supply of water. They make up their own ideas for life. Their broken ways for life are like a worthless cistern. They have decided to not do what is best. They should be listening to God. They search for ways to have satisfaction in life, but these things do not satisfy because they are broken ways for life that leave people empty in the end. They are fleeting aspirations and drives.

We are to be a treasured people who fight spiritually to keep our lives in line with God's truths and commandments. What could be better than being a treasured people who bring good into the world by living the way God wants us to live? Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV says, "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth." We could then look back on our life and feel we accomplished something good; we can have joy in knowing we have found truth instead of the deception of worldly things; we can have peace of mind in knowing that we haven't followed the delusions of the world; and we can be excited about living in reality and someday being in a future kingdom with the creator God when we are raised from the dead by God. Do not be driven by false ideals. They are worthless.

A word of caution about some people who think that we are automatically a holy treasured people. This thinking is both in Christian and Jewish circles. First of all, in order to be holy, we need to actually act holy and separate and keep God's commandments. We do not follow truth by making up truth. God is the source for truth.

It is a silly notion that if we say we believe in the Messiah Yeshua or that our lineage is Jewish that it makes us okay with God. Rabbi Yochanan says in 1 John 3:4, "Sin is lawlessness." John's

real name was Yochanan. The word lawlessness in the ancient Greek was used to mean to not keep the Torah.¹ So, sin is to not keep the Torah.

The Torah is the 1st five books of the Bible and should not be confused with the Jewish commentary of man-made laws called the Talmud and sometimes referred to as the Torah. The Talmud is not the true Torah. In the Old Testament portion, Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." The Talmud may have some good ideas at times, but much of it has to do with commandments made up by man; those that keep these extra man-made laws it says in Isaiah follow man and not God.

Also, how did Christianity end up not understanding they are to keep the Torah? Didn't Yochanan says that not keeping the Torah is sin? It is because a false version of Christianity has been passed down to us through the Roman Empire. We need to mention this frequently because of the error that has crept into Christianity. Instead of understanding this error, most Christians, pastors, and teachers, continue to pass along the error they have received. Many were born into or became believers in a system that denied God's word and its original understanding. Good exegesis is to understand the scriptures how they were originally to be understood.

This false system that was passed down to us became entrenched in Christianity. A false system of theology of made-up man-made religion then developed. We have even been told mistaken beliefs that the God of the Old Testament was difficult and harsh and that its system is completely done away with. They will then say that Yeshua did away with the Law which contradicts what He said. Matthew 5:17 NKJV, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets." They are completely deluded by man-made theology and just as soon as they read this, they contradict what Yeshua said. They say that fulfilled means that the Old Testament law has been done away with. Rephrasing Matthew 5:17 according to Christians is that, 'Yeshua did not come to do away with the Old Testament law and the prophets, but Yeshua did away with them. Do you see how ridiculous their theology is?

We now have many different manuscript copies of the Gospels in Hebrew that can be compared to the Greek. In the Greek it says that Yeshua came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. What does it mean to fulfil? It sounds like Yeshua will keep the law. We are supposed to follow Yeshua's example, aren't we? What does the Hebrew Matthew say?

The Hebrew manuscript of Matthew 5:17-18 reads:

Moreover Mashiach said to his talmidim, "Do not think that I came to throw down the Torah and the Prophets, on the contrary, I came to confirm. I say unto you in truth, that not one word will be diminished from the Torah – that it would not be performed until the end of the world."²

¹ The Greek word translated lawlessness is *anomia*. *Nomia* was used by the ancient rabbis in the Septuagint (the translation of the Old Testament into Greek in the 2nd century BC) for the Old Testament books of the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible. The "a" negates the word so *anomia* means to not keep the Torah.

² <https://www.hebrewgospels.com/matthew>

Yeshua said to His followers that the Torah should be kept until the end of the world! The translation uses confirm instead of fulfilled. It is a Hebrew word that means to make full or complete as in completing something like completing building a house. How did Yeshua make the Torah complete? He gave believers another helper, the Holy Spirit. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth." The first helper is God's Old Testament commandments. The other helper is the Holy Spirit. We are complete through Yeshua and the other helper, the Holy Spirit. Colossians 2:10 NKJV says, "You are complete in Him."

It is a shame to Christianity that they refuse to follow God the way He tells them and instead follow man-made doctrine. The sacrificial system has changed, but **the good commandments of God are still good which include God's feasts**. There are also many Christians who deny the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many of the commands in the Torah apply only to the priests, some to farmers, some to women, etcetera. There are a few hundred applicable commandments in the Old Testament Torah in this era. They are not hard to keep (mitzvah means commandment). Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB, "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach." God did not burden us with a lot of difficult commandments. By comparison, we have some 2 million laws in the United States.

The scripture we read in Deuteronomy Chapter 7 says that God treasures His people. That is not a harsh God. His commandments give us 'wisdom and understanding' (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and are "right and good;" see Deuteronomy 6:17-18. It is the many extra man-made commandments that are difficult to keep. The Old Testament says that God does not change (Malachi 3:6). Yēhōvāh was a good God then and still is a good God. Yochanan goes on to say in 1 John 3:7-8 NKJV, "He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning."

Righteousness means to live right, in other words, to keep God's commandments. Those who do what is right are the ones who are righteous, even as they are living right. Do not let false theology change the meaning of what it is to be righteous. Some think they are given a "stamp" of righteousness by believing in the Messiah or by being Jewish. That makes no sense; somehow, they think they are right even though they are okay with doing wrong.

You are not living right by doing wrong.

He then says that sin, not keeping the Torah, is of the devil. **Christianity** seems to be getting worse and worse because they deny the foundation of the Torah and **continue in their made-up doctrine**. Yeshua said in Matthew 15:9 NKJV, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men;" Believers and those who teach need to take a hard look at the facts. **There will be people who think they are okay with God but are not**, and they will not be in the future kingdom. Many of those in the Jewish community follow the commandments of the rabbis from the Talmud and are also following the commandments of men.

I have heard that there are many observant Jewish people who believe that Yeshua is the Messiah, but do not know how to follow Him because of the made-up doctrine that has been passed down to us in Christianity. The good news is that you do not have to follow the made-up doctrine of the Roman Empire that was passed down to us! And you do not have to follow the made-up doctrine of the rabbis. Some ritual is good, it grounds us in what we do spiritually, but ritual is often not a commandment of God. For example, our family lights candles on Friday evening to welcome Shabbat and we have a festive Shabbat meal. That is something we do to welcome Shabbat. The Bible doesn't command a specific ritual. There are different ways to welcome Shabbat, and I suggest you find your own ways to celebrate Shabbat.

Good News! You don't have to follow made-up doctrine!

Rabbi Yochanan said that those who sin are of the devil. We need to keep focused and watch out for the traps of the devil. We see the people of the gospels and even in the book of Acts understanding that devil spirits were disrupting the lives of the people and the lives of the Jewish people. Rabbis in Old Testament times also used to cast out devil spirits. For example, a well-known Jewish teaching talks about how mankind fell in the Garden of Eden. Through deceit, the devil changed what God said by adding and subtracting from what He said. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "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 which I command you."

Shaul was Jewish and He used the Genesis account in His teachings. 2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." It can start out as one little compromise or one thought that compromises God's word.

That is what gets us to compromise on God's word. People will add, subtract, and change God's word. For example, God defines **HIS FEASTS** (Leviticus 23:2) in the Old Testament and then theology comes along and contradicts God's word in the Bible and tells us we don't have to keep God's feasts. The easiest way to keep focused on doing what is "right and good" is to **decide not to compromise on keeping God's commandments**. Rabbi Shaul shared a number of things on this subject.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

Notice how it says that people will get to know the truth; this would be in contrast to the made up lies of people and their sinful man-made ideas or man-made theology. We can escape the traps of the devil; people who live in sin are captive to their ungodly life and need to be set free. They are living deluded lives and are slaves to sin and the devil. Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "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?" Devil spirits rebelled against God, and they are trying to get us to rebel against God too. That is what Christians are doing when they do not keep God's Torah.

Shaul says we are in a spiritual battle. The good news is that we can decide to fight and win the battle by getting rid of the false arguments that contradict God and His word. We are to get control of our thoughts and get rid of the false ideals and ideas whose source is demonic.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Some say that Yeshua did away with the law. Yeshua said that he will tell them to depart from Him at the time of judgement.

Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Notice that these people are believers who are doing wonders in the name of Yeshua. Again, the word lawlessness is the word which means not to keep the Torah. People say they will be judged at the Messiah's judgement seat. The word translated "seat" in 2 Corinthians 5:10 is the Greek word **bema**. Jews call **the place where the Torah is read the Bema**. Yeshua will judge us by the Torah.

We are to be strong in the truth and **not false doctrine** and not in the false ideas and ideals of mankind that contradict God's word.

Ephesians 6:10-14 NKJV

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

Shaul says we need to take a stand so stop acting like a baby and crawling around in the disgusting mire of sin. God even calls some sins disgusting – that is what the word abomination means. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination;" Leviticus 18:22 NKJV. If God says it is wrong, then it is wrong; you are not God. Homosexual sin is wrong the Bible says. These people may think they are smarter than God, but they are not. Over 30 million people have died from (the mostly) sexually transmitted AIDS virus and some of you who participate in being brainwashed by society may die from this sexually transmitted disease. I feel bad for you; I wish you would get control of your life and start doing what is right.

James 4:4-10 NKJV

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Submit to God's ways and stop following the ways of devil. You can be released from demonic control. The following scripture is about the Roman leadership in Israel (appointed by Rome) who were controlled by the devil. Yeshua said in John 10:10 NKJV, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." The devil steals from our lives, kills people, destroys people, and works at destroying the world. Isaiah 14:12 NKJV says, "How you are fallen from heaven, "O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!" The devil is like a rebellious angry person who, in this case, does all in his power to disrupt the goodness of God. God wants to give us a good life through His ways. Who do you want to join forces with?

Be blessed and enjoy the race we are in as God's good people. Didn't Yeshua say that we can have a good life through God and through Him? Romans 10:4 is about the Messiah coming to help us follow the Torah. The word end in that verse is an archaic meaning coming from the Middle Ages. In that verse it actually means "goal." The Greek word telos was used for the goal at chariot races. Why didn't the translators change this? There are a number of people who are deluded by false doctrine and perhaps even the translators.

I went to a translating seminar years ago and they said that the translators will not change something at times because then people won't buy their Bible. Some say that we are all going to heaven so what difference does it make. If you are living in sin, you won't be going to God's future kingdom (see Revelation 21:8). Some say we are good with God if we believe in God. If you believe in God, wouldn't it make sense that you also do what He says? James 2:18-20 NKJV, "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?"

In the Romans 10:4, Christ means Messiah, law means Torah, end is the word to mean goal, the word "for" is the word "toward" in the Greek, righteousness means to live right. So, we actually have in Romans 10:4: "The Messiah is the goal of the Torah toward living right for all who believe." So, the Messiah came to help us live the Torah better! There are other verses that substantiate that we are to live like the Messiah (He kept the Torah). Shaul said in 1

Corinthians 11:1 NKJV, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Shaul then must have kept the Torah.

Again, the word goal in Romans 10:4 was used in antiquity for the end of the chariot race, the goal. Shaul used the idea of being in a race in other scriptures as well. Why didn't the translators change this verse to give its correct meaning? That is the problem of reading false theology into the scriptures.

For a more detailed study on this go to our "Frequently Asked Questions" (<https://www.teshuvahsa.org/frequently-asked-questions>) and Select "What Does Romans 10:4 Mean?" Remember Yochanan said that not keeping the Torah is sin!

We are to run the race so that we receive the prize of eternal life. Those who compete put in a lot training and their life revolves around their competition.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

You can have joy in winning the prize of eternal life with a good and wonderful God! Do not be disqualified. You can do it; so, fight the spiritual fight. Yeshua said, "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." Matthew 24:13 NKJV. We are in a lifelong walk with God; endure to the end; never give up.

We are a people of light who draw the line spiritually. Watch what you think; be at peace, always do what is right, be calm, be helpful, be thoughtful, be caring, and most of all, follow God's commandments.

2 Chronicles 15:7 NKJV

"But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

Jeremiah 29:11-12 NKJV

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Does the Old Testament portion sound like a harsh system to you? The Old Testament says that God wants to give us a future and a hope. These false teachers do not know what they are talking about. They will try to talk you out of following God and His commandments and into their false theology. Some will even quote these scriptures and then say the Old Testament portion is done away. Isn't that ridiculous.

Isaiah 41:10 NKJV

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

Ephesians 5:8-11 NKJV

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.

You can be a light; do not live in darkness bumping your head through life. Years ago, some of my friends used that analogy. You do not have to be brainwashed by the worldly. The works of darkness are unfruitful because they mess up the good life that God wants for us. So, do not do the works of darkness. Find out what is right and true and do that.

Chukat Torah Portion

The first portion for today is Chukat and means, "ordinance of" or "decree." This portion begins with God telling Moshe (Moses) the details about the sacrifice of the red cow. It is to be without blemish and never to have had a yoke on it. Not having a yoke on it probably means it was not to be used for work or used inappropriately (it is a cow, not an ox). It is to be sacrificed outside the camp. The ashes are to be kept for the water of purification. When anyone touches a corpse, they are to be sprinkled with the ashes mixed with water. Anyone who comes in contact with a corpse is unclean for 7 days. Miriam dies in this portion in the desert in Kadesh.

There are many symbolic things in the Old Testament portion that the people back then could understand as being symbolic. There are also things done in the Old Testament portion that symbolically refer to our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ). The offerings were to be without blemish so also the people understood they were to stay away from the blemish of sin. Yeshua sacrificed himself for our sins as an offering without blemish. 1 Peter 1:18-19 CJB says, "You should be aware that the ransom paid to free you from the worthless way of life which your fathers passed on to you did not consist of anything perishable like silver or gold; on the contrary, it was the costly bloody sacrificial death of the Messiah, as of a lamb without defect or spot." "Lamb" is a reference to Yeshua in Isaiah 53:7 NKJV; "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter."

Just as the offerings at the Mishkan (the Tabernacle in the desert) were to be pure, we are to be pure. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said in Romans 12:1 NKJV, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." Shaul was Jewish so his writings have their basis in the Old Testament portion. We are to be holy and pure.

Also, we see another symbolic shadow picture of Yeshua in the red cow. Just as the red cow was to be killed outside of the camp, Yeshua gave His life outside the gate to make us holy. "Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered **outside the gate**;" Hebrews 13:12 NKJV.

We should talk a little about the example and substitution that God instituted in the Bible. As we can see, there are some definite spiritual pictures that God made. God gave us spiritual pictures so that we do what is right; there are some spiritual pictures that are about the Messiah Yeshua. Some people go to extremes though and look for things that God never intended to be used symbolically. They produce symbolic applications of the Bible that cater to our "itching ears." I had to read a book for my doctorate that applied extra meanings to everything; you would not believe how crazy this person sounded.

Watch out for people who go extremes with insights.

These extensive applications divert us from working on living out God's commandments and instead focus on satisfying our curiosity. 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV says, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."

We are to teach the scriptures and learn how to apply them. There was no New Testament at the time; so, this scripture tells us that we will be judged by the Torah, the Old Testament scriptures! There are consequences for getting off track. Some have told me they do not have to know what the Bible says because they can just look at the Hebrew letters and their ancient meaning. They are off track; do not waste your time on their wrong teaching.

Instead learn to keep God's commandments and be a productive person. Help others; be a blessing; actually, do something. Some read only the New Testament and then take it out of its Jewish biblical context. God gave us commandments in the Old Testament; why wouldn't they still be good for mankind? They are from God; Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." Some of you are going to have a nasty awakening when you stand before God.

Yeshua also said that going to extremes by reading in between the lines was wrong. "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me;" John 5:39 NKJV. They were reading between the lines instead of understanding the scriptures properly. God expects us to live out His instructions and not just look between the lines for things that God never intended. Some of these things can be instructive and fun and were intended by God but be careful you don't take reading between the lines too far.

The Israelites then complained that they had no water and God tells Moshe to speak to the Rock and tell it to bring forth water. Instead, Moshe speaks to the people and then strikes the rock twice. Water pours out of the rock even though Moshe disobeyed God, and the people drink and water their livestock. God told Moshe and Aharon they would not be allowed to enter the land because they did not trust Him and hit the rock instead of speaking to it. Some say that Moshe hit the rock and that is why water came out of it. Try that in your back yard and see if you can get water out of a rock.

God can do things for us even if we do not have the right motive. He is a merciful and good God. Parents do not withhold their love from their children. In the same way, God will do things

for us even though we are not perfect or have the right intentions. It is always best though to seek the right motive in all we do.

Hitting the rock the first time back in Exodus 17:6 was symbolic of Yeshua dying for us. The rock provided water and rescued their lives. Shaul (Paul) refers to this symbolism in 1 Corinthians 10:4 CJB, "For they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah." The second time, Moshe was to speak to the rock because when Yeshua comes again, he will not suffer, but be among us (Revelation 21:3). Yeshua the Messiah rescues³ us because He died for the forgiveness of our sins. And through Him, we can receive the Holy Spirit; those who trust in God and work at keeping His commandments, will receive eternal life. Faith requires action the Bible says (James 2:17). As we can see by this Torah portion, God expects us to actually do what He tells us. Some say we do not have to; that is false teaching. God expected Moshe to do exactly what He said.

Moshe then asks Edom if they may pass though, but Edom refuses. So, they traveled to Mount Hor where they made El'azar high priest because Aharon was about to die. Aharon died there at Mount Hor, and they mourned him for 30 days. Some of the Kena'ani in the Negev attacked Israel and God allowed Israel to attack them and destroy their cities.

Israel went around Edom. Then some of the people complained, so God sent venomous snakes. God had Moshe make a bronze snake and put it on a pole and anyone who was bitten looked on it and was healed. About 900 years later, the Bible tells us in 2 Kings 18:4 that Hezekiah had the bronze snake destroyed because people were worshipping it. Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV says, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image —**any likeness of anything** that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations." Even in our era, so called believers pray to statues, crosses, pictures, and so-called saints (dead people) instead of God and this abomination is passed down from generation to generation. Shaul (Paul) said no idolaters will be allowed in the kingdom of God (see Galatians 5:19-21).

The snake being lifted up for the healing of the people is also symbolic (a picture) of what Yeshua did for us. Yeshua explains to Nicodemus that he must die for us. Yeshua says of Himself, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life;" John 3:14-15 NKJV (also see John 12:32). Yeshua also was lifted up to the heavens and is there now waiting for the final era when He will return.

Israel then went through the desert with Moav on the east. Israel came to the land of the Emori (Amorites) and Israel asked them if they could pass through, but Sichon, King of the Emori would not let them pass. Instead, the Emori attacked them. Israel defeated them and took control of the land. Sichon was a Nephilim and the brother of Og also a Nephilim (see Deuteronomy 3:11). Because of this, Og the king of Bashan came to fight Israel. God said He

³ The Hebrew word malat used for saved (sozo) in the New Testament always means to escape. "h4422. מָלַט mālat; a primitive root; ... to release or rescue." – Strong's Enhanced Dictionary. See Joel 2:32; although translated saved in Joel, מָלַט always means escape.

would be with Israel, and they defeated Og and took control of his land. After that Israel camped opposite the Yarden (Jordan) River near Jericho.

The Haftarah portion is Judges 11:1-33. In this Haftarah portion, Amon had attacked Israel so the leaders of Gil'ad went to get Yiftach (Jephthah) and asked him to lead them and told him if he did that, he could be their leader. He had been banished because he was the son of a prostitute. They made Yiftach their leader and he told Amon that God had given them the land and that they should go home. The people of Amon didn't listen to Yiftach and Israel ended up defeating Amon.

Yiftach said if he won, he would sacrifice the first one to come out of his house when he came back. His daughter came out first. Some say he did not sacrifice her, but the Bible does not talk about the matter any further. We know that killing others is forbidden in the Torah and is murder. He should have known better; after God helped him, he possibly failed miserably. Sometimes God heals people, and they go back to their old sinful ways afterwards; and similarly, they fail miserably.

Yeshua's death was different. God allowed Yeshua to be crucified by the Romans (all the Jewish leadership were appointed by Rome and they didn't want to lose their Roman appointments; both Herod and the Chief Priest were appointed by Rome)⁴ and since He was not due punishment for anything He did, God rose Him from the dead. Kefa (Peter) said in Acts 2:24-25 CJB, "But God has raised him up and freed him from the suffering of death; it was impossible that death could keep its hold on him. For David says this about him;" In Psalm 16:10b NKJV David said prophetically, "Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." This proves the Messiah was to give Himself for us (also see Isaiah 53).

Some people will make up anything to try to prove that Yeshua is not the Messiah.

Deceitful people explain Yeshua's death as human sacrifice; Yeshua rose from the dead, is still alive, and the Bible says He will judge those who do not believe in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV says, "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." If you have not accepted Him as the Messiah, do not wait. The word translated "seat" from the Greek is the word "bema." The Bema is where the Torah is read in Jewish synagogues. Notice it says we will be judged for the good and the bad. Have we done what is "right and good" (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18) and kept the Torah?

Balak Torah Portion

The other Torah portion for this week is Balak and it means, "devastator," "empty," or "wasting" (ref. Wiki). In this portion, Balak, Moav and Midyan were afraid of Israel so Balak, the king of Moav hired Bilam (Balaam) to curse Israel. Bilam (Balaam) first refuses, but inquires again and

⁴ Even those who were accusing Yeshua were paid to do that by the Roman leadership in Jerusalem. The Romans turned the tables on what the scriptures say and accused the Jews. It was the Romans that killed Yeshua and not the Jews. Their religion is steeped in idolatry; Shaul said no idol worshipper will enter the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21) and perhaps it is still paying for its killing of the Messiah Yeshua and the killing of the true believers at that time to create their false religion and its lie.

God says he can go, but he is to say only what God tells him to say. God was angry at Bilam probably for his selfish motives and He made an angel to stand in his way and had Bilam's donkey speak to him. The angel tells Bilam that he is to only speak what God tells him.

When it is time to curse Israel, Bilam ends up blessing Israel. King Balak takes Bilam to another place and he ends up blessing Israel again. The false prophet Bilam is taken to another place by Balak and Bilam realizes that he cannot use his incantations and allows God to speak blessings again for Israel. He says in Numbers 24:9, "Blessed be all who bless you! Cursed be all who curse you." Balak is very angry with Bilam, but Bilam says there was nothing he could do about it. Further Bilam prophecies that a messianic king will come from Israel and destroy all their enemies someday. Yeshua will come back and do that.

In the meantime, Yeshua has given us peace through the Holy Spirit. John 14:26-27 NKJV says, "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. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you." The world expects the Messiah to bring peace and Yeshua did that but not how the world perceives peace, but as how God chose to give us peace.

Next, some in Israel met prostitutes who enticed them to commit sexual sin and they also made sacrifices to the pagan god Ba'al Pe'or. When we sin, we can cause a curse to fall on us. Because of Israel's sin, God allows a plague to fall on Israel. Moshe had the men hung who engaged with the prostitutes. A man brought one of these women near the Tent of Meeting and Pinchas went after him and speared him and the woman. As a result of the idolatry and sexual sin, 24,000 died from a plague, but the plague stopped because of Pinchas.

Ironically, the blessings that God made Balaam (Bilam) pronounce over Israel became part of the modern Jewish service and is called the Ma Tovu. Balaam even gives prophecy about the future Messiah of Israel. Another irony in the Torah portion is that the donkey saw the angel and Balaam didn't see it; Balaam should have been able to see, but continued on with his folly because he had an evil eye. God made the donkey to talk to Balaam and Balaam talked to the donkey; it is a humorous point – perhaps we could say that God made Balaam to look like his donkey. It seemed that Balaam repents, but like other wicked people, his repentance is only temporary. He opposes the purposes of God and Israel entering their land, but he is unsuccessful; instead, God made Balaam to bless Israel; Balaam's motives were wrong, and we should remember to be careful that our motives and values line up with the scriptures and not try to wrongly justify our behavior. Remember to have a good eye and not an evil eye.

Also, according to Revelation 2:14 it was Balaam who laid a stumbling block in front of Israel with the worship of Ba'al Pe'or. In Jewish thought and we are biblically commanded to not do anything that can cause a person to fail or sin. He could not curse Israel, so Balaam brought a curse on them through the sin of Ba'al Pe'or. He ends up dying shortly after this for his sin.

What can we learn from Balaam's behavior?

- * We should not just listen to what God says but do what He says.
- * We need to have deep godly values that we are willing to stand for.

- * We should never consider witchcraft or the occult. The Torah says not even learn to do what the pagans do. There are devil spirits behind these activities.
- * Watch out that we do not let power get to our head as Balaam did. Those who are proud are far from God, "Yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar. Psalms 138:6
- * Protect your mind from wrong thinking. Have a good eye and not an evil eye.
- * Do not acquire money through evil gain (as Balaam attempted).
- * Do not be a stumbling block to others and cause them to sin. Instead think about how we can help people to do what is right. "Resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way;" Romans 14:13 NKJV. Shaul (Paul) is applying Leviticus 19:14 from the Old Testament portion.
- * Be patient with one another and be encouraging. Say encouraging things to each other. We need each other to stay strong.

Another thing this portion teaches us is that God is over all. God was over the evil of Balaam. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said that Yeshua is over all in Ephesians 1:19-23 NKJV:

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

It says there is great power to those who believe. If you lived in an ancient society, you probably wondered why things happened sometimes. Shaul says that Yeshua the Messiah is over all and that includes all the pagan gods and people who say they operate some kind of power (and from devil spirits like Balaam operated). The Messiah is over all and none of these powers can touch us. What God blesses cannot be cursed if we stand on God's word in faith and keep His commandments. Abraham trusted in what God told him to do and kept God's commands. God told Abraham that he would bless him and bless those whom he blesses (Genesis 12:2-3). Also, it said in Ephesians that Yeshua is the head over the believers. The head of your denomination or congregation is not the head over the believers. Kefa (Peter) says leaders are to be examples as they serve God's people. "Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock;" 1 Peter 5:3 NKJV.

The Haftarah is Mikhah (Micah) 5:6-6:8 Micah talks about the future Israel, and says they are like the dew and rain from the Lord; like a lion. They will defeat their enemies and God will remove idol worship and cause havoc on those who would not listen to God. Micah says God brought them out of slavery and Bilam blessed them. God commands us in Micah 6:8 CJB, "To act justly, love grace and walk in purity with your God." Someday, God will perform what He said He will perform. Micah is in the Old Testament portion. Notice it says grace; God's commandments at Mount Sinai were a gift of God's grace for mankind. Those who say they believe in grace should keep God's commandments. God's commands give us life the Bible says. Deuteronomy 11:1, 9 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always ... that you may prolong your days."

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

The Commands associated with the Red Heifer, Numbers 19:2-3, 13, 19.

Numbers 19:2-3 NKJV, "This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without blemish, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never come. 3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him.'"

Numbers 19:13 NKJV, "Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him."

Numbers 19:19 NKJV, "The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean."

Listen to God

(A teaching to accompany the Torah portion.)

What do we think authenticates truth?

Some 600 years before Yeshua came, Isaiah said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth;" Isaiah 53:6-7 NKJV. I was watching someone interviewing people in Israel and they were asking the people there who this is referring to. Almost everyone was shocked and said that it sounded like Yeshua (Jesus). The rabbis turn this around and lie to protect their false religion. The Christians are no better. They do not want to understand the Bible in its Jewish context and they create their own false religion too.

Last week we talked about Shaul's (Paul) teaching on the "ayin tovah" (Hebrew for "good eye"). This is a typical Jewish teaching.

Philippians 4:8-9 NKJV:

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

The God of peace will not be with those who have negative attitudes. I watch the news and sometimes they talk about all the murders occurring in the United States. They have forsaken God and made themselves into God. It says in the Bible that murderers will be cast into the lake of fire at the time of judgement. "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.

How we view things is important. If we want truth, we must be willing to accept what the Bible teaches and understand it properly in its Jewish context. I have heard people say the Bible does not have anything to do with being Jewish. How ridiculous. Yeshua (Jesus) was the Jewish Messiah to the whole world. All the writers of the Bible were Jewish. Luke's Jewish name at the top of his Hebrew gospel of Luke is Lukah. The Hebrew gospels were first put together around 150 AD.

People lead us in ways that do not result in a good life; they lead us to a life which has no basis.

Is there a basis for violence and murder instead of cool heads that try to work out solutions? Do we want anarchy and destruction that results in subservience? What do people think anarchy turns into? That is what they saw in the USSR back in the early 1900s and it resulted in oppression and murder, and the communist system of control and dictatorship; they went from one system of control to another. Their communist system was no better than the monarchy they had. It is said that the Russian communist dictator Stalin executed some 20 million people. That was the result of their anarchy and unrest.

What is wrong with doing things God's way instead of mankind's way? Jeremiah 2:13 NKJV says, "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water." God's Torah (Torah means instruction) gives us an endless supply of good refreshing water and a good life. Man though creates their own ideas (cisterns) that can only give us a limited supply of water, but they are broken ideas (broken cisterns) that leave us nothing in the end.

God's ways give us life. Deuteronomy 11:8-9 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may prolong your days in the land." God wants us to accept His truths in the Torah. It says in this Old Testament scripture in Proverbs 3:5-8 NKJV:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. 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."

Why not trust in God completely? Mankind and theology are not getting the job done. Don't rely on your own way but acknowledge God's ways as your way to live. We are not as wise as God; so, respect Him and do not lean toward evil. God's ways bring health and wellness. Ask anyone who is terribly sick, and they will tell you they'd do anything to be well again. Why not trust in God? His ways will prolong your days. They will give you health and strength.

God reaches down and wants to give us truth and goodness; instead, because we want to do things our way, we get the added entanglement of mankind's ways.

Proverbs 1:29-32:

"Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, they would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. Therefore they shall eat the fruit

of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them."

This was written a long time ago; perhaps some 3,000 years ago. It is still true today. People go after things the wrong way and what they do turns on them. We see it over and over in history. If we simply did things the right way, how much better we would all be.

God can reach us and speak to us through the darkness that we think sustains us.

At times, the people of Israel resisted God, but God continued to be with them and help them. We live in a dark world where mankind does things their own way and allows the influence of the demonic. Yeshua sent Shaul (Paul), "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;" Acts 26:18 NKJV. People need God and need to be rescued.

God has spoken to us through His word to rescue us; He speaks to us through the Holy Spirit which the Messiah Yeshua gives us. If only we will hear His voice and listen and obey Him. Ya'akov said in James 1:19-22 NKJV, "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

Our God is there, and He wants us to be in fellowship with Him; we need to decide to listen to Him and not any crazy ideas. Listen to God's words which are able to help us and keep us. People think they can be savvy and know what is best and what they should do. There are lots of ways to live, but only the true God knows what is truly best for us. Do not just hear God's words; **do them or you will be living in deception.** It is God that sustains the world and not us.

Some of the Old Testament portion scriptures are pictures of spiritual things. The sacrifices of the Israelites were to be pure which is a picture for us to be pure. Yeshua the Messiah was pure. Moshe strikes the rock instead of speaking to it. He was not able to enter the promised land because of what he did. We should remember that God expects us to do exactly what He says. If we want truth, we need to be able to accept truth and do what the Bible says. People often produce their own ideas of life instead of the truths from the Bible. God wants what is best for us instead of the failure of mankind's ways. He can reach us even in the darkness and deception of this world.