



**#8 Vayishlach – Genesis 32:3-36:43**  
**Torah Teaching**  
**by Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Esav (ěšāv)– Esau  
 Hevron – Hebron  
 Ya'akov – Jacob  
 Kefa – Peter  
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed  
 Moshe – Moses  
 Rivkah – Rebecca  
 Shaul – Paul  
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yěhōváh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)  
 Yitz'chak – Isaac  
 Yochanan – John

**Terms**

Cohen – priest  
 Haftarah – reading from the prophets  
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah  
 Vayishlach - 8<sup>th</sup> Torah portion

The parashah for this week is Vayishlach which means "and he sent." This portion begins with Ya'akov letting his brother Esau know that he is coming back home to Canaan and would like the favor of his brother. Ya'akov's messengers return and tell Ya'akov that Esau is coming to meet him with 400 men.

I would like to begin today by talking about being careful what we allow our minds to consider and explore. We are to first and foremost love God. Yeshua said in Matthew 22:37-38 NKJV, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment." Strong's Dictionary says that the word mind in that verse can mean, "deep thought." We are to work our minds so that we follow God the way we are supposed to. Of course, Yeshua is quoting Deuteronomy 6:5.

Why do we believe what we believe? Is it because we want the truth of what the Bible says, or do we believe in something because that is what we would rather hear and do? There is a big difference between God accepting me as I am, and that God is a loving God who knows what is best for us.

Those that believe God accepts them as they are often put a low value on living right. They want the blessing of God without putting in the effort to believe in what God says and do what is right. They often value acceptance over rules and being free to do what they want instead of what God says is right. It is like saying I want to be paid for the job I do, but I do not intend to actually work. Or another way of looking at it is to say, "I want good relationships, but I do not want to put in the effort to have a good and caring relationship."

Now, you may object to my assessment because you have been told that God does not expect anything of you. In fact, if we love God, we are to keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His

charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." Those who do not think that God expects anything of them are in serious trouble. They have not thought through the implications of their reasoning.

Perhaps you believe God accepts you because He loves you and because He is a loving and good God, and you trust God and want to love Him and do what He tells you to do, namely, keep His commandments. You do not put a low value on doing what is right. So, you do not actually belong in the camp that believes in themselves, in doing things their own way.

I will sometimes look at something from different viewpoints, but do not be fooled by wrongly thought-out ideas. I once heard someone say that doing what is right in your own eyes means they kept God's commandments. Proverbs 26:12 NKJV says, "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." This scripture contradicts their premise. Jeremiah 13:10 NKJV says, "This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts. Our hearts can be deceitful, so we need to work at understanding the truth.

Doing things God's way helps us to be who we should be and become.

Becoming what we should become is something that most people aspire to but cannot get there because they have gone after things that are against their nature. It is impossible for them to land where they should if they are not following the truth. Instead, they become something that works against who they can and should be.

Some people think they are bastions of knowledge, but who really knows the truth? The creator God is real, and He knows what is really true. When we accept God, we accept reality. Isaiah 40:13-14 NKJV says, "Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?" Some people think they know more than God, but we are not the creator of the universe. Therefore, God knows what is best, what is right, and what is good. Our very being then was designed and defined by God and thinking we know better is just plain foolishness.

Thinking we know better than God would be like telling one of the greatest soccer players in the world how to play soccer; or it would be like us telling a great musician, singer, or accomplished physicist that we know how to do what they do better. But God is so much bigger than that! Jeremiah 10:12 NKJV says, "He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion." We can do very little compared to what God do, so He knows how we should live. God made us, we are not God even if you think you are. Some people think they are George Washington the first president of the United States, but that does not make them George Washington. Isaiah 64:8 NKJV "But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand."

We have the chance to be at peace in life or fill our life with turmoil.

Perhaps we come up with some crazy idea that if we have more electrical power at our disposal, we can perhaps create something amazing. But putting more electricity on our light

bulbs, refrigerator, or TV will probably burn them up. They are designed to accept a certain level of electricity. So it is with life. God created us a certain way and that is the way we function the best.

That is why when we follow God's good commandments, we have more focus and peace. Psalms 29:11 NKJV says, "The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace. That was true for me. Years ago, when I decided to change my life and do things God's way, my life became more organized, I accomplished more, and I had more satisfaction in life. Satisfaction is an important element to life and doing things God's ways can help you with that. Psalms 145:16-18 NKJV says, "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth." God created everything that is, and it is through Him that we can realize true satisfaction.

#### Do we fill our heads with false belief systems or truth?

We began by saying that we need to be careful with some of the things we accept and believe in. Those in Russia probably never thought that someone would take over their country and kill some 20 million people in order to establish Communist doctrine in Russia.

We sometimes think that what we consider does not matter, but make sure we have a sure founded doctrine to follow. The Bible actually tells us what is doctrine. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." Even Shaul (Paul) tells us that the doctrine he learned has not been done away with. Romans 3:31 NKJV says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

We are to be God's set apart holy people who keep the law. Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways." The Bible says that to be God's holy people, we must keep God's commandments.

We are to keep God's commandments and should continue to learn and grow spiritually in life. Theology tends to replace the truth of the Bible by substituting holiness with man-made ideas such as righteousness without being a holy person. The book of Hebrews says something to the contrary. Hebrews 12:14 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." Those who do not pursue holiness will not be in God's future kingdom. Think before you jump on the bandwagon of nonsense. Pursue truth and work at being a holy person who does things God's way.

#### **Torah Teaching**

The prophets, probably Nehemiah, divided the Torah into weekly readings. The prophets did things that God commanded them to do. Our weekly readings help us to concentrate on different sections of doctrine and learn from them. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." God's law is good and gives us wisdom (see Deuteronomy 4:6); so, let's learn and grow in God's Torah. The word Torah means instruction.

After Ya'akov leaves the land of his ancestors with his wife and family and approaches where he grew up, he sends ahead a message to Esau (esav, ěšäv), his brother, that he is coming home. He sends gifts for his brother ahead of him and Esau receives Ya'akov favorably. Ya'akov wrestles with an angel who names him Israel and he identifies the angel as God (Elohim) and that he has seen God's face.

Wikipedia says that Ya'akov is a shortened ancient name meaning, "may God protect." The same article says that Israel could be translated as God rules.<sup>1</sup> This sounds like a possibility based on the story of Ya'akov. God demonstrates His ability to rule and reign, and He protects Ya'akov. That point seems interesting. Ya'akov has everyone in his camp get rid of their idols and God confirms his promised blessings to Ya'akov. Both Rachel and Yitzchak die. Yitzchak was 180 years old when he died.

Esau's descendants settled in the land of Edom which is south of Israel. *Edom* means red. It is apparent that God has blessed and protected Ya'akov. It says that he was rich while working for Laban and he sends Esau many gifts apparently to try and placate any anger that Esau may have held onto because Esau wanted the blessing that Yitzchak gave to Ya'akov.

It should be apparent that Ya'akov was blessed by God both materially and spiritually. He had a relationship with God and wanted to do what is right. Amazing blessings can come from our creator God. Ya'akov seems not to care about all that he is sending to Esau. He saw how God prospered him and blessed him when he worked for Laban. We should probably understand that he trusted in God; especially since he had gone through so much with greedy Laban who changed his wages 10 times to try to defraud him. Ya'akov and Esau end up greeting one another and agree to live in peace.

There is a standard Jewish teaching about the lesson of Ya'akov that has to do with, we doing our part, and God doing His part. I learned about this as a child. It makes sense that we need to trust God and do what He says. Just sitting around waiting for something to happen is not really trusting in God. Not acting, is actually not believing. When God asked me to go to the jungle to serve there, I immediately began investigating how I could do that. Doing nothing would have meant I didn't trust God. Ya'akov acts like God will prosper him since he is so generous towards Esau.

Ya'akov seems confident in God. Too bad mankind isn't also confident in God. This important Bible verse in Deuteronomy 4:5-6 NKJV says, "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'"

#### The problem of not understanding the Bible correctly.

God's ways are wise and good, but mankind seems to want to do things their own way. The lesson of trusting in God and believing in God and His commandments is a lesson that we

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<sup>1</sup><https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob>

learn over and over when reading the Torah or for that matter, any of the Old Testament portion books. But instead of trusting God, people add to God's commandments inappropriately. Also, some people take the scriptures out of their Jewish context and change their meaning. The biggest problem we have in our time are those who take the New Testament portion or the Old Testament portion out of its Jewish biblical context and don't understand the Bible properly.

*God's ways are wise and good.*

Kefa talks about how people are deluded and going to the lake of fire because they do not understand Paul properly. 2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV says, "Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." There was no New Testament so what were they untaught in? We are to keep the Old Testament scriptures. They were twisting what Shaul taught and contradicting the Old Testament scriptures.

They were taking Shaul's teachings out of its proper biblical context. Don't go to the lake of fire with those who do that. Both Kefa and Shaul were Jewish. The ancient Jews believed in and taught that there is a future kingdom of God for those who follow God, and a lake of fire where those who do evil will be punished. God is just, so He must act in a just way. God must judge those who do evil and live in sin. Some have been lied to about this important understanding. Even some Jewish rabbis have lost touch with their ancient truths. Of course, they need to also believe in their Messiah Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38-39).

Rabbi Kefa talked about people twisting the Bible and just before this he says in 2 Peter 2:4-7 NKJV, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly." Rabbi Kefa says there is a future judgment. Noah taught people to do what is right; to keep God's commandments. That's what righteousness means. Noah was saved because he did what was right. We are to live godly lives by God's standards and not our own.

*Noah taught God's commandments.*

The book of Jubilees tells us that Noah taught God's commandments, so he knew them. Jubilees 7:20-21 says, "And in the twenty-eighth jubilee Noah began to enjoin upon his sons' sons the ordinances and commandments, and all the judgments that he knew, and he exhorted his sons to observe righteousness, and to cover the shame of their flesh, and to bless their Creator, and honour father and mother, and love their neighbour, and guard their souls from fornication and uncleanness **and all iniquity**. For owing to these three things

came the flood upon the earth."<sup>2</sup> Remember, short lists can be representative for larger lists; they are not a complete list. **It says, "all iniquity;"** what is "all iniquity?" It is any and all sins. Before the written given at Mount Sinai, believers passed on God's commandments. Remember, Abraham kept the law, the Torah (see Genesis 26:5).

The portion continues after Ya'akov and Esau work things out. Ya'akov settles near the city of Shechem in Canaan. Dinah, Ya'akov's daughter, is raped and her brothers make an agreement that if the men of the city get circumcised, they will give them Dinah and form an agreement with them. When the men of the city are in pain Dinah's brothers kill the men of the city. What we are not told is that in the book of Jasher, the people of Shechem planned to attack Ya'akov and his family after they recovered and that the brothers became aware of the plan.

God then tells Ya'akov to move away from there and go to Bethel and God promises Ya'akov and his ancestry the land of Canaan and tells Ya'akov that his name is now Israel. Ya'akov goes on past the tower of Eder which is thought to be near Bethlehem. Rachel dies in childbirth on the way there. Isaac then dies at the age of 180. The genealogy of Esau is then given. Esau and his descendants then lived south of Israel in the land of Edom.

In the book of Jasher, after Isaac dies, Ya'akov offers Esau the land of Canaan or all the belongings of Isaac and the animals. At the time, the Canaanites were still in the land of Canaan and Esau took the belongings of Isaac. The decision of Ya'akov was most likely influenced by his encounter with God at Bethel where God promised Ya'akov the land of Canaan. Ya'akov, now named Israel, must have believed God's promise so he was satisfied with what God promised. May we too be happy with God's promises in our own lives and God's promise of eternal life to those who keep His commandments.

The Haftarah for Vayishlach is Obadiah 1:1-21. This prophecy is over Edom (Esau's descendants) for rejoicing over the misfortune of Judah. Edom stole from Judah and turned over those who were fleeing the Babylonians. God says He will bring on them what they did to Judah. We should be especially careful how we treat others. God can turn the tables on us too if we don't treat people right. In the Torah portion God turned the tables on Laban for trying to cheat Ya'akov.

### **In Closing**

God works out everything for Ya'akov. It is really amazing. It seems like Ya'akov is in trouble at times, but everything just keeps working out for him. Shaul tells us in Romans that God is able to work out everything; perhaps He was thinking of Ya'akov, but most certainly, God is in control and even if things don't seem to work out at times, our good God can restore us even as He has done so for believers in the past. God is good and His commandments are good. God has good intentions for us, so stay faithful and don't be tricked by people who don't understand the Bible properly. God is for us just like God was for Ya'akov. Shaul says in Romans 8:31 NKJV, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" If we do our part, God will do His part. If we keep His commandments and believe on the Messiah Yeshua, we will be with God for eternity.

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.sacred-texts.com/bib/jub/jub21.htm>

People sometimes think that God is far from us and our lives, but the Bible shows us otherwise. Because of that, believers in God make this world a better place for all and bring God's goodness with us. We can rely on God just as Ya'akov did.

**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.)**

God may hear our prayers, so it is important to pray. Genesis 32:9-12

Murder is wrong even if we think it is justified. There may have been a better response to the rape of Dinah than to attack the town. The penalty for rape in the Bible is death and the town made no appropriate response to the rape of Dinah (see Deuteronomy 22:25-27) and was perhaps complicit because of that. Ya'akov believed the actions of the brothers were wrong. The book of Jasher complicates the matter with the town's plot to eventually kill Ya'akov and his family. I believe God must have told Ya'akov that what they did was wrong because of his response to the brothers. Genesis 34:30-31

God's promises are faithful. In turn, we must be faithful to God. Ya'akov returned to the land of Canaan based on God's promise and God changes his name to Israel and again promises him the land of Canaan. Genesis 35:9-14

**Last week we shared the introduction to our Divine Healing Prayer Class. There is a lot more online. Please take the time to learn and grow spiritually. Select "More," on our website heading and then the Devine Healing Prayer Class from the drop-down menu.**

**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.