



### **Names**

Kefa – Peter  
Moshe – Moses  
Shaul – Paul  
Ya'akov – James  
Yeshua – Jesus (in Hebrew it means "Salvation")  
Yehoshua – Joshua  
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)  
Yochanan – John

### **Terms**

Cohen, Cohanim – Priest, priests  
Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets  
Parashah – (portion) one of 54 parts of the Torah  
Shabbat – the 7th day of the week; we are to rest  
Sukkot – Feast of Tabernacles, Booths  
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement

Today we finish the book of Deuteronomy. The reason we focus on the different portions of the Torah throughout the year is because it was instituted by God's holy prophets. That is what Yeshua was doing when he went to His hometown and read from Isaiah. The first leader of the those who believed in Yeshua as Messiah was Ya'akov (James), and he says about the Gentiles learning and keeping the Torah in Acts 15:21 NKJV, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Yom Kippur is the day of forgiveness of sins that begins on the evening of September 25<sup>th</sup> according to the reappearance of the moon. The Orthodox have a standardized calendar so they often do not celebrate the biblical feasts on the right day. Also, in biblical understanding, the days begin in the evening (See Genesis 1:5 NKJV, "Evening and the morning were the first day."). We are to fast on Yom Kippur from sunset on September 25<sup>th</sup> until sunset on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Sukkot this year begins on the evening of September 30<sup>th</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> Day is just a day of rest, so our congregation does not do anything. Perhaps it is a picture of our eternal joy and that is what we should have in mind on this day and not going to congregation. The 8<sup>th</sup> Day begins on the evening of October 7<sup>th</sup>.

Start this season right. Seek those things which are above, do not focus on the worldly. Sometimes people think that worldly things are what is most meaningful. Guarding or keeping our relationship with God is what is most important. In Matthew, Yeshua quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and says that this is the greatest commandment. Matthew 22:37-38 NKJV says, "Jesus said to him, '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." Yeshua identifies this as the most important commandment and even calls it great. How do we love God? 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." So, we love God by keeping His commandments.

How do you see yourself? Do you see yourself in terms of being big or small, valuable or worthless, strong or weak. Stop evaluating yourself and think of your life in terms of spiritual

success. The strongest or biggest, or the most successful person can be lacking in true spirituality. Start working on your abilities not only to care for yourself, but to succeed spiritually. God's word says in Psalms 26:5 NKJV, "I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked." Not all congregations are godly congregations and God is displeased with them. They follow made up man-made doctrine and theology instead of God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "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." Some people even go to congregation without any true interest in the things of God.

Unbelievers hold onto to false ideas just as much as those trapped in false religious practice. Those who do not follow God's commandments, whoever they may be, often form groups and stick together. They love it when someone falls in line with their viewpoints even if they are evil ideas. It seems to be the strangest thing. God's people love it when people do what is right. Evil people like when people follow evil. Do not get caught in the trap of evil. Proverbs 10:29 NKJV says, "The way of the LORD is strength for the upright, but destruction will come to the workers of iniquity. Psalms 37:38 NKJV says, "The future of the wicked shall be cut off." Their evil often results in their own demise. They will not be in the future kingdom of God. Our time on earth in this present era is a time of testing. Will we follow what is "right and good" according to God's ways, or do things our own way and therefore reject God?

God wants us to have joy and peace. Isaiah 26:3 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Do you trust in God's words in the Bible? Do you trust in God's commandments in the Old and New Testaments or make excuses not to keep them? Perfect peace sounds amazing. People often want contentment in life, but they are seeking it the wrong way.

The world brainwashes people into the darkness of false doctrines and into believing in humanistic doctrines or social doctrines where they get forever lost. Those who have joined false religious systems are often also lost for eternity and destined for the "lake of fire." Yeshua said of the Roman imposed leaders of Israel of His time in John 10:10 NKJV, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." Some people teach that it is okay to steal, kill, and destroy for their god. The Bible says they will end up in the "lake of fire" (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Revelation 21:8).

The Bible is a light that brings people out of darkness. Yeshua said to Shaul in Acts 26:18 NKJV that Shaul was, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." Most people are under the power of the "god of this world" and are slaves to sin. 2 Corinthians 4:4 NKJV says, "Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe." They cannot see things as they are. They need the light of God's commandments to lead them.

Therefore, Shaul is trying to help people to do the works of God's commandments. Shaul says in Acts 26:20 NKJV that he taught people to, "Repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. What are people to repent from? They are to turn toward doing things God's way and not do things their own way. They are to do the works of the law of God. James 2:17 NKJV says, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." So, faith without works is dead. Shaul taught the people to keep the works of God and Ya'akov said the same.

People are taught things that oppose the truths that God gave us so that they cannot accept truth. Have you ever tried to explain God's concepts to someone who has been brainwashed by false doctrine? We are supposed to be doing things God's good ways and not our own ways. In our last teaching we shared Deuteronomy 29:19-20 NKJV where it says, "He blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart'—as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.' The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man."

We are trying to save people from eternal destruction. People are misinterpreting Shaul to their own destruction. 2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV says about Shaul, "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 at the time.

People even in their time were misinterpreting the scriptures and it is still happening today. We are to listen to the words of the Messiah Yeshua, but believe it or not, religious leaders will make excuses not to follow Him. The book of Acts is in the New Testament portion. Acts 3:22-23 NKJV says, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed." Yeshua is that prophet and He said in Matthew 7:23 NKJV, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" Yeshua will reject those who do not keep the Law.

God is the giver of life, and we can have true satisfaction in life no matter who we are, whether rich or poor, or male or female. Acts 10:34-35 NKJV says, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him." Doing what is righteous or right is to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good."

Those who say that they are okay with God without keeping God's commandments, or saved only by faith or by grace have to pick and choose scriptures while ignoring others, and they often reinterpret the scriptures to mean something they do not in order to support their false doctrine or theology. Shaul has some harsh words for those who do things their own way instead of God's way. Perhaps they do not understand God's good intentions for mankind through His commandments. Just think, we all kept just 2 of the 10 commandments, the command not to murder and the command not to covet what others have, we would have no more war or theft. People who sin are bringing pain and destruction into the world.

Therefore, Shaul says in Romans 2:8-9 NKJV, that those who do not keep God's commandments will be judged by God at the end of time and experience, "Tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil." Evil is not following the commandments of our good God who knows what is best for mankind. Let's read the context of those scriptures from Romans.

Romans 2:5-9 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": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil."

So do not keep sinning but be determined to change and do what is right.

Everyone is different, but we all can be part of what God is doing. First of all, we need to be strong believers. Ephesians 6:10-13 NKJV says, "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." We need to be a people who say, "I am not going to think about sin," or "I am never going to commit that sin," or "I am fully committed to keeping God's commandments." Tell the devil that he is not going to speak into your life.

2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV says, "As the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted." The devil said to Eve 'did God say?' Then the devil answered the question for her. The devil said that if she disobeyed God 'her eyes would be opened.' The devil still does that today. The devil says, "Do we have to keep God's Old Testament commandments?" The devil then answers the question like he did with Eve. The devil lies and says they were for the Jews. People do not realize they are falling for the craftiness of the devil. They are God's commandments.

Noah kept God's commandments. Genesis 6:9 NKJV says, Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God." Abraham was righteous because he kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." The laws of God were passed down verbally. How else would they know them? God wanted His commandments written down, so He gave them again at Mount Sinai. The standard for people of faith has always been keeping God's commandments.

Shaul tells us that we are to be a holy people. Romans 12:1-2 NKJV says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Then as holy believers we serve and help one another.

Romans 12:3-13 NKJV:

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts

differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

Set your aim not on how you look, but in how you will live a successful spiritual life. For some people success is all about how you look and what you have. Some are not interested in spiritual things or maybe not very much. Some have wrong beliefs or believe in false doctrine. Notice that Shaul says to "cling to what is good." He is referring to Deuteronomy 30:20 NKJV where it says, "Love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him." When we keep God's good commandments, we demonstrate to God that we value Him, that we love Him.

Yeshua tells us that if we have tremendous wealth, what does it matter if we die. Mark 8:36-38 NKJV, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" The same is true for our eternal life. What does it profit someone to have wealth, success, fame, power etcetera if they lose their eternal life? People will try to do anything they can to try to extend their lives, so why not seek God's ways and receive eternal life.

Yeshua talks about those who are successful and those who fail in the Parable of the Sower. Matthew 13:18-23 NKJV

Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Those who are successful are those who understand and keep God's word and His commandments. What kind of person are you?

We are in a time of the year where we get to observe some of God's special feasts. Shabbat is typically the weekly day of rest from Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset. The days of rest also includes those days of rest that are associated with God's special feasts. Perhaps think of your weekly day of rest as a day at the beach sitting with your arms resting on a lounge chair. We sometimes go on vacation to step out of our cycle of work. Keeping Shabbat is intended to bless our lives whether that is God's weekly feasts or God's special feasts. We will be keeping

Shabbat in eternity and not on Sunday. Shabbat is our Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset. Sunday is the day of the pagan sun god Mithras.

We are to consider Shabbat a delight.

Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV says,

If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Blessings come from keeping Shabbat.

Isaiah 56:1-2 NKJV says,

Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath.

Talking about the future kingdom. We will keep Shabbat for all eternity.

Isaiah 66:22-23 NKJV says,

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me" says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. and it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

Aren't these scriptures wonderful. It was not Christianity that changed the day of Shabbat. It was Constantine who made Sunday a day of rest to the pagan god Mithras, the sun god. Also, it was not Christianity that stopped keeping God's feasts. It was through edicts made by the pagan Roman religion in the 300s. The Bible says in Jeremiah 16:19 NKJV, "O LORD, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies.'"

What is in the spotlight of our lives? We are often drawn to new and attractive gadgets and also ideas, but what are the best things and the best ideas for life? The Bible says God's commandments are "right and good;" see Deuteronomy 6:18 NKJV. So, keeping God's commandments are the best way to live. Remember, Noah received grace because he did what was right and good. It says that Noah taught God's commandments in the Jewish writings. Genesis 6:8-9 NKJV says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

God has given grace to believers in every generation. God's commandments are an act of grace, favor. Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says, "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.'" God's commandments are an act of His love and grace. Remember, Yeshua said if you reject His good commandments, He will reject you. That is what the Bible says. Do not reject God's grace in these Messianic times.

Hebrews 10:26-31 NKJV says,

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no

longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

So what if I repeat myself. I went to a seminar once and they did a survey of parents and children. The parents said they warned their children. The children said that their parents never warned them. We need to hear the truth over and over again.

Our lives can be busy and that can interrupt our spiritual train of thought, but do not always stay in that place; bring your thoughts back into relationship with God. We need to apply ourselves well to life, but there is more than that to a blessed (happy) life. We also need to make sure to seek God every day and throughout our day. Psalms 63:1 NKJV, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." 1 Chronicles 16:10-11 NKJV says, "Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face evermore!"

I will sometimes look out over a lake or over a beautiful expanse of land and just let my mind be at peace. There is something special about enjoying God's creation. Never forget that we are God's people. As we are faithful and active believers, we are special to God. Proverbs 15:3 NKJV says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." Hebrews 4:13 NKJV says, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Jeremiah 16:17-18 NKJV says, "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin." The writer of Hebrews tells us that living deliberately in sin will not go unpunished (Hebrews 10:29-31).<sup>1</sup> Shaul in the New Testament portion tells us that those who live in sin will not be in God's eternal kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).<sup>2</sup> Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "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." I share this because people need to know this. I would not want anyone to go to the lake of fire.

Let us thank God for He is good, and He has our best interests at heart. He wants us to do what is "right and good" for our own benefit, see Deuteronomy 6:18.

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<sup>1</sup> "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV.

<sup>2</sup> "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV.

Psalms 139 NKJV says,

O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You. For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; when I awake, I am still with You. Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God! Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men. For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your name in vain. Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them my enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

### **Torah Study**

This week we are observing a double portion and are finishing the book of Deuteronomy. Instead of having a teaching on The 8<sup>th</sup> Day, we are finishing the Torah today. The 8th Day was meant to be a picture of our final and future eternal rest and life with our God and King. So, we will just be resting on The 8<sup>th</sup> Day (Some call it the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Sukkot).

The portion Ha'azinu is a prophetic song about the future of Israel that God wanted Moshe to write for them. The gist of the song begins by praising God and then a brief history of man. God was our Father from the inception of His created work on earth. He chose Israel, protected them in the desert, and prospered them in the new land, but they turned away to idols and would arouse God's anger so that He would turn away His face from them. In the end He would avenge their enemies and atone His people. Moshe tells Israel that they were to teach their children the Ha'azinu song so they would understand the urgency of its message.

We should also understand the urgency of doing what is right. First of all, God gave us His commandments to bless us and help us. They are a demonstration of God's favor (grace) towards mankind, and they are not a burden.



Deuteronomy 4:5 NKJV says,  
"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments;"

Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says,  
"Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding;"

Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says,  
"The peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;'"

God's commands are not too hard to keep, Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you;". Yeshua refers to this scripture and says in Matthew 11:30 NKJV, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Yoke in Jewish thought refers to the Torah. Yeshua as God gave us the Torah and it is not a burden. It is the extra commandments by man that are a burden. In Yeshua's time there were thousands of extra man-made laws. Those extra man-made laws were a burden.

Light refers to understanding in the Bible; God gave us "wisdom" and "understanding," namely light, see Deuteronomy 4:6. God's ways turn us from darkness to light. His ways release us from evil powers that are out to make us slaves to sin. In Acts 26:18 NKJV the risen Yeshua said He came, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Shaul said in 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NKJV, "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."

The devil works undercover so we often do not see the evil spiritual powers that are at work against us. People sometimes experience and believe in these lying powers instead of believing in God. For example, they think it is the power of the mind or ghosts. Someone once told me that they believed in ghosts, and he thought that ghosts existed. I asked him if he believed in God and he said no. I then asked him, if he experienced these strange supernatural events and believed in them, why didn't he believe in God?

The devil is against the purposes of God, but we have victory over the devil through the Messiah Yeshua. Yeshua is over all, Ephesians 1:22 NKJV says God, "Put all things under His feet." Also, through His name we have authority over demonic powers. Philippians 2:10 CJB, "That in honor of the name given Yeshua, every knee will bow." We are also to resist the temptations of the devil. James 4:7-8 NKJV says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." God is real and He knows us and wants us to know Him and His goodness and His deliverance.

The Haftarah portion is 2 Samuel 22:1-52. It is about God's power, and deliverance. King David's life was in danger, and he refused to go on the offensive, but instead tried to work things out. David had to go through an extremely tough time, but God delivered him. How many of us have the chutzpah to stay true to what we believe like David did?

I would like to talk about ritual at this time. Some people say we have to do certain rituals. Then others say that we cannot do them. Saying we must do or cannot do something is making up commandments. We are not to make up misapplied commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2). There are properly applied applications of the Torah; for example, the New Testament has hundreds of commandments that are properly applied from the Old Testament.

What pleases God? Is wearing a hat or not wearing a hat a big deal? Is something that has some biblical relevance okay to do? Probably. Do we have to light candles for Shabbat? No, but we can acknowledge the beginning of Shabbat on Friday night by some means. Some people are saying we cannot do anything that is Jewish because some Jews keep rituals as commandments. If it is not a pagan ritual; if done in the proper context; and we have the right attitude, it is not wrong. Most rituals are not commandments of God. We should never say something is or is not a commandment of God when it is not. Also, we can get accustomed to a certain ritual and begin thinking it is a commandment of God when it is not.

Here is an example where we can use some ritual. Moshe and the prophets received instructions from God to institute readings from the Torah. The readings and Torah studies were commanded by God. Acts 15:21 NKJV says, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Ritual involved with the Torah readings can vary. Even in life, there is some ritual. There are people who say we cannot do anything Jewish; not even read the Torah. Wasn't Yeshua a Jew? Isn't Yeshua God and God gave us the commandments in the Old Testament and the Torah? I have often thought these people who say we cannot do anything Jewish are either misled or anti-Semitic.

Ritual is something we do every day. We also follow rituals that others have advised us to follow. Ritual can be a good thing because it can help us get through life. Some rituals are wrong though. Again, telling people that a non-essential ritual is a commandment of God is wrong; especially ritual that micromanages life and is nonsense. What does not putting up an umbrella on Shabbat because you think you are putting up a structure have to do with anything sensible? Yeshua quoted Isaiah and said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men;" Matthew 15:9 NKJV. 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." Those who were following man-made commandments were just following men and not God.

Another example is, we now know that Constantine changed the day of worship to the day of the sun god. Worship on Sunday is a commandment of men. It was not because Yeshua rose on Sunday. And I quote, "Constantine decreed (March 7, 321) *dies Solis*—day of the Sun, 'Sunday'—as the Roman day of rest." [Constantine said,] "'On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.'"<sup>3</sup> The real day of rest is Shabbat, Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset. We inherited the wrong day from the pagan church of the Roman Empire.

This is a special season of the year. Will we observe God's feasts or will we diminish their value

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<sup>3</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol\\_Invictus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_Invictus)

somehow. Guard and keep (shamar) God's feasts and seek God and do what He asks us. He is a good and loving God who has given us His wisdom and understanding through His commandments. He is the eternal God, and we are not God. Will we stay faithful to the God of the heavens and the earth? Never give up, stay faithful to the one true God.

**We have finished the book of Deuteronomy and we say:**

Hazak, hazak, ve-nithazek,  
 Hazak, hazak, ve-nithazek,  
 Hazak, hazak, ve-nithazek.

Be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened,  
 Be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened,  
 Be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened.

**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."<sup>4</sup> That's true for life and it 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 in 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV, "Desire spiritual gifts."

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.

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<sup>4</sup>From the movie, "Galaxy Quest."

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. John 14:15 NKJV says, "Keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper." 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 1:35 NKJV. Mark 6:46 NKJV says about Yeshua, "And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray."

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). Then whenever we encounter a problem, 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 Dictionary 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 will soon observe Yom Kippur, the day of confession of sins. The Jews do a general confession of sins, sort of like what Daniel was doing in the Old Testament portion. Yochanan said in 1 John 1:9-10 NKJV, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." We need to confess our sins and seek forgiveness. We can do

this anytime, but Yom Kippur is the day God ordained for us to do that. We are to afflict ourselves in some manner like fasting and also, we are not to work on Yom Kippur.

You can find our teachings and prayers for Yom Kippur and the other feasts on our website under: <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/observing-the-feasts>.

The next feast after Yom Kippur is called Sukkot. It is a celebration feast, and we are to wave branches before God and not work on the first day of Sukkot. God's feasts help us to connect with God on a regular basis. This present world will perish, and 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 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 in Revelation 21:8 NKJV, "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." 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 and doing what is right should 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.