



**#24 VaYikra – Leviticus 1:1 to 6:7 (5:26 in the JPS)  
By Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Kefa – Peter  
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ  
     in the Greek means to be smudged  
 Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert  
 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  
 Vayikra – the 24th Torah portion

Today we begin a new book of the Bible. The portion VaYikra means "and He called." It also is the name of the 3<sup>rd</sup> book of the Torah which is also known as Leviticus. VaYikra begins with God calling to Moshe to the Tent of Meeting to speak with him about various offerings the Israelites were to make.

I would like to talk about some of the issues that Messianic believers face when they begin to learn about the roots of our faith. It takes a little bit of effort to be a Messianic believer, but it is not difficult. It is worth the effort to develop a deeper understanding of the roots of our faith in Messiah. Because we frequently use the real names of those who are in the Bible, some get a little discouraged, it is not difficult to get used to understanding who we are talking about, and it can be interesting and informative at times. Take for instance Jesus' real name, Yeshua.

Yeshua means salvation in English. Matthew 1:21 from the Hebrew reads about Jesus, 'You are to name Him Yeshua, for He will yoshia, his people from their sins. Or, 'you are to name Him Salvation for He will save His people from their sins.' There is an obvious word play in this verse. The Hebrew word play is:

Name Him Yeshua (salvation) for He will →  
 Yoshia (will save)

Yeshua and yoshia sound alike. Word plays are common in the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes these plays on words are called a word pun. Let's look at a Hebrew word play for the name of Adam to show that there are intentional word plays in the Hebrew manuscripts. This is how Hebrew word puns work and how the associations are made. Adam came from the adamah. Adamah means ground. Genesis 2:7 CJB says, "Then ADONAI, God, formed a person [Hebrew: adam] from the dust of the ground [Hebrew: adamah]." We see that, Adam which is translated as person in this verse came from → the adamah (the ground).

Here are some of the English names that are used in our English Bibles along with their real names:

John's real name was Yochanan.

Paul's real name was Shaul.

Jame's real name was Ya'akov.

Luke's real name was Lukah.

Moses' real name was Moshe.

Peter's real name was Kefa.

God's real name is Yě-hō-váh

The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. Pointing is the term used for showing the Hebrew vowels. I have seen God's name pointed as Yě-hō-váh in the Aleppo Codex manuscript. The ancient rabbis say that is God's name. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה).

We use their real names because that helps us understand the roots of our faith. The writers of the Bible were Jewish. I once heard someone say that Yeshua was English. I am not kidding. I think some think that they changed names when they became believers in the Messiah Yeshua. Why would they do that? They were all Jewish believers in the Messiah. Some may have used cultural names in foreign countries because foreign words would not be common a name in a foreign culture and some Hebrew names can be difficult for a foreigner to say.

Shaul identifies himself as being Jewish after he became a believer in Yeshua. Philippians 3:5 NKJV says about Paul (Shaul) "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee." Shaul was a part of the sect of the Pharisees, but also had become part of a Jewish sect called the Nazarene Sect who believed Yeshua was the Messiah. There is a sect of Judaism called Chabad in our present time that believes Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson is the Messiah. It is still part of present-day Judaism. There were also different sects of Judaism at the time of Yeshua and Shaul. Besides the Nazarene sect of Judaism in Shaul's times there were Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots.

Messianic believers have a lot in common with modern day Karaite Judaism because we do not believe people have the right to change God's commandments. The Bible says that it is wrong. 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." Isaiah says that to do so is to follow man and not God in Isaiah 29:13.

We have to apply God's commandments in appropriate ways and that leads to additional proper applications of a commandment. For example, Deuteronomy 22:8 NKJV says, "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it." Therefore, we are to have safety in mind when we do things. Inappropriate commands are typically nonsense or micromanagement of life. Safety is an appropriate application from the commandment to put a wall around their rooftops to prevent someone from falling off.

It should be noted that the early believers such as Abraham and Noah were not Jewish and they kept God's commandments. God ordered the Israelites to write down God's commandments at Mount Sinai. Before that, believers passed down God's commandments verbally. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." To walk with God is an idiom, an expression for keeping God's Old Testament commandments. Noah walked with God and kept God's commandments. Genesis 6:9 NKJV says, "Noah walked with God." Enoch walked with God and kept God's Old Testament commandments. Genesis 5:22 NKJV says, "Enoch walked with God." There are a number of verses that tell us that to walk with God is to keep God's Old Testament commandments. Deuteronomy 5:33 says, "**You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you.**" Here is another example. Deuteronomy 8:6 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall **keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways.**"

The Bible defines what it means to walk with God therefore when that term is used it means to keep God's Old Testament commandments. Shaul says in Ephesians 4:1 NKJV, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." He does not have to say keep God's Old Testament commandments because the common idiom, walk, refers to keeping God's Old Testament commandments. He says we are to keep God's Old Testament commandments in other verses in the Bible. Romans 3:31 NKJV says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." These expressions like to walk with God are also important to learn and understand. All the writers of the Bible including Yeshua taught us that we are to keep God's Old Testament commandments.

When Shaul became a believer, he was still considered to be a Jewish Pharisee by his standing and his education under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. Acts 23:6 NKJV says, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!" Those giving him trouble could have said he was not a Pharisee, but they didn't. Instead, they argued about the resurrection.

People will say that Shaul (Paul) was not Jewish but Christian. Shaul defends himself before the governor, Felix. Instead of saying he was now a Christian, he affirmed that he accepted the Old Testament law and believed in it and was now a member of the Jewish sect called Nazarene Judaism. Shaul says in Acts 24:14 NKJV, "I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." So, people who say that Shaul did not keep the law or teach the law are mistaken.

If you have never heard the real names of some of the people of era before now, you should already be used to understanding that Jesus' real name was Yeshua and that Paul's real name was Shaul. Do not let a few little details discourage you. If you have learned the philosophy of some other religion, it may take you some time to replace the false concepts you have learned with the truth.

Just like plants need time to grow, we need time to understand the Bible in its original context. Namely, how the people of that time would have understood what was written in the Bible. The Bible is an ancient book. We need to understand the Bible the way it was originally intended to

be understood. That is the correct way it needs to be understood. For example, in American baseball, when the runner goes home, they score a point. They are not leaving the game and going home. All cultures have certain expressions and ways of thinking. Once you begin learning some of the expressions used in the Bible, the way that era thought, and other important details, we can have a better understanding of the Bible. Also, I should point out that because a lot of people do not understand the Bible correctly, they are in danger of not following God the way they should. That is unfortunate and they need our help. If a person does not want your help find someone who does. Proverbs 9:8 NKJV says, "Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you."

The expression to love God and your neighbor is often misunderstood. Those were only two of the commandments in the Old Testament portion of the Bible. We give God the respect He deserves as the creator by listening to and keeping how He instructs us to live. 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, how do we love God? We love God by keeping His commandments. Also, the best way to love others is by keeping God's commandments. God knows what is best for us so to keep His commandments is the best way to love others properly as well. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." There were no numbered verses, chapters, or paragraph headings in the originals so, " You shall keep my statutes" should be associated with loving others. That is the way my Jewish Bible shows it in the JPS version.

Most of us want a life of satisfaction and peace. We are each responsible for growing spiritually and doing what is right. God gave us His commandments to help mankind, and His commandments are "right and good." The words "right" and "good" are often used as idioms, expressions, which represent God's Old Testament 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** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." So, if the Bible says to be good, it does not mean to do what we think is good, but to keep God's Old Testament commandments.

The Bible says that God's commandments can help us to have a satisfied life. Stay in God's light and truth. Most people are striving for only worldly goals in life. It is important to be able to take good care of ourselves and our family, and obtaining wealth is not wrong, but we also need to apply ourselves well to our spiritual life. We actually become one with our spiritual life, they are not separate. The Bible says over and over that God's Old Testament commandments are "right" and help us do well in life. Psalms 19:8 NKJV says, "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

Let's read that whole section about God's Old Testament commandments.

Psalms 19:7-11 NKJV says,

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and

righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Aren't these beautiful scriptures about God's good commandments?

That is why God's good Old Testament commandments give us a more satisfying and peace filled life. What did we learn about God's commandments in the scriptures we just read?

God's commandments give us wisdom for life.

They are the right way to live.

God's commandments enlighten us and give us understanding.

They were intended for all generations of mankind.

They warn us and inform us.

God's Old Testament commandments are worth more than great wealth.

They can help us to have a rewarding lifestyle.

### The Atheist religion versus God's truths for life.

Any set of ideals can be called a religion. I have heard the Atheist religions referred to as their doctrine by scholars or other terms that suggest it is not just an innocent set of beliefs. These next concepts are important to understand and remember. Atheists often believe and use a man made system of control and domination for a satisfying life as a crutch to control the people. God's commandments were not given by God to control the population as is the atheists man made religions. God's commandments are not intended to appease, pacify, or silence us, but to help us in life. We have words given to us **by the creator God** who knows what is best for us and to help us in life. They are truths for life and not just crutches that are used to get us by in life. Psalms 86:11NKJV says, "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth."

The atheist communist religions say that religions commit murder in the name of their religion. That is what they do to keep the people in line. The Bible says that murder is wrong, so those who commit murder in the name of their religion are following a false religion. The Atheist religion, which includes the Communist religion, murdered over 100 million of their own people just in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That does not include the people who died in the wars they start.

God's Old Testament commandments are good and are truths for every generation of mankind. They demonstrate the goodness and caring nature of the true God. Psalms 100:5 NKJV says, "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." If they did not apply to all of mankind and to every generation of mankind, they would not be truths for life, but they apply forever. Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth." And Psalms 119:151 NKJV says, "You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth." Also, Psalms 119:160 NKJV says, "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."

We can have great peace in life through God Old Testament Law. Psalms 119:165 NKJV says, "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble." When we trust in God's good Old Testament commandments we not only can have great peace, but also perfect peace. Isaiah 26:3 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."

God works in us through His commandments and the Holy Spirit. Just like God's commandments are intended to help us in significant and powerful ways, the Holy Spirit can also help us in powerful ways in this temporary Messianic era.

God's commandments are powerful. God's commandments are a guide for our hearts. They help us powerfully in life. 2 Samuel 22:31-33 NKJV says, "The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him. For who is God, except the LORD? and who is a rock, except our God? God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect." God's commandments have the power to make us into the people we should be, so we should trust in them. Psalms 18:30 NKJV says, "As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him."

We need to learn God's truths, His commandments. Psalms 119:30 NKJV says, "I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me." God is right, and His law are truths forever. Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth." The New Testament portion maintains the concept that God's commandments are powerful. Hebrews 4:12-13 NKJV says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 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." We will give God an account of our life. We will either follow God's commandments that are right and true or do things our own way. We cannot fool God. God sees all the Bible says.

The Messiah Yeshua also gives believers in the Messiah the Holy Spirit as a powerful helper in life. Acts 1:8 NKJV says, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Shaul gives different lists of the gifts or evidences (sometimes called manifestations) of the Holy Spirit. Remember, Jewish lists were intended to be short lists and do not include everything that could be listed. Giving complete lists could be tedious therefore partial lists are a better way to communicate. That is why we have different lists of gifts of the Holy Spirit. These would not be all the ways that God can work. For example, in the Old Testament portion, some were given spiritual abilities for the work on the Mishkan in the desert. We see all the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the Old Testament portion except for Speaking in Tongues. Also, these gifts are supernatural gifts. We use them, but they are God given and energized by God.

Romans 12:6-8 NKJV says,

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.

Ephesians 4:11 NKJV says,

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

1 Corinthians 12:6-11 NKJV says,

It is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

As you can see, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit encompass so many things including miracles, healings, and prophecy which the Holy Spirit does through the believer by their own free will. God does not possess us but allows us to do these things with His help and power. We are to desire God's spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Desire spiritual gifts." It is a commandment of God. 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV says, "The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

God's words in the Bible are not manufactured. It should be evident that to us that God's commandments and the working of the Holy Spirit bring the supernatural to our lives. When I first spoke in tongues, I remember being amazed as I looked at myself in a mirror while speaking in the inspired tongue that God gave me. God's gifts to us are a witness to us of God's love. Of particular note, Shaul said one of the things that Speaking in Tongues does is to give God thanks. 1 Corinthians 14:17 says, "For you indeed give thanks well. Don't you want to give God thanks? Hebrews 13:15 NKJV encourages us to give God thanks, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks."

As we follow God, we begin to realize that following God's commandments is the best way to engage with life. As we begin using God's gifts of the Holy Spirit, we experience even more of the supernatural in our life.

Since the words in the Bible are not made up by a person, they are not new concepts that someone came up with but were given to us by God. 2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." So, the Torah was written down by Moshe, but it was given to Him by God. We have many authors of the Old Testament portion scriptures, but the writers of the scriptures were given what to write by God. They wrote down what God told them to write. Years ago, I think God wanted me to understand this concept. I was about to fall asleep, and I began to get a series of visions that I understood.

The first vision was a vision of a writing implement. I thought that God wanted me to write down what He was telling me. Through the visions that God was giving me I thought God was telling me that He will reward those who keep His commandments. God was encouraging me to be faithful. Shaul tells us that prophecy is for encouragement. 1 Corinthians 14:3 NKJV says, "He who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men." So be faithful and true to keep God's commandments and to also desire God's good spiritual gifts. The prophetic that we get from God will not contradict His commandments or word. My encouragement to

keep God's commandments goes along with what it says in Daniel. Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV says, "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."

Stay true to God in the ups and downs of life.

Challenges can be opportunities to stand and be strong spiritually. In all we do, we are to keep God's commandments and not go after our own ideas about life. Jeremiah 17:9-10 NKJV says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings." As we can see, this life is not all there is, and we will have to give an account for what we do. So, be faithful to God.

When you read Deuteronomy, there are some sections that contain word after word of encouragement to keep God's commandments. Take for example, Deuteronomy 5:32-33 NKJV which says, "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you."

Look at the wording:

"Be careful."

"Do as the Lord your God has commanded you."

"That you may live."

"That it may be well with you."

It goes on like this in many places in Deuteronomy. Take for example what Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV says, "What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good." God gave us His good commandments to us for our good.

Look to God, make the effort to seek His blessings. We see the goodness of God through His commandments and also through the Messianic gift of the Holy Spirit. God did not give us the law to just make us keep a bunch of nonsense. When I talk about keeping God's commandments, I am not talking about the manmade laws that some follow that seem ridiculous. The Bible says that we are not to kindle a fire on Shabbat. Trying to start a fire without matches is a lot of work. I know because I have tried to start a fire without matches. Some say that turning on a light switch is kindling a fire. That is nonsense. I know the difference between a tiny, enclosed spark that is not intended to start a fire and a real fire. Do you?

God gave us truths for life. Numbers 23:19 NKJV says, "God is not a man, that He should lie." People are fallible, but God is perfect and has given us His perfect commandments for life. We need to make the effort to keep the truths of the Bible and connect with God and truth. Psalms 119:151 NKJV says, "You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth." God's commandments are forever because they are from our creator God. Psalms 119:160 NKJV says,

"The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever."

The Almighty Creator God intervened in our world to help us and give us blessings through His commandments and also blessing through the Holy Spirit. Connect with God, keep His good commandments, and desire His spiritual gifting through the Messiah Yeshua.

### **In conclusion.**

It takes a little effort to understand the Bible the way it was originally intended to be understood, but it is well worth the effort so we can come to a true knowledge of the scriptures in the Bible. Take the time to grow spiritually so that we can come to know the goodness of God so that we can have peace and satisfaction in life through the truths for life that the Bible teaches us. Do not be fooled by the false religions that teach murder. God works in us through His commandments and the Holy Spirit. Just like God's commandments are intended to help us. The Holy Spirit helps us in powerful ways. Keep God's commandments and desire the working of the Holy Spirit. God's words in the Bible are not manufactured. They are not concepts that were made up by someone but were given to holy people to write down for our benefit. Stay true to God in the ups and downs of life. Challenges can be opportunities to stand and be strong spiritually. Look to God, make the effort to seek His blessings that He has given us. Connect to the Almighty Creator God. God wants to bless us and help us in life.

### **The Torah Study for Today is Vayikra.**

VaYikra means "and He called." VaYikra begins with God calling to Moshe from the Tent of Meeting to speak with him about various offerings the Israelites were to make. "Tent of Meeting" is the literal name for the Mishkan in the desert, sometimes referred to as the Tabernacle. The word "meeting" from The Tent of Meeting is the Hebrew word *moed*.

#### God established His special times at creation.

The word *moed* is translated seasons in Genesis 1:14 (the Hebrew word there is *moedim*, it is the plural form of *moed*). Genesis 1:14 NKJV says, "Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years." God gave us the sun, moon, and stars to know when to meet with God. The weekly meeting with God would be on the Sabbath, Friday night at sunset to and Saturday at sunset. Biblical days go from evening to day. Genesis 1:5 NKJV says, "Evening and the morning were the first day." God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day and made it holy (see Genesis 2:2-3). Observing Shabbat recognizes God as the true God and creator. There are also other days of rest associated with God's feasts. Christianity got Sunday worship from pagan sun god worship.

This is under the title, Lord's Day on Wikipedia: "On 3 March 321 [AD], Constantine I decreed that Sunday (dies Solis) will be observed as the Roman day of rest [CJ3.12.2]: **'On the venerable day of the Sun** let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.'" The quote of Constantine clearly shows that Sunday worship was instituted **for the Sun god** and **to be on the day of the Sun god Mithras**. Christianity inherited this false observance from the pagan Roman Empire. Keep the real day of rest and not the day of the Sun god Mithras. Deuteronomy 12:31-32 NKJV says, "You shall not worship the

LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

This is a good article:

At: The Ten Commandments online, see, Did Constantine Change Sabbath.

*God made Shabbat holy in Genesis.*

Other common misunderstandings.

There is an extra section following our commandments section this week on some commonly misunderstood words in the Bible. I hope this will help you understand some other misconceptions that have been passed down to us from the pagan Roman Empire and taught in Christianity. Please take the time to understand these misconceptions. Why did the translators mistranslate Genesis 1:14? Some believe it was to conceal the truth. That is what modern theology tends to do. They make up a man made doctrine to continue keeping the pagan doctrine passed down to us. They have made up a philosophy and call it doctrine. They follow man made doctrine and not God. 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." This was written about 2,600 years ago. People have not learned to fear God.

The portion continues. The animal offerings were to be animals without defect; the person making the offering was to lay hands on the head of the animal and it would be accepted on behalf of the person for their unintentional sins; namely, for the unintentionally missing the mark of keeping God's commandments. The priest was to sprinkle the blood of the animal on them and then sacrifice it.

Forgiveness of sin.

In our present era, we need to make some tangible evidence of our sorrow for disobeying God if possible, and we must be sincere and repentant. For example, after I made a big unintentional mistake by telling someone something that was not true, I told them that what I said was not true and corrected my mistake. People can often let these things go. First, they lied and then by not saying anything when they realized that what they said was not true, they are lying again and not truly sorry they did what they did. Self abasement is violence against ourselves and is wrong. When we find out that we have been sinning in some area, we need to completely repent. Going through the process of repentance should be enough to make us work hard at learning and applying God's commandments so we do not sin.

We know that most the Israelites were literate because we even have ancient letters written by women. This was no doubt due to each person's responsibility to learn and keep God's commandments.

When the Temple still existed, we were required to make a sacrifice for our unintentional sin. We do not always understand God's commandments. I think it had to be painful to have to

sacrifice one of their animals because of sin. Perhaps our sin causes God pain because God knows we are doing something that is bad for us. God wants what is best for us. This is one of my favorite scriptures. Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever."

For intentional sins, God requires complete repentance and well as being sorry for our sin. Psalms 51:14-17 is an example of a prayer for intentional sin; it does not require a sacrifice but requires complete repentance. The reason God does not want a burnt offering for intentional sin is because God wants complete repentance.

Psalms 51:14-17 NKJV says,

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart – these, O God, You will not despise.

Unintentional sins are now forgiven by the sacrifice of our Messiah Yeshua, but of course, they also require being sorry for our sin and complete repentance, and like I said, some tangible response if possible. It is not always possible. We are to confess our sins to God. Confessing them to a person is not the same as confessing them to God.

The Hebrew word for offering is korban. A person was to lay hands on the head of the animal as an act called semichah. Then to complete the act of transference, they would say the viduy (וִידוּי), pronounced vee-doo-ee) which is a confession of sin. They would say that they deserved to die instead of this innocent animal. Yĕhōvâh would accept their act and korban (sacrifice) based on their faith and teshuvah. Teshuvah is a turning away from sin with a commitment to not do it again.

We should note that laying on of hands was also used to transfer blessings, healing, and anointing in the Old Testament. It is still Jewish practice in our era to lay hands on the head of their children and bless them. We see this Jewish practice of laying on of hands in Acts 4:29-30 NKJV, "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." We stretch out our hand to transfer healings, signs, and wonders from God. Remember it is not us doing the healing, but God doing the healing supernaturally.

If they offer birds, they should be a dove or young pigeon. For the grain offerings, choice flour was to be used; no leaven or honey was to be used for a burnt offering; they were to make sure to use salt for all the offerings. If anyone sinned both in ignorance or not, they could be forgiven. A person can also sin by not giving testimony when they should. A person could sin in the treatment of holy things, or by being deceitful, by stealing, or by lying.

In this portion we see that sin in ignorance was still a sin and a sacrifice had to be made for those sins. Also, sins not done in ignorance were forgiven too. Again, one must repent of the sin and ask God for forgiveness (see numbers 14:19 and Psalm 51:16-17). It has always been

understood that forgiveness involves repentance whether the sin was done in ignorance or not. Repentance means true sorrow and the determination not to repeat the mistake (the sin) again. Sometimes after they repented, they would be immersed, be baptized. The Hebrew word for immersion is *mikvah*. Immersion came after repentance.

Who has not sinned in ignorance and most people have sinned knowing they were doing something wrong; so, we all sin. With the coming of the Messiah, reparation to God for our unintentional sin is only possible through the Messiah. Leviticus 17:11 NKJV tells us that a sacrifice for sin is required: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." It is not enough to simply repent without coming before God for forgiveness. Yochanan said God hears our heartfelt confession (see 1 John 1:7-9).

Also, in this portion we are commanded not to eat fat or blood. Some commandments make sense and fat and blood carry disease and impurities. While meat has fat in it, this commandment must refer to the fatty tissue around the meat and not the fat in the meat. Some say that it is okay to eat the fat around some tissues, but I have been cutting it away since I was little and I think it is gross to eat fat. Therefore, I also try to eat lean hamburger meat (namely, hamburger that is low in fat).

The ingredients or lack of ingredients in the offerings in Leviticus could point to spiritual things. Sometimes what God has believers do or what rituals God has believers do, conveys important spiritual pictures for us.

Consider these spiritual pictures of the sacrificial system:

- \*Animals without blemish and using choice flour – could be a spiritual picture of purity of life; or giving of best.
- \*Adding salt (to be added to all offerings) – could also be construed as trusted fellowship.
- \*No honey (in the meal offerings) – could mean no gladness because the Messiah has not yet come.
- \*No leaven (in the meal offering) – could refer to the absence of sin as in a return to purity. Judaism understands that leaven is referring to sin. Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 NKJV, "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." This scripture also commands us to keep God's feast of Passover.
- \*Adding oil (in the meal offering) – could mean anointing, making holy or separate.
- \*Adding of frankincense (in meal offering) – could be a picture of spiritual goodness.

The thanks offerings are:

The Minchah (is the meal offering) and the Shelamim (is the peace offering); part of these offerings were to be eaten.

The sin Offerings are:

The Olah (it is an ascending offering) and it is a free will offering that some could choose to do after they have repented from their sin, Chatat (is a sin offering), the Asham (is a guilt offering); these offerings were to be burnt up completely.

The miracle of the fire that descended from heaven for the offering is recorded in The Talmud; in Yoma 1 it says, "Five things have been said of the fire on the altar: It had the form of a lion, it was clear as the sun, it was palpable, it consumed moist things as dry ones, and never emitted any smoke."

In our present Messianic age, Yeshua gave Himself for us and it is no longer necessary for an animal sacrifice for sin; Yeshua is the final sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 10: 14 NKJV says, "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." We are in the process of becoming holy (set apart from sin, sanctified) through the Holy Spirit and through our obedience to God's commandments. Notice the similarities to the fire on the altar and Yeshua. Yeshua was the light of the world from the tribe of Judah, and the tribe of Judah's symbol is a lion. God as Yeshua came as a person and not a spirit; He was palpable.

When we sin, we ask God for forgiveness. 1 John 1:7, 9 NKJV says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our confession of sin should be understood within a Jewish context. Remember, Yeshua Messiah was Jewish and so were all the early believers. Confession according to Yochanan in 1 John is an act of viduy (וידוי) where we confess that Yeshua has taken our place. We need to make an act of sorrow and repentance for our sin just as Israel did like I did when I unintentionally sinned. Yeshua was innocent and without sin according to Hebrews 4:15. By our faith and teshuvah (our turning away from sin) we are forgiven. We turn away from sin and towards God and keep His commandments.

Modern Judaism says that since the destruction of the Temple, sacrifice has been replaced by prayer, Torah study, and acts of charity (chesed). They cite Hosea 6:6 NKJV, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." Hosea actually means that God would rather that they stop sinning. Their false theology is just like some of the false theology of Christianity that contradicts the Bible. Leviticus 17:11 NKJV tells us that there must be a sacrifice for sin: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." Yeshua is the final sacrifice for sin.

In the same way, when we confess Yeshua as God (Romans 10:9), we are making a similar association. In Jewish context, our confession is a sort of viduy with the understanding that we know who Yeshua is and that He died for our sins. Romans 10:10 NKJV tells us, "For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." All the components for a Jewish confession are there which requires faith in God and in this case, a turning toward the Messiah Yeshua (teshuvah). We then establish our relationship with God because we do what is right and keep God's commandments.

Through the Messiah and the Holy Spirit, we are to escape (we are saved from) the ways of this world. Saved always means *to escape* as in Joel 2:32 and is the Hebrew word, *Malat*. The

Hebrew word *Malat* always means, escape. In Joel 2:32, the Hebrew word *malat* means to escape. In the NKJV Bible it is translated as saved. We should understand that the Greek word in the New Testament portion often translated saved has this meaning. (see h4422. מָלַט *mâlat*; "a primitive root; properly, to be smooth, i. e. (by implication) to escape." Reference is from Strong's' Enhanced Dictionary.) If you see *malat* translated as saved in Joel 2:32, it was done to deliberately mislead because this scripture was quoted in the New Testament portion and incorreccted translated as saved.

*Saved should be understood as escaping sin by keeping God's commandments. In our Messianic age, we also do that with the help of the Holy Spirit.*

Yeshua the Messiah came from heaven in the form of a man to be an example for us, to bring us back to God (teshuvah), and to die for our sins. In Philippians 2:7-8 NKJV it says that Yeshua (Jesus), "Made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." Kefa talks about the prophecy of King David concerning the Messiah: Acts 2:30-33 NKJV says, "He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses." King David prophesied in Psalms 16:9-10 NKJV, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

It was always determined by God to provide a blood sacrifice for us. Kefa also said about Yeshua in Acts 2:24 NKJV, "Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it." When Yeshua gave His life, it was not human sacrifice. Human sacrifice is wrong.

Also, those who give their lives to murder other people is wrong, and they are also committing the crime of murdering themselves. Suicide is murder. Sometimes they call this despicable behavior being a martyr, but it is not. Being martyred is the giving of one's life for their faith in God involuntarily.

The Haftarah for VaYikra is Isaiah 43:21 to 44:23. Isaiah talks about how God had taken care of Israel, but Israel had not been faithful to the sacrificial system and had been a sinful people. So, God has allowed destruction and scorn to come upon them. Someday though God will pour out the Holy Spirit on them. The redeemer God and Rock is the first and the last; there is no God, but Him. Also, it says that those that worship idols are deceived.

Here in Isaiah God refers to Himself as the first and last. In Revelation Chapter 1, we see God appearing as a man to Yochanan (John) and referring to Himself as the first and last; we find out that it is Yeshua who is speaking to Yochanan there in Revelation. He is our redeemer.

Isaiah 44:6-8 CJB says,

Thus says Adonai, Israel's King and Redeemer, Adonai Tzva'ot: "I am the first, and I am the last; besides me there is no God. Who is like me? Let him speak out! Let him show me clearly what has been happening since I set up the eternal people; let him foretell future signs and events. Don't be frightened, don't be afraid — Didn't I tell you this long ago? I foretold it, and you are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? There is no other Rock; I know of none.

Yeshua said in Revelation 22:12-13 NKJV, "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

If you do what is right and good, you will have a good reward (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18 and Daniel 12:2-3, a wise person is one who keeps God's commandments, see Deuteronomy 4:6).

**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 olah offering describes the burnt offering. Leviticus 1:3.

Leaven and honey are not to be part of an offering. Leviticus 2:11.

Offerings are to include salt. Leviticus 2:13.

The sacrifice of the peace offerings. Leviticus 3:3-5.

We are commanded not to eat fat or blood. Some commandments make sense and fat and blood carry disease and impurities. While meat has fat in it, this commandment must refer to the fatty tissue around the meat. Leviticus 3:17.

If the leaders of Israel sin unintentionally, they are to make an offering. In verse 15, the leaders make the offering. Leviticus 4:13-15.

When sin becomes known to someone, they are to make a sacrifice for it. Leviticus 4:27-29.

A person who witnesses a crime must make testimony for the crime that has been committed or be guilty of the crime before God. Leviticus 5:1

Those that make any unintentional sin will make a sacrifice according to their financial ability. Leviticus 5:7, 11.

The priest is to pinch the head of a bird brought for an offering by its neck, but not divide a bird. Leviticus 5:7-8.

They were not to put olive oil in the unintentional sin offering. Leviticus 5:11.

They were to add 1/5<sup>th</sup> value to things mistakenly taken from the offering. Leviticus 5:15-16.

For an unknown sin they will make an offering. Leviticus 5:17-18.

A person is to give an offering when guilty of something. Leviticus 5:21-25.

A person is to return something they have taken. Leviticus 5:23.

**This is an extra section on, Commonly Misunderstood Words – Holy, Set Apart (seperate), Apostle, and Called.**

**The Words Holy or Set Apart.**

We are to be God's set apart holy people. 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. So, we need to talk about this in more detail to address the various false teachings on holiness.

There are conditions for inheriting the future kingdom of God.

Shaul (Paul) says there are conditions for inheriting the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "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." These sins that Shaul talks about are in the Old Testament portion. There are more commandments than these that we need to follow. We should want to do everything that God commands us.

Understanding lists in the Bible.

The scripture we just shared in 1 Corinthians 6 is a short list of some of the major offensive sins. Short lists were used back at the time this was written to represent longer lists. Complete lists could be tedious to give all the time. So, short lists were a common way to represent God's commandments and other things. For example, God's commandments are sometimes summarized as love God and your neighbor. Matthew 22:37-40 NKJV says, "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. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." In other words, these two commandments summarize God's commandments, but they do not replace God's commandments. If we just say we are to love God and others, then we make up how we should live instead of following God's commandments. God knows all, knows what is best for us, and has our best interests at heart. So, all of His commandments are to help us live right.

### What is loving God and our neighbor?

When we keep God's commandments we respect and love God and also love others. First, Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says tells us how to love God: "You shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." We show God that we love Him by keeping His commandments. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says about loving others: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." There is no better way to love others than by keeping God's statutes because God knows what is best. Loving is not just a feeling we have but requires action. Ask anyone who has a good marriage. They understand the principle of treating those you love with kindness and respect.

### God must judge evil.

We are to learn and keep all of God's commandments. Why should we do that? Like we said, God wants what is best for us, so when we do not keep God's commandments, we bring pain and evil into the world. That is why God must punish those who sin. In several places in the Bible, it talks about the punishment in store for those who do not keep God's commandments. Hebrews 10:29 NKJV says, "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?" Yes, we have grace but not grace to sin as some believe.

### Accept the Messiah and the Holy Spirit.

There is another part to being a holy person in this Messianic age. We are to also believe in the Messiah Yeshua and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are supposed to listen to the Messiah. Acts 3:22-23 NKJV says, "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 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 from among the people." That prophet is the Messiah Yeshua who will some day return and be our God and King (see Jeremiah 23:5-6). To be destroyed from among the people must refer to losing your eternal life.

Yeshua went away temporarily and sent the Holy Spirit as another helper; the first helper was the law. We are to keep God's Old Testament commandments, and we are also to receive 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." Acts 2:38-39 NKJV talks about receiving the Holy Spirit: "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." You can receive God's Holy Spirit when you believe in Yeshua, even those who are "afar off."

We must keep God's commandments and receive the other helper, the Holy Spirit. We are to strive to do what is "right and good" and we do that by keeping God's commandments and also listening to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will not tell you to sin. God does not want us to sin. Doing good in biblical and Jewish thought 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** in the sight of the LORD." We are to both keep God's commandments and receive the Holy Spirit in this era. Some people say it is enough to receive the Holy Spirit, but that is incorrect.

#### Being separate and holy.

We need to also understand the idea of being separate holy people. We are to separate ourselves from doing evil by doing what is "right and good." Being righteous means that we do what is "right." When we do not keep God's commandments, we separate ourselves from God. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God." Holiness carries with it the idea that we separate ourselves from sin, so we bring good into the world and not evil. We do not want to bring evil into the world and separate ourselves from God. Leviticus 20:26 NKJV says, "And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine." We keep God's commandments and separate ourselves; we become distinct in thought, attitude, and behavior.

#### Saint is the word that is often translated holy.

Sometimes the Bible uses the word saints for God's holy people. It is translated that way at times both in the Old Testament portion and the New Testament portion. Saints in the Old Testament portion were led by God's commandments. In our era, the saints are those who are led in life by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit.

As believers, we are to live holy separate lives. If we live that way, we will not be separated from God. Shaul talks about us not being separated from God in Romans Chapter 8. We should understand that if we are living holy lives, we will not be separated from God. Some say that we are not separated from God no matter what we do. But as we just read, sin separates us from God. Shaul agrees with that concept in several places in the Bible. Shaul quotes this verse in Psalms 118:6 NKJV which says, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" It does not matter what man can do to us, if we do not separate ourselves from God through sin. But if we do not live holy lives, we have turned our back on God. Then we must repent, confess our sins to God, and turn towards God and keep His commandments if we want to be God's holy ones.

#### Repentance is turning back to God.

When we make full repentance and are committed to keeping God's commandments, we are then restored in relationship to God. God is a good God and wants what is best for us. Therefore, He wants us to fear Him, to have a deep respect for who He is and what He has done for us. We fear God by doing what He tells us to do, namely, keep His commandments. If we turn our life around, then God will forgive us. Psalms 103:10-12 NKJV says, "He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Be assured that a sincere confession with a deep desire to keep God's commandments will release you from the punishment due you for your wrongdoing. When someone does what is wrong in society, they are punished because of the problems and pain they have caused society. God is no different, He is a just God who helps those who do good but must punish evil.

The Holy Spirit is another helper for life (see John 14:15-17).

We have talked some about how in this Messianic era, we are also to receive the Holy Spirit to be holy. I should note that some people do not like the Holy Spirit because of some people who have misused the Holy Spirit or because of those who have the Holy Spirit but continue to live in sin. Those that misuse the Holy Spirit or are living in sin are not living as holy people and they are separated from God. We should do what is right no matter what others do. Remember, Isaiah 59:2 NKJV says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

Also, Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV in the context about the things of the Holy Spirit, "The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord." In the same context in 1 Corinthians 14:40 NKJV Shaul says, "Let all things be done decently and in order." We are not to misuse the Holy Spirit. He also writes in 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." We are not to misuse the Holy Spirit, and we are also to desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Those who are not using the Holy Spirit in an honoring fashion or not pursuing the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit are therefore sinning.

We are to actually act holy in order to be holy.

The Holy Spirit is our helper just like God's written commandments are our helper. Also, I think we established that we must act holy in order to be holy. Being holy is actually behaving like God's holy people. People may cite different reasons for believing we do not have to act like God's holy people, but they are delusional. We are to be holy as God is holy the Bible says, and a person is holy by keeping God's commandments. Again, 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." We are only God's holy people if we keep His commandments.

The Bible says we are to consecrate ourselves holy. The word for consecrate means to become holy. Leviticus 11:44 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy." We are to become holy and be holy, for God is holy.

Those who do not act holy will not be in God's future kingdom.

Without holiness, no one will see the Lord according to Hebrews 12:14. The Bible says that those who bring evil and pain into the world through living a life of sin will end up in the lake of fire for eternity (see Revelation 21:8). So, be a holy person and bring good into the world and not evil. The Bible says it is not hard to keep God's commandments! Deuteronomy 30:10-11 NIV says, "Obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." Do not make it harder than it needs to be. God wants you to succeed. 2 Peter 3:9 NKJV says, "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."

Be committed to holiness.

Begin your commitment today to be a holy person. Understanding **holiness** and being a separate **set apart** person is important for understanding your spiritual condition. We can be in

God's future amazing and good kingdom for doing what is "right and good." It sounds like a win-win opportunity. The streets will look like gold and that is only part of it, I am not kidding! Taking about the future kingdom in Revelation 21:21 NKJV says, "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." God is a good God both now and forever.

### **The Word Apostle.**

It is not true that there are only 12 apostles.

First, the word apostle means a sent one and is a common ministry. There were many sent ones in the Old Testament portion for example, Isaiah and Jeremiah were apostles. Most of the prophets in the Old Testament acted as sent ones at times. Sent ones, that is apostles, is listed as a common gift in Ephesians 4:11 in the New Testament portion of the Bible, and all the New Testament gifts of the Holy Spirit were present to some extent in the Old Testament except for speaking in tongues. For example, Noah received revelation from God, Abraham heard from God, and so did many others. We also see many ordinary people prophesying. For example, Elizabeth prophesied in Luke 1:41-45, Zacharius in Luke 1 67-79, and Anna in Luke 2:36-38.

We should understand that in the New Testament era, there are perhaps millions of sent ones over the last 2,000 years because apostles are listed among other common gifts such as teachers or pastors. Therefore, Shaul (Paul) intends us to understand that **an apostle, a sent one, is a common ministry.** Ephesians 4:11 NKJV says, "And He Himself gave **some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.**"

So, it is not true that there are only 12 apostles. Again, being an apostle is a common ministry according to the Bible. Shaul says in Romans 16:7 NKJV. "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles." Junia is a woman's name. Yeshua had 12 apostles that were closest to him but there were many more. One of the things Yeshua's 12 apostles did was to be trained witnesses of what Yeshua did and to spread the message of the Messiah. Those sent by God can have different functions. One person may be sent to serve in the inner city, someone else may be sent to another city or country, or someone may be sent to do some specific kind of service like service to the poor or to families and so forth. A person may only serve as a sent one for a short time such as Jonah's brief service to the people of Nineveh. They may be sent as apostles at different times in life or for different periods of time.

A problem has developed because of the false teaching about apostles.

A problem has developed because of the wrong understanding of the word apostle. Not only is it being used for pride, but it is being used by people, congregations, and denominations to control others. There are some denominations that say they their beliefs are legitimate based on their descendance from the 12 Apostles. The believers who are legitimate keep God's commandments, believe in the Messiah Yeshua, and receive the Holy Spirit that is promised to believers in the Messiah Yeshua. Ezekiel 11:19-20 NKJV says, "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." True sent ones tell people to keep God's commandments. For example, Shaul says that people who live in sin will not be in God's future

kingdom. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "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."

True believers keep God's law, the Torah, and receive the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua. The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, and its laws are doctrine for life. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." We also have inspired histories, messages from the prophets, messages of encouragement and correction, inspired songs, and inspired letters from which we can learn and grow.

Because of the wrong understanding of the word apostle, it is now improper to use the word apostle at this time because of the improper stigma that has been attached to this word. If God sends you to do something, use literal terms instead of the word "apostle." For example, God wanted me to serve in the Amazon Jungle for a short time. In that way you avoid the deceitful pride of some denominations or people. Remember, it is a common ministry.

Without the foundation of the Old Testament prophets, we would have no Messiah.

We should also note, that since there were apostles and prophets in the Old Testament portion, the community of early believers in the New Testament portion was based on the apostles and prophets of the Old Testament and not just the 12 Apostles. The Old Testament prophets were sent to call people back to God and they foretold of the coming of a future Messiah. Ephesians 2:20 NKJV says, "Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."

Without the apostles and prophets of the Old Testament portion, no one would have returned to God at crucial times in history. Also, we understand what the Messiah would be like because of the Old Testament apostles and prophets. The early believers in the Messiah would have understood this. There was no New Testament portion at the time. So, the Old Testament apostles and prophets kept the foundation intact so that the cornerstone, Yeshua the Messiah should come. In Acts, Kefa (Peter) talks about this very thing and says that the prophets foretold that a Messiah would come and what He would be like. Acts 3:22-24 NKJV says, "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 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 from among the people. Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days."

We need to understand the scriptures within their original understanding, how people back then would have understood them. Like I said, there was no New Testament at the time so the apostle and prophets of Ephesians 2:20 had to be the Old Testament apostles and prophets without whom, God's people would not have responded with repentance and without whom, we would not know who the Messiah is.

### **We Are Called.**

We are called to do something. I thought I was called to be a Christian. The Bible explains

being called in an active sense. Ephesians 4:1 NKJV says, "Walk worthy of the calling with which you were called." The Old Testament believers were supposed to follow God's commandments and walk in them and so are the New Testament believers. New Testament believers also believe on the Messiah Yeshua and receive the Holy Spirit and walk by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit. That is how we become part of the family; we do what our Father God wants us to do and behave like His children. That is what we are called to do, so live out what you have been called to do.

Some people are also called to do specific things. Shaul was called to be a messenger or sent one (an apostle), others are called to be teachers, etcetera. In addition to being led by God's commandments and the Holy Spirit, God may call us to do specific things during different stages of our life. For example, I was also called to be a person who serves others through prayer.

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

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God, which is pronounced, Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used 6,521 times in the Old Testament portion according to Strong's Dictionary. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name. So, why not use God's real name? According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. In that verse and everywhere we see a name for God in all capitals (in some of our Bibles) it is this exclusive name for God, Yě-hō-váh. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah which means to exist. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. He is our eternal God and creator. I want to honor God's name. Will you also honor God's name?

Some people call God Hashem which means "the name." They dishonor God's name by not using His name (see Deuteronomy 29:20). When we honor someone, we use their name in an appropriate way. Christians for the most part do not use the true name of God. Why not begin using His true name and honor Him? Do not be afraid to use God's real name with respect. I say this in order to encourage you to use God's real name because it points to God being our eternal creator.

The ancient rabbis say that is God's name. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. I have seen God's name pointed as Yě-hō-váh in the Aleppo Codex. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה).

Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people. So, let's put God's name on His people.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׂמְרֶכָּ  
 יְאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי, וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ  
 יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי, וַיִּשְׂאֵם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

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.