



**Names**

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

Yochanan – John  
 Yosef – Joseph

**Terms**

Haftarah – reading from the prophets  
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the  
 Torah  
 Vayechi – the 12<sup>th</sup> Torah portion

God does not give us antiquated or old-fashioned ways of doing things; also His commandments are not meant as a means to burden us. Isaiah 46:9-10 NKJV tells us that the God of Israel is the only one and true God who knows all things and that His purposes will stand: "For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'"

This does not sound like a God whose commandments are worthless. He is the one true God and those who teach a different god are false teachers. Yeshua our Messiah said, "Salvation is of the Jews;" John 4:22 NKJV. This is a simple enough statement to understand. Also, since God's purposes will stand, then those who don't accept His ways live worthless and meaningless lives spiritually. They may accomplish tasks, but lack an element of reality.

The true God will accomplish what He wills despite those who do not believe or oppose the truth. They can pray to their false god or rely on their own strength. We can rely on our abilities and on God who is able to keep us and help us. Psalm 55:22 NKJV says, "Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved." God wants to help us in life. Not only does God give us His commandments to sustain us, but He knows the outcomes and can change them for the better. We just saw that in the life of Joseph. God knows the beginning and the end it said in Isaiah 46:10.

Some church people and pagans have a low opinion of God. Some church people put in their 1 hour a week and think they are spiritual. Pagans or atheists are no better spiritually. I lump atheists into this category because their god is themselves. They are the idol; they believe in themselves. In our modern world, we sometimes see anything outside of our modern culture as time consuming and bland. Because people are self-absorbed in their selfish world, they fail to see what God can do in their lives. The psalmist says in Psalm 18:3 NKJV, "I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies." There

are a lot of people out there that think they are right. It is God who is truly right; they are not God even if they think they are.

It says in 1 Kings 2:3 NKJV that God's ways are right: "And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn." We may not prosper like all the selfish egotists; instead, we will trust in our God who knows all. In this Messianic age, God gives the Holy Spirit to believers in the Messiah Yeshua.

God wants to work powerfully for each one of us. He gives us peace and works powerfully in us through the Holy Spirit.

\*Yeshua said that those who receive the Holy Spirit through Him would receive power. Acts 1:8 NKJV, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

\*God's commandments help us to live and so does 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.

John 14:26 NKJV, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name."

\*The Holy Spirit is to be part of our joy filled life.

Ephesians 5:18-19 says, "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

2 Corinthians 13:14 NKJV, "The Holy Spirit be with you all." This implies something the Holy Spirit does for us.

\*The Holy Spirit helps teach us, brings godly thoughts to our minds, and gives us peace.

John 14:26-27 NKJV, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you."

Romans 14:17 NKJV, "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

\*The Holy Spirit teaches us good things.

Romans 14:17 NKJV, "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Be at peace and practice God's ways. God has a lot for us through His word and the Holy Spirit. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 NKJV, "Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way." God is a good God who knows all and we can trust in Him. Culture and even some churchianity has its own values and not necessarily God's values. Instead of trusting in the ways of mankind, trust in our good God who is able to give us good things through the Messiah. Don't forget to seek the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13 NKJV, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts."

## Torah Teaching

We now close out the book of Genesis also called Beresheet which means in the beginning. God has mercy on mankind as Adam and Eve repent. God again has mercy on mankind because of Noah who taught what was right and did what was right. That's what righteousness means; to do what is right. God protects Abraham and Ya'akov, men of faith. God saves the whole region of Egypt through Yosef, a believer in the true God. Archaeologists have found where the grain was stored during the famine of that time and also Yosef's tomb that held his bones until Israel was able to go back to Canaan. This portion finishes the history of Yosef and Ya'akov.

Vayechi means, "and he lived." This portion begins with Ya'akov dying at the age of 147 after living 17 Years in Egypt. He asks Yosef (Joseph) to swear to him that he will bury him in the cave of Machpelah in Hebron. That is the cave that Abraham bought and was thought to be where Adam and Eve were buried.

Jacob says that El Shaddai (God Almighty)<sup>1</sup> appeared to him at Luz (Bethel), blessed him, and God said that the land of Canaan will belong to Jacob's descendants forever. Jacob blesses Ephraim and Manasseh and he blesses the younger Ephraim first and tells Joseph that he is not making a mistake (even though his eyesight is bad). We should understand that Ya'akov was listening to God; Ya'akov relied on hearing from God, just as his fathers did. Also, he says that Israel should invoke a blessing that God would make His people like Ephraim and Manasseh (as in Genesis 48:20). It is thought that they were examples of getting along well. Perhaps Ya'akov chooses to bless Ephraim first to let us know that God chooses who He wills to choose. God has chosen Yeshua Hamashiach to be the Messiah. Or, God saw the heart of Ephraim and chose Him because of his godly heart.

Jacob prophetically says that God will bring them back to Canaan and then speaks to each of his sons and includes some words of prophecy to them. Ya'akov prophesies that the messiah would come from Judah and that Judah's rulership will continue until the Messiah comes. "The scepter will not pass from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [obedience] belongs; and it is he whom the peoples will obey." Genesis 49:10 NKJV. Yeshua Hamashiach was born before the Roman appointed King Herod and the false high priest were installed by Rome. Yeshua is our king and someday will reign as king in the future kingdom of God. Ya'akov's prophecy of the Messiah coming before the Israeli kingship being ended was fulfilled.

It is interesting to note that if we take the dalet out of the name of Y'hudah, it spells the exclusive name for God, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey. Dalet means door in Hebrew. Yeshua said in Revelation 3:20 NKJV, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." If we open our hearts to the Messiah, we can have a relationship with Him. How wonderful and amazing!

Also, Y'hudah means praise and that is from where we get the word Jew. Shaul says in Romans 2:29, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." Jew inwardly and praise

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<sup>1</sup>The ancient rabbis believed that El Shaddai meant mighty God.

from God is a Hebrew word pun. We are to be a praise (Y'hudah) to God inwardly and therefore a praise to God. Having a circumcised heart refers to Deuteronomy 10:16 NKJV, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." In other words, stop resisting God.

*We are to be a  
praise to God inwardly*

Ya'akov blesses each of his sons and the two sons of Yosef. The words he has for them are not all good words. We should understand that God knows our thoughts and sees all we do, and is not removed from mankind as some think.

Then Ya'akov dies, he is embalmed, and they mourn for him for forty days. The Egyptians mourn for him 70 days. Yosef asks Pharaoh if he can go bury his father at the cave of Machpelah and a great number of people go up with him and mourn for him for 7 days there in Canaan and then return to Egypt. Yosef's brothers are concerned that Yosef will retaliate for their mistreatment of Yosef, but Yosef tells them not to be afraid and that God used the situation and turned it around for good.

Joseph dies at 110 and he gets to see the third generation of Ephraim's children. He asks to be buried in Canaan when God takes them back to the land of Canaan sometime in the future. Joseph was a true believer, a holy one, a saint. In this we perhaps can see a picture of our future hope; it prefigures the picture of God returning all His people to Him some day in the future and raising His people from the dead. Ezekiel 37:4-6 NKJV says, "Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.'" This refers to Israel, but God will raise up all believers to live together in a future kingdom.

In this closing portion of Genesis, we see the death of two of our great spiritual leaders, Ya'akov and Yosef. What do the stories in the Bible tell us so far? Mankind fell from their relationship and fellowship with God. The sin of man without God becomes so severe that God relents creating man. For the sake of the faith of Noah, God saves the world through a believer. Noah listens to God and he builds an ark that saves mankind from annihilation. May we all be like Noah who saved the world. Those who keep God's commandments give this world hope.

*Those who keep  
God's commandments  
give this world hope*

Abraham becomes the father of believers in the true God and God tells Abraham that the world will be blessed through him. Isaac and Jacob carry on the line of believers and each encounter God and are led by God just like the believers before them. Even though the believing prophet Joseph suffered as a result of his brothers' jealousy, he ends up saving

them from a deadly famine. God prospers and protects His people of faith. The prophetic is important and Shaul tells us to love each other; to desire the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit; and be led by God through the prophetic. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy."

We see God saving mankind because of those who live in faith towards God; who follow God's commands; and who are led by Him. Let us also be people of faith who bring God's blessings to the world. Let us be a people who listen to God's voice and follow Him just as our patriarchs did. True believers make the world a better place. The world needs us. The people who say they don't need God are mistaken. Without God, there would be no life left on earth.

As believers in the true God, we have lots to celebrate. We can be thankful for the past saints of the Old Testament portion who brought us to this time. No wonder God's feasts are times of celebration. Mankind may celebrate their own works, their own accomplishments, their lives, and their special times, but without God, mankind would not exist. Celebrating God's feasts keeps us in touch with reality. We would have nothing without God so don't be deluded (tricked or brainwashed) into thinking otherwise; all things exist because of the creator God.

Let us be people of faith who bring God's blessings to the world. Let us be a people who listen to God's voice and follow Him just as our patriarchs did. We can make the world a better place.

The Haftarah for Vayechi is 1 Kings 2:1-12. We read about the deaths of some of the great leaders of Israel in the portions of scripture for Vayechi. King David is about to die and so he commissions Shlomo and tells him to do things God's way; according to the Torah. David asks for specific favors against Joab and Shimei, and for Shlomo to be kind to the sons of Barzillai. David then dies after reigning over Israel for forty years.

We see Ya'akov giving farewell words to his children. Both Ya'akov and Yosef die in the portion and Yosef asks for his bones to be taken back to Canaan when they return. Yosef firmly believes in what God is able to do and so should we. Remember to be faithful to God.

*Remember to believe in what  
God is able to do and will do.*

We will close our Torah study with an ancient encouraging Jewish saying. We don't have to reinvent things in pagan terms. Tradition is not a commandment of God, but some tradition can be useful and encouraging. They use this saying at the conclusion of each book of the Torah. Be strong in our God, Yĕhōvâh:

Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek! 3X

Be Strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened! 3X

### Stop Resisting God

(A teaching to accompany this portion.)

We shouldn't be making up our own religious practice; the creator God is big enough to tell us how we should best live. I believe most people want to do what is "right and good;" Deuteronomy 6:18 NKJV. Yeshua Hamashiach was against man-made doctrines; especially ones that took away from God's commandments. If we are not following God's instructions, are we really trusting in God? God's people need to stop resisting God.

There are things in life that are the trappings of worldly life. Examine what is behind what you do and what your motivations are.

Why do we do what we do and what are our motivations? Psalms 2 is about the rulers around Israel setting themselves up against God and Israel; it is also thought of as a prophetic Psalm because some day God will renew the world and rule the world in spite of what mankind thinks they will do (Psalm 2:8-9). Psalms 2:1-2 NKJV says, "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed."

It's still true today; people think they are greater than Yĕhōváh our God (the word LORD in verse 2 in all caps is Yĕhōváh). People make up their own religious practice instead of following God. God's prophets, probably Nehemiah, gave us Torah readings for every week. People aren't teaching it because they don't believe in God's word. They will say they believe in God's word, but actions speak volumes.

Let's talk a little about God's real name. Some say we can't use God's name. The Messiah Yeshua said in John 17:26, "I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The Messiah said to use God's name! Exodus 3:15 NKJV says, "The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations." "LORD" in all caps is God's real name used in the Bible as Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey and pronounced as Yĕhōváh. We've now found found God's name as Yĕhōváh in over 2,363 manuscripts. Once as Yĕhōvēh, never as Yahweh. God says to use His name so those who never use Yĕhōváh are dishonoring His name.

In Psalm 2, the nations around Israel thought they could impose themselves on Israel, but of course they couldn't. God was for them. The same is true today isn't it. People think that they can get away with whatever they want to and that is not further from the truth. Those who are persecuting believers in the true God will end up in the lake of fire for all eternity. They are among the liars who say they are God over the earth. 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."

I should point out at this time that some take the scriptures out of context and apply them as though they had nothing to do with Israel. How ridiculous. This false teaching is called replacement theology. Also there is teaching out there that says the Jews have their own salvation apart from Yeshua Hamashiach. That is also false teaching. Yeshua was Jewish and He is their Messiah too. Some teach that the American Indians are the 10 tribes; that is just

made up. Some say Yeshua came for the lost tribes of Israel. That is a misquote. The context is about saving those who are sinning: "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish;" Matthew 18:14 NKJV. God doesn't want anyone to go to the lake of fire for eternity; those are the lost.

Will we also pretend to be in control? Will we put worldly thinking and living over godly living (godly means to keep God's commandments). Do we think that our worldly thoughts and evaluations are better than doing things God's way? Watch what you think and rebuke the wrong thinking in your mind. Where did your thoughts originate? Are they proper spiritual thoughts or are they something you've been wrongly taught, imagined, or something we made a worldly commitment to? Are they something derived from an ungodly desire like lust, retribution, anger, fear, lack of trust in God, or a man-made philosophy?

*Are they proper Spiritual thoughts?*

What right things can you do?

- I will make my mind up to do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18).
- I believe that God's commandments give us wisdom and understanding (Deuteronomy 4:6).
- I will love God by keeping His commandments ("Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always;" Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV).
- I will trust in God by not making up misapplied man-made commandments. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."

The Jews had made up thousands of misapplied man-made commandments in Yeshua's time; that's what a Judaizer is. Those who are saying that a Judaizer is someone who believes in God's commandments are liars. It is someone who makes up their own commandments. New Testament believers have made up their own man-made system of theology instead of following God. Some even say there are only two commandments, so making God's commandments of no effect. Yeshua was defending the commandments He gave at Mt. Sinai and said, "Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites!" Matthew 15:6-7 NKJV. They say they follow God, but they don't. Yeshua called them hypocrites.

Yeshua also said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9 NKJV. Yeshua said their worship is in vain. Yeshua said in Matthew 7:23 NKJV, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" In the context they were prophesying in God's name so it is believers who are practicing lawlessness; they are not keeping God's commandments.

*Yeshua defended the law given at Mount Sinai.*

They don't follow God's Sabbath and feasts, nor His wisdom given in the Torah and the New Testament portion. Some say it doesn't matter. God says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you

shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts;" Leviticus 23:2 NKJV.

"On March 7, 321, however, Roman Emperor Constantine I issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating:

All judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon **the venerable day of the sun**. Country people, however, may freely attend to the cultivation of the fields, because it frequently happens that no other days are better adapted for planting the grain in the furrows or the vines in trenches. So that the advantage given by heavenly providence may not for the occasion of a short time perish."<sup>2</sup>

Our Sabbath got changed to the day of the pagan Sun god, Sunday. That is what we inherited. Jeremiah 16:19 NKJV says, "The Gentiles shall come to You From the ends of the earth and say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies.'" So, when are the Gentiles going to wake up? Some will say, "Oh, that is just what you believe." Hello, what does the Bible say? What did Yeshua say?

*The Gentiles have inherited lies. When are they going to do something about it?*

We set our hearts on things so that God is not leading us much.

How can God lead us if we are resisting God's commandments. We are resisting God. It says in Leviticus, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Yĕhōvâh); Leviticus 19:18 NKJV. Shaul quotes the gist of this scripture in Ephesians 4:32 NKJV, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another." Leviticus said to forgive and love your neighbor. Shaul said to forgive and be kind and tenderhearted.

If we have decided not to forgive, then we are resisting God. If we are deciding not to be kind and tenderhearted, then we are resisting God. The Holy Spirit is in us if we believe in the Messiah, but if we are deciding to do things our way instead of God's way, how can the Holy Spirit be our helper?

Yeshua Hamashiach said in John 14:15-18 NKJV: "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, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

*Yeshua is God and He gave us the commandments on Mount Sinai.*

First we are to keep God's commandments. Then Yeshua the Messiah said He will give us another helper. The first helper that He gave us is the Torah. Yeshua said that the world does not receive the Holy Spirit because they are worldly. Don't continue to be a worldly person. God care about us and wants to help us.

Allow God to lead us in areas of our life that He wants us to be involved in. Trust in God and

<sup>2</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath\\_in\\_Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath_in_Christianity)



be at peace.

We are to grow up spiritually. Hebrews 5:14 NKJV says, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." We are to be thoughtful and apply God's commandments properly. Then we need to find out if there is something God wants us to do in addition to our normal routine. Perhaps it is nothing extra at this time or maybe God has something He wants us to do.

When people get open to the idea that God actually wants to use us in varying ways, God often begins inspiring us or speaking to us about serving in different ways. God does not want us to overburden ourselves, but often there is something more we can do. I am sometimes amazed at how believers can be with their time. Acts says they got together from house to house and ate together. They were using their time for God. Acts 2:46 NKJV says, "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart." My experience is that most believers are not doing that.

*We always have to interpret the scriptures within their Jewish or Israeli context. All the writers of the Bible were Jewish.*

Of course we need to understand that Jewish believers would eat together on Shabbat. When we don't have the virus issues we have now, we have always made it a point to make available eating together. Also, when the 3,000 people believed on the day of Shavuot they were automatically small group leaders. Those at the Temple on Shavuot were most likely believers who knew the Torah. That's right, believers observed the Torah. When they got together from house to house it was most likely on Shabbat, a day of rest. That's when they had the time to do that. Nowadays, most people don't rest on Shabbat, so they never have time to get together. Or, maybe it is that they decide to be selfish with their time. I've talked to people like that. You will ask if they can do several different things and the answer is always no.

There is so much more I can say on this issue of finding out what God wants you to do. Try different things and see if God is speaking to you about any of these things. I have worked on churches, fed the poor, and have done short term missions to Europe and the Amazon. I have gone house to house and prayed for people. I have done street evangelism. I've gone to pray for people who were dying. You name it, there are so many things we can do with a little bit of our time.

This couple I knew helps the elderly. They put an add in Craig's List and with a little bit of their time they helped them with things they needed done including cleaning. I think they just did it for a few hours on the weekend. I asked them if anyone receives the Messiah as they get to talk to them and he said perhaps one or two people a year. They had been doing this for about 10 years as I recall. Even if only 9 people believed from all their contacts, how many of us can say we've helped that many people to know about God? Don't minimize what

you can do. Even if it's just a little thing, our efforts will not be forgotten by God. Hebrews 6:10 NKJV says, "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name." God will reward us in eternity and even in the present.

*Don't minimize what you can do.*

Get control of ourselves spiritually. Have substance to your spirituality.

Have you ever thought that your life was a little out of control? Well, you can do something about that. I've recognized things that I needed to change and have made a commitment to work on that. And, in the process, I think God blessed that effort; that is the only thing I can figure out because of the way it sometimes worked out. God can bless our efforts; He is God.

What is substance. Webster's defines substance as, "Ultimate reality that underlies all outward manifestations and change."<sup>3</sup> God and our spiritual life is the ultimate reality; all that we do is defined by the reality of God and living out that in our spiritual life.

*God and spirituality is the ultimate reality.*

The Bible says we are to take our spiritual life seriously. Deuteronomy 6:5-7 NKJV says, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." We are to be involved.

Sometimes I just don't catch onto to something right away. For example, Yĕhōvāh (the real name of God) is used in the Old Testament portion over 6,000 times. Wow, that's a lot. So, why are people saying we shouldn't use Yĕhōvāh's true name? It's just crazy isn't it; that's how deluded people can get. I just didn't get it for a long time too even though it should be evident. Again, to love God is to keep His commandments: "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always;" Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV. It's seems pretty plain. Our life is to have substance to it. God is big enough to let us know who He is and to help us live right. That's why doing things our own way is to reject God.

That's a dangerous thing to do. Shaul said in Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV that those who live in, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." There is a limit to what God will accept as living without faith. Doing what God says is trusting in God. Do you trust in God? We can always get right with God and He will forgive us.

*Following God's commandments is trusting in God.*

Some people need to hear about forgiveness. 1 John 1:9-10 NKJV says, "If we confess our

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substance>

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." If we confess our sins to God He hears us because He is God and we need to have faith that God has forgiven us. In Psalms 103:12-13 NKJV it says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him." If it says that God has forgiven us, He has forgiven us if we are truly sorry and commit not to doing it again. And if we sin again, He will forgive us if we are sorry and commit to being faithful to God.

God is the ultimate reality for living out our lives and not our own ideas, feelings, or any misapplied man-made commandment. 1 Peter 1:7-8 CJB says, "Even gold is tested for genuineness by fire. The purpose of these trials is so that your trust's genuineness, which is far more valuable than perishable gold, will be judged worthy of praise, glory and honor at the revealing of Yeshua the Messiah. Without having seen him, you love him. Without seeing him now, but trusting in him, you continue to be full of joy that is glorious beyond words." We saw that Yosef had some tough times, but was rewarded for being faithful.

God says He will bless us for our efforts. Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, Deuteronomy 11:26-28 NKJV.

*God can bless us supernaturally because He is God.*

When we don't follow Him, we are telling God we don't want those blessings and help. Yosef brought blessing on an entire region because He stood with God and used his prophetic gift from God. Unfortunately, those who turned away from God were not warned of the coming famine and suffered because of it. God though blessed an entire region through Yosef!

Don't be trapped by worldly thinking. For some reason, mankind thinks it has one up on God. They are mistaken. Don't resist God. Follow His commandments so that the Holy Spirit can better help you in life. God wants to use us for His purposes; be open to how you can serve God. Get control of our lives. God is the ultimate reality in life. God will bless us for our service. Trust in God.

We will close our Torah study with an ancient encouraging Jewish saying. They use this saying at the conclusion of each book of the Torah. Be strong in our God, Yēhōvāh:

Hazak, hazak, v'nit'chazek! 3X

Be Strong, be strong, and let us be strengthened! 3X