



#17 Yitro Exodus 18:1-20:26

Torah Teaching and Teaching, Be Connected to God

By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
in the Greek means to be smudged

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)

Yitro – Jethro

Yochanan – John

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

Yitro – the 17th Torah portion

In this portion, Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, becomes a believer in the true God. He joins others who were part of a mixed group that accepted the true God when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:38). Yitro who is not Jewish is accepted among the believers based on his confession and even eats with the leadership.

I'd like to start by talking about keeping functional and active. God intended people to be functional working beings; it is good for us because that is how God designed us. God gave mankind purpose in life. Adam and Eve were to take care of what God gave them. "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it;" Genesis 2:15 NKJV.

We are to take care of ourselves and provide for ourselves. We are not supposed to just sit around and live on handouts. Sometimes we need the support of others, but that is not how we are to live on a continual basis. Those that don't work, don't eat it says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10. Even if we've earned retirement benefits, it doesn't mean we do nothing. God created us to be useful according Genesis 2:15. We have family, friends, and spiritual family that we need. We interact, help, and provide for those we are in relationship with.

On an individual basis, we don't need much. In fact, I heard a story once about a man who lived very modestly and gave most of the money he made to help others. I think he had given away a quarter of a million dollars. His story amazed me. That's just goes to show you one way how we can unselfishly use our lives to help others.

We all can use our lives in different ways. We can help others, visit with others, provide support for others in various ways, do things for the community; the things we can do are endless. There are many people with talents that can be used to help others. My uncle used to do odd jobs for the elderly when he was in his 70s.

One of the most important things we can do is take time to get together and talk about God and encourage each other. Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." One of the best ways to learn and grow is through small groups; that was the model for the early believers; they attended house churches.

It makes sense. They couldn't get around like we do today, so nearby meetings were the way early believers met. Especially for an agricultural society; that's where most people lived years ago. So when it says in Acts that they fellowshipped from house to house, it was on Shabbat, the day of rest. That is the day the Bible says we are to rest. Life could be hard in that era and people worked 6 days a week. When Shabbat came, that was their opportunity to get together with others and also talk about Yehovah. 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, praising God and having favor with all the people."

Remember that no 1st century believer in Yeshua would have kept the day of the pagan god Mithras which is Sunday. God is disgusted with bringing in pagan elements in to our faith. 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." The people who believed in the pagan god Mithras also performed child sacrifice.

Breaking bread for Jews is not just eating, but involves doing a ceremony on Shabbat where they pray and break bread and drink some wine (kiddush). Acts 2:42 NKJV says, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Whenever possible, we must put the scriptures within their proper context. There were synagogues in that era, but the norm was meeting in the home. That is why Shaul (Paul) says in Acts 20:20 NKJV, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from **house to house**."

Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and goes through Saturday until sundown. It was customary to celebrate the day of rest with family and friends. They were instructed in God's commandments from the time they were little. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NKJV says, "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." So, when 3,000 people believed on Shavuot (Pentecost) in Acts 2:41, they were qualified small group leaders. People who put their hour in at a building are often not educated in God's commandments. The modern church model has in many cases produced lazy believers and 1 hour a week believers, and not fully functioning involved believers.

The word for church in the Bible simply means an assembly. It is actually used for a group of unbelievers in Acts 19:32 NKJV, "Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the **assembly** was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together." The word assembly is translated as church in other places in the Bible. The word means a group of people. It has nothing to do with buildings or denominations as some think.

Let's look at some scriptures and see where believers met. Philemon 1:2 NKJV says, "To the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the **church in your house**." 1 Corinthians 16:19 NKJV, "The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the **church that is in their house**." Romans 16:5 NKJV, "Likewise greet the **church that is in their house**." Colossians 4:15 NKJV, "Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the **church that is in his house**."

Leaders would go from house church (assembly) to house church and teach the people. Acts 5:42 NKJV says, "And daily in the temple, and **in every house**, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the

Christ." Acts 20:20 NKJV, "I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from **house to house**."

Matthew 18:20 refers to agreements but can also be applied to getting together. Why? We hear encouraging teachings and we also teach each other before God. We enter into agreement with God and accept His truths. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20 NKJV. You just need more than one person for an assembly.

This scripture suggests a smaller group and not a large group. 1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV, "Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." This is difficult to do in a large assembly. Everyone having a function also suggests a smaller group where everyone can participate.

Romans 12:4-8 NKJV:

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

How can people operate their spiritual gifts in a large congregation? 1 Corinthians 14:37 NKJV says that having God's gifts present is a commandment of God: "If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."

I'm not saying we can't have larger churches, but the one hour and done model isn't the true way God wants us to meet. When I was in the jungle, they met in the home or the back yard if the meeting was large. The pagan system of meetings was for everyone to go to a pagan place of worship and make homage to their idol.

That is the typical model for many churches today. As you can see, the biblical model calls for people to keep the Torah, receive the Messiah Yeshua and the Holy Spirit, and meet in homes. For many in Christianity, it resembles a more pagan practice with people going to a building as inactive participants. They pay homage to their denomination and their building. Shaul talked about works of wood or stone in 1 Corinthians 3:12 NKJV, "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

Their buildings that they worship are made of wood and stone. These congregations many times give a weak message in order to keep people coming. They may entertain you, but instead of bringing people to the truth, they sometimes conform to lies and half-truths. There is a lake of fire (sometimes called hell); Revelation 21:8.¹ Not all churches have a pagan model of ministry.

Also, Galatians 6:10 NKJV says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." How can a person do this if all they are doing is going to church for an hour or two? People in small groups or those who are involved in various ways can use their spiritual gifts and help each other personally, so fulfilling these commandments. Helping one another and encouraging one another spiritually is a very important part of life.

¹ "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part **in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**," Revelation 21:8 NKJV.

Someone recently asked me why the Messiah came. Why did the Messiah come?

* Yeshua gave Himself as the final sacrifice for our sin (Isaiah 53).

* To help us follow the Torah — God's commandments. "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**. John 14:15 NKJV. Yeshua is God so He gave us His commandments on Mt. Sinai.

* To help us live right – be righteous.

2 Peter 1:2-4 NKJV

"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

* To give us the Holy Spirit to lead us and help us. The Holy Spirit replaces the need for extra laws. John 14:26 NKJV, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you."

What are you most interested in? Do we take time for God? The physical side of life is important. Take care of yourself and your family. Don't just be consumed with the physical things. Have a regular and ongoing relationship with God? Genesis 3:8 NKJV suggests that Adam and Eve had a frequent relationship with God: "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God."

Keep God fresh in your heart and life. We can get a lot on our mind, we get busy, and we can get preoccupied with life.

Proverbs 3:1-10 NKJV

Do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; **for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you**. Let not **mercy and truth** forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart and so **find favor and high esteem** in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and **He shall direct your paths**. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will **be health** to your flesh, And **strength to your bones**. Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be **filled with plenty**, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Some say the Old Testament is not loving. What is wrong with a long life of peace, mercy and truth, favor and esteem, having direction for life, having health, and being filled with plenty. Someone has been lying to you if you think the Old Testament God is not loving. Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV says, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Protect your spiritual life and relationship with God first and foremost. 1 Kings 8:61 NKJV says, "Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day." 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**." How do we love God? We keep His commandments. If you don't really care about God, make up your own way to live.

Yeshua said we are to love God first and foremost.

Matthew 22:36-40 NKJV

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Yeshua knew what it said in Deuteronomy 11:1. If you believe in Yeshua, believe in what He said.

Torah Teaching

In this portion, Yitro becomes a believer in the true God. Just like others who were part of a mixed group that accepted the true God when they left Egypt (Exodus 12:38). Yitro who is not Jewish is accepted among the believers based on his confession. God begins giving the people laws in this portion with the giving of the 10 Commandments. There are more commandments than just the 10 Commandments. God's laws are not archaic as some say; when God gives us something that is good for us, why would that change? He is an all-knowing God, isn't He?

God's laws are still good for us. Deuteronomy 4:6-8 NKJV says, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a **wise and understanding people.**' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has **such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before** you this day?"

People are being misguided by those who want to make sin okay. In some cases, they may not believe that is what they are doing, but nonetheless, that is what they are doing. They may say God's commandments are legalism. They use this as a negative term. Without law, we would have chaos. God gave us laws that were good for all of time; some are only meant for the priests. It is not true what some are teaching. God is not a liar; God said His laws were good. "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Numbers 23:19 NKJV.

Torah Teaching

The name of this portion is Yitro. Yitro means, "Jethro." This portion begins by saying that Yitro, the father-in-law of Moshe (Moses), heard about what God had done and He brings Moshe's sons and wife to him. Yitro confesses that the God of Israel is over all. He becomes a believer. Moshe, the leaders of Israel, and Yitro make a sacrifice to God and eat together. Yitro sees Moshe administering all the judgments and he tells Moshe that he needs to set up a justice system and hear only the difficult cases. Moshe listened to Yitro and then Yitro goes back home.

Moshe then goes up to the mountain and God calls to him and God tells him what he is to say to Israel. If they keep His commandments, they will be a kingdom of priests for God. "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation;" Exodus 19:5-6 NKJV. God did not give them a caste system where only some were to be the privileged.

Moshe tells the people, and the people agree to obey God. Kefa refers to this verse from Exodus in 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." God has not changed; His people can still be God's holy people. Isn't that great! If you want to be close to God, believe in Him and the Messiah Yeshua.

God tells Moshe that God will speak to him and the people. The people were not to touch the mountain until the shofar sounds and they were to prepare for their meeting with God by washing their clothes. God then give them the 10 commandments. The people prepared to meet with God. As believers in Yeshua, we can meet with God every day because we have the Holy Spirit.

Some people are very lax about their relationship with God and do not keep God's commandments. The Bible says we are to take God's commandments seriously. Hebrews 10:29-30 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? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.'"

Decide you will honor God and keep His commandments; it is not hard. Deuteronomy 30:11 NKJV says, "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach." Those that say it is too hard are not telling the truth. The Bible says it is not hard. The thousands of extra man-made laws that we **do not** have to keep are too hard to keep. Some of these man-made laws are against God's commandments.

On the third day Moshe brought the people to the mountain and there was thunder and lighting, a thick smoke, and a shofar kept blasting louder and louder. God called Moshe up the mountain and God also told Moshe to tell the people that no one was to go up the mountain after Moshe and Aharon.

Then God, Yēhōvāh, gives the people the ten words (Ten Commandments). Yēhōvāh is God's name as seen pointed in over 2,363 manuscripts. Yēhōvāh is used over 6,000 times in the Bible. 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 the Hebrew word Yēhōvāh. If someone gave you their name, would you purposely never use their name?

Let's take the time to read Exodus 20:3-17 NKJV; the Ten Commandments:

1st Commandment

Verse 3, "You shall have no other gods before Me."

2nd Commandment

Verses 4-6, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image —any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

3rd Commandment

Verse 7, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

4th Commandment

Verses 8-11, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

5th Commandment

Verse 12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

6th Commandment

Verse 13, "You shall not murder."

7th Commandment

Verse 14, "You shall not commit adultery."

8th Commandment

Verse 15, "You shall not steal."

9th Commandment

Verse 16, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

10th Commandment

Verse 17, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Perhaps take some time to think about how you could apply these commandments. For example, the 2nd commandment tells us not to bow down to anything made. Some people actually set up statues or pictures and kneel before them. It says we are not to make anything and bow down to it; that obviously includes praying before anything that is made. Some people tell me that they are praying to God when they do this. God says not to do it. Some denominations change this commandment to reflect their wrong beliefs.

How do you honor your parents? I would listen to them even and respect them even as an adult. You can always weigh what they have to say. When I was in Jewish neighborhoods, sometimes an elderly man would walk up to me and give me advice. I would respectfully listen to them. That is something that Jewish people do for their young generation. They were someone's parent. I gave them honor and respect. Even though these laws seem self-explanatory, in Jewish thought, there are many valid ways that we can apply God's commandments.

Not using God's name in vain has to do with not using God's name inappropriately. *Hashem* means, "the name; that's how some people address God. Would you call someone you respect, "the name?" That is inappropriate. Saying God's name honors Him. Do not steal; I will not even take a pen that is not mine. Didn't Yeshua say that those who are faithful in the little things are also faithful in much (Luke 16:10)? Look for ways you can be faithful. Notice how the commandment to keep the Sabbath quotes Genesis 2:2-3 so people who say God's commandments are just for Israel are wrong. They are God's commandments. Why would something that God gave us not be good for us in our time. Those who say God's commandments are done away with are deluded. I would not want to stand before God and tell God I did not agree with Him. I do not think you will win that debate.

The people experienced all that was going on at the foot of Mt. Sinai and they were afraid, so they asked Moshe to speak to God for them. Moshe approaches the thick darkness while the people stood back. God tells Moshe that the people are not to make any idols and that they are to make an altar of earth or of

uncut stone and not build steps up to the altar so no one will be indecent. They are to make their offerings at the place where God chooses.

This portion begins with Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law, coming to see Moshe. He was a gentile priest of Midian where they practiced idolatry and some despicable practices associated with idolatry. Yitro believes in the God of Israel and is fully accepted among the Israeli leadership. We should remember that it was always God's intention that the nations should believe in the true God through Israel. Israel was unable to accomplish that until the coming of the Jewish Messiah Yeshua who has spread the message of the true God around the world.

In this portion, God promises that He will make Israel a holy nation and the people respond that they will do what God tells them to do. We could liken the account to a marriage ceremony between God and Israel where God enters into a relationship with them as their husband (see Isaiah 54:5). Mount Sinai acted as the chuppah (canopy) and the Ten Commands as the ketuvah (marriage contract). The Jewish writings say that it had rained so that the dessert was in bloom and Israel was surrounded by flowers. The giving of the Ten Commandments occurred on Shavuot and the giving of the Holy Spirit also occurred on Shavuot.

There is thunder and lightning, a thick smoke, and a shofar that kept getting louder and louder. Perhaps Yeshua was blowing the shofar. The people were afraid and so God allows Moshe to speak for the people. Moshe becomes an advocate who speaks on behalf of the people just like the Messiah Yeshua is our advocate that speaks on our behalf (1 John 2:10). Although the Ten Commandments are important, it should be remembered there are other commandments that are also important that we should keep.

The Haftarah for Yitro is Isaiah 6:1 to 7:6, 9:5-6. Isaiah had just written a prophetic song about Israel's demise. This portion begins with Yēhōvāh Tsava'ot (the "Lord of Hosts" which is implying warfare) sitting on His throne with seraphs worshipping God and saying, "holy, holy, holy," that is "kadosh, kadosh, kadosh." It says that the door posts shook, and the House (referring to the heavenly Temple) kept filling with smoke. The heavenly vision reminds us of Israel's encounter with God at Mt. Sinai. In this portion, God is sitting which is an attribute of a man and so Isaiah probably sees God in the shape of a man just like Ezekiel did in one of his visions. Isaiah is sent to Israel even though they will not hear Isaiah and will not repent. Isaiah is told by God to say to Ahaz to not be afraid; the invaders this time will not succeed against Judah.

Also, Isaiah 9:5-6 is part of this portion which prophetically talks about the coming of God as King. **The attributes in these scriptures can only be attributed to God.** Israel's mission was to bring the true God to the entire world. That has been accomplished in part through God coming as a man in the person of the Jewish Messiah Yeshua. Someday Yeshua will return and complete His mission and establish peace and His kingdom forever. In the present, Yeshua gives those who believe in Him personal peace through the Holy Spirit. All the millions of those who have the Holy Spirit can have the peace Yeshua gives.

Isaiah 9:5-6 CJB is about the Messiah:

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; dominion will rest on his shoulders, and he will be given the name Pele-Yo'etz El Gibbor Avi-'Ad Sar-Shalom [Wonder of a Counselor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace], in order to extend the dominion and perpetuate the peace of the throne and kingdom of David, to secure it and sustain it through justice and righteousness henceforth and forever. The zeal of ADONAI-Tzva'ot (Yēhōvāh of Hosts) will accomplish this." ADONAI in all caps is Yēhōvāh, God's real name.

Our ancestors experienced the awesome power of God at Mount Sinai so that they trembled. Through our Messiah Yeshua we have been made part of a heavenly community and as we talked about earlier, we need to take that seriously. Hebrews 12:22-25 CJB says:

"You have come to Mount Tziyon, that is, the city of the living God, heavenly Yerushalayim; to myriads of angels in festive assembly; to a community of the firstborn whose names have been recorded in heaven; to a Judge who is God of everyone; to spirits of righteous people who have been brought to the goal; to the mediator of a new covenant, Yeshua; and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better things than that of Hevel (Abel). See that you don't reject the One speaking! For if those did not escape who rejected him when he gave divine warning on earth, think how much less we will escape if we turn away from him when he warns from heaven."

Be Connected to God (Teaching to accompany the Torah portion Yitro)

There is a standard way to understand how God is at work in our lives in these Messianic times.

It should be understood that the very first thing we need to do as believers is to do what God tells us. In this portion, God gives Israel the 10 Commandments, but that is not all the commandments that God gives us. We are to keep all of God's commands. Remember, Yeshua is God so He gave us the commandments in both in the Old Testament and the New Testament portions of the Bible. Many of the commandments in the New Testament portion are interpretations of the Old Testament portion. Yeshua said, "If you love me, you will keep my commands;" John 14:15 NKJV.

Yeshua was referring to the commandments at Mount Sinai because He is God. Jeremiah 23:5-6 says that Yēhōvāh will come from the line of Dave; the Messiah Yeshua is God. "Behold, the days are coming, 'says the LORD,' that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV. The Bible says Yeshua will come again some day and fulfill this scripture. Do not wait until it is too late for you.

Kefa (Peter) addresses the problem with those who think it is okay to dismiss God's commandments. He says in 2 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV:

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly."

I often say that Noah was righteous and did what was right and he saved himself and the world. Those who sinned were destroyed.

So, do not be fooled by those who say it is okay to sin. God did not spare the angels Kefa says. The Bible says the devils believe in God and they are destined for the lake of fire. James 2:19 NKJV says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!"

In this portion, we see how powerful and amazing God is. We need to remember how important it is to follow God's commandments. We are to follow God's commandments, but we are to also listen to the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age. Just as Israel experienced God every day in the desert, we can experience God through the Holy Spirit every day.

How do we experience the Holy Spirit?

- * Often the Holy Spirit will remind us to do what is right. The Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit does not tell us to sin or do what is wrong.
- * The Holy Spirit can work in our minds to be kind, caring, patient. Shaul talks about the fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.
- * The Holy Spirit may lead us to do something at times during the day.
- * The Holy Spirit may call us for a specific purpose like serving the poor or other acts of service.
- * The Holy Spirit gives us gifts. These are supernatural gifts. For example, a person who gives a prophetic word speaks words from God and not simply their own thoughts. It is wrong to say we speak from God when we are simply telling others what we have been thinking about. God can give believers many spiritual gifts. In the Old Testament, God even gave gifting for building and making the Tent of Meeting in the desert. There are lists of gifts in Romans 12:4-8, Ephesians 4:11-13, and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Jewish lists are short lists rather than listing everything. For example, Shaul (Paul) does not list all possible sins every time he talks about sins.
- * We can experience the peace of the Holy Spirit and God can work in many other ways. We may even feel a peace that seems to make 30 minutes like 5 minutes.

Our spiritual life is **not** just a calling by God for us to do something or a just a thrilling experience.

There have been some movements where people go to church just to experience God. It is true that we can experience God, but that is not all that God wants us to do. This one person I know who was part of a prophetic movement at one time told me that everyone just went to church just to hear prophetic words or be thrilled by the presence of God. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, 40 NKJV says, "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." ... "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Our meetings need to be conducted so we are built up spiritually. So, we also need good biblical exposition and order in our weekly meetings. Shaul told us to have orderly meetings and those who think they know better are wrong (1 Corinthians 14:40). If you want to experience the peace of God, you can do that at any time, and not just when we get together. Some think their meetings need to be long and drawn out with a lot of singing.

I am not against experiencing the Holy Spirit. I will sit and pray at times and just welcome God's peace while at home. It is very uplifting! When we get together, it is not just to experience God's presence it says in 1 Corinthians 14:26; Shaul says these things were to be done decently and in order. Our spiritual life is about living out our lives every day with God and the Holy Spirit, and we need biblical encouragement for this, and we need to grow up spiritually. We can have other types of meetings for extended prayer or for an extended time to sing and experience God's presence. I think that is a great idea and I participate in those types of meetings as well.

Being connected to the power of God through the Holy Spirit is the best way to live.

Like I said, the Holy Spirit helps us to do what is right. We also receive the fruit (result) of the Holy Spirit; we can receive special callings; and we can receive spiritual gifts. When I say we are to keep order in our meetings, I am not saying we are not to allow the work of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit was intended for our daily use and not just at congregation. The disconnect between our spiritual life and putting our 1 hour in a week bothered me years ago. I thought there has got to be something better than this. We are to be connected to God every day and not just for 1 hour a week!

Do not be trapped by only what you can see; do not be trapped by living a worldly life.

Just putting in your 1 hour a week is a worldly life. God never intended for His Messianic people to be holy for 1 hour a week and then live like hell. Doing that makes no sense at all. It says in 1 John 2:15-17

NKJV, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."

It is not a bad idea to understand that worldly things are going to pass away. So, do not let anything come between you and God. I remember when Yugoslavia was a single nation and then war broke out between various factions and many lost their lives. Their country became divided and still is divided today. This must have come as a surprise to some. Perhaps we can put all our life into worldly things. We can get fooled into thinking that this is all there is, but that is not true. The opposite is true. This is a time of testing and when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua and live how God wants us to live, our future life with God will not pass away; we can have eternal life.

2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1 NKJV:

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Be faithful in God's ways. That is the best way to live.

What an amazing God we have. He has told us how to live; He is a loving God who cares about us. He gave us the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age to help us live right. God continues to reach down to mankind through the ages to help us. Sometimes we think of God calling us to do something or an experience of God as important spiritual moments, but that is not all of life with God is about. Keep God's commandments, but also be connected to God's power through the Holy Spirit every day. Do not be trapped into thinking that this life is all there is. This world is passing away. Believers can look forward to a wonderful eternal life someday. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;" Hebrews 10:23 NKJV.²

² The context of this verse includes: "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, " Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV. God is for us, but we must also honor Yēhōvāh.