



#22 VaYakhel-#23 Pekudei Exodus 35:1-40:38

Torah Teaching and teaching, God is Amazing and Wonderful

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
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah
Vayakhel, Pekudei – the 22nd and 23rd Torah portion
(We also use transliterations from Hebrews)

Our portion for today is a double portion, Vayakhel which means "and he assembled" and Pekudei which means "accountings of." In Vayakhel, we see the people acting together for the work of the Mishkan. They were making the effort to do what God told them to do. Pekudei begins by giving an account of the offerings made and more descriptions are made of the items for the Tabernacle.

I would begin by talking about being careful to follow God and sharpen your spiritual abilities. Perhaps, like Israel worked hard to put together the Mishkan, we should work to be careful to sharpen our spiritual abilities. Deuteronomy 5:1 NKJV says, "The statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them." It says we are to be careful to learn God's commandments and keep them. When I was in the jungle the people there often did not know anything about the God of the Bible. So, when someone wanted to become a believer they had to be instructed beginning with the basics.

We have the same problem now in Christian denominations. Many do not read their Bibles and they form their beliefs based on worldly thinking instead of from the creator who cares about them and wants what is best for them. Also, people have been told that they can read the Bible without its Jewish context. Context is very important. If you called up a repairman because you need your wall fixed, you are looking for a carpenter to do the work and not a plumber. Can you see how context is very important?

For example, last week I mentioned that Psalm 14:1 is talking about unbelievers. It should be evident from the context, but some people use a quote of Psalm 14:1 in Romans 3:23 to say all people are evil. It is part of their false system of theology. Psalms 14:1 NKJV says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good." As we can see, this scripture is absolutely about those who do not believe in God and does not mean no one can be good. They are the ones who do evil. Also, Jews understand that the word fool to refers to an unbeliever. Therefore, to call someone

a fool in that culture was to say they were going to the lake of fire and it would be considered an insult.

People who teach the false theology that we can do nothing good developed it by ignoring the cultural context. Shaul quotes Psalm 14:1 to make a strong appeal for them to be open minded and believe in the Messiah Yeshua. We see Shaul making strong analogies in his writings. Shaul talks about the gift of the Holy Spirit in other places in his writing. He wants us to understand that the Messiah gives us a helper, the Holy Spirit, to help us live justly. That is what helps us to do what is right. Therefore, through the Messiah we can live righteously and justly. We have to actually do what is right with the help of the Messiah and not just think we are right.

Some use this context to say just the opposite of what Shaul intended. They say the law has been done away with by faith. They say we will still try to keep God's commandments. They then say that we are all evil and cannot do anything good, and that it is only through faith in the Messiah that we are saved. They say we do not have to do what is right to be in the future kingdom. Do you see how convoluted this is?

It is only a few verses later in Romans that Shaul qualifies what he is saying. Romans 3:31 NKJV says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." So, the law is established and not done away with. We can do what is right with the help of God's commandments and the help of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says we can do what is right. 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."

People that teach the doctrine that we are evil and that it is only by faith that we will be in the future kingdom may give great and grand speeches and repeat themselves a lot. We need to understand their false doctrine so we do not fall into the sin they allow. Their doctrine comes close to teaching that we can do nothing about our sin. They even say that! Sin separates us from God the Bible says and those who live in sin are separated from God. Isaiah 59:2 NKJV says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

Also, Yeshua told us that He will reject anyone who leads a life of sin even if they were believers. Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Do you see why it is so important to understand Jewish biblical thought and context?

If you have trouble understanding Shaul, look for clear scriptures that support keeping God's commandments from the Old Testament portion. You are not the only one to have trouble understanding Shaul. There is also the problem of heretics in the Roman Empire that changed the manuscripts to make the text more agreeable to the Roman Empire and their take over Christianity.

Kefa says that those who misinterpret Shaul are sending people to destruction, the lake of fire. And guess where these false teachers are going to go? 2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV says, "Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures." What scriptures are they untaught in? There was no New Testament portion at that time. They did not understand how Shaul used the Old Testament portion in his teachings.

There are also people who can explain the scriptures properly so that you can understand them. For example, Colossians Chapter 2 is about misapplied man-made laws. That is how it should be understood. Colossians 2:8 NKJV says, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men." The Jews of that time made up thousands of extra man-made laws that they call traditions. They were man-made traditions and not God's commandments. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV, "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."

Shaul also says some verses later in Colossians 2:21-22 NKJV, "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men." So, when he tells them not to judge others about food and drink and the Sabbaths in Colossian 2:16, it is about the man-made laws that Shaul is talking about and not God's Old Testament good commandments. God's commandments are not done away with. There were people who were disobeying God's commandments and adding and subtracting from God's commandments when Shaul wrote Colossians.

Yeshua and all the early church leaders said we are to keep God's Old Testament commandments. The laws in the New Testament portion are applications of the Old Testament laws. 1 John 3:4, 8 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness;" and in verse 8 it says, "He who sins is of the devil." Remember there was no New Testament at the time so Yochanan is talking about the Old Testament law. He uses strong words for those who do not keep God's Old Testament law. Ya'akov says in James 2:19-20 NKJV, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" The all you need to do is have faith and receive the Holy Spirit is false doctrine. The Holy Spirit is our helper. "Even the demons believe," and they are going to the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone."

A word of warning to those who think the Holy Spirit entitles them to be in the future kingdom. God did amazing miracles for Israel in the desert and even fed them so that it would seem that they had no choice, but to believe. Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV says, "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." The Holy Spirit has such an impact on the believer in the Messiah Yeshua that it is a similar kind of experience. You must still keep God's commandments. You must show that you believe in God like Ya'akov said.

There are many things that we need to know as believers in the Messiah. The Roman Empire changed Christianity and changed the teachings of Yeshua our Messiah and the Bible. Heretics made up their own Greek manuscripts with deliberate deviations. The Roman Empire subverted and killed the true early believers, and they burned the Hebrew scriptures of the New Testament. Fortunately, we have found 84 Hebrew manuscripts of the New Testament as of this writing.

When believers try to get back to the true roots of our faith, they can get confused by normative Judaism which believes their man-made traditions are commandments of God. Because of this, we need to make sure that the commandments that we keep are what Yeshua originally taught and are proper applications of the Torah. God's commandments in the Torah are "right and good" and they are still "right and good," and they give us 'wisdom and understanding,' see Deuteronomy 4:6 and Deuteronomy 6:17-18. God did not decide that His good commandments are no longer good or not to be kept. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change."

Also, there is pagan practice in Christianity and God considers anything that comes from pagan practice to be disgusting. The word abomination means disgusting. For example, Easter is the name of the multi-breasted goddess of fertility. There is pagan language, practice, and wording that has been passed down into Christianity from the Roman Empire.

Deuteronomy 12:30-32 says,

Do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 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.

Also, the Roman Empire made up its own feasts and made God's biblical feasts illegal. We should be keeping God's feasts. Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." The so-called Jewish feasts are God's feasts. God says, "These are my feasts." As you can see, Christianity needs to make some updating in order to return to its original and true doctrine.

Some people do not take the time to sharpen their lives spiritually. How can we do that? We need to learn the Old Testament commandments and learn how to apply them. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "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. You shall keep My statutes." Shaul applies this in Ephesians 4:31-32 which says, "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." So, when the writers of the New Testament portion applied Leviticus 19:18, they gave details on how to do that. Philippians 4:8 talks about how we should think towards others. Philippians 4:8 NKJV says, "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are

just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

Kefa talks about virtues in 2 Peter.

2 Peter 1:5-9 NKJV says,

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

Godliness is being godly, namely to do what God tells us to do and keep His commandments. These scriptures tell us ways that we can be loving towards others and they are applications of Leviticus 19:18, and there are a lot more in the New Testament portion.

Be ready to do what is right. Now that we are actively making time to be careful to learn and keep God's commandments, we need to be ready to apply them. Work on learning them by doing them and form good habits.

Find out how others keep God's commandments and learn from them. 1 Timothy 4:12 NKJV says, "Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Just recently, one of my friends said that he tries to also keep Shabbat by not thinking about stressful things. That is a good application of resting on Shabbat!

We need to be willing to listen to what others have to say even if it is repetitious. When I was in Jewish neighborhoods older men would take the time to talk to me and encourage me in life. That is something Jewish cultures learned to do. I would take the time to listen and learn what I could from what they had to say. Also, listening to others gives people value and respect.

Stay on top of things spiritually. Be ready for Shabbat so you can make it a true day of rest. Be ready to be kind, caring, and considerate to everyone. Never allow culture or mistaken ideas to change your behavior towards someone. Always be on guard to keep God's commandments. Make sure you are good, kind, and patient towards your family and friends. Be considerate. Project towards others that you are a kind, caring, and happy person. If you work on being happy, you will be a happier person. Never take anyone for granted – always value others, appreciate them, and treat them that way.

Shaul often has encouraging words for us. This comes from a man who worked on keeping God's commandments in the Old Testament portion. He was one of the leaders of Judaism in his time and a Pharisee. Shaul knew how to keep the law and was strict at keeping the law. Acts 22:3 NKJV says, "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and was zealous toward God." This scripture in Galatians shows that Shaul was one of the main leaders of Judaism. Galatians 1:14 NKJV says, "I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers." Also, Acts

23:6 NKJV says, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." They do not argue about Shaul saying he is a Pharisee in Acts 23:6, but they argue about the resurrection. They accepted that he was a Jewish leader. He starts out by saying in these scriptures in Romans that our love towards others should be genuine and that we are to strongly dislike evil.

Shaul says in Romans 12:9-19 NKJV,

Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Try taking some time to think of how you could apply Shaul's advice. Evil means to not keep God's commandments because God has our best interests at heart and His commandments are right and good. God is a loving and good God and He always was loving and good. This scripture from the Old Testament portion tells us that the God of the Old Testament is a good God. Psalms 86:15 NKJV says, "But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth." The word gracious also can mean favor and the word mercy can mean kindness according to Strong's. So, God gave the believers in the Old Testament portion favor and kindness among other things. The JPS version says, "But you, O Lord, are a God compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Isn't that wonderful. Our God abounds in steadfast love. The JPS version is the Jewish translation from the Hebrew.

Also, have scriptures on hand to help with life. Sometimes we have issues that keep coming back over and over in our lives and they present a challenge to how we live. Use the scriptures for encouragement. Memorize key scriptures that apply to you. Use them to adjust your thinking, for how you live life, and for how you make decisions. Psalms 119:105-106 NKJV says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments." God's word is a light in the darkness of this world.

More to Consider

Make effort to move towards God and in His power from above. We can coast along in life sometimes and just go through the routine of life. We also need to purposely put God in our lives. It isn't always easy because some of us have busy schedules. I think sometimes we need to redefine what's important to us.

I have found that putting God in His proper place often results in our time being given back to us by God. Yeshua gave us words of wisdom for encouragement and said give and it will be

given to you. Luke 6:38 NKJV says, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." People respond well to generous people, but there also seems to be a supernatural element to giving and I have experienced this as well.

Even taking Shabbat as a day of rest seems to be returned to me at times. Shaul said to the Philippians who supported him, "Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:18-19 NKJV. I find it remarkable to have experienced this. We wouldn't necessarily expect that. Why not trust in God's ability and not just in ourselves?

Be at peace and secure in your faith in God and the Messiah Yeshua. Life can be far from peaceful when we are always pressing forward with life. Keeping busy and productive can be a good thing, but don't forget to take deep breathes of God's presence and take time to trust in God.

One thing we need to understand in the so called "busyness" of life is that if we are doing all we can to live right according to the Bible, if we are believing in what the Messiah did for us, and trying to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit; we are secure spiritually. Psalms 118:6 NKJV says, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" If we have set apart our lives for God, then we are a separate and blessed people and secure spiritually. No matter what happens we are then secure with God. Shaul also quoted this in Romans 8.

Make your life strong in God. Have you ever gone to the gym and worked out and found that you can be stronger and feel better because you exercised? The same can be true spiritually. Your application of God's truths and desire to do what is right can make you into a better person and make you feel better as a person. There are many scriptures that attest to this. Here is one of them.

Psalms 37:3-6

Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday.

If we trust in Yĕhōváh, we will keep His good commandments (Deuteronomy 6:18). Have life through His faithfulness. Be delighted in Yĕhōváh and He can give you what you want and need. Be committed to Yĕhōváh in trust and He can bring it to pass. Your right ways will be a light and your just ways will shine brightly. Don't you want to be a person who shines like the noon day Sun?

Keep moving forward and keep your heart burning for our God and King. Exodus 14:15 NKJV says, "And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward." When we follow God we can move forward and do the impossible through Him.

Jeremiah 32:17 NKJV says, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." Then in Jeremiah 32:27 NKJV it says, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" It says in Job 42:2 NKJV, "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You." So, trust in God and keep moving forward spiritually. "Go forward."

I had a dream once and I saw this word "haffernitions." When I looked it up on the Web, every link was about affirmations.¹ None of them had anything to do with God. Some of the affirmations verged on narcissism; a narcissistic person is someone who always thinks they are right and often puts others down because they feel superior. So, I got to thinking they are half-truth affirmations, haffernitions. Some I thought were good affirmations, while others affirmed the egotistical proud self without God. Why waste time on them?

What would be some good affirmations for believers?

I am able to keep God's commandments and honor Him (Philippians 4:13).

I can afford to be humble because God is with me (Proverbs 3:34).

I am willing to change and do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18).

I love God and care about what He tells me to do (Deuteronomy 11:1).

I trust in God and rely on Him (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I resist sin with all my heart (Deuteronomy 6:4).

I resist negative thinking, pray and trust in God, and have peaceful thoughts (Philippians 4:6-7).

I apply myself well because I not only represent myself, but my fellow believers and God.

I can be kind, good, patient, loving, generous, thoughtful, caring, merciful, and compassionate because God wants me to live like that (Galatians 5:22-23).

When God is part of our lives, we can go to Him during the day for times of blessing no matter what is going on around us. We can experience frustration, being tired, or any number of distracting or difficult things. Giving yourself opportunity to spend time with God, going to Him with prayer, or just enjoying the presence of the Holy Spirit, can refresh us and redirect us.

Our DNA was created to be in fellowship with God. We can choose a worldly life, or we can have a supernatural connection. Yochanan said in 1 John 1:3 NKJV, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." So, it is possible to have fellowship with God. God can speak to us. That is one of the ways the gift of the Holy Spirit works in believers in the Messiah. We are to receive the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua. John 14:26 says the Holy Spirit is our helper. God also spoke to the prophets in the Old Testament portion. Mankind was created to be in fellowship with God. God spoke to Adam in Genesis. It is a tremendous advantage to be in fellowship with an all knowing and good God who looks out for us.

Keep God's commandments and live a pure life. Keeping God's commandments keeps us in relationship with God. First of all, God knows all and keeping God's commandments is the best way to live. The Bible tells us God's commandments are "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18).

¹ When I entered that non-word again, nothing came up! Perhaps God knew what would happen.

Trusting in His commandments and honoring His word gives Him the respect and honor that is due the God of the universe. Therefore, not obeying God is like telling God that we do not value and respect Him for who He is. Our fellowship with God is then broken until we repent and begin honoring what God said.

Our lives can be a melody of blessing and praise to God. Having God in our lives is such an honor and privilege. Those who keep God's commandments are a praise to God. Shaul said that we, "Should be to the praise of His glory;" (Ephesians 1:14). Isn't that wonderful! Also, Shaul used the word praise which is what Judah means; The word Jew comes from the name Judah. I just thought this might interest you. Most certainly the believers of his time would have recognized this connection. Another way of saying what Shaul said is, "Be a Jew who is to the glory of God." They were all Jewish; this was a good affirmation.

Honor God in all we do.

Torah Study

Our portion for today is a double portion, Vayakhel which means "and he assembled" and Pekudei which means "accountings of." In Vayakhel, we see the people acting together for the work of the Mishkan. Pekudei begins by giving an account of the offerings made and more descriptions are made of the items for the Tabernacle. Vayak'hel begins with Moshe (Moses) again reminding the people to keep Shabbat. This is just before they take up a collection for the articles and manufacture of the Mishkan (Tabernacle, Tent of Meeting in the desert). From the context this encouragement has to do with their place of worship. They might think that doing the work for the Mishkan was enjoyable and consider it no work at all; but God tells them not to do it. Perhaps that is a good rule to follow for Shabbat. I often say that if it can wait for tomorrow, don't do it. In life, we prepare to keep Shabbat and are ready to do it. Just like God rested on the 7th day, we rest on the 7th day because we believe He is the creator God.

In the context about work on the Mishkan, it talks about not starting a fire. We should probably understand that it has to do with the work on the Mishkan, like smelting and forming of metal. Starting a fire can also be arduous and we should be careful not to do any work like that on a Shabbat. Use good judgment. Not turning on a light switch because it causes a spark is not work and neither is driving a car. Some people will walk a mile with their little children rather than drive their car Shabbat. Which is more work? Their man-made doctrine is just foolishness.

I once explained this to someone who kept all these little extra man-made laws that micromanage life. He said to me that my teaching was not enough to keep people from working on Shabbat. I understood where he was coming from. People make up excuses to work on Shabbat and we shouldn't do that. The Bible says that "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;" Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV. Adding misapplied commandments is wrong. God gave us a brain; stop making up excuses to work on God's days of rest and stop following misapplied man-made laws. Follow what the Holy Spirit is telling you to do if need be. God gave us the Holy Spirit to help us follow His commandments.

Moshe goes on to tell them that God told him that they should take up a free will collection for the things needed for the Mishkan. Likewise in the New Testament portion, Shaul talks about taking up a free will collection in 2 Corinthians 8:6-10. The purpose of the collection was to save lives. The Bible teaches us that we are made in the image of God and therefore life is valuable.

Then Moshe asks for the craftsmen to come and make the articles for the Mishkan and the clothing and adornments for the priests. The people came and gave freely for the work of the Mishkan. Women who could make fabric began their work and according to Exodus 38:8, the Hebrew text seems to be saying that some women came to the Tent of Meeting to fight spiritually in prayer. The leaders brought precious objects such as precious stones, incense, and oil.

The people seemed to be of one mind as they worked on the Mishkan. This reminds us that we are to be of one mind spiritually. Shaul refers to this in Colossians 3:2 NKJV, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." As they set their minds on the things of God and the Mishkan, they moved forward spiritually. We too need to be of the same mind spiritually.

Bezalel and Aholiab lead the work and they as well as others are filled with the Spirit of God to do the work. It is possible that God gave them instructions on how to do all the work and it wasn't just by natural ability. On more than one occasion, God helped me to accomplish the tasks I had to do. People sometimes diminish the power of God and God's ability to work in us and through us. This is incorrect doctrine. My cousin became a believer and after 2 computer specialists worked for 24 hours straight to get a large company computer working, my cousin was called on. He prayed and within 10 minutes he had the problem fixed. That is God at work in us!

The people brought more than they needed so they needed to tell them they had enough. Then the making of the tent, planks and crossbars, and other items for its construction are described. The making of the ark and k'ruvim (cherubs) are described as well as the other items needed including the Menorah and the altar for the Mishkan.

The Haftarah for VaYakhel is 1 Kings 7:13-26. King Shlomo (Solomon) sends for the Jewish bronze worker Hiram from Tyre to do some of the work on the first Temple. This portion describes the amazing work done on the first Temple. In both the Mishkan (the Tabernacle, Tent of Meeting) and the first Temple we see some beautiful work being done in the name of the true God, Yě-hō-váh. Perhaps this should remind us that we being the temple of the Holy Spirit, should strive to live lives that befit the beauty that God has bestowed on us. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

Also, the Mishkan in the desert is a picture of our spiritual abode (life) with God. Israel lived in the presence of God in the desert with a fire over the Mishkan at night and a cloud by day. Yeshua said He goes to prepare a place for us – He means a place where we will also live in the presence of God. John 14:2-3 NKJV, says, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and

prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." We have an amazing future hope ahead for us.

Pekudei means "accountings of." Pekudei begins by giving an account of the offerings made and more descriptions are made of the items for the Tabernacle. They brought all the finished items to Moshe and then Moshe blessed the workers. Isn't that great! God gives us the power to bless through Him.

The portion ends with the Tabernacle being set up on the first day of the first month, the 1st of Nisan, and when it was set up the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the presence of the Yĕhōváh the LORD filled the tent. When the cloud lifted from over the Mishkan, the Israelites would follow it. A cloud appeared over the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting) during the day and fire would appear over the Mishkan at night during their time (some 39 years) in the desert!

Notice how God did not give them His presence right away, but they learned and grew spiritually. Then God gave them the Tent of Meeting in the desert. Perhaps this is the way God tests us to see if we continue to seek Him. It has been my experience that God will give us things to do and spiritual gifting as we remain faithful. We see in the book of Exodus how Israel was set free from Egypt; they were also set free to serve God and do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18).

The 1st of the Jewish biblical months is the month of Nisan which is also called Aviv. There are four Jewish New Year's: the 1st of Nisan – the counting of king's reigns; the 1st of Elul – animal tithes; the 1st of Tishrei, also known as Rosh Hashanah or Yom Teruah – new year for the calendar year; the 15th of Sh'vat also called Tu BiShvat – tree new year, when trees are planted and other ecological things are often done. Also, the dedication of the Mishkan took 8 days. That's why Chanukkah lasts 8 days; it remembers the rededication of the Temple.

The Haftarah for Pekudei is 1 Kings 7:51- 8:21. The Haftarah portion for Pekudei concludes with the dedication of the first Temple. The presence of the Lord filled the Temple and Solomon blesses the people. Both the Mishkan and the Temple were filled with the presence of God. Just like the Lord filled the Temple, those that believe on the Messiah are filled with the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit should not be taken lightly. According to Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV we can be an insult to what God has given us. These people will not escape God's punishment. 1 Kings 8:10-11 CJB says (Cohanim means Priests), "When the cohanim came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the house of ADONAI, so that, because of the cloud, the cohanim could not stand up to perform their service; for the glory of ADONAI filled the house of ADONAI." This is an example of the overcoming presence of the Holy Spirit which we as believers in the Messiah Yeshua can experience.

After reading the scripture about how the presence of God filled the Temple, we may wonder if any of that type of experience is for believers in the Messiah and the answer is yes. We are to receive the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua and it impacts our lives, and we can experience the Holy Spirit. Kefa (Peter) said in Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "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." Some though are not open to the Holy Spirit. It is a commandment of God to receive the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age. Some put on a show; acting is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with believers in the Messiah Yeshua just like God's presence was with Israel at the Mishkan. God is ever present and is not far from us.

Some of us have experienced the presence of God in amazing ways through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit simply works in our hearts and minds at times, and at other times we can experience a timeless type of presence and peace. If you need that, just acknowledge the presence of God and talk to God. I first experienced God's presence when I did that years ago. Do not let your mind get sidetracked; it is your time with God. God has also given us gifts of the Holy Spirit.

God is amazing and wonderful.

God wants to comfort us and give us peace in every situation. Yeshua told us that He would not leave us as orphans, and He gave us the Holy Spirit. God is able to help us supernaturally, so we are to pray and cast our anxieties on God. Be sensible and do not tempt God. You do your part in a sensible manner and let God take care of the rest. Pray for protection and for all things; prayer works!

God is with us so do not be deluded into thinking He is not there. It says about our God Yĕhōvāh in Psalm 147:4-5 NKJV, "He determines how many stars there are and calls them all by name. Our Lord is great, his power is vast, his wisdom beyond all telling." Be strong and courageous even as Israel was in the desert years ago as they moved forward toward the land God promised them. They were not without doubts and trials but continued to move forward in faith. So, we also should move forward in faith.

God is Amazing and Wonderful.

By Moshe Schwab

(An accompanying teaching for this portion)

Unlock the comfort of God through the scriptures.

Shaul (Paul) said that God can encourage us and comfort us and that we should encourage one another. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NKJV says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." It is wonderfully amazing what God can help us with. Shaul said that God got them through some tough situations. "He rescued us from such deadly peril, and he will rescue us again! The one in whom we have placed our hope will indeed continue to rescue us;" 2 Corinthians 1:10 CJB.

We are talking about real troubles here and not just the electricity going out. God is our Father, and He will not leave us. Yeshua said, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.;" John 14:18 NKJV. Yeshua sent those who believe in Him the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can give us,

"Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;" Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV. God can give us peace, but if we work ourselves up in a negative way, we will not allow the Holy Spirit to give us peace.

Over history, God has been able to help people to be comforted. Psalm 94:19 NKJV says, "In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul." Even more so now in this Messianic age, we can experience God's comfort if we are open to Him and do not allow our peace to be stolen from us. Shaul tells us to not let anxiety overcome us but pray. He also said to change how we think. If we are thinking about good things, we will not have time to belabor fear and anxiety. Stay your mind, pray, and trust God. I have applied the following verses in Philippians many times in my life and they have helped me get through some tough situations. They can help you too.

Philippians 4:6-9 NKJV

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you."

The very nature of our greeting, shalom, which means peace should remind us to be at peace. I am not talking about blind foolishness. Do not tempt God. We don't jump off a cliff expecting to be rescued by God. God can be merciful though in our ignorance and has even helped me at times when I used poor judgment; I have had some amazing miracles happen to me. But use good sense. Proverbs 16:21-22 CJB says, "A wise-hearted person is said to have discernment, and sweetness of speech adds to learning. Common sense is a fountain of life to one who has it, whereas fools are punished by their own folly." Do not be punished for the consequences of unwise actions or decisions.

Pray for protection; be a person that supports and sustains others.

Besides having good sense, we need to be in prayer Shaul says. There have been many times in my life that prayer has freed me from my anxieties just like the scripture tells us prayer will do. After Shaul says God rescued them in 2 Corinthians, he says to keep praying; he is telling them that prayer works! "You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us;" 2 Corinthians 1:11 NKJV. The Bible says we are to pray with supplications (with humble sincerity) and requests. In Ephesians 6:18 NKJV it says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."

Be logical and strategic as God's people.

Proverbs tells us to have good sense and consider if something is wrong or evil. Proverbs 22:3 NKJV says, "A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, but the simple pass on and are punished." Do not be clueless about life. Use your thinking abilities and be sensible. God gave

us a brain, so use it. Watch out for what they call tunnel vision where we mindlessly act on our impulses or fears. Isaiah 5:21 NKJV tells us that can lead to trouble "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes." A person who thinks they are wise when they are not, are in for trouble. Think about doing what is right and commit yourself to it.

God is there; do not be deluded into thinking He is not with us.

Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV says, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." God will lift us up and be with us. Isaiah 41:10 NKJV says, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Psalm 118:6 CJB says, "With ADONAI on my side, I fear nothing." God told Joshua to have courage, "Be strong, be bold. So don't be afraid or downhearted, because ADONAI your God is with you wherever you go;" Joshua 1:9 CJB.

Just like those in the Old Testament portion, God can work in us and use us for His purposes. The presence of God was an overcoming presence at the Mishkan in the desert and at the Temple in Jerusalem. We are to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Messiah and the Holy Spirit can work in us just like God worked in those in the Old Testament portion. Sometimes we can have amazing personal experiences just like they did at the Temple because we have the Holy Spirit.

God is amazing and wonderful.

God wants to comfort us and give us peace in every situation. Yeshua told us that He would not leave us as orphans, and He gave us the Holy Spirit. God is able to help us supernaturally, so we are to pray and cast our anxieties on God. Be sensible and do not tempt God. You do your part in a sensible manner and let God take care of the rest. Pray for protection and for all things; prayer works! God is with us so do not be deluded into thinking He is not there. It says about our God Yĕhōvâh in Psalm 147:4-5 NKJV, "He determines how many stars there are and calls them all by name. Our Lord is great, his power is vast, his wisdom beyond all telling." Be strong and courageous even as Israel was in the desert years ago as they moved forward toward the land God promised them. They were not without doubts and trials but continued to move forward in faith. So, we also should move forward in faith.

The Aaronic Blessing

Adonai or Lord in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yĕ-hō-vâh. Yĕ-hō-vâh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yĕ-hō-vâh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yĕ-hō-vâh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yĕ-hō-vâh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name.

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh is God's name. 2,363 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh. Only once is it pointed differently. God's name is never pointed as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. 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. So, perhaps this alludes to the Messiah not coming again until people begin using God's name properly.

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם 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.