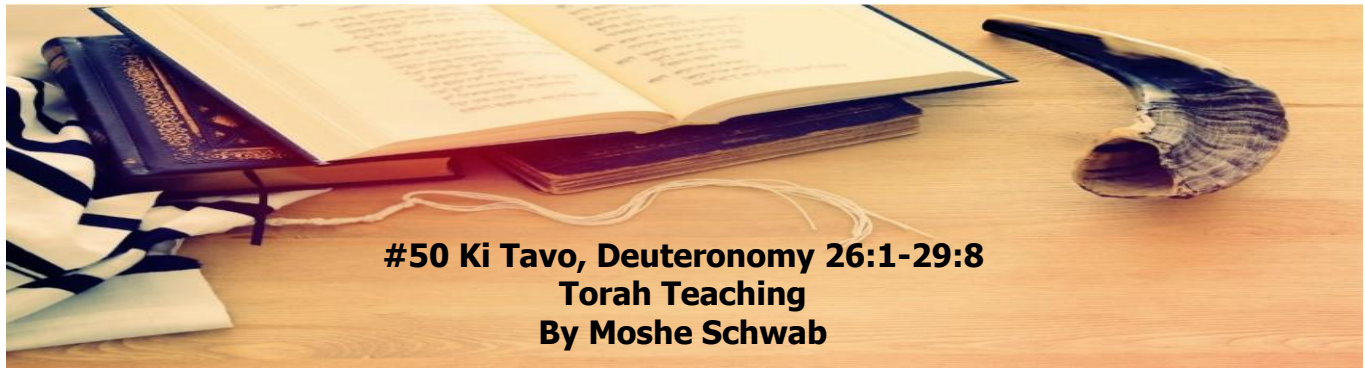




Names

Cohanim - priests
 Kefa – Peter
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Shavuot – Pentecost, a spring feast of God
 Yeshua – Jesus (in Hebrew it means "Salvation")
 Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
 Yochanan – John

Terms

#50 – the 50th portion
 Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets
 High Holy Days – Yom Teruah, Yom Kippur, & Sukkot
 Parashah – (portion) one of 54 portions of the Torah
 Shabbat – the 7th day of the week; we are to rest
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

The Torah portion for this week is Ki Tavo and means, "when you enter." We teach the Torah portions because it was instituted by God's holy prophets, perhaps Nehemiah. Yeshua would have taught from the portions and that is what He was doing in Luke 4:21. Gentiles are to also learn and keep the Torah. It says about the Gentiles in Acts 15:21 NKJV, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." The context there in Acts is about the Gentiles coming to believe in the true God. The leader of the early Messianic church expected the new believers in Yeshua both Jew and Gentile to go to synagogue and keep the Torah.

Tavo comes from the Hebrew word Bo which means to come. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who **comes** in the name of the LORD!'" He is quoting Psalm 118:26 which uses יהוה, Yĕhōvāh, for LORD. It is interesting that in these times that the name of Yĕhōvāh is being taught again. It is not true that we are not to use God's true name. The Bible says that this is his name forever. LORD in all caps in Exodus 3:15 is also Yĕhōvāh, יהוה. Referring to the name Yehovah in the Bible it says in Exodus 3:15 NKJV, "The LORD God of your fathers ... this is My name forever." Yĕhōvāh is used over 6,000 times in the Bible! Most certainly we should be using God's true name at appropriate times. Perhaps the speaking of God's true name will usher in the promised future kingdom of God.

Be willing to help others. Pray, get involved helping those in need.

By helping others, we get our minds off of ourselves and more in touch with those who are in need. There are a lot of ways we can help others and helping others is an application of the command to treat others as we wish to be treated. 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." We can pass out food to the poor, help others with their home, or in many other ways, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. There are perhaps hundreds of ways to help others. Helping people with their

spiritual life is also considered as helping others. We are to also give financially to help others.

Financial giving is commanded in the Bible, and it is 10% of our gross income. Some people give 10% of the net income. If we cannot give 10% of our income, we should aim at getting our finances under control so we are able to give 10% of our gross income. A portion of our giving is to go to what I call the poor category. We are commanded to help those in need financially. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NKJV says, "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you." We are to give 1/3rd of our 10% giving to this category which includes the poor. Those who do not do this do not keep the tithe properly. Every 7th year farmers did not plant and did not have any income that year, but those who work at other professions should give 1/3rd of their giving to this category. The farmer gave as they had opportunity and those who are paid should give at an appropriate time shortly after they are paid. They often produce income throughout the year unlike the farmer who gets paid at harvest time. The Bible uses very stern words for those who deviate from giving to the poor. Proverbs 21:13 NKJV says, "Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard." Of course, we have another 2/3rd of giving that we are required to give.

People should be giving 2/3rd of their giving to ministries or organizations that are providing Messianic teachings, applicable research, or other support groups or ministries that support our Messianic beliefs. Without the support of these groups we would be without the helps we need to keep growing in the truth. I do not believe in supporting groups or organizations that are teaching pagan doctrine.

In regard to this category of giving. Some go to a small group, so it is up to the person who is running the group how they should give. Most small groups leave giving up to the individual. When people give to our group, we take no money for ourselves. Our group divides the money we get by 2/3rd going to Messianic support ministries and 1/3rd to the poor category. Those who teach us are supposed to be supported. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV says, "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, The laborer is worthy of his wages." We take up special collections for the poor sometimes. We leave it up to those giving to give how the Bible says we should give.

For groups that take up collections, the money should be split up how the Bible says it is to be done, 2/3rd to the support of the ministries category (which could include the expenses of the group) and 1/3 of the giving to the poor category. Leaders must give 1/10th from what they receive for payment and that money is to be given to the chief priest (see Numbers 18:25-26). We have no Messianic chief priest who needs money to administer in the Temple, so leaders need to give from what they receive to the support in the ministries category. This is the biblical way we should be giving to the best of my knowledge. In order to give appropriately, we need to manage our finances so that we afford to give the way we should. There are good financial services available to believers. We used Dave Ramsey's ministry for a short period of time. We

will repeat this section on giving in our Torah study for today.

Understanding applications of loving your neighbor as yourself.

We are to treat others the way we want to be treated and like I said, that includes the poor. 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." Notice that the Hebrew Bible properly attaches keeping God's commandments with loving your neighbor. The context after that command then immediately changes to animals. Some people only quote that we are to love others and misapply this commandment. It is one of the commandments and is best applied through keeping God's other commands. Also, a lot of applications of this command can be applied from this command.

The command to love others is a natural outcome of following our good God. Since God is a loving and good God and creator, as followers of Him, we should endeavor to be a caring and good person just as God is good. Exodus 34:6 NKJV says, "The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.'" That is who God is. He has not changed as some say, but has always been a good God who give grace (gracious), is patient, abounds in goodness towards us, and gives us truths for life. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." God gives us the truths we need for life through His Old Testament commandments and since He is a good God, His good commandments still apply because He does not try to manipulate or fool us. Numbers 23:19 NKJV says, "God is not a man, that He should lie."

Loving others involves doing it in a holy way. We are to be a holy people just as God is holy. Leviticus 19:2 NKJV says, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." We are to be separate from the ways of the world and live differently as God's holy people. Leviticus 20:26 NKJV says, "You shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine." Are we acting like God's holy people or do we have other agendas that control our life?

Since God is not vindictive or manipulative, everyone who follows the true God must make the decision to do so. We are not born into being a true believer as much as living as God's special people through keeping His commandments.

Deuteronomy 26:16-18 NKJV says,

This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments.

It makes sense that being someone who follows God also means that we follow what He says we should do. It requires not only a decision to claim that we believe in God but also that we do what he tells us. Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people

to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, **if** you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways."

Perhaps a good example is the combined effort of the Israelites and the mixed multitude who left the bitter mistreatment of their slavery in Egypt through God's help. They must have had to cooperate and help one another (not to mention God) to flee Egypt, or they would have never made it to the promised land. It is truly amazing that some 2 million people made it into the promised land. What an accomplishment; it had to be a miracle; it absolutely was a miracle that ordinary people accomplished with God's help. Exodus 12:37-38 NKJV says, "The children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed multitude went up with them." It has always been God's desire that the people of the world would follow the true, loving, and caring God. We talk about this a lot. God has good intentions for us and gave us good commandments to live by. It is too bad most people do not realize this. Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

Also, help people spirituality if the opportunity arises.

People need direction in life and sometimes kind and caring words can help people to follow God if they are open to hearing what you have to say. Also, if we never tell others about the goodness of God and His commandments, how can they turn from evil to do good. Yeshua said to Shaul in Acts 26:18 NKJV, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." By helping people to know truth, we help them to find the goodness of God and a new and good life through Him.

It is important to know though that in our society, there are people who hate us and react negatively towards those who believe in doing what is "right and good." Proverbs 9:8 NKJV says, "Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." Also, speaking into others life requires we have their best interests at heart just as God has our best interests at heart. **Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!"**

Ask God for help when trying to help people.

God knows people better than we do about what they need. I remember telling God that I did not know what to say to this one person and God had me ask them a question about what they believed. I was surprised how easy it was to find out what we should talk about. We are supposed to be ready to tell people about our good God.

1 Peter 3:15-17 NKJV says,

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

The word sanctify in these verses in 1 Peter is the Greek word for holy. We are to have holy hearts as we live out life and follow God's good commandments. When the opportunity arises, we should be ready to talk about what we believe in a kind and considerate manner. Always keep God's commandments so that you are not defamed for doing evil.

Remember, doing evil is sin. Psalms 119:101 NKJV says, "I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word."

Proverbs 4:14-19 NKJV says,

Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on. For they do not sleep unless they have done evil; and their sleep is taken away unless they make someone fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.

The reason that those who do evil do not know what makes them stumble is because they often think they are right and do not understand the consequences of their sin. They also often do not see the problems they cause. They walk in darkness. Do you want to have better days in life? Then follow God and His good commandments of light.

Be at peace in your home and in all you do.

We need to take control of our thoughts so that we trust in God and have peace in life. One of the ways we can do that is by also praying about what is bothering us. Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV says, "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."

We can also manufacture our own lack of peace. I am not saying we will not have difficult situations in life. Sometimes though we may obsess about something in life or situations that we have gone through and let these things steal our peace. John 16:33 NKJV says, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." We need to trust in God and resist the thoughts that take away our peace. Yeshua did not give us the typical worldly peace, but a greater peace. John 14:26-27 NKJV says, "But 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, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." One of the results (fruits) of the Holy Spirit is peace (see Galatians 5:22-23), but if we resist having peace, we are resisting the help of the Holy Spirit. As we engage with having peace in our life, God may also instill supernatural peace through the Holy Spirit.

Shaul often makes applications of the Old Testament commandments. Let's talk about loving your neighbor as yourself again because it applies to some verses I want to share with you from Colossians. It is applied often in the New Testament portion. 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."

We are not to hold onto grudges but forgive others and treat them with love. Similarly, Shaul says in Ephesians that we are to forgive others and be kind to them. Ephesians 4:32 NKJV says, "**Be kind** to one another, tenderhearted, **forgiving** one another." This section in Colossians is another application of Leviticus 19:18-19.

Colossians 3:12-15 NKJV says,

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and **forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things **put on love**, which is the bond of perfection. And **let the peace of God rule in your hearts**.

Instead of holding onto hurt, Shaul says to let the peace of God rule your heart. We need to work on ways to develop our peace in life. Let peace rule your heart.

Doing things God's way will save you a lot of time and anguish. It will also free you up from engaging in hurtful behaviors. Having peace in our minds helps us to think through things better and in a godly way. Do not be thoughtless, but thoughtful.

More to consider.

We have a choice in life. Are we going to pass on the truths of the Bible or are we going to pass on our own ideas?

The first step for anyone who wants to follow the true God and creator of all that exists is to begin to learn and apply God's commandments and have a deep desire to make learning about God and the truths we need for life supreme.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 NKJV says,

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." For in these I delight,' says the LORD.

Wise people are often drawn to learning and growing in knowledge but most of all, wise people need the wisdom of God through God's commandments. Knowledge and information are not enough to have a satisfying and good life. Some knowledgeable people have turned out to be murderous and cruel. Strong and imposing people often are proud of their prowess, their skills or abilities. Might does not necessarily make a person right. It sometimes makes them cruel dictators.

It is the ways of an all-knowing God that set us in the right direction in life. Some think that wealth is power and that by achieving that they can influence others. What are they teaching others? They may help others, but some have used wealth and ambition to the detriment of society and caused society a lot of pain. Some of the most important people to the planet have been spiritually minded people who have changed whole societies for the better through their dedication to God. Just about everyone in the world knows about Yeshua (Jesus) and millions have benefitted from His encouragement to follow God's commandments. Why not get to know the loving and good God and His "right" ways?

Perhaps the greatest secret in the world is that God gave us His commandments to help us, they are for our good. Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV says, Fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today **for your good.**"

God's law is truth. God is right and will always be right. Psalms 119:142 "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth." We need God's truths for life; they will always be true. They are from a good and loving God. Psalms 26:3 NKJV says, "For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth." God's ways can preserve us because they are good and are truth. Psalms 40:11 NKJV says, "Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me." We need to apply God's truths to our life.

There are different ways that we can present ourselves. Does God have a place in our life?
We have a personal life that is a combination of all that we do. Some go to school, some have jobs to do, we all have necessary chores that we do in order to take care of ourselves and even more so when we become an adult. There is a lot to life.

We can either bring God's goodness into our lives or make other priorities in life. As a parent, I communicated to my children the importance of God, of being good to each other; and the importance of praying, learning, and growing spiritually.

I asked my children to try to make our home a home of peace and goodness through doing what is right. I communicated to them that we have a choice about how we relate and treat each other. If we do what is right, our home could be a satisfying, peaceful, and delightful place to live. I gave them the option of bringing goodness into our home, or stress and dissatisfaction. I challenged them to follow God's commandments and do what is right instead of problems and bad attitudes. It is my hope they learned that they could choose to have that kind of life through God's good commandments and the Holy Spirit given by the Messiah Yeshua.

Let's talk about some of the things that God can give us through His commandments. God's commandments give us strength in life. We do not have to make up life each and every day, but we have a good standard to live by, so we do not need to guess what is best. Having a good standard can give us peace in life. Psalms 29:11 NKJV says, "The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace."

Since we know that God is good and His commandments are "right and good," we know that by following God's good ways we are doing good. Some think they are following good by someone's idea of what they think is good. I remember in the 1970s that the media was saying that an ice age was coming, and the northern United States would become uninhabitable. Now people are saying that the earth is warming, and we must do something about it. What is it? Is the ice age coming or is the world warming? I understand that a great number of scientists say

that there is no reason for alarm. Why not trust in something sure and desire to keep God's good commandments first and foremost. Proverbs 11:23 NKJV says, "The desire of the righteous is only good."

People are often filled with their own ways. Being filled with God's ways leads to a more satisfying life. Proverbs 14:14 NKJV says, "The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied from above." The word "backslider" is the Hebrew word for turning away. When people turn away from God and His commandments, they must make up what they think is right or good instead of God's good and satisfying ways.

God's commandments put us on the right path in life. When we look back on our lives will we feel fulfilled for being a good person or an evil person? Knowing that we have hurt others because of our sin cannot be called satisfying. Some people have become deluded into thinking that their evil is okay or even good. Doing what is "right and good" assures us of having joy for living in the truth. Psalms 16:11 NKJV says, "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

When we do what is "right and good" we can be happy and have joy about what we do. Psalms 16:9 NKJV says, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope." We can have hope for our future in life and also for a future in the eternal kingdom of God which is for those who are wise enough to follow God and His commandments.

Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV says,

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

Do not set your goals on an earthly empire. Set your central goals in life on spiritual things.

Many people seem to think that learning information is what sets us apart in life. Parents often communicate success as being able to take care of ourselves and often think that our examples will be picked up automatically by our children. My uncle worked on nuclear reactors and was a meticulous and hard-working individual. Does that mean that his children will automatically be able to work on nuclear reactors? Our examples are not enough. We most of all need to communicate our spiritual values on a frequent basis and live out those spiritual values.

I knew of someone who could not stand learning and growing spiritually but did it anyway. What was he communicating to his children, his wife, his friends, and those at synagogue? Did he have a proper attitude towards his spirituality? It seems to me that he did not value the things of God but perhaps only wanted to pass a sense of belonging on to his children. A lot of parents are like that. They want their children to succeed at school, to relate properly to culture, to have attitudes that will make them successful, and to have a good life. Little do these people realize that they need truth, they need to have a good spiritual attitude, and they to keep God's commandments for a fully successful and good life.

1 Kings 2:2-3 NKJV says,

Be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. 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.

How do we prove ourselves as a true man or woman? Some think it is worldly success, some think it is fame or popularity. The Bible tells us to be strong spiritually. A real man is a strong spiritual man. A real woman is a strong spiritual woman. God's ways are intended to help us be who we are supposed to be. Psalms 103:17-18 NKJV says, "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them."

Strong's says that covenant can mean alliance. We are aligning ourselves with God. In other words, it means we make an agreement to believe in and follow God. Will we agree to follow God and His commandments? Some make a theology out of the word covenant. When they read the word covenant, they think of it as mankind having an evolution of relationship with God. They think that mankind did not know much about God at the beginning and then God gave mankind the law. They often then think that mankind has made it to a pinnacle of spirituality through Yeshua, through grace. God has always been a God of grace and has given mankind his favor throughout the ages. Also, the concept of spiritual evolution is therefore a false concept.

Mankind was perfect in the beginning and then began doing things their own way. God gave Noah and his family grace because Noah did what was right. Genesis 6:8 NKJV says, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD." Noah followed God's commandments. Genesis 6:9 NKJV says, "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God." To walk with God means to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 13:4 NKJV says, "You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him." For other examples of walking with God means to keep God's commandments see Deuteronomy 8:6, 10:12, 11:22, 26:17, 28:9, and 30:16. Israel was given grace by God. Psalms 84:11 NKJV says, "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly."

Doing what is right according to the Bible is to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "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**." That is why Abraham was righteous; he did what was right. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." It says here that Abraham knew the law and followed the law. The law was passed down through the early believers like Noah until it was written down. Why did Moshe have his children circumcised? The law was not given yet. He must have known that believers circumcised their male babies.

Those who believe in God and keep His commandments are in the line of believers like Noah, Abraham, Jacob, King David, the faithful of Israel, and the faithful who follow the Messiah Yeshua with the help of the law and the help of the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said in John 14:15-17 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." The first helper is the law, and the Holy Spirit is another helper.

When we receive the Holy Spirit, it does not mean we are at the culmination of our spirituality because we are in a Messianic age. Just like Israel was in a time of testing in the desert, believers in Messiah are also in a time of testing to see if they will obey God. 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." Israel could have assumed they were at the pinnacle of their spirituality because God provided all they needed for 40 years in the desert and gave them the law. They even saw a cloud over the Tent of Meeting during the day and the Shekinah light over the Tent of Meeting at night for some 39 years. We should not think we are okay spiritually because we have the Holy Spirit. Believers in the Messiah are being tested as well to see if they will obey God's commandments.

Yeshua said he will reject those who do not follow the law. Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" It says in 1 John 3:4 NKJV, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Those who are not following the law are living in sin. We need to hear this often because of the false teaching being taught. It is not just by faith as some say (also see James 2:18-20).

As we engage spiritually in life the way we should, we will often engage well with the ordinary things of life and have a deeper sense of who we are and what we need in life. It is as though God touches our life in a multiplicity of ways that we could have never imagined. My uncle who worked on nuclear reactors had a strong spiritual conviction in life and perhaps because of that, he was able to help develop the usability and capability of nuclear reactors at the inception of their use in several ways. He told me that one of the last things he did for NASA was to take apart a nuclear reactor that he had put together for cancer research. It gave him great satisfaction that he was able to be part of that project. Anytime I talked to him, he always made it a point to let me know that his spiritual life was the most important thing in his life.

When we follow God's commandments, we are following God's directions for life. Following God will give us satisfaction in life. Isaiah 58:11 NKJV says, "The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail." God satisfies us in life physically and spiritually. Psalms 107:9 NKJV says, "For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness." Those who have hope in Yehovah will be strengthened. Isaiah 40:31 NKJV says, "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Following God will help us to rise up in life, is renewing so we do not weary in life. We not only experience goodness because we follow truth, it is renewing and satisfying to know that God's commandments are such a blessing and a help in life. Deuteronomy 6:24 NKJV says, "And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, **for our good always, that He might preserve us.**"

We literally experience the goodness of God when we trust in God's commandments. God always has good intentions for mankind. We just need to begin trusting in Him. Psalms 34:8 NKJV says, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!"

Torah Study

After Israel came into the land that God provided for them, they were to present their first fruit to the Cohen (priest) at the place where God chose to place His name and recite a message of humility; the people were to have joy for what God has given them. We too need to be mindful that God is over all and that He provides for us. Every time I pray for my food, I am reminded that God provided for us. Deuteronomy 8:10 NKJV says, "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."

We often read right over the scriptures on the first fruit without thinking; God's people are to make themselves humble before God. We are to confess that we are a pagan Aramean. It teaches us that we were all at one time sinful people. That was our heritage. I remember my dad reciting that scripture about us being Aramean; it was quite startling for me. "We are what?!" It is about our ancestors originally being sinful idolaters and not about our victory over Laban as some say. It teaches us to be a humble people.

Shaul talks about humility in Romans 3:10 NKJV; "There is none righteous, no, not one." He is quoting Psalms 14:1-3 NKJV where it 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. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one."

As we can see, Psalms 14:1-3 is talking about someone who does not believe in God. Shaul uses these verses because it is Jewish practice to be humble. In this case, Shaul is talking about being humble enough to accept the help of the Holy Spirit. Those reading his letter would have understood this. Most people quoting this verse do not share the true context of this verse because they do not understand how to read the Bible in its true context. Shaul means in Romans 3:10 that although we work at doing what is right, we know intuitively that we still make mistakes and sin.

Some people flippantly use Shaul's scripture in Romans 3:10 to say we can do nothing good. That is ridiculous and not true; The Bible says in Genesis 1:31 NKJV, "God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good." Their "nothing good" man-made philosophy is a non-biblical philosophy that they apply to God's word. They are practicing self-abasement which is not biblical. Some religions practice things like whipping themselves or hurting themselves; that is wrong. God asks us to do what is right and good, but we still sin at times. We need to be humble enough to accept that. Humility is to be part of our thinking.

God brought Israel out of Egypt so they could do what is "right and good." 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." They could actually do what is good the Bible says and so can we. When I say we are to do what is "right and good," I am actually quoting scripture.

God also helps us to live right, to be righteous, through the help of the Holy Spirit. We are given the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua to help us live holy lives. If we follow God's commandments with the help of the Holy Spirit, some day we will be part of His future eternal kingdom. Hebrews 12:14 says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

The portion continues; after they presented their first fruit on the Day of Firstfruits, they were to have joy in what Yĕhōvāh had given them and make a statement before the priest that they performed their required giving.

Appropriate financial giving.

We need to talk about this because of the confusion caused by wrong teaching on this subject. On the 3rd and 6th years they were to give 10% to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. So, 1/3rd of a person's regular income should go to this category. We will talk more about this. The other years, except for the 7th year, they took their giving to Jerusalem. They were to give a little over 10% every year. They gave a little over 10% because they were to leave the corners of their field every year for the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. This points to us being amenable to giving to others aside from the tithe. Deuteronomy 15:11 NKJV says, "The poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'" Yeshua quotes this in Matthew 26:11.

After they gave their tithe, they were to say the Firstfruit's prayer and ask for a blessing from God (see Deuteronomy 26:5-10). The prayer contains the real name of God 4 times, Yĕ-hō-vāh. So, ordinary people were to say the real name of God. After giving on the 3rd and 6th years, they were to say another prayer before God and say they have given to the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows which also contains God's real name once.

The prayer probably concludes with Deuteronomy 26:13-15 NKJV which says, "I have not transgressed Your commandments, nor have I forgotten them. I have not eaten any of it when in mourning, nor have I removed any of it for an unclean use, nor given any of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD (Yĕ-hō-vāh) my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. Look down from Your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers." This appears to be a general confession of belief and practice. Unclean use probably refers using it for sin and not giving to the dead refers to pagan practice. While some think it is okay to give liberally to any cause, that is not true.

Helping others is a good thing and we should not limit our giving to the tithe. By helping others,

we get our minds off of ourselves and more in touch with those who are in need. There are a lot of ways we can help others and helping others is an application of the command to treat others as we wish to be treated. 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." We can pass out food to the poor, help others with their home, or in many other ways, physically, emotionally, or spiritually. There are perhaps hundreds of ways to help others. Helping people with their spiritual life is also considered as helping others. We are to also give financially to help others.

Let's talk a little more about financial giving. It is commanded in the Bible and it is 10% of our gross income with slightly more as afore mentioned. You can give more if you so desire. I have heard of one person giving 80% of what they made. Some people give 10% of their net income. If we cannot give 10% of our income, we should aim at getting our finances under control so we are able to give 10% of our gross income. As we just talked about, a portion of our giving is to go to what I call the poor category. We are commanded to help those in need financially. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NKJV says, "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you." We are to give 1/3rd of our 10% giving to this category which includes the poor. Those who do not do this are not keeping the tithe properly.

Also, every 7th year farmers did not plant and did not have any income that year. Those who work in other professions should give 1/3rd of their giving to what I call the poor category. The farmer gave as they had opportunity (as part of a 7-year cycle) and those who are paid should give at an appropriate time shortly after they are paid. They often are producing income throughout the year unlike the farmer who gets paid at harvest time. The Bible uses very stern words for those who deviate from giving to the poor. Proverbs 21:13 NKJV says, "Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard." Of course, we have another 2/3rd of our giving that we are required to give.

We do not have a central Temple that needs support. People should be giving 2/3rd of their giving to ministries or organizations that are providing Messianic teachings, applicable research, or other support groups or ministries that support our Messianic beliefs. Without the support of these groups we would be without the helps we need to keep growing in the truth. I do not believe in supporting groups or organizations that are teaching pagan doctrine. The Bible forbids that (see Deuteronomy 26:14).

In regard to this 2/3rd category of giving, some go to a small group, so it is up to the person who is running the group how they should give. Most small groups leave giving up to the individual. When people give to our group, we take no money for ourselves. Our group divides the money we get with 2/3rd going to Messianic support ministries and 1/3rd to the poor category. Those who teach us are supposed to be supported. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV says, "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the

grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'" We take up special collections for the poor sometimes. We leave it up to those giving to give how the Bible says we should give.

For groups that take up collections, the money should be split up how the Bible says it is to be done, 2/3rd to the support of the ministries category (which could include the expenses of the group) and 1/3 of the giving to the poor category. Leaders must give 1/10th from what they receive for payment and that money is to be given to the chief priest (see Numbers 18:25-26). We have no Messianic chief priest who need money to administer in the Temple, so leaders need to give from what they receive to the support in the ministries category. This is the biblical way we should be giving to the best of my knowledge. In order to give appropriately, we need to manage our finances so that we afford to give the way we should. There are good financial services available to believers. We used Dave Ramsey's ministry for a short period of time to help us with our finances.

One last point about financial giving. The rabbis had the people bringing additional tithes to Jerusalem and the Greek translation of the Torah (the Septuagint) was later modified to refer to this false practice that was enforced by the rabbis. Also, many Christian pastors believe that they are entitled to the entire 10% tithe and of course, that is not biblical.

Back to the Torah portion for today. Every 7th year the land was to rest, and debts were forgiven, see Exodus 23:10-11 and also Deuteronomy Chapter 15. People were to share with others who had need. The shmitah year of course poses a problem for those who need income and food in the 7th year. Farmers now rotate their crops and leave some of their land fallow and therefore give their land rest. Not leaving land fallow makes the land barren and unable to grow anything. Perhaps this is why God had them do this. Some Jews follow a complex concept of shmitah; one of the things they do is to only buy from Gentiles on the 7th year. God's commands were never intended to be complex.

There is a lot that can be talked about regarding the shmitah year. Canceling all kinds of debt could make it impossible for a person to own a house because it would call for full payment within 7 years. That is because all debt then becomes relative to the 7-year shmitah. Owning a house and making payments is considered an asset and not so much a debt. So, it does not apply to the shmitah year. Perhaps only incurring other debt to last over 7 years would be an applied practice for the law of shmitah. Certainly, having good foresight and careful money management would be a good way to apply shmitah. Setting proper borrowing limits would enable people to keep a short-term clean slate financially.

Obviously, lenders are not practicing proper borrowing limits, and the individual would need to take charge of their own limits. Taking some extra time off on the shmitah year could be a way to observe the resting of the land, but the commandment is not a rest from work; the land is at rest. Most certainly, rotating crops would be a proper application of the practice of shmitah. We should not overthink this commandment and make it convoluted in practice. We do not live in an all-farming society anymore as they did. Farmers can find other ways to provide for themselves in a year when the land is at rest. We call this diversifying.

This portion goes on to say, by agreeing to obey God's commands and be holy, God would make them His treasured people. This is often mentioned in the Old Testament portion (see Exodus 9:5; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18; and Psalms 135:4) and it is also quoted in 1 Peter 2:9. Therefore, Messianic believers are also God's treasured people when we obey God's commandments. They were to write the Torah on stones on Mount Ebal after they crossed over, set up an altar, make offerings, and rejoice. Archeologists have found Mount Ebal, and it is closed to the public because Muslims shoot at the people going there. It is not near Jericho like some think.

After they crossed over to the promised land, curses were to be given from Mount Ebal and blessings from Mount Gerizim. Then Moshe told them cursed is anyone who makes an idol, mistreats their parents, moves a landmark, mistreats the blind, or pervert's justice. Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with his father's wife, or an animal, or his sister. Cursed is anyone who takes a bribe or does not agree to do the Torah.

This portion talks about the curses for not doing what God commands and the blessings for obeying God. We also can be cursed if we are not obeying God's commandments. Those who are willfully sinning can incur consequences for their sin which includes sickness, losses of various kinds, and God releasing His protection over them. Continuing intentional sin will also result in the loss of eternal life.

Understand though that Yeshua said we will all experience trouble; it is wrong to think that just because someone is having trouble that it is something that they are doing that is causing that. Yeshua said in John 16:33 NKJV, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." We know that living godly and good lives blesses our lives even though we all may suffer troubles at times.

We all suffer, but doing wrong often brings more troubles. Rabbi Shaul (Paul) also associates curses with sin in the New Testament portion. Romans 1:26-27 NKJV says, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." Shaul says they received a penalty for their sin. He says it was something that believers saw happening to those who were committing these sins. Even in our modern society, 25% of homosexuals have the deadly disease AIDS. As of this writing, 31 million people have died from AIDS; most of them participants in sexual sin. They have brought this terrible consequence on themselves. Stay away from sin. Another example can be made for those who follow the Atheist, Humanistic, or Communist Religions. In the 20th century more than 100 million people were murdered by these religions to enforce adherence to them. The people of these countries chose the evil doctrine of these religions thinking they would have a better country under their doctrine, but instead became the slaves to their murderous societies.

If the people obeyed God's law, God would bless them wherever they are; He will bless them in

conception, against their enemies, with their stored food, their livestock, and rain. They will be an exalted nation. If they disobey God's commands, they will lose these benefits and they will be struck with sickness, plague, war, loss, and blight; they will be destroyed and they will be scattered. The people respond and affirm various commandments in this portion. Notice that the 10 commandments are not all of God's commandments. Moshe closes this portion by relating about their time in the desert and by telling them that they should obey God's commands so they will prosper.

The Haftarah for Ki Tavo is Isaiah 60:1-22. This Haftarah portion says that the nations will see the glory of God through Israel and that the nations will acknowledge that and bless Israel. The nations that do not will perish. It says shalom will be Israel's leader, they will do what is right, and God will be their light. Anyone can choose to allow the true God to be their leader and join the ancient believers of Israel and ancient Gentile believers as followers of the true God.

Isaiah 56:3-8 NKJV says,

Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD speak, saying, 'The LORD has utterly separated me from His people'; nor let the eunuch say, 'Here I am, a dry tree.' for thus says the LORD: 'To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. 'Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants – everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant – even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.' The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, 'Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.

Technically, those who accept God's commandments and the Messiah Yeshua become part of those of Israel who accept the true God. We could say we are, "of Israel." I am Jewish and a descendent of Aaron. The true believers join the true believers of Israel and other believers from all of time.

Ezekiel 47:21-23 NKJV says,

Thus you shall divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. It shall be that you will divide it by lot as an inheritance for yourselves, and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall be that **in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give him his inheritance,**" says the Lord GOD.

Those who are rejected by their old false church are accepted by God. We could pick our tribe it says. Romans 2:29 NKJV says, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart.**" Shaul of course is referring to keeping the Old Testament law.

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 NKJV says,

What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to **keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good**? Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. **Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart**, and be stiff-necked no longer.

This Haftarah portion is talking about a future time when the Prince of Peace (namely Sar Shalom) will be their leader (the Prince of Peace or Sar Shalom is another name attributed to Yeshua the Messiah). Likewise in Revelation 22:5, Yochanan says that God will be their light in the new Jerusalem.

Even in the present we see God's blessings on those who do what is right and good. Someday those who love God will be with Him forever and experience God's goodness and blessings forever.

Isaiah 60:1-3 CJB from the Haftarah says, "Arise, shine [Yerushalayim], for your light has come, the glory of ADONAI has risen over you. For although darkness covers the earth and thick darkness the peoples; on you ADONAI will rise; over you will be seen his glory. Nations will go toward your light and kings toward your shining splendor."

When I read this, I sometimes think about the pillars of light that we can see sometimes coming down from the sky. I enjoy looking at amazing sunsets, clouds, and beautiful skies. The pillars of light sometimes give me thoughts of God's divine light coming down from heaven. It is a nice spiritual picture, isn't it? Do we actually allow God's light into our lives? That is what is important.

For fun, what kinds of things in the natural can sometimes make us think about God?

Pillars of light – God giving His light from heaven.

A rainbow – God's promises are true.

A dry field – life without God is barren and difficult.

A beautiful sunset – in the end, we will be blessed for being faithful to God.

Flowers – God's creation is beautiful and amazing.

What other things in nature might relate to God or make you think about God?

There are many important scriptures in Deuteronomy. It is perhaps the most important book of doctrine in the Bible. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." Soon we will be finished with the portions for this year, and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is near. Now is a good time to inspect your life and attitudes and make yourself into a true follower of God and His commandments.

Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts.
(We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)

We are to recite a statement of humility on the Day of Firstfruits. We are to declare to God we have given the proper tithes (10 %) to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow on the 3rd and 6th years and the Temple on the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th years. The Temple is not standing so we should give to those who teach and lead us, to our congregation, to teaching organizations that are helping us, and the like instead of the Temple. We should keep track of our giving so that it reflects the above. Deuteronomy 26:2-10, 13.

We are not to eat of the tithes in Jerusalem while in mourning or while unclean. Deuteronomy 26:14.

We are to be holy. Deuteronomy 28:9

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

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

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

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

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.