



### Names

Kefa – Peter

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

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Shlomo – Solomon

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

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

Y'hudah – Judah

Yochanan – John

Yosef – Joseph

### Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

Miketz – 10th Torah portion

The portion for this week is Miketz and means, "at the end of." The portion Miketz begins with Pharaoh having two dreams that were given to him from God.

God the creator is a God of comfort and peace. We can see the goodness of God through his good creation. Psalms 145:15-16 NKJV says, "The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." God designed how all of nature works so that every creature can survive. It is not the survival of the fittest. God designed the earth to provide for every living thing.

Psalms 104:10-15 NKJV says,

He sends the springs into the valleys; they flow among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart.

Just like God has given every living thing the ability to take care of themselves, God has given mankind the ability to take care of ourselves, so we have what we need for life. God did not leave mankind without instructions for life. Before the written law was written down, Noah kept God's instructions, His commandments. The bible says he walked with God. Genesis 6:9 NKJV says, "Noah walked with God." To walk with God is to keep God's commandments. Deuteronomy 28:9-10 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**. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD;" (also see, Deuteronomy 5:33, 8:6, 10:12-13, 11:22, 13:4, 19:9, 26:17, and 30:16 where it says to walk with God is to keep God's commandments).

So, God created everything to work together so that we could have comfort and peace in life and

that includes His commandments, His instructions for life so that we could do well in life. Deuteronomy 5:33 NKJV says, "**You shall walk** in all the ways which the LORD your **God has commanded you**, that you may live and **that it may be well with you**, and that you may prolong your days in the land." Notice that in Deuteronomy 28:9-10 that we will be God's special people, if we walk with God. Since God wants what is best for us, when a person keeps God's Old Testament commandments, God is pleased to see that we are doing what is best for ourselves. God is a good God. Exodus 34:6 NKJV says, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abounding in goodness** and truth."

Spiritual powers are trying to infiltrate the world. These spiritual powers are against mankind and try to get people to disobey God's instructions. Isaiah 14:12-13 NKJV says, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you **who weakened the nations!** For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, **I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.**" Sometimes we call these spirit beings the devil. They are spirits that rebelled against God; **they want to be God** and are therefore out **to destroy God's creation and people's lives.** So, following God helps us in life, but these evil devil spirit beings are out to destroy peoples' lives and the earth.

We need to resist doing what is wrong and follow God's instructions and so bring us in harmony, in peace with God's creation "**that it may be well with you.**" Not doing things God's way is against how we were designed to live. James 4:7-8 NKJV says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you **double-minded.**" Double-minded is not being able to control yourself. It is deliberate sin. When we do not follow God's good commandments we sin. 1 John 3:4 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." We need to repent, change and stop sinning and God will forgive us. Psalms 103:12-13 NKJV says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him." If we respect our good God for who He is (fear God), change and stop sinning, and ask for forgiveness, God will forgive us.

When we sin, we put ourselves and our ideas on how to live over how our creator God wants us to live. That was the mistake Eve made. She listened to the lie of the devil who spoke through a snake. The devil told Eve the same lie that the devil believes. Genesis 3:5 NKJV says, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." People will say that we know that snakes cannot talk. It is a story. We use stories all the time to teach others. They are a learning aid. These people who are critical of this Bible story do not seem to understand simple communication skills. Perhaps you could help them.

We feel safe because we have set boundaries in life. Often, we understand there are certain things in life that will mess us up for good. So, through God's commandments we can have a better life when we do things how the creator designed us instead of following detrimental behaviors. Psalms 34:14 NKJV says, "Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. To do good is to keep God's good commandments. They are "right and good" it says in Deuteronomy 6:17-18. We started out by saying that we can a better life through God's commandments, therefore doing what is "right and good" brings us peace. Also, doing evil will

separate us from God's good future kingdom for eternity. Psalms 37:27 NKJV says, "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore." Keeping God's commandments brings God's goodness into our life, pleases God, and get us into God's future kingdom. God will judge every person for how they live. Psalms 9:7 NKJV says, "But the LORD shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment." Psalms 37:18 NKJV says, "The LORD knows the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever."

Now is the time to obey God. Be patient with our teaching and listen to our encouragement so that you will be encouraged to follow God the way you should. Deuteronomy 6:7 NKJV says, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." Understand that when we encourage you to keep God's Old Testament commandments that we are doing that for your own good even though we share some things frequently. God gave us His commandments for our good, for our 'wellbeing' and that is what we want for you. There was a very good historical economics teacher at Harvard that I used to enjoy listening to. He would use several examples to make his points and that helped me to understand what he was saying. Repetition can be a good thing.

Encouragement to keep God's commandments, following God the way we should, and obeying God will help us in life. By the way, we are commanded to do that, so make it a point to let people know why you are encouraging them. Tell them you want what is best for them, that you care about them, or you want them to have a good life, etcetera. Think of ways to express how you care about them or others. Joshua 1:8 NKJV says, "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."

Keep God's good commandments that are able to help us in life and make us prosperous and successful. Yeshua came to encourage us to keep God's Old Testament commandments. That is why he said in Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV says, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, **till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law.**" In John 10, Yeshua is then referring to what it says in Joshua 1:8, namely that the law will help you to be "prosperous" and have "good success." John 10:10 NKJV says, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." Of course, Yeshua also gives us the Holy Spirit which is "another helper" (see John 14:15-17). The first helper is the law, God's good commandments.

### **Here is more to consider.**

Make God's peace penetrate our life to the point it becomes part of our life. Doing so helps insulate us from the harshness of life and forms a barrier to worldly thinking.

There are many ways in life to achieve peace. We desire peace in our everyday relationships and in the activities we participate in every day; we desire peace in those areas of life where we encounter requirements and limitations; and we desire peace with new or different people or activities that we encounter. We interact in many ways with life, but as believers, we are to interact and apply our spiritual know-how to life.

Psalms 34:12-18 NKJV says,  
 Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see good?  
 Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil  
 and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the  
 righteous, and His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against  
 those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The  
 righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.  
 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a  
 contrite spirit.

Don't we all want a good life? Do not use your speech for evil; do not mislead others. Do what is "right and good" in God's eyes and do not do what is wrong. Remember, doing what is "right and good" is to keep God's commandments (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). Doing evil is to not keep God's commandments because God knows what is best for us, cares about us, and has our best interests at heart. Doing what is "right and good" often makes for a better life, a life that is more at peace.

When people don't do what is right, they bring evil into the world and to themselves. God is the provider for the whole world, but God especially helps those who are righteous (righteous means to do what is right) and God is not far from those who listen to Him and those who are willing to do what is right. A "right and good" spiritual life requires that we live our life God's ways and not our own ways.

We look different to those who do not know God. We have a different appearance, much like we can have a good or evil appearance depending on how we dress or act. If we do not act like we are God's people, then we are not His people. We need to be enthusiastic and zealous about being God's people and acting like His people. Romans 12:9-12 NKJV says, "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." Cling to what is good, be kind, be diligent, fervent spiritually, and pray.

Learn to correct your values so they line up with God's light.

Some people do not think there are any true values for life, but we know there is a wrong way and a right way in almost every area of life. When I was little, my older brother told me not to put my finger in an electrical socket. I was shocked to find out that he was right. It did not feel good and it was one of the many lessons I had to learn in life. It makes sense that in addition to common sense, we need values for life from our good and all-knowing God who knows what is best for us.

So, we need to do our best to line up our life with what God teaches us. When the Bible uses the word light, it is referring to our wisdom and understanding we get from God's commandments. Let's read the often-quoted verse about God's wisdom and understanding that we get from His commandments.

Deuteronomy 4:6-8 NKJV says,  
 Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your  
 understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say,

"Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

What about God's word is a light to us? It says in Psalms 119 that God's light are God's judgments, namely, they are God's statutes, His commandments.

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.

Psalms 119:111-112 NKJV says, "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end.

The psalmist is committed to do what is right and keep God's judgments. The law is a heritage for his life; it is the legacy of his life and his lifestyle. He is passing on something good, and he is committed to keep God's commandments "to the very end." We should all be like him and want to keep God's commandments to the very end of our life.

A good starting point are the 10 commandments. Keep them and learn how they can be applied to life. Keep God's feasts. Perhaps you have heard that they are just Jewish feasts but that is not what the Bible says. Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **these are My feasts.**" God's feasts are for all His people both in the Old Testament portion and the New Testament portion era.

Learn and keep the other commandments in the Torah, which are the first 5 books of the Bible. For example, it says we are to put a parapet wall on top of our buildings for safety.

Deuteronomy 22:8 NKJV says, "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it." God wants us to be concerned with safety. We should be safety minded in all we do.

So, we should have handrails on our stairs and be committed to safety both for ourselves, our family, and others. Do not be too proud to do what is right and be safe. I remember not wanting to wear safety glasses at work because the other workers did not want to wear them, but if I hadn't, I would have lost an eye from a large flying piece of hot metal. Being safety minded would be a good example of applying God's commandments without adding unnecessary commands to God's commandments. People will sometimes take chances with safety, but one slip up can result in an injury. Sometimes, safety measures will only take you a few seconds to do.

Adding commandments inappropriately is wrong. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV teaches us not to add misapplied or tedious commands to God's commandments: "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."

I have put just a few of the things that I am going to share now in our Torah teaching for today.

The Bible says that we can end up following made up commandments instead of following God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Also, consider this. If a person is not following God's commandments, they must be making up their own set of man-made rules for life instead of doing what God's says. It said in Isaiah that their heart is then far from God. The same can be true for those who keep the extra man-made commandments of theology or religion. People can be so consumed about following a man-made commandment that they forget to keep God's commandments.

I have included a special section that talks about some of these issues following our Torah study for today.

Also, in this Messianic age, we have the Holy Spirit as our helper. Yeshua said that God's commandments are our helper, and He gave us another helper for life, the Holy Spirit (see John 14:15-16). Shaul commands us to desire spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." These gifts of the Holy Spirit are for our benefit and are good. Yeshua said in Luke 11:13 NKJV, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" If you haven't been taught about these spiritual gifts, then you have not heard all you are supposed to have heard.

Luke 24:49 NIV says, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you **have been clothed with power** from on high." We are to look like God's people. So, do not try to look weird as some do who dishonor the Holy Spirit, but be filled with goodness of God both from His commandments and the Holy Spirit. **We are to be clothed with the Holy Spirit** which is the power of God at work in us. Yeshua said in Acts 1:8 NKJV, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. The work of the Holy Spirit in our life is also necessary in this Messianic era. Begin learning and growing in all the spiritual fundamentals of life. We talked a little about one of the basic principles for a godly life last week. We need to trust God; we need to have faith in God. I will talk about what is involved with faith some more in our Torah teaching for today. Keeping God's Old Testament commandments is a basic doctrine. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." As we can see, receiving the Holy Spirit is another basic doctrine of faith in this temporary Messianic era. There is still a future era to be fulfilled.

We need to direct our life and hold onto what is good.

Remember, we talked about "wisdom and understanding" referring to God's commandments (see Deuteronomy 4:6). So, when these verses in Proverbs talks about wisdom and understanding, it is talking about God's commandments. Happy is the person who finds wisdom and understanding. It is not our wisdom and understanding, but the wisdom and understanding God has given us. Happy is the person who holds onto God's commandments and happy are those who retain God's commandments.

Proverbs 3:13-18 NKJV says,

Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for

her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.

It goes without saying that we need to act like we believe. Ya'akov says that we need to do more than just hear what God says but do what God says. (Ya'akov is James' real name).

James 1:21-24 NKJV says,  
Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

If you are a believer in God, act like you believe in His commandments. Get rid of the evil and sin in your life. Do what God tells us to do and do not forget who you are supposed to be. We are God's children if we act like God's children. We love each other by keeping God's commandments. 1 John 5:2-4 NKJV says, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world."

We are to overcome worldly sin. God's commandments are not a burden like some say. They are from a good God who knows what is best and wants what is best for us. Amos 5:14 NKJV says, "Seek good and not evil, that you may live," So, keep God's good commands and do not live in sin.

Learn to hold fast to truth. Put boundaries around your life in order to keep God's commandments. (Construct your life so that you keep God's commandments.)

Most anything that we want to do well requires that we work at it so that we get good at it. We do not become good at something without applying ourselves. When I first began using a hammer, I had to hit the nail 9 to 10 times before I drove the nail in. The person who was training me told me how to hold the hammer, to hit the nail on its head, and told me not to hit my fingers. I then watched him do it and within a short time and a little bit of practice, I was driving the nail in with just a few strikes. We do not show our love for God by trying and telling God we cannot do it. Work at loving God and doing what God says to do.

We are to love God the Bible says. We are to make every effort possible to love God and how do we love God? Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." This is a good scripture to memorize. We love God when we keep His commandments because He knows what is best for us and wants what is best for us. We are to also diligently teach our children. We are to teach our children to do what is right at every opportunity. We should even set up physical reminders to help us keep God's commandments like scriptures on our doors and gates. I put scriptures on my doors and gates inside a mezuzah in order to keep them from deteriorating. I

often put a scripture on my refrigerator with a magnet and change it from time to time. Pursue God in your life and in all you do.

I am not telling you to keep all the extra fences around God's commandments that some keep to help them keep God's commandments. They are often just following commandments of people and not God. We should put up boundaries though that will help us keep God's commandments, especially if we need these boundaries. I start my day praying. I have a long prayer list, and I know that if I do not get my prayers done before I begin working, I will often be too tired to say my prayers later.

### **Here are some of my boundaries:**

I will recite scriptures that apply to my situation.

For example, if someone gives me their pen to use, I make sure I do not steal it by deliberately thinking to make sure I give it back. Or, if I get angry, I reply in a quiet manner like it says in Proverbs 15:1 NKJV which says, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." I also often pray about the situation that I got angry about.

I do not listen to secular music.

I stopped listening to secular music a long time ago because many of the words were against what the scriptures teach. I remember going past a secular group playing outdoors in town years ago and I thought, "Wow, are they great musicians." Then I listened to what they were singing about, and it was terrible and disgusting. I was reminded why I stopped listening to those types of musicians and singers.

I am careful to remain sexually pure.

I do not stare at the opposite sex, I am never alone with the opposite sex, I do not stare at pictures of the opposite sex, and I avoid web sites that have any hint of attracting me there with alluring pictures.

Single people need to be careful when dating to not to be in compromising situations. I know of someone who is dating, and they hold hands with a handkerchief between them. I am not sure that is necessary (it sounds a little weird), but use caution in your relationship, communicate that you both want to be pure, and try not to be alone together in your home for any extended period of time. Get to know each other and learn to respect each other.

I reject any thoughts that come to my mind that are wrong.

If I think about anything that the Bible says is wrong, I reject that thought and refuse to continue to think about it. If the thought comes back, I think about how I could do something the right way. If I get upset with someone, I try to be kind anyway. You can do this with almost any temptation. Use wisdom.

On Shabbat, I refuse to work.

I tell myself that I will not even empty a waste basket. One of my habits is to do whatever needs to be done at the moment. I stop doing that on Shabbat. I make it a true day of rest. I also will not do hobbies that require work. I suggest making a list of



recreational activities that require work and avoiding them. The ancient Rabbis made up a lot of restrictive commandments because people were apt to do things on Shabbat that required work. Is flying a plane for recreation on Shabbat wrong? Get the plane ready ahead of time, and put a limit on the time you will fly. Do not make it into work.

Also, watch out for man-made nonsense when applying God's commandments. Turning on a switch to start something is not the same as the extensive work needed to kindle a flame. Not flipping on a switch is one of the ridiculous man-made laws made up by the rabbis. Sometimes following these man-made laws ends up being work so that they disobey God by their man-made law. Anything man-made can become an idol. Isaiah 58:13 NKJV says, "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words." I tend to be conservative in my approach to Shabbat, but not ridiculous.

What are the areas of life that you need to be especially careful with? Do you need to set up a boundary in your life in that area? These boundaries are ways to help us do what is right. Doing what is right is the commandment. The boundaries we make are not commandments, but we can use them to help us keep God's commandments. Take your boundaries seriously. Do not begin making up man-made commandments and impose them on yourself or impose them on others.

I remember when I was young that I would tell ladies that I wanted to remain pure. To my astonishment, some of them decided not to continue dating me. I said the same thing to my present wife when we were dating, and I was pleased to find out that she wanted the same thing. I wanted a wife that took her spiritual life seriously.

Being at peace helps insulate us from the harshness of life and forms a barrier to worldly thinking. The best way to be at peace is to trust in God and keep His commandments. Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever." Learn to correct your values so they line up with God's light. We need to correct our values so they line up with God's commandments which are a light for life. 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.

We need to direct our life and hold onto what is good. God's commandments are "A tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her;" Proverbs 3:18 NKJV. Learn to hold fast to truth. Put boundaries around your life in order to keep God's commandments. Do not follow ridiculous man-made commands, be sensible. People end up following man-made ideals instead of what God teaches. Use sensible extra precautions to avoid sin.

## **Torah Study**

Miketz means, "at the end of." The portion Miketz begins with Pharaoh having two dreams. One dream is about 7 good looking cows getting eaten by 7 lean looking cows and the other is about 7 fully ripe and good looking ears of corn getting eaten up by 7 bad looking ears of corn.

Pharaoh is upset and asks all his magicians and wise men if they can interpret the dreams, but no one can. We should probably understand that they tried but could not interpret the dream to Pharaoh's satisfaction.

It has been two years since the cup bearer returned to Pharaoh's court and he then remembers Yosef interpreting his dream and it coming to pass. It appears that Yosef is then brought before Pharaoh after being made to look appropriate. Yosef tells Pharaoh that the dream was repeated twice because it is going to happen. God can repeat things either to get our attention or to establish something. God told Pharaoh that there will be 7 good years followed by 7 years of famine and that Pharaoh should find someone who will manage and gather food during the good years.

Pharaoh says to his officials that Yosef would be good for the job because the Spirit of God is in him, and they pick Yosef to be in charge. Pharaoh gives Yosef the authority of second in command when Yosef was only thirty years old and gives Yosef his signet ring and the people bowed down before him. How is it that Yosef is given so much authority so quickly?

If you remember, Yosef was in charge of Potipher's household before he was unjustly accused of sexual sin and Potipher was in the court of Pharaoh and in charge of the king's guard. Yosef did a good job for Potipher, so it is likely similar to the cupbearer who was restored to his position. Yosef was restored to his position only this time instead of to Potipher, Yosef is put in charge of Pharaoh's affairs.

When Yosef was jailed, he was put in the royal dungeon. That is why Pharaoh's cup bearer ended up there. Yosef was put in charge of the prisoners, so he proved himself responsible even while in jail. When Yosef was called to appear before Pharaoh to interpret his dreams, they made Yosef appear presentable. It is a sign of respect to be attired appropriately. Those in charge of the prison probably dressed him up to look like an Egyptian.

It is interesting that Pharaoh seems to be familiar with the power of the true God. Perhaps some of Shem's (Melchizedek's) followers had introduced Pharaoh or his family to the true God because Salem is not that far from Egypt. The Egyptians believed in many gods, so Yosef's God was also a God to them among many. Salem is the ancient name for Jerusalem where Shem lives (he is also known in the ancient writings as Melchizedek). Shem was the son of Noah, and he had a school of prophecy that worshiped the true God that he called El Elyon, God Most High.

#### Yeshua gives believers the associated gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament portion, Shaul tells us to seek God's spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy." There are believers in Messiah that say we are not to prophecy. They contradict the Bible. Are believers in the Messiah somehow less capable than those in the Old Testament portion? Of course they are not less powerful; it says in Acts 2 there will be lots of prophecy in this Messianic age. Acts 2:17-18 NKJV refers to Joel 2:28-29 and the Messianic age we now live in: "I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy." The Holy

Spirit and its associated gifts are available to the believer in the Messiah in this era.

I should also point out that Yosef does not complain about his unjust imprisonment but sticks to the task when he appears before Pharaoh. He instead points out the necessity for someone to address the problem at hand. He conveys God's message and the need for Egypt to respond or face a serious upcoming situation. He gives credit to God and not himself.

Yosef gathers grain for seven years before the famine hits and then sells the grain to the people needing it during the famine. Jacob's family hears there is grain in Egypt and Yosef's brothers go there to trade for some grain, but do not take Benjamin the first time they go to Egypt.

Yosef just happened to be at the place where they traded for grain when some of his brothers arrived. He probably knew that his brothers would have to come and get food. God had told him years before in a dream that his brothers would bow down before him, and he expected that to happen. He was now in the position for this revelation from God to take place.

He didn't tell them who he was. He seems prepared to meet them and even has an interpreter. He accuses them of being spies perhaps to find out more about them and perhaps to see if they mistreated their younger brother as they mistreated him. Yosef tells them they must bring their youngest brother if they need to come back. In his vision, all the brothers bow before him, so he expected to see all his brothers. He keeps Simon in prison. We would assume that he would keep the first-born brother Reuben. The brothers did not know that Yosef could understand them, and he finds out Reuben intended to save him. So, he puts Simon in prison instead of Reuben. Yosef's brothers returned home and also find the money in their packs that they gave for the grain.

After they had depleted all the food they had traded for, Yosef's brothers returned to Egypt, and they brought their younger brother Benjamin with them as Yosef had demanded. Ya'akov was very upset about Benjamin going with them, and Judah says that he would be responsible and take his place if anything should happen. We speculate that Judah, the 4<sup>th</sup> child, becomes the brothers' spokesperson because Reuben, the firstborn, slept with Bilhah, and Simon and Levi, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 12 male children, had killed the men of Shechem. We are told in the ancient writings that Jacob did not approve of what Simon and Levi did.

They bring gifts to Yosef and also bring the money they found that they should have originally paid for the grain. When they arrive, Yosef sees his brother Benjamin and he is overwhelmed emotionally; he decides to feed his brothers. He seats them by birth order. Yosef returns Simon to them. In Genesis 43:32, it tells us that the Egyptians felt themselves superior to other people groups and would not eat with Yosef's brothers. More specifically, the Egyptians worshipped sheep and we know the Israelites ate sheep. So, the pagans did not want to eat with these them. Later, Yosef will make sure that they do not offend the Egyptians and has his family be careful to not reveal they raise sheep. It does not appear that Yosef is looking for revenge and is willing to come to his own conclusions about his brothers.

Being attached to our own conclusions and the problem of developing sinful concepts.

Along with God giving us a free will, there seems to be a strong level of attachment to our opinions, or we would not be able to come to conclusions. Once we become convinced of

something, we are not likely to change our minds. For example, many people call the resurrection of Yeshua, Easter, the bare-breasted goddess of fertility, simply because that is what they think Easter refers to. They use a despicable name for the resurrection of Yeshua because they are convinced somehow that it is the correct name. I suggest just calling it the resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus).

While it is important to hold onto truth. It is also important to be humble enough to accept truth. That is why God tells us to be a humble people, first to God and also towards others because of the convictions we can develop, either true or not true. Also, Leviticus 19:33-34 tells us that we are to also love the stranger as ourselves so that we are able to look past non-sinful differences and see these non-sinful differences in that way.

From a drive to protect what we perceive to be true can come all kinds of sin. Superiority was used by Hitler to claim Aryans are superior and he used that and other concepts to get rid of and kill all those who had perceived flaws. That included anyone who differed from his views. 11 million people were put to death by this evil system including 6 million Jews.

We can convince ourselves even of evil concepts like Religious Communism and of other autocratic type governments which were responsible for over 100 million murders of their own people in the 1900s. Somehow, people can become convinced that the Communist Religion's ideal of equity must be forced on people. People often accept the ideals of these murderous systems without even knowing the evil it produces. While we are all equal in God's sight, we do not all act in equal ways. It is not just to treat someone who works hard with the same equity as someone who is lazy.

We can become strongly attached to almost any idea or concept, even ridiculous ones. Religious Atheists, those who do not believe in God, often develop their own strong religious like belief system. One famous atheist that I know of suggests some of the same things that Hitler believed in. That is why our beliefs need to be based on something outside of our own like the truths from an all-knowing and good God.

Even Atheists would be better off believing in the Bible because it has been proven to produce a person who has better reasoning ability. For example, the commandments not to murder and to not to covet would reduce significantly human abuse and war. That is only two of the commandments in the Bible. Think about what observing more of God's commandments could accomplish.

Our reasoning of course can apply to any concept. That includes our reasoning about other countries, other belief systems, other economies, and other governments. People tend to think their own reasoning, their own country, their own economy, their own ideas on life, etcetera are superior to those of other people even if history reveals their reasoning could come from a dangerous and faulty system. Even the wealthy people of Russia thought Communism would be good for their society. The Communist ideals of Russia must now be perpetuated by constant propaganda, oppression of the people, and murder.

Back to the Torah. Yosef agrees to give them food and send them back and he orders their packs filled with supplies. He has his servants put a goblet in Benjamin's pack. After they start

their journey back, he orders their belongings to be searched, and they find the goblet in Benjamin's pack. The Egyptians priests used a divination cup, so Yosef used the missing cup as an excuse to search their belongings. In no way did Yosef practice divination. As we have talked about many times, the ancient believers passed on God's commandments verbally and divination is a sin. Sometimes people misunderstand things like this in the Bible and because of that, some think that some of the sins in the Bible are okay. Yosef was pretending to be Egyptian perhaps to find out what his brothers had been up to because of the sin they had committed towards him. He was not committing divination, that it disgusting and contemptable to God (see Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

As the portion ends, Yosef tells his brothers that they can return, but Benjamin has to stay there and be his slave. We see in the next portion that Judah is acting as spokesman for the brothers, and he offers to give himself for Benjamin. Just as Yeshua gave himself for us, Judah is a Messianic type who was willing to give himself for Benjamin.

Yosef's success can clearly be attributed to God. It was not an easy rode of success that took 13 years, but God made Yosef to prosper because he listened to God. It appears that Pharaoh, besides probably knowing of Yosef's capabilities, also sees that Yosef hears from God and is willing to use him to prosper all of Egypt. This should remind us that listening to God is the best way to live and to bring the blessings of God to us and others in every way in life; physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

*Yosef's success also came from God.*

Yosef brings deliverance to his family and the whole region because he hears from God, he is another messianic type because of the deliverance the whole region experienced. The Messiah Yeshua also gives believers in the Messiah blessings and deliverance. Yosef and Yeshua were both rejected, but both end up saving others. There are many similarities between Yosef and the Messiah Yeshua. Both are favored by their fathers. Yeshua's Father was God who created life in Miryam's womb.

The Haftarah for Miketz is 1 Kings 3:15-4:1; Zechariah 2:14-4:7 is the Haftarah read during Chanukkah. In the Haftarah for Miketz in 1 Kings, King Shlomo had just been given wisdom and a long life by God. Like God helped Yosef, God is going to help Shlomo and give him wisdom and understanding. Two women come to Shlomo and are fighting over a child. He is able to trick the woman into revealing who the real mother is, and the people hear about Shlomo's wisdom. Just as through God's Spirit, Yosef was to become a great leader in Egypt, Shlomo through God's Spirit became a great king with wisdom. 1 Kings 3:28 CJB says, "All Israel heard of the decision the king had made and held the king in awe, for they saw that God's wisdom was in him, enabling him to render justice properly."

Zechariah is read for the Haftarah during Hanukkah and we are presently observing Hanukkah. It is not a commanded feast. We choose to observe it because of God's great deliverance of the believers at that time from the oppression of the Greeks. It begins by saying that someday God will live among His people Israel and also that many nations will believe in the true God. Obviously, this is a prophecy about the Messiah Yeshua who not only came and lived among mankind but will someday come back and reign as our king.

**I am including a teaching on,  
What are the Basics of our Messianic Faith  
 before our concluding prayer.**

**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.)**

It appears that Yosef is brought before Pharaoh after being made to look appropriate. Conforming to appropriate attire is a way of respecting others. Genesis 41:14.

It is up to God to give the interpretation of a dream or vision. When a believer receives a dream or vision, the interpretation of a dream or vision is given to the person who receives it. That information may just be knowledge or sometimes there is accompanying wisdom that needs to be acted on. The knowledge that Yosef received was about the impending famine. The wisdom was to prepare by collecting food. We may seek additional confirmation at times; especially for big endeavors as was the case with Pharaoh's two dreams. God gave an unbeliever a dream, but it required a believer to interpret it unless God chooses to give the unbeliever the understanding. We are to never make up our own ideas and say it was from God. Genesis 41:16, 32-36.

It is good practice to find out others' intentions as Yosef did with his brothers in this portion. This should especially be done for big decisions. For example, I made sure my future wife was a committed believer before I married her.

The following is a special section on some of the basics of our Messianic faith. I sometimes use some of these concepts in my other teachings so please be patient with any repetition. I hope you enjoy this important teaching.

**Some of the Basics of the Messianic Faith  
 By Moshe Schwab**

This important teaching is well needed to help Messianic believers work through what is proper faith, doctrine, and practice. First, what does Christianity believe about faith and practice? A lot of Christians believe that all we need to do to be saved is to have faith. In this short teaching on faith and basic Messianic beliefs, I will talk about some of the main principles or basics of our faith that should shape our faith and practice. We have at times shared briefly on this topic, but this teaching is intended to go a little more in depth. It is by no means all that needs to be shared. Since this is about the basics of our faith that was once delivered to the early believers, we would expect to hear about faith frequently. We will begin by addressing the "just by faith" thinking.

Faith in God by itself is not good enough to be part of God's future kingdom according to the

Bible. James 2:19 NKJV says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe." The devil is going to the lake of fire and brimstone. Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. The devil believes there is a God but demonstrates no actual trust in God.

Even Shaul says that the unrighteous, those who live in sin, will not be in God's future kingdom. He then goes on to mention sins that are in the Torah or implied by the Torah. The Bible says that God's commandments are "right and good," (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). Righteousness means to do what is right and keep God's commandments, and therefore unrighteousness is to not keep God's commandments. Sins of the flesh are unrighteous acts and are sin. So, these scriptures tell us that those who do not keep God's commandments will not be in God's future kingdom. Shaul (Paul) says, "Do not be deceived." If you have been taught that you are righteous because you only have faith, you have been deceived.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says,

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says,

The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

It says that Shaul told them before that sin will keep people out of God's kingdom. Ya'akov (James) also says "Do not be deceived."

James 1:14-16 NKJV says,

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

The Bible plainly says that it takes more than faith to be saved. Sin "brings forth death," namely, spiritual death.

Shaul said in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "We establish the law." That does not sound like the law is done away with. We have a lot more evidence that it is not just by faith. Yochanan (John) said that not keeping the law is sin.

1 John 3:4 NKJV says,

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. Verse 8 says, "He who sins is of the devil."

So those who do not keep the law are living in sin according to the Bible. Yeshua said that He will reject those who do not keep the law.

Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Why is there confusion on this matter? It could be from misunderstanding the text, a problem with the translation (the translators are imperfect people), or even in the text itself because we

only have copies of the originals and no originals.

Kefa (Peter) says that people misunderstand Shaul to their own destruction. There were problems with people misinterpreting Shaul's teaching right from the beginning.

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.

Does the Bible tell us to keep the laws of the Sanhedrin?

The Sanhedrin made up the ruling body of Israel and enforced their own laws and not necessarily the laws of the Bible. Some will say that Yeshua implied that the local judges, magistrates, and the Sanhedrin were applying the Torah correctly because Yeshua properly applied logic to the things He did regarding the Sabbath. They will cite Matthew 23 where it says in the Greek to follow what the scribes and Pharisees say. Matthew 23:2-3 NKJV says, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe." If we look at the context in Matthew 23, the rest of the verses obviously tell us that these people were not applying the Torah correctly and we are not to keep the man-made laws of the Sanhedrin.

Matthew 23:13-15 NKJV says, "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." It goes on like this for 21 more verses!

Matthew 23:16 NKJV says, "Woe to you, blind guides." Matthew 23:19 NKJV says, "Fools and blind!"

Matthew 23:23 NKJV says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ... have neglected the weightier matters of the law."

Matthew 23:27-28 NKJV "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

You can read this section in Matthew 23 for yourself if you like. It pretty much goes on and on about how messed up these rulers were. Are we supposed to listen to the scribes and Pharisees that made up the Sanhedrin and who made people keep all kinds of extra laws and made people, "twice as much a son of hell as yourselves?" These degenerate sinful people were obviously not to be listened to.

These are our traditions.

I want to qualify what I am about to talk about. Without the teaching from the Torah I got from my mother, I would be a very different person. I appreciate anyone who wants to be zealous for God. So, do not get me wrong when I talk about the Jewish traditions. I still light candles on Friday before Shabbat because it is meaningful to me and doing this reminds me that Shabbat



is about to start. Rituals are not bad; they are part of life. They often help us in life. I know that I do not have to light candles because it is not commanded by God. Candle lighting was instituted to give us a sense of ancient practice. I loved my dear sweet mother tremendously and I especially appreciate her teaching me lessons from the Torah. God's commandments are "good as gold" as the saying goes. Remember, wisdom and understanding in the Bible often refers to God's Old Testament commandments (see Deuteronomy 4:6).

Proverbs 3:13-15 NKJV says about God's law,  
 Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding; for  
 her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She  
 is more precious than rubies.

Also, often when a rabbi says that these are our traditions, they are referring to extra man-made laws that they say make them Jewish. They sometimes have almost nothing to do with what the Bible teaches us. What they should be saying and doing is we teach God's law as it is written in the Tanach (the Old Testament portion), and we teach appropriate applications of God's commandments (and not laws that add to or subtract from God's commandments). The rabbis typically follow a man-made system of Jewish theology instead of God's commandments just like most Christians do. Most rabbis also teach God's commandments, but often the emphasis is on these extra man-made commandments.

For the most part, they are following men who imposed these laws on the Jews as though they were kings (and therefore they were oppressing the people). These "want to be" kings would travel wherever they could to impose these man-made laws. There is even a record of Gamaliel II acting as a king for the Jews and going to Rome. The Britannica article states about Gamaliel II: "During his administration, Gamaliel frequently became dictatorial toward dissenters." Dictators often put to death those who do not go along with them. We know that we are probably right in assuming this. Yeshua took issue with the Sanhedrin about putting people to death. Matthew 12:7 NKJV says, "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."

So, the Jewish people have been brutally restricted by the laws that the Sanhedrin imposed on them. Some keep these same stringent man-made laws that were imposed on them in ancient times. Not only that, but it also seems any ridiculous law is okay to follow. For example, there is a commandment to put on your right shoe first, another one is to not open an umbrella on the Sabbath because that is putting up a structure, also they cannot turn on a light switch on the Sabbath because somehow that is starting a fire, and they tear their toilet paper before Shabbat so they do not have to do it on the Sabbath. These people must be very weak to call tearing a piece of toilet paper work. I can tell the difference between a fire and a spark, can you?

As you can see, these unreasonable laws make a mockery out of Judaism and make it difficult to follow God. The Bible says that God's laws are good and not difficult to keep. Deuteronomy 30:11 NKJV says, "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." They are also breaking the commandment to not make God's commandments difficult. The Reformed Jews often do not believe in the Bible properly and keep some of the

traditions. What really makes a person a Jew and a true follower of God? Rabbi Shaul said it was keeping the law. Romans 2:29 NKJV says, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God." Being circumcised in heart is a commandment in the Old Testament portion. Deuteronomy 10:13 and verse 16 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good," and verse 16, "Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer."

As you can see, the believers of Yeshua's time needed someone who would teach them to keep God's Old Testament commandments properly because of the man-made commandments of that time. Even Isaiah the prophet warned the people they were following man-made law and not God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men."

They needed a prophet like Moshe and we need that prophet, namely Yeshua the Messiah as well. When I was young, I told a Rabbi that I wanted to be like Moshe. I can in no way consider myself even somewhat to be equal to him, but I pursue God and the truths of the Bible so that I might be in the future kingdom of God and I also want to help you to follow God so you can be there too.

Often, an observant Jew will be happy to see an unbelieving Jew observe some man-made law. Wouldn't you rather want your fellow Jew to be a believer in God and keep God's commandments? Proverbs 23:17-18 NKJV says, "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day; for **surely there is a hereafter**, and your hope will not be cut off." It says about Isaac in Genesis 35:29 NKJV, "Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people." A person does not join dead people; **it is an idiom expression for eternal life**. Mankind will be judged by God. 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."

In addition to teaching us to keep the law, Yeshua sent the Holy Spirit as another helper. John 15:26 NKJV says, "The Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth." John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth." Yeshua taught us to keep God's Old Testament commandments to help us in life, 'until heaven and earth pass away.' And Yeshua gave us another helper, the Holy Spirit. Those that do not believe in Yeshua are mistaken, they have interpreted the Bible wrong. He is the Messiah who came to help us follow God the way we are supposed to.

The Hebrew Matthew in some cases tells us to follow what Moses taught. Doctor Nehemia Gordon, a former Jewish Dead Sea Scholar and graduate of the prestigious Bar Ilan Research University (בר-אילן), said that some of the Hebrew Matthew manuscripts say, 'The scribes and

the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever he, namely Moses, tells you to observe, that observe.' It is a clever way of saying they were to listen to what Moses taught instead of the extra man-made laws of the Sanhedrin. The Greek translation of the Hebrew obviously got it wrong. Also, Yeshua said that these leaders were not applying God's commandments correctly when Yeshua says they were condemning innocent people. Again, Matthew 12:7 NKJV says, "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."

Also, the translators sometimes make mistakes. For example, John 5:4 is in no manuscripts and was added by the translators to the King James Version. They thought that the context was a reference to a pagan belief. Some think that the King James Version of the Bible is perfect, but the more recent King James Versions are different than the older ones. They update the Bible to try to remove the mistakes they made in translating. The Greek text is a compilation of manuscripts, and it shows sometimes up to 10 deviations or more per scripture. Scholars work hard to try to account for all the differences, but we do not always know what was added or changed by the scribes. There are some 8,000 verses in the New Testament portion of the Bible. If we take a low average number of total deviation in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, perhaps 2, then we have 16,000 deviations between the manuscripts of the New Testament. That is a lot. We might come up with a lot of different doctrines just because of problems with the translation. Even Jerome, a Bible scholar who lived in the 300s said there were problems with the Greek manuscripts.

From the Preface to the Latin Vulgate by Jerome: "There are almost **as many forms of texts as there are copies**. If, on the other hand, we are to glean the truth from a comparison of many, why not go back to the original Greek and correct **the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators**, and the **blundering alterations** of confident but **ignorant critics**, and, further, **all that has been inserted or changed** by copyists more asleep than awake?" Unfortunately, all we have are copies that have been tampered with. Accept the scriptures that do not contradict keeping the law; there are many. Do not allow the scriptures that have obviously been tampered with to influence you.

We now have a significant number of Hebrew manuscripts of the New Testament. While nowhere in the thousands, they can be used as another manuscript to determine if the Greek has been altered. In the Hebrew James, James 1:25 does not have the word liberty in it. James 1:25 NKJV says, "He who looks into the perfect law ~~of liberty~~ and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." The word liberty is crossed out to help you see what the Hebrew is saying. It is saying in the Hebrew James that the Torah is perfect. The words "of liberty" are not in the Hebrew manuscript of James. This actually agrees with what the Old Testament portion says about God's law. Psalms 19:7-8 NKJV says, "**The law of the LORD is perfect**, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

We sometimes see scriptures that say we are saved if we believe, and there are lots of scriptures that say faith requires more than just believing in Jesus. Sometimes even translators inject their personal beliefs into the translation. The translators of the King James Version added a scripture in John 5:4 that came from a pagan fable that the translators thought was what the

text implied. Imagine that, a pagan fable instead of a Jewish understanding of what was going on. Also, I went to a translating seminar many years ago, and they said that they cannot update some scriptures to their correct meaning because people would not buy their Bible. The any number of problems we can have in getting to even a proper translation is why we need to understand what the basics of our faith really is, and work the scriptures to develop a proper understanding.

It is also easy for people to make the mistake of applying a modern thought to what is an ancient text. For example, if someone playing baseball goes home, they score a point for their team. If a person did not know anything about baseball, they may think the person went to where they lived. We need to understand the Bible the way it was originally intended to be understood. In the time of Yeshua, they were required to do certain washings including washing the body of a person who died. The translators translated a scripture about the baptism of the dead which if you understood that they washed the bodies of the dead, then you would understand it was referring to a ritual washing of the dead and not what some people call baptizing the dead.

We just read scriptures that conclusively tell us that we must also keep God's commandments to be saved. Romans 10:4 seems to say that the law has been done away with. Christ means Messiah, the Greek word translated "end" is also translated as goal in other places, the word law could be translated Torah which refers to the Old Testament commandments, and the word "to" is the Greek word that means toward. Romans 10:4 could be translated: "The Messiah is the goal of the Torah toward righteousness, for all who believe." It could more properly mean, that the Messiah helps us to keep the law. That goes better with what Yochanan said, "1 John 3:4 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Verse 8 says, **"He who sins is of the devil."** Namely he says, those who do not keep the law are living in sin and they are of the devil. Then Yeshua rejecting those who do not keep the law makes sense. Shaul says in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "We establish the law." He says the law has not been done away with, it is established.

Some denominations interpret the scriptures in terms of believing or faith, or they interpret them by some other doctrine. They are developing a philosophy of the scriptures that blinds their minds to the truth. Faith in itself is important, but it is not the point of every scripture. They will then say that anyone who does not believe their made-up doctrine are blinded. The Bible tells us what doctrine is. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." You can go round and round with these people because they reinterpret the scriptures based on their theology and not truth.

Faith is an important part of our Messianic belief. Faith must include faith and trust in God in a number of ways. I use trust purposely to convey an active sense. For example, James 2:20 NKJV says, "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" Faith without keeping God's commandments is dead. Dead works in the Bible refers to sin. Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" Sin will keep people out of God's future eternal kingdom.

We must trust in God's law. That is part of what we must believe. I am not talking about lots of

man-made Christian or Jewish laws. A multitude of extra commands can be inappropriate and micromanage life. The Bible warns us not to add or subtract from God's word. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

The Bible says that we can end up following made up commandments instead of following God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Also, consider this. If a person is not following God's commandments, they must be making up their own set of man-made rules for life instead of doing what God's says. It said in Isaiah that their heart is then far from God. Extra inappropriate man-made commandments manufacture God. We do not want to make up God, but to follow the Creator God and His good commandments.

So, those who keep the extra man-made commandments can also be far from God. People can be so consumed about following a man-made commandment that they forget to keep God's commandments. Some even tear their toilet paper before Shabbat so they do not work on Shabbat because somehow, they consider that it is work to tear a piece of toilet paper. They will put their lights on dimmers, so they do not have to turn on a switch on Shabbat because they think they are kindling a fire if they turn on a switch. We are commanded not to kindle a fire on Shabbat. Kindling a fire can be a lot of work. Do you see how ridiculous their man-made commandments are? I know of people who do these things religiously but get drunk or become incoherent on drugs on a regular basis. They follow man-made laws, but not all of God's laws.

We need to address the problem of keeping man-made laws religiously and thinking we are okay with God. The Torah teaches us that getting intoxicated is wrong and can lead to compromising situations or even other sins. Genesis 9:20-21 NKJV says, "Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent." Perhaps this did not lead to any additional sin, but only disgrace. Isn't disgrace something to be avoided? Lot's daughters got Lot drunk, and they sinned by having intercourse with their father. Genesis 19:32 NKJV says, "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." The Bible forbids sexual relations between family members.

Getting intoxicated by either drink or drugs can cause severe problems, cause a person to hallucinate, say wrong things, and even commit sin like Lot did with his daughters. Proverbs 23:31-33 NKJV says, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things." Rabbi Shaul said that drunkards will not be in God's future kingdom. Again, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." We need to understand what we are to have faith in, in this case we are talking faith in God's commandments.

We should understand that faith includes several principles. It includes trusting in who God is, in

His good commandments and repenting of behaviors that God says we are not to do. It includes the gift of the Holy Spirit in this Messianic era, in the resurrection of Yeshua, in eternal reward for those who keep God's commandments, in eternal punishment for those who do not keep God's commandments, and that Yeshua is the Messiah who died for our sins and will come back at a future time and rule in His future kingdom. We will talk briefly about each of these. In addition to these issues of faith, there are also other elementary principles. I would suggest that you would work on these I have addressed in this paper as an issue of the basics of our faith.

#### Having faith, trust, in God's good commandments.

God is good and therefore His commandments are good. We do not have to second guess them. Psalms 119:68 NKJV says, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes."

God's faithfulness and goodness towards mankind has endured for all of time. God's law helps us in life. Psalms 119:90-92 NKJV says, "Your faithfulness endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides. They continue this day according to Your ordinances, for all are Your servants. Unless Your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction." God is good and wants us to follow His commandments for our own good. This is a key scripture. Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good."

God is the creator and knows what is best for mankind. We need to learn and keep His commandments. Some are for men, some are for women, some were for farmers, and some commandments were for the priests. Apply what is for you. Psalms 119:73 NKJV says, "Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments."

People that keep God's commandments instead of their heart or good intentions often realize that God's commandments contain good judgment. Why make up what we think is right when we can have good judgment and knowledge? Psalms 119:66 NKJV says, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments."

We need good values for life. They can light our way so that we know the right path to take. 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."

Some value material things or value ideals other than what God teaches us. God's commandments though are extremely valuable, more than what gold, our own ideas, or what anything else has to offer. Psalms 119:127-128 NKJV says, "I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right."

God's commandments are truth. If you need something to help you with life begin to learn and keep God's laws and commandments. Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth."

People who believe in God have often seen their life transform for the better by keeping God's good commandments. For thousands of years people have benefitted from God's commandments. God's commandments were good thousands of years ago and they are still good. Psalms 119:151-152 NKJV says, "All Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever." The good news is that God does not change and has given mankind His good commandments and they are good forever. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change."

Hebrews 6:1 NKJV says, "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." The dead works referred to is sin. Sin is dead works (see Romans 6:16 NKJV which says, "Sin leading to death.") Living in sin leads to spiritual death and loss of eternal life in God's future kingdom. We are to repent from sin and keep God's commandments. It is an elementary principle. There are other elementary principles. But in regard to faith, we must have faith in God's commandments. Let us continue to talk about other issues that are basics we are to understand and believe.

#### Having faith, trust, in the Holy Spirit.

Also, in this Messianic age, we have the Holy Spirit as our helper. Yeshua said that God's commandments are our helper, and He gave us another helper for life, the Holy Spirit. Also, since Yeshua is God, He gave us His commandments at Mount Sinai. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "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." Shaul commands us to desire the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." These gifts of the Holy Spirit are for our benefit and are good. Yeshua said in Luke 11:13 NKJV, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" If you haven't been taught about these spiritual gifts, then you have not heard all you are supposed to have heard.

Luke 24:49 NIV says, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." We are to look like we are God's people and that includes having the Holy Spirit. So, do not try to look weird like some do, but be filled with goodness of God both from His commandments and the Holy Spirit. We are to be clothed with the Holy Spirit which is the power of God at work in us. Yeshua said in Acts 1:8 NKJV, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

This power is a witness that Yeshua rose from the dead and that we will rise from the dead. 1 Corinthians 4:20 NKJV says, "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." This is not just a philosophy for life. Ephesians 3:16 NKJV says, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." And in Ephesians 3:20 NKJV it says, "To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." What is at work in us? It is the Holy Spirit that we are supposed to receive. Acts 2:38-39 NKJV says, "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."

The work of the Holy Spirit in our life is also necessary in this Messianic era. Begin learning and growing in all the spiritual fundamentals of what we are to believe in. We need to trust God; we need to have faith in God. Keeping God's commandments is a basic doctrine that we need to believe in. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." Also, as we can see, receiving the Holy Spirit is another basic doctrine that we are to believe in which requires faith.

Hebrews also talks about some of the other basics which we will touch on. Hebrews 6:1-3 NKJV says, "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**, of the **doctrine of baptisms**, of **laying on of hands**, of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment**. And this we will do if God permits."

We already talked about "dead works" referring to sin and the issue of faith towards God some. Laying on of hands was used for anointing leaders, when praying for others, and at the Temple when giving sacrifices. Most people think there is only one type of baptism, but the ancient believers practices a number of ritual baptisms which could also be termed washings. These are commandments of God and not just made-up commandments. I would like to talk about a couple of the other basics at this time, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement because they are important to understand.

We are to have faith, trust, in the resurrection of Yeshua.

The reason I talk about trust is because we need to act like Yeshua rose from the dead, and therefore, believe that we also have something to look forward to. I use the word trust to emphasize that we are to have faith in both an internal and external sense. We need to believe in the future resurrection of the dead. The fact that Yeshua rose from the dead and is still alive is an evident witness that there is a future kingdom that we can enter and that there is life after death. The Bible says that there is life after death, and Yeshua's resurrection is a witness to that. In times past when people were raised from the dead, they went on to die. Not so with Yeshua. He is still alive. Also, as I already mentioned, when we receive the Holy Spirit, it is a witness to us of a future resurrection and that Yeshua rose from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 NKJV says,

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by **over five hundred brethren at once**.

There is a future judgement and reward that we must trust in and act accordingly.

All must stand before the Messiah and be judged whether "sin leading to death," or obedience leading to righteousness." Again, Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" If we live in sin, we will not be in the future kingdom – it leads to eternal spiritual death. If we keep God's commandments and show trust in God, we will enter God's future amazing and wonderful future kingdom. The word for "seat" in the following verse is the Greek word *bema* which is where the Torah is read in Jewish synagogues.



2 Corinthians 5:10 NKJV says,  
 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The picture we can draw from this verse is Yeshua standing in front of the *bema* with the Torah scroll set in front of him and he is judging mankind. Shaul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. There was no New Testament at the time; he is talking about the Old Testament portion! 2 Timothy 3:15 NKJV says, "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." Timothy's mother was Jewish (see Acts 16:1); the Holy Scriptures being talked about there in 2 Timothy are the Old Testament commandments. It goes on to say there in 2 Timothy that Yeshua will judge us; He will also judge those who are teaching false doctrine. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone."

Some will be detested and despised forever and those who are wise will be glorious forever. 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.

The word wise in this verse seems to be a play on the word wisdom. A wise person is someone who lives a wise life, a life of wisdom. This refers to Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV which says, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" So those who keep God's commandments will shine like the stars forever.

Someday, believers who believe in and trust in God and act accordingly will put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:50-54 NKJV says,  
 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Believers who believe in and trust in God will experience the new kingdom of God.

Revelation 21:3-5 NKJV says,

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

God can do what He says He will do because He is God, and He will do what He says He will do. The streets will be like pure gold it goes on to say.

Revelation 21:19-21 NKJV says,

The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

There are those who do not believe and those who do not understand the scriptures the way they are supposed to. You do not have to be among them. God is the final judge. I hope that you will be a person of faith and trust, act accordingly, and make it into the future kingdom of God. If all we need to do is have faith, then why did Yeshua say it matters what we do in life?

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." Doing what is right or what is good is to keep God's commandments. Therefore, to bear good fruit means to keep God's commandments. Do not follow the crowd that lacks understanding. Bear good fruit. Yeshua says, "enter by the narrow gate."

Matthew 7:13-17 NKJV says,

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

There is a future eternal kingdom to come with the Messiah Yeshua as our King.

It is my hope that I will see you in the future kingdom of God with the Messiah Yeshua. The word "Christ" means anointed (smudged) in the Greek. Yeshua is that anointed King who will reign forever. Revelation 11:15 NKJV says, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were

loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

God has sent His Messiah Yeshua, a descendent of King David. He is, "Yě-hō-váh the righteous." The word LORD in all caps in the following verses is the exclusive name for God that is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Someday in the future He will rule and reign as our Messianic King.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV says,

Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Do not wait until it is too late to accept Yeshua as the Messiah and begin keeping these basic principles of our faith. These principles would be a good start. The Bible refers to God's Old Testament commandments as wisdom (see Deuteronomy 4:6). Psalms 90:12 NKJV says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Now is the time to accept the true God, His good commandments, the good Messianic gift of the Holy Spirit, and all the basics of our Messianic faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ  
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶךָ  
 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.