



#23 Pekudei Exodus 38:21-40:38
Torah Teaching
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Names

Kefa – Peter

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

Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert

Moshe – Moses

Shaul – Paul

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

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

Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah

Pekudei – the 23rd Torah portion

The Torah portion for today is Pekudei and means “accountings of.” It could also be translated records, namely in this case, the records of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. Pekudei begins by giving an account of the offerings made and more descriptions are made of the items for the Tabernacle. I would like to begin today by talking about how following God does not mean we do what suits us or makes us feel good. We do what the creator God says because he knows what is best. We get to see and know what the big picture for life is.

People mistake feeling good with what is right and true. There was a contractor that decided to put up an apartment building and he saved money by cutting corners. He ended up causing the deaths of some of the people who lived there when part of the building collapsed. He committed murder through his negligence.

Numbers 35:30-33 NKJV says,

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land.

Those who commit murder are to be put to death. The land would stop being polluted by murder. Those who oppose this law of God are causing the deaths of people. Their opposition may save the life of a few innocent people but are causing the death of perhaps thousands. People would also stop doing things that can hurt other people if there were consequences. I have heard some terrible stories that I would not want to repeat. The argument is that some innocent people are being put to death. God knows all and those who do did not commit murder will be judged accordingly at the final judgement. This is a good example of what

happens when God is disobeyed. All sin brings evil into the world. Some think it does not matter but it does.

The contractor probably felt good about making extra money from the project that he should have used to do the job right. The Bible teaches us that we are not to cheat others. He was cheating the buyer of the building he put up. Exodus 20:15 NKJV says, "You shall not steal."

I once knew someone who loved money to such an extent that they were willing to sell people drugs that altered their state of mind. These mind-altering drugs can sometimes cause permanent mental damage. Even marijuana or overindulging in alcohol can cause problems for some people. These drug dealers are causing some people to have lifetime problems. They did not care about these people, they just wanted to make money. Hurting others is wrong whether it is indirectly or directly, or whether it is hurting someone emotionally, physically, or spiritually. Each person is valuable and has dignity because we are each special beings that are created in God's image. Genesis 1:26 NKJV says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." We are not God, but have the ability to choose, think, consider, be creative etcetera just like our creator. We were created in His likeness.

Degrading life and how we are created is a sin against the likeness that mankind was created in. I once heard of a person who wanted to act like a cat. He told people that they must accept him because that is the loving thing to do. He is degrading the likeness that God created him in. Rabbi Shaul said in Romans 1:22-23 NKJV, "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things." This section goes on to talk about some who are using their bodies inappropriately. They may not think what they are doing is evil, but it is wrong and evil. Some say that "God knows my heart," but we are not to follow our own heart, but God's commandments. When the Bible talks about wisdom it is talking about God's commandments (see Deuteronomy 4:2). Proverbs 28:26 NKJV says, "He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered."

We see and get to understand God's goodness as we keep His commandments and how to apply spiritual principles correctly. He gave them to help us. Everything God has done is to help us. Psalms 145:9 NKJV says, "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." God created the world so that it could sustain us, and God's commandments are also meant to sustain us. Psalms 119:47-48 NKJV says, "And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love. My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Your statutes." Those who keep God's commandments learn to love them because they are good, and God means them for our wellbeing (see Deuteronomy 10:13).

We each have different ways of doing things, but our life and beliefs include keeping God's commandments. Our way of life and thinking should not contradict biblical truths or God's commandments. We are not robots but are each unique and a special people who follow God and not every whim of worldly thinking.

God's takes us on a journey where we get to know that we have valuable truths for life through God's commandments and our life is elevated from the baser elements of thought and practice.

It should be evident from our examples that every sin can have terrible consequences. That is why doing things God's way and keeping and developing our ability to keep God's commandment is so important. It said in Psalms that he delighted in God's commandments. Nothing is more important than putting God's ways first. The psalmist said he loved God's commandments. We will also get to the point in life where we value God's good ways if we give His commandments a chance.

Who wants to be treated ruthlessly or badly? The Bible says we are to treat others as we want to be treated and keep God's commandments. 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." Since God's commandments are from a good God, He has our best intentions at heart and when we keep His commandments we can treat others better.

We know where we are headed. But most people seem to be living in a world that lacks concrete truths. Not understanding that there is real truth makes people ambiguous. I know of one atheist that believed in being kind and good. He probably got that from his encounters with people who kept God's commandments and realized that was a better way to live. But since there is nothing to tether these deniers of God to reality, they can make loopholes in their ideals for life. As I have said a number of times, I had a friend who was atheist and he told me he would trust those of faith before he would trust another atheist. Isn't that something!

We first trust in God and that makes us trustworthy. Proverbs 3:5-8 NKJV says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones." We are to do things God's ways and they will help direct our life. It will help us in life and makes for a healthier life.

Believers who keep God's commandments see a little of the world to come and understand that there is a future kingdom that we can be part of. Because we experience the goodness of life through God's commandments and their application, we also come to understand that God's future kingdom will be awesome. For the people who are looking for success, the streets will look like gold. God can do that because He is God. Revelation 21:21 NKJV says, "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." Even a rich country is not able to make streets of gold. It goes on to tell us of the greatness and wonder that we will experience in the future kingdom.

Those who have lacked or suffered because they chose to do what was right will not suffer anymore. Revelation 21:4 NKJV says, "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." So, also, we will not have to experience the pain and hurt that often comes with life at times. The Messiah 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." Yeshua gave us spiritual hope and peace.

Even in the present God wants what is best for us. 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." Does that sound like a God that is out to take away our satisfaction in life? What God has promised for those who love Him and His commandments will be amazing and good. Isaiah 64:4-5 NKJV says, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him. You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness, who remembers You in Your ways." Psalms 31:19 NKJV says, "Oh, how great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You."

So, stand strong and you will be in God's good future kingdom. Righteousness means to do what is right and keep God's good commandments (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). 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."

I am not going to make excuses but keep God's commandments. I am going to keep God's truths and not lead an ambivalent life. I will trust in God and put my hope in God.

Torah Study

The Torah portion for today is Pekudei and means "accountings of." Sometimes it is combined with the previous portion. Pekudei could also be translated records, namely in this case, the records of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. Pekudei begins by giving an account of the offerings made and more descriptions are made of the items for the Tabernacle. They brought all the finished items to Moshe and then Moshe blessed the workers. Isn't that great! God gives us the power to bless through Him.

Bezalel and Oholiab are given credit for leading the work on the Mishkan. At times, the Torah gives honor to people. The midwives who refused to murder babies were also mentioned by name.

Giving thanks.

It is good to be thankful to God and others. We should give God thanks for all His provision, His good commandments, the Holy Spirit, and all He has done for us. Also, good leaders are often in a demanding position, and it is good to give them credit for what they do as well, as was the case for those who led the work on the Mishkan and the midwives.

Meaningful and specific compliments show heart and can impact others positively. Some say we lack humility by accepting compliments, but attitudes like these are often associated with pride. It is good to accept praise without letting it get to our heads and make us prideful. Thankfulness to God and others shows that we value them. It is important to validate others, especially those who are closest to us: our spouse, our children, friends, family, and those who work for us. We should give honest and concrete words that show our feelings and validate their accomplishments.

In this portion, an exact number of men is mentioned, 603,550 (see Exodus 38:26). That puts to rest the idea that a small number of people left Egypt. There are more specifics about the Mishkan and would lead us to conclude these events really happened. The Mishkan was large enough and functional for the community. It was appealing and extravagant. Perhaps this teaches us that we should do good work, make our homes presentable, and take proper care of ourselves. I remember going to a stilt house in the jungle and they took the time to scrub their floors and make their house presentable. I saw them scrubbing their floors on their knees.

The priestly line is talked about and only descendants of Aaron were allowed to be priests. Israelite identity came by faith in the God of Israel (take Ruth for example) or from paternal descentance from the line of the father. Modern practice is by the line of the mother.

The priestly line, privilege versus accountability and accomplishment.

The priestly line demanded accountability. Also, status requires capability. Those who served understood this. If they did not want to serve, they could decline their position. That did not stop some from abusing their position and their inappropriate behavior, but doing so could cause God to act as was the case of Eli (see 1 Samuel 3:11-14 and the preceding chapter). God cursed Eli and his descendants forever. Two of Aaron's sons died on the spot for the wrong they did. Ya'akov said in James 3:1 NKJV, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." The unjust will face God's judgment. 2 Peter 2:9 NKJV says, "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." Those who are not teaching God's commandments and that are leading people to sin will face dire eternal consequences. 2 Peter 2:4 NKJV says, "God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness."

Leaders have the responsibility to lead well. Leaders have influence and can help people but can also destroy lives by their behavior or wrong teaching. They should be qualified (see 1 Timothy 3:2-10). Leaders need to learn to delegate, and they should not be overloaded with work. The work of the priests was given in the Bible; they did not have to do everything. God knows our intentions and leaders are required to teach truth (see Luke 8:17-18). As we have shown, they will be judged more harshly.

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

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

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

The Haftarah for Pekudei is 1 Kings 7:51-8:21. The Haftarah portion for Pekudei concludes with the dedication of the first Temple. The presence of the Lord filled the Temple and Solomon blesses the people. Both the Mishkan in the desert and the Temple in Jerusalem were filled with the presence of God. Like the Lord filled the Temple, those that believe in the Messiah are filled with the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit should not be taken lightly. According to Hebrews we can insult what God has given us. Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV says, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." These people will not escape God's punishment.

1 Kings 8:10-11 CJB says (Cohanim means priests), "When the Cohanim came out of the Holy Place, the cloud filled the house of ADONAI, so that, because of the cloud, the Cohanim could not stand up to perform their service; for the glory of ADONAI filled the house of ADONAI." This is an example of the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit which we as believers in the Messiah Yeshua can experience.

After reading the scripture about how the presence of God filled the Temple, we may wonder if any of that type of experience is for believers in the Messiah and the answer is yes. We are to receive the Holy Spirit when we believe in the Messiah Yeshua and it impacts our lives, and we can experience the Holy Spirit. Kefa (Peter) said in Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Some though are not open to the Holy Spirit. It is a commandment of God to receive the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age. Some put on a show; acting is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is with believers in the Messiah Yeshua just like God's presence was with Israel at the Mishkan. God is ever present and is not far from us. Acts 17:27 NKJV says, "So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."

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

God is amazing and wonderful.

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

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

The Aaronic Blessing

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

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

The ancient rabbis agree with this pronunciation of God's name. Over 2,363 different manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yĕ-hō-vāh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yĕ-hō-vāh. 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 Yĕ-hō-vāh (יהוה).

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשְׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yĕ-hō-vāh bless you and keep you.

Yĕ-hō-vāh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yĕ-hō-vāh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

We have finished Exodus, so we say:

Hazak, Hazak V'nithazek – Be Strong, Be Strong, We Will Be Strengthened.