



Names

Kefa – Peter
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
 in the Greek means to be smudged
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name
 Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
 Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
 House – refers to a school or the Temple
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
 Torah
 Mishpatim – the 18th Torah portion

Mishpatim means, “judgments” and this portion contains more laws. I'd like to talk a little about God's goodness.

Live in the light of God's blessings and goodness.

It is such an honor and a privilege to have God's commandments of light, of understanding. Before I began studying the truths of the Bible, I did not know much about how to do what is right. My life became better when I began doing things God's way. 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."

The Book of the Law that it is talking about is the Torah, the first 5 books of the Bible. It is God's commandments that help us in life. Unfortunately for some, they have believed the lie that the Torah is not for us and not good. They are bringing woe and suffering on themselves. Isaiah 5:20 NKJV says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil." It is very sad. Don't we wish that all people could experience the goodness of God?

Lead a heavenly walk; know that it is a good walk that brings peace. Proverbs 3:1-2 NKJV says, "Let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you." Strong's Dictionary says that the word peace, shalom in Hebrew, has connotations of being safe, well, happy, prosperity, having health, rest, to be wholly well. Perhaps, those who keep God's commandments can be said to have the possibility of complete satisfaction in life.

That is something that money cannot buy. It says that later in this chapter. Proverbs 3:14-15 NKJV says, "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."

and all her paths are peace." It seems that God's commandments are one of the greatest secrets in this world. People often pursue the secrets of our planet and the universe. God's commandments in the Bible are available to anyone. Too bad more people do not look to God for answers.

We need to be tough and committed to follow God.

God told Joshua to be strong to do what God told him to do. We all need to be strong in life. Joshua 1:9 NKJV says, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." We know that God knows all and is with those who want to follow His commandments and to be His people. Psalms 118:6 NKJV says, "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

God is for those who are dedicated to Him and He watches over His people. Psalms 31:23 NKJV says, "Oh, Love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful." Saints are not dead people, but those who are holy and faithful to God and His commandments.

Allow God to work in you in all you do.

When our minds contain the truths of the Bible our thoughts can be in the right place. Proverbs 16:3 NKJV says, "Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established." In order for our thoughts to be what they are supposed to be, we need to be committed to do what is right. When we do that, we bring the goodness of God into our own lives and the lives of others. God's loving commandments are forever and are the loving heart of God towards mankind. Psalms 33:11 NKJV says, "The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations." Isn't that wonderful! The counsel of God refers to His commandments.

If a person sins, they can have forgiveness and reconnect with God. It just requires that they ask God for forgiveness and decide never to do that sin again. God will forgive them just like He forgave Israel.

Numbers 14:18-20 NKJV says,

The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word.

Notice how Moshe is an advocate for the sins of the people. He speaks to God on their behalf. Yeshua the Messiah is now our advocate for our sin in this present Messianic era. 1 John 2:1-2 NKJV says, "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." Yeshua gave Himself as a sacrifice and rose from the dead for the sins for all faithful believers for all of time. Sin needed the payment of a Messiah. Hebrews 10:4 NKJV says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." Since the Messiah has now come, all are now required to believe in Him in order to receive forgiveness. Those in

ancient times looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Yeshua said in John 8:56 NKJV that, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day." Abraham was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah and He was forgiven because he kept God's commandments and looked forward to the Messiah. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Also, notice that the those who sinned in the Old Testament were forgiven if they turned away from their sin. It says that God is abundant in mercy. Some say that the God of the Old Testament portion was not a loving God. That is absolutely not true. Again, God's loving commandments are forever and are the loving heart of God towards mankind.

More to Consider

God doesn't have to be fancy or complicated. Some people and some Bible teachers come up with complicated teachings because they are trying to draw people in with interesting information. Think about it. God does not have to be complicated about anything or allude to anything but can be clear and direct.

2 Timothy 4:1-5 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. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

You can't get any more direct that teach people what God says; God will judge everyone. Also, if you follow the context, Shaul is talking about the Old Testament portion commands. The context is established in 2 Timothy 3:14-15 when Shaul tells Timothy to continue in what he has learned from his Jewish mother (see Acts 16:1). 2 Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV says, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." There was no New Testament portion of the scriptures at that time, so he has to be talking about following the Old Testament commands.

Then in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV it says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Old Testament commands are good for doctrine and doing what is right (righteousness means to do what is right). People are still following the pagan religion of the Roman Empire that separated itself from the truths of the Bible and used their false religion to exert power over the people. They made themselves into a god and told people to follow them and not the Bible.

Stand on what God has given us for this time we have. We can either decide to live a life of lies or decide that we will follow truth and not put up with these ancient pagan lies anymore.

Yeshua said to the false leaders of His time in John 8:43-44 NKJV, "You are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." People are not able to understand what I am saying because they are under the influence of a demonic system.

Stand against the spiritual forces that are against you. Ephesians 6:10-14 NKJV says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore." Stand and be strong and fight the spiritual battle.

God's word is light and a blessing to those who want to follow Him. People have been told lies like God's word in the Old Testament is cursed. The Bible says, "God is not a man, that He should lie; Numbers 23:19 NKJV. God said about His word in the Old Testament portion in Deuteronomy 4:6-8 NKJV, "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?'" Who is the liar? Not God. Aren't you glad!

There are so many blessings that we can have as we grow and remain faithful to God. We have so much to lose by following worldly values instead of God.

Deuteronomy 28:1-6

Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

Isn't that wonderful! When you go out you will be blessed and when you get back from where you were you will be blessed.

God has so much for us; it is inconceivable. Isaiah 64:4 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."

Psalms 37:3-6 NKJV says,

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

Do what is good and delight yourself in our God. Doing what is good is to keep God's commandments according to Deuteronomy 6:18. Psalms 84:11 NKJV says, "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." The God of the universe is good and generous!

Psalms 121 NKJV says,

I will lift up my eyes to the hills — from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

There is a new era coming and those who follow God, keep His commandments, and believe in His Messiah Yeshua get to be part of it along with all the believers from Old Testament times. Isaiah 65:17 NKJV says, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind." Those who follow God's path will be in the future kingdom forever. Psalms 16:11 NKJV says, "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Revelation 21:10-11 NKJV describes the future city that God is preparing for us: "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Revelation 21:18 NKJV says, "Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass." Revelation 21:21 NKJV says, "The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." God can do this because He is God.

We saw the scripture in Isaiah where Shaul quotes 1 Corinthians 2:9. Shaul applies this to our future as well. God does not change. He is good to us now and for eternity. 1 Corinthians 2:9 NKJV says, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

There will be a new heaven and earth and we get to be part of it.

Isaiah 66:22-24 NKJV says,

'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the LORD, 'so shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the LORD. 'And they shall

go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.'

God is plain and direct so keep His commandments. Stand on His word and what He has given us. God's word is a light and a blessing for us. We have so many blessings to receive from God and it doesn't end in the here and now; God not has not changed. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change." We will be blessed forever for being faithful to His truths.

Torah Study

Mishpatim means, "judgments" and this portion contains more laws. There are a few hundred applicable laws in the Torah. There are more than 10 commandments. In this portion, our loving God was giving them laws they needed for life. They were being reminded to live a new and good life through God's commandments that was passed down to them by Abraham and given again at Mount Sinai. Just like Israel lived a changed life through God, we are to live a changed life through God's commandments and the Messiah Yeshua.

Mishpatim begins with the laws regarding a Hebrew male slave. He is to be set free after six years and his wife with him unless his wife was given him by his master. The slave may choose to remain under his master. A daughter who is sold as a slave if married to her master must be treated well and if not, she is to be set free. If married to the master's son she should be treated as a daughter. If divorced she cannot be sold to a foreigner and she can be redeemed. We should remember that slavery for Israel was not like the abusive slavery of our world. If they were mistreated, they would be set free. The slaves were to be treated well and set free after 6 years. A slave could choose to work for their masters indefinitely. Shaul says that he has chosen to be a slave, for the Messiah Yeshua in Romans 1:1.

*The United States gave everyone equal rights,
so, it is not a caste system or rule by only the privileged.*

I share this to show how sinful ownership slavery started in the United States, who the participants were, and the issue at stake. It is history, nothing else. In The American Story by David Barton, He says that wrongful slavery began in the United States with a Black slave owner in 1654 by the name of Anthony Johnson. He eventually owned many slaves and owned 250 acres. Before then, there were only indentured servants, and they were set free after they had served for a period of time to pay off their debt. Only 3% of the world's slaves went to the United States. There were many slave owners in the Southern United States who were black. So not all slave owners were White or Indian. Many Indians also had slaves. In 1830, a Black historian by the name of Carter Woodson did a study and found that 43% of free black households in South Carolina owned slaves. The United States gave everyone equal rights. Ownership type slavery developed in the South backed by the Democratic party. The Ku Klux Klan was started by the Democratic party as a terrorist effort to keep this ungodly slavery going.

Lincoln was a Republican and the civil war in the United States was fought to free slaves who were being mistreated. The original settlers of the North were mostly white people who believed in the Bible and did not believe people should be treated that way. The people in the South held incorrectly to the idea that the Bible taught that slaves could be **treated merely as property**. The Bible does not teach the kind of slavery the South practiced.

As we can see, there is more to the story of slavery than some so flippantly give us. Prejudice was practiced toward every people group no matter whether White Irish, Jewish, Black, or other various people groups. That is a different issue than slavery. Like other people groups, Jews often had to form their own settlements and they provided their own services for each other. Sometimes their services were used outside of their community.

This portion goes on; the person who kills someone is to be put to death unless it was an accident. If a person attacks or curses their mother or father, or is a kidnapper they are to be put to death. This cursing of their mother or father would not be spurious occasional words, but some form of abuse. A curse in the form of witchcraft is punishable by death according to Exodus 22:18. There must be grounds for being put to death. Also, a person who injures someone is to care for them until they are well. A person is to be punished for killing his slave. A person is to be fined for the death of an unborn child.

Appropriate retribution must be made, as an eye for an eye relative to the damage. It was always understood that "eye for an eye" would be some sort of remuneration for damages. It was never understood that we are to actually put out someone's eye as retribution. Some people don't know what they are talking about.

*The Mishna and the Talmud are
not God's word as some treat them.*

Some things in the Talmud are extreme. The rabbis had differing opinions. For example, the house (school) of Hillel taught if a person had stolen a beam, they should make remuneration. The house of Shammai taught that the house had to be torn down and the beam removed and given back. The Jewish writings were commentaries and not God's word. They may have some good things to say, but they are not God's word as some treat them. In this case, the house of Hillel had a better approach.

We continue with the portion; a slave is to be set free as compensation for personal injury from their master. An ox that gored someone is to be killed and not eaten. If has been known to gore, the owner will be put to death too; or the owner can be redeemed. Retribution should be made for a slave that is gored. A person is to make retribution for the loss of another's animal. A person that steals an animal is to make retribution even if the animal is recovered. We are mentioning some of the commandments in this portion and not all of them.

A thief caught in the act at night that is killed is not considered murder. A person is to make restitution for another person's loss that they have caused. If a dispute arises over the ownership of an animal, they are to come before God and the one found not to own the animal

will pay double. I remember my dad being flustered over our neighbors not returning things he lent them. Perhaps they should have paid double for not returning them. At the very least they should have given my dad something extra to show their appreciation. That could be a good application of the Torah.

If something happens to an animal that is being cared for by another and it is not stolen, then the owner can swear it was not his fault. If it is his fault, he should make restitution unless he had paid a usage fee. A man who seduces someone who is not engaged must pay retribution - the bride price. He may marry her unless not accepted. A sorceress, someone who has sexual relations with an animal, or someone who sacrifices to another god is to be put to death.

They are not to abuse or oppress foreigners, widows, or orphans. They were not to charge the poor interest. If they take someone's clothes as collateral, they are to restore them the same day. They are not to curse God or their leader, they were not to delay their offerings, their firstborn sons and animals belonged to God, they were not to eat dead animals, and perjury is wrong. They are not to pervert justice, they were to return what belongs to others, and to help others regardless of their feelings for them.

Fraud is wrong and so is the oppression of the innocent, oppression of the righteous, and oppression of foreigners. Even in Israel today, their neighbors in Gaza may be short of food and supplies so Israel regularly sends them help. Gaza regularly sends rockets into Israel and Israel regularly sends them help in the form of food or supplies. If these people spent their money on helping their people instead of on rockets, perhaps they would be able to take care of themselves properly.

Bribery is wrong. In the seventh year, the land is to be fallow, they are to keep Shabbat, they are not to talk about other gods, and they are to keep the three feasts (of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot). They are to follow the rules for the feasts; they were not bow down to other gods. If they obey God, He will protect and bless them. They were not to boil a goat in its mother's milk is a reference to a fertility ritual done by the Canaanites. It has nothing to do with not eating meat with milk. Since this is mentioned more than once (Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21), the rabbis said there must be a reason, so they made up an inappropriate extra man-made law about not eating meat with milk.

I should say something about the Talmud at this time. The Talmud is a commentary put together by rabbis that some Jews consider to be biblical truths, but they are not. At times they have good advice, but advice is not a commandment of God. Sometimes they are a proper application of the Torah, but just like any commentary, we must weigh what they have to say with what the Bible says. The Jerusalem Talmud was written around 350 AD and the Babylonian Talmud was written around 500 AD.

*Moshe did not say to put a fence around
the Torah with extra commandments.*

The Bible says you are not to add improperly to God's commandments, so the thousands of extra commands of the rabbis are frequently wrong applications of the Torah or just personal beliefs. Pirkei Avot 1:1 (Chapters of the Fathers) says that Moshe and Joshua told us to put a fence around the Torah – namely, through extra laws. **Moshe said just the opposite.** Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

The many misapplied commandments of mainstream Christianity are also wrong. For example, God told us to keep His feasts. Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." God said they are His feasts, and some mere humans say they are not. Who is right? They do not fear God. Malachi 3:5-6 says, "Because they do not fear Me, 'Says the LORD of hosts.' For I am the LORD, **I do not change.**" God does not change; they are still His feasts. These false leaders fear that people will reject them instead of following God correctly. Religion explains away truth. Let us do our best to keep God's commandments properly.

In this portion, God says He will send the His angel before Israel. Joshua meets the angel of Yĕhōváh in Joshua 5:13-15, and he is told to take off his shoes because it is holy ground. Moshe met God (Exodus 3:4) in the burning bush and is told to take off his shoes because it is holy ground. Messianic believers believe God's angel that goes before Israel to be Yĕhōváh in the form of the preincarnate Yeshua.

Moses then reads the covenant to the people, offers a sacrifice, and sprinkles the people with blood. Moses and the elders then ascend the mountain, and they all see God and they eat before Him; **His feet are standing** on blue sapphire. So, God appears as a man before all the elders of Israel and Moshe. Moshe then goes up the mountain for 40 days and nights to receive the tablets with the commandments from God. There is a lot more that can be covered from the portion.

There is so much that you can apply from the law.

Respect everyone.

Trust in God and His food laws instead of diet fads.

Keep the day of rest on the right day; Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset.

Perhaps having insurance so we can make quick restitution for accidents.

Not cheating others.

Try to return anything of value that others have lost.

Having honest weights and measures.

These in themselves are important for society. And there is much much more. The New Testament portion has some 1,053 applications of the Torah in it that we can learn from.

There is so much value in following God's commandments. There are 53 commandments in this portion. This portion begins with various rules or commandments. Rules for slaves, murder, abusing parents, reparation and restitution, accidents, self-protection, some sexual sins, not oppressing others, treatment of other believers, giving of the first born to God, dietary laws,

lying and perjury, returning property, bribery is wrong. We are to only work six days and rest on seventh, on Shabbat. We should note that a number of these laws are not mentioned in the New Testament portion; some say they can be implied by spurious statements in the New Testament. Without the Tanakh we do not have a complete or best understanding of how to live right.

We need the Torah to treat others properly and lovingly.

For example, bribery which is mentioned in this portion it is not mentioned in the New Testament portion. We know that bribery subverts justice and is wrong. We need the full revelation of the Bible as instructions for life. Some people say we only need the New Testament, but they are mistaken. The New Testament portion is based on the Old Testament portion of the Bible. The New Testament does not include all the pertinent laws for life because they already had the Old Testament to refer to. They did not need to be rewritten.

It says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV about God's Old Testament laws, "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.'" Perhaps some of these laws do not apply in our culture. We should take some time to think about how these laws might be applied in our modern times and how they could apply to us. I was taught some of these laws as a child and learned how to apply them. Many of these laws are important for a peaceful society. Keeping the law is the proper way to treat and love others. God says He will judge those who break His laws because they are bringing pain and trouble into this world.

The Haftarah for Mishpatim is Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26. We read here essentially that just as God has established day and night, He will bring back Israel to their land and show them compassion. God could have used another way to describe bringing back Israel to their land, but in using "day and night" we can say that the passage definitely alludes to the idea of something permanent in the future; and perhaps that final future time is drawing near.

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.)

Laws regarding servants. Exodus 21:2-11.

2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him

forever.⁷ "And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. 8 If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 10 If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. 11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money.

Laws regarding violence. Exodus 21:12-27

12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. 14 "But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

15 "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 16 "He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

17 "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 18 "If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, 19 if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed. 20 "And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. 21 Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property. 22 "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

26 "If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Laws concerning animal regulation. Exodus 21:28-36

28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. 29 But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. 33 "And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his. 35 "If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. 36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Laws regarding property. Exodus 22:1-15

1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. 3 If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. 5 "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. 6 "If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. 7 "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. 8 If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods. 9 "For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor. 10 If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it, 11 then an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept that, and he shall not make it good. 12 But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. 13 If it is torn to pieces by a beast, then he shall bring it as evidence, and he shall not make good what was torn. 14 "And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good. 15 If its owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired, it came for its hire.

Moral and miscellaneous observances. Exodus 22:16-31

16 "If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins. 18 "You shall not permit a sorceress to live. 19 "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. 20 "He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21 "You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. 25 "If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious. 28 "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. 29 "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30 Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. 31 "And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

Laws regarding fairness. Exodus 23:1-9

1 "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. 3 You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. 4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. 5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it. 6 "You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. 7 Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. 8 And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. 9 "Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Law of times of rest. Exodus 23:10-12

10 "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. 12 Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

Do not talk about the pagan gods. Exodus 23:13

"And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth."

Laws regarding keeping the three feasts. Exodus 23:14-19

14 "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); 16 and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.

17 "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

18 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. 19 The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

Do not do the things that pagans do regarding their gods. Exodus 23: 19

"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk." This is something the pagans did. It was a fertility ritual.

Do not provoke the angel of God that is being sent into the land with Israel. Exodus 23:20-21

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him."

Do not bow down to idols or serve them. Break them apart. Exodus 23:24-25

24 "You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water."

Do not make covenants with pagans and they are not to live in Israel.

Exodus 23:32-33

"You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me."

Live a New Life
(An Accompanying Teaching)

We need to take the path God is giving us. We may want to forge ahead serving God the way we think we should, but God may have other things for us to do.

One of my favorite scriptures keeps things simple regarding the things of God.

Proverbs 3:5-10 NKJV says:

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

8 It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

9 Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase;

10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

The very first thing we need to do with our lives is to trust in God. Do not make excuses and try to do things your own ways. Live a new life in our God and the Messiah Yeshua. If we follow His commandments, a lot of life falls into place. Do not think you are smarter than the creator God. Stay away from sin and evil. It says you will be healthier and be strengthened for trusting God.

A lot of people think the only way to add strength to their lives is through their own efforts. While it is important to stay fit and to develop our minds, God's ways actually simplify life. We are not led into unnecessary choices and even bad choices because we know what is right and can focus on doing what is right.

I have had many experiences where my first response was to take time to think about what I should do and then do the right thing. In a number of instances, the other person distanced themselves from me when I did the right thing. If they had a good heart, they should have welcomed my response. This approach perhaps saved me from getting involved with someone or something that was not good.

Doing what is "right and good" will keep you out of trouble (see Deuteronomy 6:18).

Also, we need to find out how God wants us to use our time. After going to a conference on translating the Bible, it seemed I would never use the information I learned, but over and over again, it has helped me in the study of the scriptures. Just understanding that the translators are sometimes at odds over the translation of the scriptures or that they will not change certain scriptures so they will sell more Bibles has helped me understand that all is not perfect in the translator world. I thought, of course we want to sell Bibles; that is a good thing. But if the translation is wrong, that is not a good thing. Especially if people end up believing in false doctrine because it needed to be changed.

Do not be so quick to jump into something that God does not want us involved with. I remember hearing someone teach as though politics should be the main focus of our lives. You would have thought that the Bible was all about who to vote for. I am not saying that voting for godly people is not important; we should vote for godly people. Find out who supports biblical principles and vote for them.

Focusing on following God and trusting in His ways should be our primary focus in life. These scriptures in Proverbs 3 also goes on to say we are to make sure we use some of our resources for God's kingdom. That can be a sticky subject for some people, but we should desire to be generous toward the things of God. It is a demonstration of where our heart is at. God will bless our desire to use our resources for God's kingdom. I always found it strange that some people **and even pastors** will hold onto their money like that is all there is to life. I've heard pastors brag about how many cars they have. How many cars do we need? If they valued God so much, why are they holding onto their riches so tightly and not being generous with their resources?

God is the giver of life and the supplier for His purposes. We owe everything we have to God. God will accomplish what He wills, and He allows us to take part in that. Hebrews 13:21 NKJV asks God to, "Make you complete in every good work to do His will." Of course, in Jewish thought, "good work" refers to keeping God's commandments; we are doing His will when we keep God's commandments. For example, Shaul tells us to love others by serving them in Galatians 5:13 and then quotes Leviticus 19:18.

It says in Leviticus 19:17-19 NKJV, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 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." There is a lot more to the context of loving our neighbors, isn't there. Keeping God's commandments is part of loving our neighbors. Shaul talks about loving others as ourselves in Ephesians; he says be tender, kind, and forgiving (Ephesians 4:32).

Shaul quoted the Old Testament portion.

We should understand that Shaul's reference for the things he says in his letters is the Old Testament portion. That is why he quoted Leviticus 19:18 in Galatians. He is also referencing

Leviticus 19:18 in Ephesians 4:32 NKJV. In Leviticus it said to forgive and love your neighbor. That is also what it says in Ephesians. The Old Testament portion are rules that bring blessing and goodness into people's lives; they are the most loving way to live.

People do not know that because they do not know the Old Testament portion of the Bible. Read the Bible. I was told by someone that, 'You are not Christian because you believe what the Old Testament teaches.' Shaul used the Old Testament scriptures and so did Yeshua so they must have believed them. I think my company is rather good in this matter. They would not dare call Jesus an unbeliever.

God can use us to show kindness and treat others well. We can do God's will by serving others in so many ways. When the Israelites were fleeing the Egyptians, they must have worked together to accomplish that and they no doubt served each other. That was not supposed to stop. In this portion, God commands them not to abuse or oppress foreigners, widows, or orphans. They were not to charge the poor interest. We can show others the goodness of God in so many ways.

God reaches out to a cold and spiritually barren world with His goodness, and we are part of the solution through our lives. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:11 NKJV, "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant." Instead of making ourselves out to be something special, we should make God out to be special by serving others.

Set out doing what God wants you to do. Do not be moored and become ineffective.

Shaul tells us in Romans 12 that we are to think modestly of ourselves. He says we each have different functions in the believing family, the body of Messiah. God has given some the gift of prophecy, others serving or teaching. We are to love others (like Leviticus tells us to) and do not do evil. Be kind and respect each other. Romans 12:11 NKJV says. "Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." We are to be servants of God.

Do not be moored and become ineffective. If you were in a ship that was moored, it would be sitting there without the ability to be of much use. Proverbs 30:19 talks about how wonderful it is to see a ship at sea. It is not so wonderful if it is moored on some rocks. Kefa said in 1 Peter 4:10-11 NKJV, "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified." God has given us abilities and spiritual gifts. Minister and serve each other.

God's light shines on a world that lacks substance and understanding.

We say be good, be kind, be a blessing and the world comes back with nothing but manipulation. They say believers are weak; they say we are strong and opinionated; they say we are fools for caring about others; they say we do not care. The worldly say anything to justify their behaviors and to get away with doing what they want. They do not care about truth. They contradict themselves to manipulate and fool people into complying with their hate towards God.

People are certifiably in need of God's light and understanding.

He is the creator; God knows all. Psalm 139:4 NKJV says, "Is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether." God knows all and knows how we should live. Psalm 147:5 NKJV says, "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite." The world needs us whether they know it or not. Serve one another and serve others so that God can be glorified.

In this portion, the people agree to their relationship with God, and Moshe goes up the mountain to receive more commandments. How wonderful and amazing is it to be in relationship with the creator God, and what a wonderful privilege it is to live as believers in our God Yĕhōvāh and Messiah Yeshua. God has given each of us a path to forge ahead on, so serve God the way we should. God gives life. He gives blessings and life through His commandments to the people of Israel as they left Egypt. He also gives us blessings and life through His commandments and the Messiah Yeshua. Choose to follow God, do what is right, and find purpose spiritually. Do not be moored on the rocks doing nothing with our lives but be effective. God's light shines on a world that lacks substance and understanding. The world needs people who desire to live as people of light. Be a light and live the life our good God wants for us.