



#46 Ekev Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25
Torah teaching and teaching, God's Word is Important
By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus
Ya'akov – James
Yĕhōváh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

#46 – the 46th portion of the Torah
Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets
Mezuzot – plural of mezuzah; it contains scripture
Parashah – (portion) one of 54 portions of the Torah
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

The Torah portion for today is Ekev and means, "because" or "if" (pertaining to "if you follow"). This Torah portion begins with Moshe telling Israel that God will bless them for being faithful to His commands. Isn't that great! God blesses us with His good commandments that give us wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6), and also gives us special blessings for keeping His commandments. I would like to begin by talking about the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age.

The work of the Holy Spirit can be exciting. The Holy Spirit is powerful when compared to the efforts of man. Yeshua the Messiah said that the Holy Spirit that He gives to believers is powerful and useful. Acts 1:8 NKJV says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Much of Christianity denies the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet Yeshua said the opposite. Many say that the Holy Spirit only acts as our conscience. The Holy Spirit is much more than that.

The Holy Spirit can give us words from God in the form of encouragement, comfort, prophecy, inspiration, faith, information, how to do things, warnings, in the moment inspiration, ideas, peace, purpose, and direction in life. The Holy Spirit can empower our lives by producing miracles, healings, and special abilities like empowered teaching or through the power of the prophetic. Let's read about a few of those things from the scriptures.

Romans 12:4-8 NKJV says,

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

These spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (*charisma* in the Greek) are empowered by God. They are not just our abilities. Some work in conjunction with our abilities, but others like prophecy have

nothing to do with our ability to discern, but are words that come from God. Trying to develop prophecy on our own is not prophecy and is wrong because they are our words and not God's words.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NKJV says,

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one."

Notice how it says that these evidences that are called gifts in Romans are given to every believer. Some of us may use these gifts only occasionally, but some of them can be available as much as we want. For example, Speaking in Tongues is a supernatural prayer language that seems to be available to anyone who seeks it and can be done at will. Shaul tells us to desire God's spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts."

You can read more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our Divine Healing Prayer Class at:

<https://www.teshuvahsa.org/prayer-class>.

These are some other common spiritual gifts.

Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV says,

"He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry."

Note that apostles (which means sent one) is a common spiritual gift so there have probably been millions of sent ones over the millenia. Some say that their church is based on the apostles. There were apostles, sent ones, in the Old Testament portion, for example Moshe, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. They were also prophets who gave us the scriptures. So, this scripture is talking about them. Ephesians 2:19-20 says, "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." Notice how it says they were no longer foreigners but have become citizens with the holy ones (the saints). Namely, they have become part of the citizen believers of Israel. The foundation of our faith came from those who gave us the scriptures before the Messiah came and also through the Messiah Yeshua and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

We should remember that Jewish lists are not intended to be complete lists. Lists in the Bible are intended to be representative lists, so there are more gifts that the Holy Spirit can empower. In the Old Testament portion, God even empowered people's work. That is why we have different lists associated with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We also have different lists stating that certain sins will keep us out of God's future kingdom. You should learn what they are! They are also not intended to be complete lists.

It has been my experience that God gives people the Holy Spirit despite our weaknesses. New believers can receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they still need a lot of spiritual growth. The Holy Spirit should be a catalyst to help us follow God's commandments, but some ignore the goodness of God's commandments and do not repent of their sin.

Matthew 7:21-23 NKJV says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Yeshua will reject those who do not keep the law it says. Lawlessness in this verse is the Greek word used by the ancient rabbis that means not to keep the Torah, God's Old Testament portion commandments. Those who do not keep the Torah are in danger of not making it into God's future kingdom. I would do all that I can to make sure I keep all God's pertinent commands. Yeshua must be talking about believers who continue to live in sin in Matthew Chapter 7, and it sounds like Yeshua is talking about those who are operating the powers associated with the Holy Spirit.

Those that continue to live in sin is one of the reasons some people reject the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said in Matthew 18:6 NKJV, "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Those who are not teaching people to keep God's commandments will be judged accordingly.

God's goodness should lead us to change our lives. Sadly, those who do not do what is righteous (namely, do what is right) and do not keep God's commandments will end up in the lake of fire (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, and Revelation 21:8). It is very plain in the New Testament portion. Some though twist the scriptures to their own destruction, namely their eternal destruction and say that we do not have to keep God's good commandments (see 2 Peter 3:15-16). Again, these lists of sins are intended to be a representative list of sins that will keep us out of God's future kingdom.

Mankind's works are designed to please us, but their usefulness is nothing compared to the usefulness of what God has created and made. God created the world and everything in it. Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV says, "You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You."

Mankind cannot create anything from nothing but must use what God has created to make things. Although what people make can be useful and good, they are not necessarily from God. Some think that what they design or do makes them like a god, but they are not God. Some think that their success gives them power, but it is only temporary power. All the so-called great people in history are dead and gone and are only a brief mention in the history books if at all. God's ways are best and are intended to help us in life.

Those who oppose God are often worldly and their life is often only a shell of what they should be. Think about this. Those who seek worldly power often do it at the expense of others. Those who want to do what is right and keep God's commandments bring goodness into the world. Have you ever been taken advantage of? It does not feel good, does it? Have you ever known someone who brought goodness into your life? From their acts comes joy.

It is important to always understand that God and His commandments are intended to bring the goodness of a caring God into the world and help mankind with life. God has no agenda other than to help us and He is a loving God who has our best interests at heart. There are more than 10 commandments, but just think that if everyone kept just the 10 commandments, the world would be a much better place. Doing what God tells us to do brings goodness into our lives. Not following the commandments of God brings evil into life because God knows what is best.

People think they can do anything they want, but in doing so, they bring evil into their life and the life of others. Do you want what is good or evil? God gives us the choice. It is up to us. When you stand before God, He must judge you for what you did in life. The Bible says God will forgive us if we decide to change and do what is "right and good." Psalms 103:11-12 NKJV says, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Anytime that I realized that what I was doing was wrong I changed my mind and told others and God I was wrong and began doing what is right. Do not be too proud to admit you were wrong and begin doing what is right. God will forgive you.

The usefulness of what mankind has made is only meant to get us by in life. In contrast God lifts up our life. Sometimes we make everything in life about knowledge and what we own. People go to school and learn information and do not learn how to treat others because they have never learned the lessons the Bible teaches us.

For example, Joseph gets sold into slavery by his brothers because Joseph's brothers had trouble dealing with Joseph. His brothers should have been able to put up with their younger brother. A lot of times we think that life is all about us instead of being considerate of others. Joseph's brothers let their thoughts get out of control. How much pain have we inflicted on others because of our selfish thinking? We may not agree about everything, but we do not have to sin and cause others pain.

I watched a video years ago about this incredibly intelligent person who could speak a number of languages. One of his ideas was to put to death anyone who was a burden to society. Besides killing the Jews, that was one of the things that Hitler did. Hitler put to death 11 million people. This supposed very smart person in the video I watched had no compassion or consideration for others. He was just another Hitler and there are a lot of other people who have no wisdom and goodness in their lives. They may have a lot of information, but their ideas are based on a personal agenda that has been founded on shortsightedness and not what is good.

So, mankind keeps making the same mistakes over and over instead of doing what is right. The Bible says the Old Testament commandments give us wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6). Don't we want what is "right and good?" Why wouldn't people want what a good, caring, and loving God wants for us through His word and His commandments? People make themselves into a god and reject the true God. They are deluded.

God's ways help us in life and are better than the ways of this world. Those who oppose God are often doing so for selfish means. They could have a much better life through God and His truths for life. The selfish ways of mankind do not produce what is 'right and good.' God's commandments would make the world a so much better and fulfilling place. God has given us the Holy Spirit in this Messianic age and the Holy Spirit can do so much for us. The Holy Spirit is powerful and can be exciting.

More to Consider

God's people need to stay locked into living right and doing what is right. We often use the phrase "locked into" meaning to keep our focus or stay true to our plans. There are various ways that people make plans. They may stay locked into doing what is right – that is the best way to live. Some may stay locked into making money, or they may remain locked into some form of sexual perversion, or they may remain locked into some form of harmful political or societal rhetoric (philosophy of words).

The Bible has something to say about these things. For example, in regard to money, applying oneself and providing something helpful and meaningful to people in an honest and good way is a good way to provide for yourself. Being dishonest and taking advantage of others is wrong.

1 Timothy 6:9-11 NKJV

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness.

Shaul is obviously talking about an inappropriate desire for riches that causes temptation, harmful desires, and greed. A person without much money can also be inappropriate with money issues. Notice it says the love of money is at the root of many kinds of sinful actions. It does not say that having money is evil. Those who act inappropriately end in perdition¹ which is a loss of spirituality and therefore a loss of eternal life. Whether it is some form of sinful greed, sinful sexual desires, or harmful beliefs of some kind; those things will lead to a loss of eternal life.

For example, atheists have a belief system without boundaries which they can enforce any way they want. The result of their belief system has caused tremendous pain and death. Atheists will say that religion has caused wars and death. They provide you with their mantra to control your

¹ Ruin or loss (physical, spiritual, or eternal); Strong's Dictionary.

thinking. They do not tell the other side of the story. In fact, atheist regimes have caused over 100 million to be executed in the name of their political atheist beliefs just in recent times.

Hitler was an atheist (who hated Christians, by his own account) who believed that it was okay to sway the people by any means possible to take control of Germany (he wrote about this in his book, "Mein Kampf.") and he proceeded to kill 11 million of his own people — 6 million of them were Jews. The atheist Stalin killed some 20 million people and the atheist Mao Zedong killed 70 million. And there were other murderous atheist regimes like the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia that killed some 2 million people. That is not to mention the wars they caused and the many more millions who died on their account. The atheist systems made religious wars and persecution look like child's play. If you are buying into false systems of rhetoric (words), you are playing with the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8). Shaul concludes in our scriptures in Timothy, **do what is right, be righteous.**

Be faithful to stay connected to God through doing what is right and the Holy Spirit. First, God's commandments are faithful, and we can count on God. Psalms 119:86 NKJV says, "All Your commandments are faithful." Psalms 119:90-93 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. I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life."

Yeshua tells us that there is more to life than all that we own. Matthew 16:26-27 NKJV says, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." The word "soul" in the Greek is the word "life." All the stuff we have is worth nothing if we should die. What would a person be willing to pay to extend their life? How about keeping God's commandments so we receive eternal life in God's eternal kingdom?

Even so, what will we get from God when we rise from the dead? God will give us what we deserve. Shaul said in Romans 6:16 NKJV, "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?" People become slaves of their ideology. What is better, to be slave of sin that leads to eternal damnation or to be slave to do what is right which leads to blessings in the future kingdom of God? Psalms 133:3 NKJV, "It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing — life forevermore." God can give eternal life to those who want to do what is right and keep His commandments. He is God; He can do that!

Stay hot spiritually; don't go cold. In Genesis we see how Adam and Eve failed. They doubted the scriptures and they believed in lies. This was accomplished by adding and subtracting from God's words. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV tells us, "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." The following is a common Jewish teaching.

God commanded Adam and Eve:

Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

The devil and Eve said:

Genesis 3:1-5 NKJV, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 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."

The devil first tries to subtract from what God said. 'Did God say?'

Eve says we may eat. The word "freely" is subtracted from the command of Genesis 2:16-17. Eve said you shall not touch it. The word touch is added to God's command.

Eve said 'perhaps' they will die – Eve changed God's command from "surely die" to "perhaps. The devil then subtracts from God's word with contradiction and lies.

Do not add and subtract from God's commandments. Since He is God, He knows what is right and what is best. Do not let the greed of society take hold of you. Who do you allow to speak into your life? Do you allow lies to control how you think and act or do you do what the Bible says regardless of what society says?

God says:

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 NKJV says,

Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 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.**

Deuteronomy 7:9-10 NKJV says,

Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, **the faithful God** who keeps covenant and **mercy for a thousand generations** with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face,

Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who **goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.**

Exodus 19:5 NKJV says,

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then **you shall be a special treasure** to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

Strong's Dictionary says that covenant can also mean an alliance. As we align ourselves with God, we are in covenant, in alliance. Perhaps we can think of covenant as an agreement. We are God's special people as we agree to keep His commands. Won't you be God's special treasured people. Doesn't that sound great!

Torah Study

Ekev means, "because" or "if" (pertaining to "if you follow"). This Torah portion begins with Moshe telling Israel that God will bless them for being faithful to His commands. If Israel obeys God's commands, He will keep His covenant of mercy with them; God will love them and bless their lives, family, work, and health. The same is true in this Messianic age. If we obey God, He will be merciful to us.

I have personally experienced blessing in my life because I was faithful to God. That is a promise to all who will keep His commandments. Israel was to go and take the land that God had promised them; that required trust in God and action. Ya'akov tells us that our faith requires action in James 2:17 NKJV, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

They were not to bring any idols into their houses. Bringing an idol into their house can bring a curse with it since devil spirits can attach themselves to idols. They were to remember their time in the wilderness; how God tested them and provided for them; Israel should learn that we don't live by food alone, but also through what God says. Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." Yeshua (Jesus) quoted this in Luke 4:4. We must always remember that our spiritual life is just as important as our physical life. This life is short compared to the eternity that is promised by God to those who keep His commandments.

The devil tempted Yeshua in Luke 4 and Yeshua used the scriptures to fight off the devil. We are to follow God and use His scriptures to help us have good godly biblical thoughts. Shaul said we need to get control of our thoughts, "Bringing every thought into captivity;" 2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV. We are in a spiritual battle, and we need to take control of our thoughts and put the right thoughts into our mind.

Yeshua used the scriptures to stand against demonic powers as an example to us and we should also stand against any wrong thoughts that may enter our minds. Also, Ephesians 6:12-14 NKJV says, "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." So, stand strong. We are in a spiritual battle.

God was bringing Israel into a good land. They were not to get proud and forget Yĕhōvāh. They were to remember that God was blessing them. What does it mean to be proud? A proud person wants to do things their way. We should want to do things God's way. Being proud spiritually is thinking our thoughts and ideas are better than God's ways. It says that if they didn't keep God's commandments, they would perish like other nations had perished because of their sin; because they followed their own ways instead of God's good ways. God will help them

to defeat nations greater than them if they follow God. They were not to think their success was because they were so good, but because the nations they displaced were so evil. They even sacrificed their children to the pagan god Molech. Also, God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham to return Israel to their land which is still in effect to this day.

In this portion, God tells them to pray for their meals. The order of the command implies that we should thank God for the bread from the land, after we eat. Deuteronomy 8:10 NKJV says, "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you." Some have the habit of praying before their meal, it is better to follow the commandment more explicitly. The typical Jewish prayer thanks God for the bread they have received from the earth.

The typical Messianic prayer (we use God's real name Yĕhōváh):

Baruch ata Yĕhōváh Eloheinu melech ha'olam hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are you, Yĕhōváh our God, king of the universe who brings forth bread from the earth.

Moshe reminds them of some who rebelled in the desert and his prayers for them that saved them; they should stop rebelling. God set apart the tribe of Levi to serve Him. In this portion He then tells them to follow God's commands for their own good and to circumcise their hearts see (Deuteronomy 10:16). Just as circumcision reminded Israel of their agreement to follow God, their hearts needed to be circumcised and committed to follow God. Shaul quotes this and says we need to have circumcised hearts, "But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart;" Romans 2:19 NKJV.

Some say Shaul is saying that circumcision is no longer necessary; it is of the heart. He is quoting a scripture from the Old Testament portion that says we are to have circumcised hearts. He is not saying circumcision is no longer necessary; he taught circumcision, Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision." He taught the circumcision of male babies. The Bible says we are to protect life even on Shabbat (Deuteronomy 22:4; and Luke 14:5). Circumcising adult males is dangerous and should not be practiced. It was especially dangerous in ancient times. Shaul opposed adult circumcision based on the Torah.

Those in the 1st century who were pushing for adult circumcision were disobeying the Torah's command to save life. **They were Torah breakers.** Saving life means we value life and do things that protect life. For example, we should take our medicine unless we are healed. Watch out that you do not get caught up in superstitions against medicine. We had a foster child in our home that was being treated with vapor rub on her feet for her asthma by her abusive parents. She could have died! Be sensible. Consider the consequences of your thinking; could the superstitious values that you are passing on cause someone to die? I would not want that on my conscience. Also, we are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:27), so human life is precious.

God is good and just; they were to also to be good to foreigners because they were once foreigners in Egypt. In ancient times, strangers to the community could be a drain on resources and some people groups mistreated them. Israel was commanded not to mistreat foreigners. They have seen the power of Yĕhōváh so they should keep His commandments. We know the

correct pronunciation of God's name from 2,363 different manuscripts as Yĕhōvâh. "This is My name forever;" Exodus 3:15 NKJV. When we learn something, we begin to practice correct doctrine. Those that are saying we cannot say God's name are treating God's name with disrespect. Believers used Yĕhōvâh's name appropriately in the Old Testament portion. Ruth 2:4 NKJV says, "Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, 'The LORD be with you!'" The word LORD in that verse is God's real name, Yĕhōvâh. Some call God Hashem which means, "the name." It is like calling God "it."

The eyes of Yĕhōvâh are always on the land of Israel it says, and He will prosper the land if they keep His commands and put God's words in their heart. Do you want the eyes of Yĕhōvâh to be upon you? Keep His commands and put God's words in your heart too. Putting God's words on their forehead meant they were to always have God's words before them; it was not meant to be literal as some take it. This literal practice of wearing tefillin did not begin until the 1st century AD. Also, they were to put God's words on the door frames of their houses.

As this portion comes to a close, Deuteronomy 11:18-19 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up." As we walk, we are to be mindful of God's commands and teach them to others, especially our children. This portion ends with telling them that their territory would extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Sea to the Euphrates.

The portion for this week talks about God's mercy, forgiveness, and willingness to bless; this should give us great comfort. Moshe tells them that God gave His commands for their good and that they should circumcise their hearts. Shaul said in Rom. 2:29 that a real Jew (believer) has a circumcised heart. Believers in the Messiah considered themselves Jewish in the 1st century. They were a Jewish sect called Nazarene Jews.

Jewish people were to treat foreigners well and it is a misconception (a lie) that they do not. For example, Israel sends Gaza food, supplies, and medicine and Gaza sends rockets into Israel to try to destroy Israel. Palestinians think it is okay to lie to spread their hate. The Bible says that liars will go the "lake of fire: (see Revelation 21:8). They could easily take care of themselves if they instead focused on doing what is right. Yeshua said you will know what kind of people they are by their works.

Israel has seen God's power and we will too says Yeshua in John 14:12. Israel should have remained faithful based on their witness. Believers in the Messiah should also remain faithful based on our personal witness. Many of both Jews and Christians have failed though. They make God into their place of worship or say they believe in God, but do not listen to His commands. Since they do not listen to God, they disrespect God. Believing in God means we also believe and trust in what He says and do what God says.

Putting up scriptures on our entries is a commandment of God. Mezuzot are a practical way to put scriptures up at your entries and they remind us to obey God. As Messianic Jews we understand that just because the New Testament portion does not mention something, that

does not mean we shouldn't do it. For example, honest weights and measures are not explicitly mentioned in the New Testament, but that does not mean we shouldn't do that. The practice of treating a mezuzah like a rabbit's foot as some do is wrong. A mezuzah which contains scripture is to remind us to keep God's commands for when we leave our home and when we return (or we could put up a scripture instead of a mezuzah containing scripture). The man-made practice of touching a mezuzah and saying something to God when you touch it can help the mezuzah from becoming invisible to us. Some man-made practices are practical, but they are not commanded.

The Haftarah for Ekev is Isaiah 49:14 to 51:3. In this portion it says that God will never forget Israel; He has engraved them on the palms of His hands. In their captivity God will still help them and save them. They lost their land because of their sins. Yĕhōváh will not be put to shame though, and if Yĕhōváh helps us, who can condemn us it says? Yĕhōváh called just one person, Abraham and that blessing turned into many. God will once again turn Israel's desert into a garden (like Eden) and there will be joy, thanksgiving, and music there.

Shaul sees the Messiah in this section of Isaiah. He also says, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Rom. 8:31. He is obviously also relating Israel's travail to his travail and God's blessing to what God is accomplishing in us through Messiah. Just like God will never forget Israel, He will never forget us.

Isaiah 50:7-10 CJB says:

"For Adonai ELOHIM will help. This is why **no insult can wound me**. This is why I have set my face like flint, knowing I will not be put to shame. My vindicator is close by; let whoever dares to accuse me appear with me in court! Let whoever has a case against me step forward! Look, **if Adonai ELOHIM helps me, who will dare to condemn me?** Here, they are all falling apart like old, moth-eaten clothes. Who among you fears ADONAI? Who obeys what his servant says? Even when he walks in the dark, without any light, he will trust in ADONAI 's reputation and rely on his God."

We have seen a number of verses from the Old Testament portion quoted in the New Testament portion in our studies. This portion also has verses from the Old Testament portion of the Haftarah that are quoted in the New Testament portion. The New Testament believers reference for life is the Old Testament portion – that's why they quoted the Old Testament portion. If they Old Testament portion was of no consequence, they would not have used it to substantiate what they believed.

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

We are not to benefit from anything that an idol is made of or own an idol.
Deuteronomy 7:25-26 and Deuteronomy 13:18.

We are to thank God for food after we eat. Deuteronomy 8:10 NKJV says, "When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you."

We are to be kind to strangers, especially the stranger who is new to our faith. Deuteronomy 10:19.

We are to have reverent fear of our God, stay close to God, and pray and take oaths (swear) to Him. Deuteronomy 10:20.

We are commanded to teach and think about God's commandments in all of life. Deuteronomy 11:18-22.

God's Word is Important (A teaching to accompany the Torah portion.)

Bible teachers can give us all kinds of interesting information and tell great stories, but we are to actually live by God's words and not just get stories and good advice. I remember listening to this one pastor teach and thinking he was just giving his personal advice. Good advice is not a bad thing, but we are to actually learn to keep God's commandments; the words that come from Yēhōvāh.

Deuteronomy 6:2 NKJV tells us God's commandments prolong life, "That you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged." People will do all kinds of things to prolong their life; why not keep God's commandments. Notice it is the commandments in the Old Testament portion that prolong life. It is strange that people say the Old Testament has been done away with. I hope not; I trust in His words.

Just a few verses later, it says in Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you." The word for "well" has to do with making well, beautiful, happy, successful, or right according to Strong's Dictionary.² Wow, isn't that something! Also, it says that we are to do what is right before God. That in itself should motivate us. God sees us and we show God that we love Him when we keep His commands. 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." It is important to keep God's commands. Deuteronomy 11:32 NKJV says, "You shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments."

The Holy Spirit is to be our helper, but first of all, we need to learn and keep what God tells us to do. We need to be strong and follow God's truths. The Bible is our manual for life and the Holy Spirit encourages us to follow the manual. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will say that I should use caution or that I shouldn't do something. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead me or encourage me. God expects us to know what we can know first in the Bible and then the Holy

²h3190. יָטַב yāṭab; a primitive root; to be (causative) make well, literally (sound, beautiful) or figuratively (happy, successful, right): — be accepted, amend, use aright, benefit, be (make) better, seem best, make cheerful" - Strong's Enhanced Dictionary.

Spirit will help us with more specifics. Yeshua said in John 14:26 NKJV, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." The Holy Spirit woke me up in the middle of the night once because I had a fire in my house. The Holy Spirit saved me and my family. I would not be around if it wasn't for the help of the Holy Spirit.

Since God expects us to know His word and follow His word, it is a good idea to have some scriptures handy to help us in certain situations. A good scripture for fear is Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV which says, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." Perhaps when encountering some fearful thoughts we might say to ourselves, "Be strong and of good courage." Or, if feeling alone and afraid we could think, "He will not leave you or forsake you."

I take courage in knowing what God said to our forefathers and you can too. One of my favorite sections of scriptures is Proverbs 3:5-10 NKJV:

- 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.

Perhaps today you need verse 6 or you are feeling sick and need verses 7-8, "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." Then pray to God and tell Him that you fear Him. Ask Him to help you and heal you in the name of Yeshua. Or perhaps we just need to tell ourselves that we will not do any evil. Sometimes I say to myself, "I rebuke that evil thought in the name of Yeshua." Do not let just anything to go through your head. Remember, Shaul said to get control of our thoughts.

Be ready to do what is right; we need to have direction in life. Kefa said in 1 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed." Perhaps someone says to you, what good has believing in God done for you? I would say, "I believe in the creator God who helps me to do good and not evil. He is active in my life and even saved my life on several occasions. Believing in God has been more than worth it.

Perhaps someone says that all that congregations want is our money. You could say, God does not need our money; He is the creator and God asks us to give as a recognition that He is our provider and the creator. Perhaps an atheist says religion causes wars. We could say the true God wants us to be kind and caring (see Leviticus 19:18; and Ephesians 4:32). Atheist societies have executed over 100 million people in recent history. Thank goodness for believers who have good values. An atheist friend of mine told me he would trust a Christian before he would trust an atheist.

We need to have answers on how to live. We need to not only be able to explain what we are doing to others, but also be able to know within ourselves what is right and why. For example, those who hate me for doing good will not get under my skin. Isaiah 50:7 NKJV says, "No insult can wound me." Use the scriptures if you can instead of sayings or good ideas. Put your trust in God. Or perhaps, I am not going to fear because, Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV says, "He will not leave you nor forsake you." The possibilities and applications are endless. I now have 9 pages of scriptures that I have put together. As my list got longer, I began speaking one page a day into my life instead of all of them every day.

Base your beliefs in the Jewish biblical context of the scriptures; that is the biblically correct way to understand them; namely, the original way they were to be meant to be understood. This portion tells us that God will bless us for doing what is right. We need to be dedicated spiritually; spiritual things are just as important as the physical side of life; even more so. God is for us; why not trust in God and not just in good advice. We need to follow God's word first and foremost and then the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our helper and can even save our life. Have scriptures ready for life's situations to help you live right. Set aside your life for God.

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

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.