



#52 Vayeilech, Deuteronomy 31:1-30 by Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Ya'akov – James
 Yeshua – Jesus (in Hebrew it means "Salvation")
 Yehoshua – Joshua
 Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
 Yochanan – John

Terms

Cohen, Cohanim – Priest, priest
 Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets
 Parashah – (portion) one of 54 parts of the Torah
 Rosh Hashanah – Yom Teruah; Jewish New Year
 Shabbat – the 7th day of the week; we are to rest
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

This week's portion is sometimes a double portion. This year it is a single portion, Vayeilech. Vayeilech means, "he went." These portions were established by the prophets and read as doctrine by the early believers in Yeshua. Ya'akov (James) speaking about instructing the Gentiles to keep God's commandments says in Acts 15:21 NKJV, "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." The early believers were teaching doctrine from the sections of the Torah every week and teaching them because they are doctrine. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law."

Vayeilech begins by saying that Moshe is 120 years old, and he is not allowed to enter the promised land because in one instance, he did not do exactly what he was told to do by God. Moshe had told the people about his mistake previously and no doubt he asked God to forgive Him (see Deuteronomy 3:25-26 and Psalms 103:7-12). Because Moshe acknowledged his disobedience, he was forgiven, and he will be in the future kingdom of God for eternity.

It seems that Moshe's disobedience was a small matter, but it is perhaps a spiritual picture to us that teaches us that little things matter to God, and even though God forgives us if we are sorry for our sin and are committed to not do that again, there may be consequences for our sin. Yeshua said we are to be faithful in the little things. Luke 16:10 NKJV says, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much". Moshe says at the beginning of this portion that Yĕhōvâh will go over the Jordan before Israel which perhaps expelled any of the fears they may have been having.

Some have a backward idea towards their spiritual beliefs. They think that anyone who takes their faith in God seriously is deceived. Yeshua says in Matthew 7 that our spiritual life is to be taken seriously.

Matthew 7:13-23 NKJV says,

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 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!'"

Let's take some time to talk about what Yeshua said. First what is a wide gate? The wide gate leads to eternal "destruction" in the lake of fire and brimstone (see Revelation 21:8) and many choose the wrong gate. The narrow gate leads to "life," namely, eternal "life" in the future kingdom of God. It says that the narrow gate is difficult, but that word means to press according to Strong's Dictionary. Shaul says in Philippians 3:13-14 NKJV that he is. "Reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal." In other words, we must make an effort with our spiritual life.

Psalms 139:23-24 NKJV says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." We are to keep our hearts in the right place and keep God's commandments, so we will have everlasting life. We are not to live in sin and consequently lose our eternal life. We keep our hearts in the right place by keeping God's good and loving commandments that help us in life. 1 John 5:3 NKJV says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." God gave us His commandments out of love. And in the context, 1 John 5:13 NKJV then says, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life." We have eternal life if we keep God's commandments and we are also to believe in the Messiah Yeshua.

God will judge us for the good or bad we have done. What does that mean? Sometimes we need to read the context to find out what something is referring to in the Bible and sometimes a verse clearly explains itself. At other times, we need to understand what the words mean by its usage in the Bible. The Bible says that to do good is to keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "You shall **diligently keep the commandments** of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. And you shall **do what is right and good** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you."

So, when it says in 2 Corinthians we will be judged by the good or bad, it means we will be judged by God's commandments. To not keep God's commandments is to do wrong, what is bad or evil because God is the creator and knows what is best for us and wants what is best for us. We just read that we are to keep God's good commandments for our good, "that is may be well with you." 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 NKJV says, "For we must all appear before the

judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences." The word seat in the Greek is the Greek word *Bema* which is used in Jewish synagogues as the place where the Torah is read (which contains the commandments of God in the first 5 books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy). So, Yeshua will judge us by the commandments of the Old Testament portion of the Bible.

Those that reject God's good and loving Old Testament commandments will face, "The terror of the Lord, it says." I would not want that for anyone. God will forgive us if we change and are sorry for our sin. Isaiah 1:18-19 "'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the LORD, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. **If you are willing and obedient.**" We need to learn God's commandments, be sorry for our sin, and "**be willing and obedient**" to God. For some, that means dropping the impatience with the spiritual things of life and deciding to make them a priority and make them important. So, get with it.

A lot of people do not want to put God into His proper place in their life. The teaching of false teachers often appeals to those who are looking to downplay keeping God's good commandments. Those who teach we do not have to keep God's Old Testament commandments are false teachers it says in Deuteronomy 13. People may be willing to put a great amount of effort into making money, into a hobby they enjoy, or into having thrills and fun. Those things are not bad, but that is all that some do in life and that is wrong. Why not put some effort into the spiritual matters of life which will produce a good life and end in eternal life in God's future kingdom.

Even in this temporary era before the end of the world, I have been thrilled by the good things that God has done for some of the people I have prayed for. After God healed me miraculously this one time, I could not help smiling all day long. I was at work, and I must have looked a little strange to some people. I was overcome by the goodness of God. You can experience healings and miracles too if you begin praying to God and taking God and your spiritual life seriously. I sometimes talk about a teenager whose one leg was shorter than the other and God causing his shorter leg to grow instantly to the same length as the other leg while my friend was praying for him with his hand on the leg. Only God can do that. Once I was praying for someone who could not walk, and I felt something in her knee moving while I prayed for her. She got up and walked after I prayed for her.

Back to what Yeshua talked about in Matthew 7. These false teachers are described as wolves and their life reflects their lack of adherence to God's good commandments. Some in false religions are vicious towards others. A good person keeps God's commandments, and an evil person does not teach all of God's commandments and often teaches others that they do not have to keep God's Old Testament commandments. Yeshua said that these false teachers will say they prophesied for God, cast out devil spirits in God's name, and did wonders for God. Yeshua said that he will reject them because they did not keep the law. Again, Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" The Greek word lawlessness is the word meaning, not to keep the law,

namely, God's Old Testament commandments.

There are 100s of scriptures about the goodness of God's Old Testament commandments. Psalms 119:66 "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments." God is good; therefore, His commandments are good. Psalms 119:68 NKJV says, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes."

Psalms 1:1-3 NKJV says,

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

We are to delight in God's law and think about. God gave us His law to help us. This is an important scripture. God pleads with us to accept His good commandments, His good law. Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, **that it might be well with them** and with their children forever!" God wants what is best for us and He gave us His commandments to help us.

Who is right, these false teachers who says we do not have to keep God's commandments or God? God is right, these false teachers are wrong. We are not to accept what these false teachers are teaching. Yeshua did not teach us not to keep God's Old Testament commandments and neither did Shaul. Shaul (Paul) said in 1 Corinthians 11:11 NKJV, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."

Yeshua kept the law, Shaul kept the law, and Yeshua and Shaul told us to keep the law. Yeshua said in Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Not all has been fulfilled yet; the final judgment must come sometime in the future. Also, the earth has not passed away yet as of this writing, so the law is still in effect. Shaul (Paul) said in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." The Greek word establish means to stand according to Strong's Dictionary. **The law still stands** according the Shaul (Paul) and those who teach otherwise are false teachers and false prophets.

Also, saying Yeshua did not keep the law or His ministry led to the abolishment of the law is like saying He is a false prophet. Deuteronomy 13:3-4 NKJV says, "**You shall not listen to the words of that prophet** or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and **keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.**" Keep the commandments of God and hold fast to God and the truth.

Torah Study

In the portion Vayeilech, Moshe tells Israel and Yehoshua (Joshua) that God will go before them and to boldly enter the land. Moshe then wrote down the Torah, gave it to the Cohanim, and told them that they were to read it to the people every seven years on Sukkot. Moshe and Yehoshua go to the tent of meeting and God tells them that someday the people of Israel would become a disobedient people. In this portion, they are encouraged to boldly trust in God and to do what God told them to do; there are consequences for doing what is wrong.

Because they would someday disobey God, Moshe and Joshua were to write a song that the people should learn as a testimony. Yĕhōvāh commissions Yehoshua (Joshua) as Israel's new leader and Moshe finishes writing the Torah which was to be kept by the Ark. Moshe assembles all the leaders and tells them they will provoke God with their evil and he teaches them the Ha'azinu that God told him to write. Recognizing that any one of us could fail, should make us humble and open to anything that can help us do what is "right and good" (see Deuteronomy 6:18). We need to hear words of encouragement over and over because of what we are subjected to in culture on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we presently have an evil culture in the United States.

One of the ways that our culture influences us is by brainwashing us into accepting sin. This brainwashing works through alluring tactics (through lust), by force (by making us conform to our sinful society or by the allurements of wanting to belong), and by outright lies (our culture is filled with lies which contradict God's commands). Yeshua said in John 8:44 NKJV, "**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.**" Do what is "right and good" and do not follow lies.

The Ha'azinu in the final portion is to remind Israel that someday they will provoke God with their evil. While we like to hear and sing about good things, we also need to hear the complete story. We need to apply ourselves to doing what is right and good, so we do not stray from the truth. Rabbi Shaul says in Galatians that we should not be deluded, Galatians 6:7 NKJV says, "A person reaps what he sows." We reap the results of our convictions both in life and spiritually. Doing wrong can incur consequences and unfortunately, sometimes even disastrous consequences. Also, we cannot fool God; He knows if we are following His good commandments or not. Sow good (keep God's commandments) and God will reward us with eternal life. A pretty good trade off; we keep God's good commandments, and we often can experience good and blessed results in life, and then we will get rewarded with eternal life with a good God in His future eternal kingdom.

If we do not follow God by keeping His commandments, we can experience trouble and difficult circumstances in life and also have to stand before God in judgment for living an evil life. It says in Hebrews 10:28-31 NKJV, "Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of

grace? For we know Him who said, 'vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Those who insult God's grace by living in sin will not escape punishment for their sin.

God will forgive us if we repent.

While judgement may be difficult to hear, it is what the Bible says, and people need to hear this for their own benefit. We should also understand that God will forgive us if we repent. So, do not remain in your sin, but repent and decide you will follow God and do what is right. Shaul says to stand in Ephesians Chapter 6. We should, STAND UP, and get back on our feet spiritually! Psalms 103:11-13 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. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him." Instead of failing, why not remain faithful. We are told to be strong in this portion. Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV says, "Be strong and of good courage."

The Haftarah for Vayeilech is Hosea 14:2-10 and Micah 7:18-20. Joel 2:15-27 is included when this Shabbat portion is during the 10 days of repentance. In the Haftarah, Hosea uses pictorial imagery, and He tells Israel to return to God; nothing but God can save us and make us:

Lilly – beautiful	Tree roots – stable	Olive tree – prosperous
Fragrance – pleasant	Shadow – protected	Grain – fertile
Vine – cover the land	Wine – have joy	

Ephraim will even repent of its idols because of what God is doing in Israel it says in the Haftarah portion. It makes sense; God's ways are fruitful and right; so, those who do what is right will have life through them, but the sinful will face judgment for their sin.

In Micah 7:18-20 says that God will forgive for He is merciful. He will have compassion and cast their sins into the depths of the sea. On Yom Teruah, we sometimes do a ceremony where we throw bread into a body of water or river and as the bread gets carried away (or sometimes eaten by birds), we think of our sins going away. It says in Micah that God will keep His promise of truth and mercy that has been promised to the children of Abraham and Jacob. And God will keep His promises to those who love God and keep His commandments and believe in the Messiah Yeshua.

Joel 2:15-27 starts out with saying, "Blow the trumpet in Zion." Israel should fast, gather together, and make the people holy. How do we become a holy separate people? Deuteronomy 28:9 NKJV says, "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, **if** you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways." It says if they are sorry for their sin, God will restore them, bless them, and they will not be put to shame. Don't be put to shame for failing to follow God properly. God wants us to succeed. Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

**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.)**

People are to hear the entire Torah every 7 years. Since we can each have Bibles, we can read this for ourselves. This can be done a little at a time, which is probably better for retention, or all at once. Deuteronomy 31:12.

Israel was to learn the song talked about in Deuteronomy 31:19.

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

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

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

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

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִחַנֶּנָּךְ
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשְׁלַם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

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

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

Thank you for being with us today.