



**Nothing Matters More than God**  
**(An accompanying teaching for Vayetzei 2020)**  
**by Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Esav – Esau  
 Hevron – Hebron  
 Ya'akov – Jacob  
 Kefa – Peter  
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ in the Greek means to be smudged – anointed  
 Moshe – Moses  
 Rivkah – Rebecca  
 Shaul – Paul  
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name  
 Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)

Yitz'chak – Isaac  
 Yochanan – John

**Terms**

Cohen – priest  
 Haftarah – reading from the prophets  
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah  
 VaYetzei - 7<sup>th</sup> Torah portion

**Nothing Matters More than God**

God's light shines from the heavens; people have their back turned away from God and are religious about their own ideas.

In this portion, God speaks to Ya'akov in a dream, promises his descendants the land of Canaan, and that the whole earth will be blessed through him. He names the place where God met Him, Beit-El, which means "house of God." God has been speaking to mankind since the fall of Adam and Eve and trying to help mankind to return to Him. In our day and time, some seek God, but others have turned their back on God.

When we do a Torah procession, we face the Torah scroll as it moves around the room. We don't want to turn on back on God or His word. Of course, it is just a ritual and not a binding commandment. Since I never want to turn my back on God, I face where the scroll is very carefully. Some just do it mindlessly. Isn't that how some people take their relationship with God? They put a minimum of effort into it. Years ago I would put my 1 hour a week in going to church; I would often think at times that there has to be something more than this.

Well guess what, we are to be mindful to follow God every moment of the day and not just one hour a week. It's not a chore; it is a pleasure. We understand that God's commandments in the Old Testament portion give us *wisdom and understanding* (Deuteronomy 4:6), *they prolong life* (Deuteronomy 6:13), and they *are good* (Deuteronomy 10:13). We also need to watch out we don't have an evil heart so we don't lose those benefits. Hebrews 3:12 NKJV, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief."

I had an interesting conversation with someone recently. We were talking about rebuking wrong thoughts. I said that rebuking to me means the thought I was having is not my thought, and I will never ever do that and I am not going to think about that.

What does never thinking about sinning or committing sin mean to you? Do you have something you say to yourself?

No, I am never going to do that.

If something comes to my mind that is wrong, I am going to rebuke that.

Stop it, go away in the name of Yeshua Messiah.

God will help me overcome; I have no excuse ("No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape;" 1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV.

I will make no excuse to sin; I am not going to make an excuse.

Shaul said, "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

Don't confuse doing what is right with not believing you are forgiven of your sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation<sup>1</sup> to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit;" Romans 8:1 NKJV. If you have confessed your sin and are committed not to do it again, you are forgiven. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;" 1 John 1:9 NKJV. When you are committed to following God's commandments and also being led by the Holy Spirit, you are not under judgment.

The flesh is not following God's commandments. Also, the flesh is NOT to follow wrongly applied man-made commandments. Remember, ritual is part of life, and as long as we don't make a man-made ritual into a commandment of God, it should be okay to do. It's not okay to do weird rituals, pagan rituals, or any ungodly ritual.<sup>2</sup> Saying we can't do something can also be a misapplied man-made commandment. The issue being talked about in Romans 8 also has to do with fleshy man-made commandments because that was a problem back then. Instead we are to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us in insignificant matters.

*We to absolutely keep God's commandments; that is non-negotiable.*

Perhaps you have something you say to yourself when you are tempted like one of the things we just talked about. We may go through testing times, but God does not tempt us with evil. James 1:13-16 NKJV says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

When we begin to accept sin into our lives, it brings spiritual death. We need to have a pure

<sup>1</sup> People were judging others on man-made commandments; that was a problem back in that time. We are to keep all of God's commandments. They had made up thousands of man-made commandments; man-made ritual is not binding.

<sup>2</sup> For example, **spiritualism is never okay to practice**. The Kabbalah is spiritualism mixed with various pagan charms and is forbidden by the Torah.

heart the Bible says. Yeshua said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" Matthew 5:8 NKJV. I want a pure heart. I want eternal life with a good and loving God. It will be absolutely awesome. Have a pure heart.

People often follow their own made up beliefs religiously without lining up their thoughts with the Bible. Some say there are only two commandments; then they have to make up how they live. God is big enough to give us more direction than that! That's why we have a couple hundred commandments in the Old Testament portion to learn to apply. Most of the of the Old Testament portion commandments are for the priests. Some say they are too hard to keep; the ones that say that God's commandments are hard to keep are making that up. The Bible says God's commandments are not too hard to keep "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you;" Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB. I've heard there are some 2 million laws in the United States; so what's the problem with a couple hundred laws and the 1,050 New Testament laws? The New Testament laws are proper applications of the Old Testament laws. We've been taught false doctrine that we religiously hold onto.

People fight for what they know not; guard your heart with God's truth. (Don't be so quick to allow yourself to get involved with things of the world and not the things of God.)

There are so many things we hold onto that have nothing to do with God. Even in medicine, someone will come up with a theory; then it will be disproved, but people will hold onto the false theory anyways. People do that with theology too. Years ago they didn't have much archaeological proof for what happened in the Bible, but now they have abundant proof. Some of the people that learned the old information haven't updated their thinking with the more recent information. For example, they said we have no proof that King David existed; now we have found actual archaeological evidence he existed. All the ridiculous wrong speculation about not having proof years ago created questions that didn't need to be made.

*Don't strive over things that are not profitable.*

Shaul said in 2 Timothy 2:14-15 NKJV, "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed." You name it, people can make an issue out of almost anything. Stop fighting over things that don't profit us spiritually and follow God and keep His commandments. God is not blind; He knows if you have a worldly heart in areas of your life, so change. Proverbs 5:21 NKJV says, "ADONAI is watching a man's ways; he surveys all his paths." Notice how Shaul says that striving over things can cause problems. Things don't seem to change do they. People are still making up issues. Don't confuse worldly issues with following God.

Search your heart and be ready to change how you are thinking so you do what is right. Make the effort.

What's most important in your life? Your attitude or God. We talked a little about this earlier. Did you know there are some people who don't want to be fully committed to God or to truth? I have a believing Jewish friend of mine that asked an Orthodox Jew that if he found

out that Yeshua was the real Messiah, would he accept Him? He answered no. He obviously has some major confusion of issues in his mind. This Orthodox Jew would rather go to the lake of fire than believe in his Messiah. That is surely messed up. Also, I have been around people that have to fight you on every little thing and it is exhausting. I have been around people that if you say something they don't like, they will correct you or even lash out at you. They would do this even if what you said wasn't directed at them. We don't need to take issue on every little non-sinful thing.

Yeshua is the greatest Jew who ever lived and He is the Messiah so we'd better listen to Him. Nathanael believed in Yeshua just because Yeshua knew what he was doing at some time in the past; Yeshua can also reveal Himself to you in a way that you will know who He is. Perhaps Nathanael was sitting under a fig tree committing his life to God. That thought is exciting to me. "Nathanael answered and said to Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!'" Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" John 1:49-51 NKJV. Seeing the angels of God like that must have been quite a sight! In our portion today, Ya'akov also had a vision like Nathanael. Yeshua is the Messiah and some time in the future He will judge mankind.

Yeshua said, "The Son of Man will send forth his angels, and they will collect out of his Kingdom all the things that cause people to sin and all the people who are far from Torah; and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where people will wail and grind their teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let him hear!" Matthew 13:41-43 CJB. There is a different kind of world coming; thank you God.

*We'd better have ears to hear.*

God is great; seek Him first. Nothing matters more than our relationship with God.

God is the creator and knows what's best for us. I am relying on a future without selfish ambition and worthless contention. It amazes me how relevant the scriptures can be. Yeshua told us, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble;" Matthew 6:33-34 NKJV. There's going to be troubles Yeshua said, but what's important? Seek God, seek His future kingdom, and do what is right (righteousness means to do what is right).

We can get sidetracked spiritually in a multiplicity of ways. I don't know if you noticed that before the recent COVID virus a lot of people sat in front of their TVs a lot; the virus hasn't seemed to change that. I have actually had someone tell me they didn't have time to come to our fellowship because they watched TV. It sounds ludicrous, but its true. Nothing should matter more than our relationship with God. What are we looking forward to? TV or an amazing future kingdom where things will be wonderful and exciting. I'm not kidding you. It

says in the Bible that the future city will look like gold. If God can do that, He can work things out so we will have an amazing fun, blessed, etcetera future life in His kingdom. Revelation 21:18 NKJV says, "The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass." Sometimes aren't you tired of the strife and the troubles we face; we won't have to deal with that in God's future kingdom.

In the mean time, keep it together; keep following God faithfully, keep His commandments, and be at peace. Here are a couple of scriptures that have been key scriptures in my life. Philippians 4:6-8 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things."

So, drop your guard and pray more for all that is on your mind. Do some meaningful prayer. Be thankful for all you have; go to God as much as you need to and have peace in your life. Think good things in your mind and about your fellow believers who are trying to follow God and keep His commandments.

*Keep good things in your heart and mind.*

Ya'akov makes an agreement with God and asks for His protection. How many of us have made agreements with God and need to keep what we've said. God indeed protects Ya'akov and God does bring him back safely to the land of Canaan that God promised him. Perhaps as God had Ya'akov return to the land of promise, God has always desired that we turn toward Him and His light and truth, and be His people of promise. Some though make worldly things more of an issue than spiritual things. Set your heart on God. Ya'akov trusted in God and God blessed him exceedingly. God is big enough to keep His promises to us and to bring us into His future kingdom if we will be obedient to Him. Seek God; nothing matters more than a relationship with God.