

#54 Vzot Haberakhah Deuteronomy 33:1-34:12

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Be light hearted; don't allow the things of this world to drag you down.
- * Baubles and things seem more real to us at times than the reality of God.
- * Stay in God's all-consuming light and power. The world is nothing compared to God.
- * Be lifted up by God's power and the scriptures.

Vzot Haberakhah means, "and this blessing." Today's Torah portion begins with a blessing for the tribes of Israel. God loves the people who love His instruction. He blesses the tribes of Israel even though He knows what will happen to them because they will be unfaithful to God. They have been saved by God from the Egyptians and they will destroy the idolatry of the land.

Moses goes up to Mount N'vo and he saw all the land of Israel. God tells him that this is the land He promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and the descendants of the people who are entering the land. Moshe died and was buried by God at the age of 120 years old. Y'hoshua (Joshua) was filled with the Spirit of wisdom that was passed onto him by the laying on of hands by Moshe and lead Israel into the promised land.

The Torah portion says that there has never been a man like Moshe who knew God face to face until Yeshua (Jesus) that is. Yeshua did many tremendous miracles. John 21:25 CJB says, "But there are also many other things Yeshua did; and if they were all to be recorded, I don't think the whole world could contain the books that would have to be written!" Yeshua the Messiah came to help us and to set us free from sin.

The Haftarah for V'zot Haberakhah is Joshua 1:1-1:18. God tells Joshua to go across the Jordan River and promises to give him the land wherever he goes. God will be with Israel if they keep His commandments. The people affirm that they will listen to Joshua. Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV says, "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 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."

Perhaps, just in case we haven't been reminded enough that we should keep God's commandments, God tells them to be strong and keep His commandments again. God loves those who keep His instruction – Torah (Torah means instruction). Doing what is right should give us a sense of satisfaction and lightheartedness. The life of the believer is not supposed to be a life of drudgery. How ridiculous is that?

We have a good God that wants what is best for us. God told Joshua that if they kept God's laws, they would prosper and have success. That doesn't sound like drudgery to me. He even gives us His feasts to celebrate and one of those feasts is Shabbat which we get to celebrate every week. So, lighten up and don't allow the things of this world to drag you down. God wants to raise us up. Ya'akov (James) said, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up;" James 4:10 NKJV.

There was a time when I was dissatisfied being single. I decided that I was going to follow God and do things His way no matter what. Incredibly, I could tell that God was blessing my attitude. I believe it was God putting His blessing on my life because I wanted to do what is right. Even though we will go through tough times, doing things God's way is always the best way because God loves those who keep His instructions. Remember, God is the creator of the universe. It is worthwhile making the effort to follow Him every day, every hour and year after year.

Do you know what a bauble is? It's just a trinket; it is something that doesn't have much value. A lot of the things of this world and the things we think we need are often just trinkets. I don't know how many times I've bought something that I never used much. I try not to be wasteful, but it happens sometimes. One of my hobbies is to collect rocks. I like nice looking rocks and I've bought a few of them over the years. Talk about a trinket; that is something we can find in our yards!

The things of life can sometimes just be a bauble (a new word for some of you). The things we have in life is never more important than God. I put God first and my life seemed to go great. In fact, the Messiah said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you;" Matthew 6:33 NKJV. I am a firsthand witness to that truth. Shaul (Paul) said, "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal;" 2 Corinthians 4:18 NKJV.

God created everything that exists, so don't we think that God is more important than the things of life. I've known a number of people who were driven to get all the things of life. Yeshua said in Mark 8:36 NKJV, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" Soul refers to life. Yeshua was making a simple statement about how we can have lots of stuff, but what does it matter if we are not around to enjoy it. If we gain all that we want, but lose our lives, what did it profit us? People can be all about getting things, but forget about the most important part of life; the most important part of life is our relationship with God. Yeshua wants us to do what is right.

Stay in God's all-consuming light and power. The world is nothing compared to God. God is all powerful and there is nothing greater than Him. Kefa (Peter) said God's going to create a new heavens and earth and this world will come to nothing. I knew someone once who told me their goal in life was to have a mausoleum (a small stone building that is used as a tomb). He will be able to enjoy it because he will be dead. The Bible says that all matter going to be dissolved in the final heaven and earth. The only true opportunity for our future is to accept God's gift of love through the Messiah and be part of the future kingdom.

2 Peter 3:10-13 NKJV:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."

This sounds terrible and tough to imagine. On the other hand, those who want God can rejoice. Why not get excited about our future with God in the new heaven and earth? Shaul said in Philippians 4:3-4 NKJV, "With Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" Isn't that exciting! It says to rejoice and then rejoice some more.

The Hebraic understanding of our names being written in the book of life are those who follow God and keep His commandments. Yeshua said, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;" Revelation 3:5 NKJV. So, it is possible to have our names removed from the book of life. Those who misinterpret the Bible take scriptures out of their Jewish context could be in for trouble. Yeshua had just said previous to this in Revelation 2:10 NKJV, "Do not

fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death." Yeshua said be faithful until death. It doesn't sound like we can make up any old thing we want to. Do you want to put your spiritual life in the hands of someone who is contradicting the Messiah?

Instead of making excuses not to do what God tells us to do, be lifted up by God's power and the scriptures. Part of becoming a Messianic believer is to receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38-39 NKJV, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"

We are to turn towards God and follow His commandments (repent). We are to believe and follow Yeshua the Messiah (be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ – Christ means anointed one or messiah). We are commanded to receive the Holy Spirit. It is God's promise for this Messianic age.

I've known people who get talked out of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. How ridiculous is that? The creator of the universe wants to give us something to help us and we make up excuses to not allow the Holy Spirit in our lives. God wants to lift us up by His power. Acts 2:8 NKJV says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." How wonderful and amazing is that!

Also, don't forget about the scriptures. They were written to help us. God tells Israel over and over to follow His commandments. We should learn how to follow God's commandments. God gave us the scriptures for our example and as words of encouragement. We need to hear over and over how to follow God; we need the encouragement. Hearing God's words of encouragement solidifies our desire to do what God tells us and we need that.

When I find a scripture that encourages me in an area I'm trying to grow in, I memorize the scripture and pray about. I've kept a list of printed out scriptures that I pray into my life every day, year after year. In closing, here are some scriptures to encourage you.

From Psalm 119 in the NKJV:

10 "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"

16 "I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word."

30 "I have chosen the way of truth."

40 "Behold, I long for Your precepts"

50 "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life."

65 "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments."

72 "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver."

162 "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure."

One of my favorite scriptures is Proverbs 3:5-7 NKJV:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil."

The last Torah portion doesn't end our study. We have a new beginning and start out all over in the book of Genesis. In the same way, for believers in the Messiah Yeshua who keep God's commandments, we will have a new beginning in the 1,000-year reign of the Messiah and eternal life in the new heaven and earth.

When Moshe went up onto Mt. Nebo to die, he expected a future hope with the Messiah and Yehováh and He lived like it. There has never been someone like Moshe until the coming of the Messiah Yeshua. We are told over and over to keep God's commandments in the Torah. If people would read the Tanakh (the Old Testament portion) they would see this. Instead, I read articles with excuses about not keeping God's commandments.

What is our attitude? Do we care about God and truly believe in Him or do we just make up excuses to break His commandments? I have found God's promises to be true; it is worth following God. God expects us to be faithful and brave. God wants to lift us up by the power of the Holy Spirit. Then someday, God will lift up those who live holy lives and keep His commandments through the power of the Holy Spirit to eternal life. "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord;" Hebrews 14:12 NKJV. Yochanan said, "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, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God;" 1 John 5:13 NKJV.