

#53 Ha'azinu Deuteronomy 32:1-52

By Moshe Schwab

While Praying:

- * Focus on God; don't overdo things
- * Let your footsteps be steps of light.
- * Don't value ritual more than truth. Valuing ritual makes us cold towards God. (We end up doing a lot of works that has nothing to do with living right – pagans value ritual.)
- * Don't fight worldly battles; fight spiritual battles.

This portion begins with the Ha'azinu, a prophetic song that God wanted Moshe write for Israel. The gist of the song begins by praising God and then a brief history of man. God was our Father from the inception of His created work on earth. He chose Israel, protected them in the desert, and prospered them in the new land, but they turned away to idols and would arouse God's anger so that He would turn away His face from them. In the end He would avenge their enemies and atone His people. Moshe tells Israel that they were to teach their children this song so they would understand the urgency of its message.

We are to seek God with our whole heart. Yeshua (Jesus) said, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 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 6:31-34 NKJV.

This verse says a lot. Yeshua says don't worry; we shouldn't be consumed with what the world is consumed with. They'll do anything to seek their cause, what they will eat, or the things they want. Just today, China bragged about its ability to fight a war with the United States. My first thought is that they should be concerned about helping their people. They know the United States just wants peace and to help other countries; that's mostly true. There are some in the United States who only seek worldly things. What mankind does just seems crazy to me, but that is the world.

Yeshua says our main goal in life is to seek God and do what is right, be righteous. Doing what is right will take care of most of the things mankind needs and that's exactly what Yeshua is saying. If we seek God and do what is right the things we need will be there for us.

We need to focus on God, but don't overdo things. Just being in constant anguish over life is not the answer to a blessed life. Living a worldly life will not get us to our future heavenly promise (Revelation 20-21), but seeking God and doing what is right will get us there.

One of the things I pray for every day is to leave a trail of the Holy Spirit in all that I do. It just means that I am trying to allow the Holy Spirit to use me and speak to me during the day. Perhaps another way to think of this is to let your footsteps be steps of light. In order to do this, we first have to keep God's commandments. Leviticus 19:17-19 NKJV says, "You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. You shall keep My statutes;" We are to keep God's statutes (commandments) and love our neighbor. Shaul gives us advice on how to love our neighbor.

Ephesians 4:25-32 NKJV:

"Therefore, putting away lying, Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word

proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

What a tremendous help Shaul is with understanding the Tanakh (Old Testament portion) and loving your neighbor. Be kind, be tenderhearted, and forgive. Of course, Shaul expands on many other scriptures from the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). Shaul (Paul) was Jewish. His reference for how to live was the Tanakh – the Old Testament portion. Notice how he says not to grieve the Holy Spirit there in Ephesians. If we are not working on acting with peace, love, joy, patience ... (the fruit of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23), we will grieve the Holy Spirit (and stop the work of the Holy Spirit) from adding love, joy, and peace ... to how we live. If we are not following God's commandments, we will stop the Holy Spirit's work in other areas of our life.

Shaul also talks about watching out for ritual made into commandments in his writings. Rituals can be good and fun, but don't make them into extra commandments. The Bible tells us not to do that. "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you;" Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV. Making idols of wood and stone to worship or pray to is committing idolatry which God strictly forbids. Making up inappropriate commandments of men is also wrong. By doing so we end up keeping man's laws instead of God's commandments. This is a form of idolatry; we command people to do commandments made by man. Rituals are not commandments of God unless the Bible tells us to do them.

I think God is leading me to talk about the battles of man. Someone will come along and say one thing and make an issue out of it and someone else will say something else. Then we get engaged in a fleshly battle over something that is not hugely important. Don't fight worldly battles; fight spiritual battles. Years ago, some of the people I knew began battling over vitamins and food. Yes, vitamins can help us and we should try to live healthy.

Suddenly, it seemed the issues for them in life were all about food and vitamins. For example, Shaul experienced things with people who made up fables, exercised, or who were aesthetic (denied themselves). He said exercise was good, but exercise yourself to doing what God wants you to do. "For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come;" 1 Timothy 4:7 NKJV. One person I knew put Vick's on their daughter's feet to help her with asthma. Her child could have died from listening to this fable. Stand for God and His truths.

The early believers were willing to stand for truth and believe firmly in the messianic message. "But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men;'" Acts 5:29 NKJV. Because they were willing to stand and glorify God, God was able to use them to increase the work of His message. "But the word of God grew and multiplied.;" Acts 12:24 NKJV.

The serpent influenced Eve in Genesis and we need to stand firm with the truth of the Messianic message in order to bring the truth of God's message to this world. Don't be confused by the message of the world. "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ;" 2 Corinthians 11:3 NKJV. Don't be deceived so that you stop following the Messiah the way you should.

We live in a world filled with lies about everything including people who are spreading a non-scriptural and out of context message from the Bible. We need to understand and expect people to not understand God or the Bible. We need to be firm in what we believe; yet, flexible enough to work with those that lack true understanding so that we can give them points of truth to lead them to the truth. Yochanan said, "We know that we are from God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the Evil One;" 1 John 5:19 CJB

Yeshua said that we need to be savvy (good sense and practicality) in this world: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men;" Matthew 10:16 CJB. Even in Yeshua's time and in a culture that valued God, the people obviously had worldly values too.

God protected Israel in the desert and promised to continue to be with them in their new land as long as they were faithful. The song Moshe wrote would remind them of these things and that someday they would turn away from God. God is faithful though and took them back when they turned towards Him. Also, if we return to God, He will take us back too.

Yeshua quoted the Tanakh and tells us that our lives depend on seeking God with our whole hearts. The world looks after itself instead of seeking God. We need to focus on God and put God in His proper place in our lives. Being in constant anguish is not God's will; instead, trust in God. Follow God's commandments and allow the Holy Spirit to help us to do what is right. Follow God instead of making man-made ritual into commandments. Ritual can be enjoyable, but making up extra commandments leads us away from God and can burden us. Don't be deceived, but be strong and faithful. Yeshua said to be wise. Watch out for people and things that will detract us from our relationship with God.