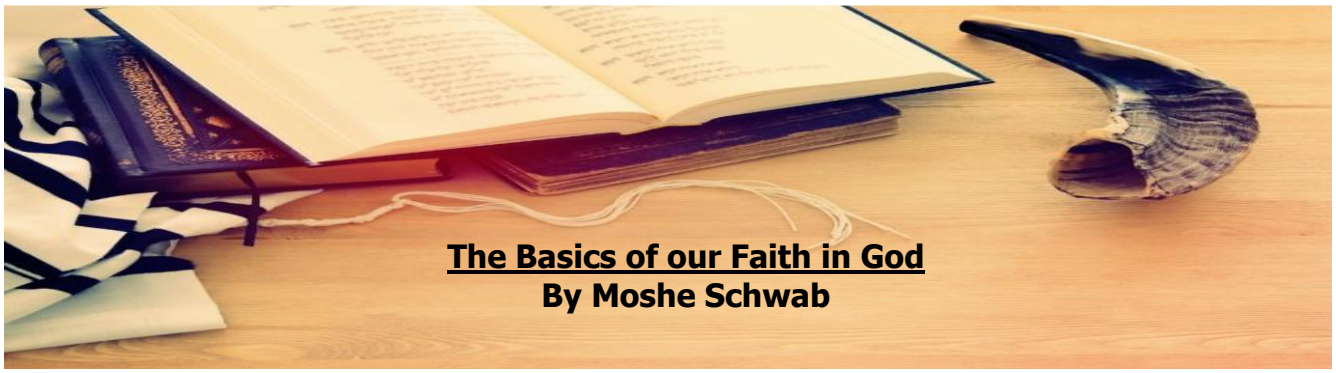


The Basics of our Faith in God

By Moshe Schwab

We know that the Messiah taught and encouraged the people to keep the true faith, but how does that compare to what we believe in our era? As Messianic believers we want the true faith and to go back to the roots of our faith. So, we have to compare the scriptures to what is being practiced now so that we know what the true faith is. First, what does some of modern Christianity believe about faith?

A lot of Christians believe that all we need to do to be saved is to have faith. In this short teaching on faith, I will talk about some of the main principles of our Messianic faith that should shape our faith. Faith towards God is important and we need to understand what we are to have faith in. We have at times shared briefly on this topic, but this teaching is intended to go a little more in depth on the basics. It is by no means all that needs to be shared. Since this is about the faith once given to the early believers in Messiah Yeshua, we would expect to hear about faith frequently.

We will begin by addressing the "just by faith" thinking and concepts relating to it. We need to talk about the "just by faith" theology because there are a lot of people who believe in this false theology and insist that faith in God is all we need to be in God's future kingdom. We will also talk about some of the principles of our faith in this teaching.

Faith in itself.

Faith in God by itself is not good enough to be part of God's future kingdom according to the Bible. James 2:19 NKJV says, "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe." The devil believes in God and is going to the lake of fire and brimstone. Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." The devil believes there is a God but demonstrates no actual trust in God because devil spirits do not trust in God and His good commandments; they want to be God. Isaiah 14:13-14 NKJV says, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;" and in verse 14, "**I will be like the Most High**."

These evil spirit beings want to be God and decide for themselves what is right or wrong and want to influence mankind perhaps like a disobedient child who wants his way. The Bible reveals to us that these beings exist and it is not made up like some think. Those who disobey God like these devil spirits or those of mankind who disobey God's good commandments will be judged and sent to the lake of fire some future time the Bible says (see Revelation 21:8). All the more reason to understand these things!

The devil and other beings.

Some people do not know that devil spirits and other beings exist, but since God's creation is so vast, why wouldn't there be other beings that He created? The devil is real because God revealed that to us. The Bible talks about different beings, some that are hidden to us but can still influence us like good angels or evil devil spirits. It also talks about giant beings that came to earth called Nephilim (their origin is disputed), and strange creatures called Cherubim. Some Nephilim survived the flood according to the Bible. Deuteronomy 3:11 NKJV says, "For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of the giants. Indeed his bedstead was an iron bedstead. (Is it not in Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits is its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit (13 ½' by 6'). Some think they are still around.

God is over all the host of all His creatures the Bible says. 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**." This may seem strange to those who do not read the Bible and more like a fairy tale. They actually had Nephilim skeletons on display in the 1800s, but it upset people so they were put in storage. It should be noted that the Bible says that not everything is revealed to mankind but those things that pertain to our interests. Deuteronomy 29:29 NKJV says, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever."

What the Genesis story of Adam and Eve teach us.

The story in Genesis is thought by many to be a fairy tale, but it is at the very least symbolic. I believe it really happened. **People use stories to make points all the time** but for some reason, most people do not understand the lesson that the story in Genesis chapter 3 is teaching us! **Even a child can understand a fable or a story that is intended to make a point**. As we saw, devil spirits say they want to be like God and run their own lives instead of doing what is right and good. Eve is tempted to do the same by a devil spirit through a snake! Genesis 3:4-5 NKJV says, "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.'" That is the same lie that is presented in Isaiah.

Devil spirits want to be God and they want others to rebel against our good God and will speak to our mind to try to get us to sin. Most people do not understand that these evil spirits can try to influence us. So, we need what God has revealed to us as being right and good so we won't be tricked into doing what is wrong for us. Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today **for your good**." The all knowing and good God gave us good commandments for life. They are intended for our good. There are unseen forces at work that oppose God and what is best for mankind. These unseen evil forces we call the devil or devil spirits. There are other names used in the Bible for these evil beings.

Mankind did not make up the true God, namely, the God of the Bible.

The true God is not like the made up pagan gods that can be vindictive or fickle. The pagans often try to appease these so called gods. Instead of having to appease these objects made of

wood or stone, the true God wants to help us in life. The Bible says that God's commandments are "right and good." Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV say, "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**. God gave us instructions for life, His Old Testament commandments, because He has our best interests at heart; they are "right and good" and God gave them to us '**that it may be well with us**.'

Doing what is right is to keep God's commandments.

Shaul (Paul) says that the unrighteous (the un-right), those who live in sin and do not do what is "**right and good**" will not be in God's future kingdom. We need to understand what is sometimes called biblical usage, the ancient way words or language is used in the Bible. Shaul then goes on to mention some of the sins that are in the Torah (the commandments in the first 5 books of the Bible) or that are implied by the Torah. Righteousness means to do what is "right" and keep God's commandments, and therefore unrighteousness is to not keep God's commandments. The following scriptures tell us that those who do not keep God's commandments will not be in God's future kingdom. Shaul (Paul) says, "**Do not be deceived**." If you have been taught that you are righteous because you only need to have faith, you have been deceived.

> 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says,
> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? **Do not be deceived**. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

Sins of the flesh or "works of the flesh" refer to unrighteous acts and are sin.

> Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says,
> The **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just **as I also told you in time past**, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

It says that Shaul told them before that sin will keep people out of God's kingdom. He must have reminded them of this a lot, so do not be deceived. Ya'akov (James) also says "Do not be deceived."

> James 1:14-16 NKJV says,
> 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.

The Bible plainly says that it takes more than faith to be saved. Sin "brings forth death," namely, spiritual death and loss of eternal life in God's future kingdom according to the book of James and the Bible. The term death is sometimes another form of biblical usage. We sometimes call them cultural idioms. Yeshua said in Revelation 3:5, "He who

overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life." What are we to overcome? We are to overcome sin. Those who live in sin will be removed from the book of life and will not be in God's future kingdom. Here is another scripture; sin brings spiritual death. Romans 6:20-21 NKJV says, "For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." The end of those things is spiritual death and loss of eternal life in God's future kingdom.

Is the Old Testament Law done away with?

Shaul said in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "**We establish the law**." That does not sound like the law is done away with. We have a lot more evidence that it is not just by faith. Yochanan (John) said that not keeping the law is sin.

> 1 John 3:4 NKJV says,
> **Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness**.
> Verse 8 says, "He who sins is of the devil."

So those who do not keep the Old Testament law are living in sin according to the Bible. Yeshua said that He will reject those who do not keep the law.

> 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**!'

These scriptures in Matthew seem to be prophetic scriptures about New Testament believers. The translators use the word "lawlessness." It is the Greek word *anomia*. The ancient rabbis used the Greek word *nomia* for the Torah, the first 5 books of the Old Testament portion. The "a" in front of the word *nomia* negates it. So, Yeshua is saying that He will reject those who do not keep God's Old Testament commandments. The above scripture in 1 John 3:4 also uses the word lawlessness and it is the same Greek word *anomia* in the manuscript. So, again, not keeping the Old Testament law is sin and according to verse 8, sin is of the devil.

Who are false teachers?

The Bible teaches us that those who teach us not to keep the Old Testament laws are false teachers.

> Deuteronomy 13:1-5 NKJV says,
> If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' 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. But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has

spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God.

We need to talk about these things because of the false doctrine that is being taught. **Those who are teaching that we do not need to keep God's good Old Testament commandments are teaching lies**. The Bible says that all liars are going to the lake of fire. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." If Yeshua or Shaul (Paul) did not teach us to keep God's Old Testament commandments they would be false teachers. Those who say that Yeshua or Paul did not teach us to keep God's Old Testament commandments are disqualifying Jesus and Paul from being sent from God.

Why all the confusion?

Why is there confusion on this matter? It could be from misunderstanding the text, or a problem with the translation (the translators are imperfect people), or even in the text itself because we only have copies of the originals and no originals. Also, Kefa (Peter) says that people misunderstand Shaul to their own destruction. There were problems with people misinterpreting Shaul's teachings right from the beginning.

2 Peter 3:15-16 NKJV says,
Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable **people twist to their own destruction**, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

Shaul (Paul) uses some complicated examples in his writing and those things that seem to be saying that the Old Testament Law is done away with, we need to reject until we can understand the point he is making.

Also, the translators sometimes make mistakes. For example, John 5:4 is in no manuscripts and was added by the translators to the King James Version. Some think that the King James Version of the Bible is perfect, but the more recent King James Versions are different than the older ones. They update the versions to try to remove the mistakes they made in translating.

The Greek text that is used to translate the New Testament into other languages is called, Novum Testamentum Graece and is a compilation of manuscripts. It shows sometimes up to 10 deviations per scripture between the manuscripts. Sometimes there are only a few scriptures on a page and all the small print on the page show the deviations between the scriptures on that page. The book is presently available on Amazon. Scholars work hard to try to account for all the differences between the manuscripts, but we do not always know what was added or changed by the scribes. There are some 8,000 verses in the New Testament portion of the Bible. If we take a low average number of total deviations per verse in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, perhaps 1 per verse, then we have 8,000 deviations between the manuscripts of the New Testament. So, even if the average deviation is 1, it turns out to be a lot of deviations between the manuscripts.

We might come up with a lot of different doctrines just because of problems with the deviations between the manuscripts or how the accepted Greek text is translated. I should note that having some 22,000 manuscripts is a good thing. Other ancient documents often only have a

few copies in existence. So, we do not know to what extent how these other ancient documents may have been altered. Then there is the problem of those who assert there are no deviations. For example, if you ask a Muslim how they have been able to reconcile the differences between their manuscripts, they will always say there are none. People who say there are no deviations in the Bible manuscripts are not trying to get back to what the originals said.

Even Jerome, a Bible scholar who lived in the 300s said there were problems with the Greek manuscripts.

> Jerome writes in his preface to the Latin Vulgate (see Vulgate.org):
> "If, on the other hand, we are to glean the truth from a comparison of many, **why not go back to the original Greek** and **correct the mistakes** introduced by inaccurate translators, and the **blundering alterations of confident but ignorant critics**, and, further, **all that has been inserted or changed by copyists** more asleep than awake?"

Jerome says to go back to the original Greek, but they had no originals, only copies, perhaps just an original copy of the Hebrew Matthew. There are **mistakes in these copies** of the Greek manuscripts he says. There are **blundering alterations, alterations made by ignorant critics, and insertions and changes made to the original Greek manuscripts**! Some say how dare you say there is something wrong with the Greek, but they just want to perpetuate false doctrine or say the manuscripts are perfect when they are not. It would be more correct to say that the translators put an enormous amount of effort to produce a Greek text from which to translate from.

Don't we all want the Truth!

<u>We are not going to get truth defending false doctrine.</u>
Some denominations say they are the true church because their priests or religion was passed down to them from the apostles. The true church are those who follow Yeshua and keep God's commandments. That's what we want to do. We want to be among the true believers in God whether that was the believers of Israel who followed God or the Gentiles before Israel like the Gentile Abraham. Some in Israel sinned but not all of Israel. For example, God says about those who lived in Israel at the time of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:18 NKJV, "I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Being a true believer applies to believers for all of time, before the law was written there is evidence that the Law was passed down verbally. True believers in the true God are to still follow the Law in this temporary Messianic age. To be blotted out of the Book of Life is to lose one's eternal life in God's future kingdom. Those who lived in the desert at the time of the exodus and did not repent will be blotted out of the Book of Life. Exodus 32:33 NKJV says, "And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book." Those who lived in sin in ancient times or those in our present age who live in sin and do not repent will be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be in God's future kingdom. Again, Yeshua said in Revelation 3:5 NKJV, "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life."

There has always been a remnant of believers who kept God's commandments. It says

emphatically by repetition that the Gentile Abraham kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham **obeyed My voice** and **kept My charge**, **My commandments**, **My statutes**, and **My laws**." Abraham believed so He kept God's commandments. At the time of Abraham, the Torah was not written down yet so God's commandments were passed down by the ancient believers until it was written down. For example, before the Torah was written down, Moshe knew his sons were supposed to be circumcised. Joseph knew that it was wrong to commit adultery with Potifar's wife.

The Hebrew manuscripts.

We now have a significant number of Hebrew manuscripts of the New Testament. While nowhere in the thousands, they can be used as another manuscript to determine if the Greek has been altered. There are many against this, but we know that even though they are copies and not originals, they contain some of the original language because the church Fathers quote the original Hebrew. Jerome probably quotes from the original Hebrew Matthew some 26 times. Jerome's quotes match the Hebrew scriptures we have found.

The reason we do not have many Hebrew manuscripts is because the anti-Jewish Roman Empire burned the Hebrew scrolls and put to death those who had them. We believe that they intended to replace the true faith with a Roman version of the faith and they were able to do that to some extent. They mixed in pagan doctrine with the original doctrine and observed Roman holidays as Christian holidays. The Romans also changed the Law to suit their purposes. To this day, Christians keep Easter for the resurrection of Yeshua. Easter is the multi-breasted pagan goddess of fertility!

Here is an example of the Hebrew James being altered. In the Hebrew James, James 1:25 **does not have** the word liberty in it. James 1:25 NKJV says, "He who looks into the perfect law ~~of liberty~~ and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does." The words "of liberty" is crossed out to help you see how the Hebrew James reads. Just two words changes the meaning of what was written! The Roman Empire did not want to keep God's good Law so they changed the scriptures.

Here is an example of the anti-Jewish Roman-Greeks changing the meaning of one of Yeshua's parables. The parable of the talents is in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew, the unprofitable servant is cast outside in the dark and it probably alludes to not making it into God's future kingdom. Matthew 25:30 NKJV says, "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In Luke he is not cast out but murdered! Luke 19:27 NKJV says, "But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me." People take that to mean to murder the Jews and I have a commentary that says just that. Murderers will not be in God's future kingdom! Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, **murderers**, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone."

The translators are not perfect.

Why talk about these things? It does not need to be upsetting if we are seeking the truth. It is so we can learn and grow in the truths of God's word. Don't be stuck in false doctrine where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." We sometimes see scriptures that say we are

saved if we believe, and there are lots of scriptures that say faith requires more than just believing in Jesus. Sometimes even the translators inject their personal beliefs into the translation or a mistaken understanding. Again, the translators of the King James Version added a scripture in John 5:4 that came from a pagan fable that the translators thought was what the text implied. There is no John 5:4 in the manuscripts! There is a blank space in the Greek text. Imagine that, a pagan fable instead of a Jewish understanding of what was going on. Also, I went to a seminar on translating the Bible many years ago, and they said that they cannot update some scriptures to their correct meaning because some people would not buy their Bible. There are any number of problems we can have in getting to even a proper translation and that is why we need to understand what faith is really about, and work the scriptures to develop a proper understanding.

Ancient biblical thought versus modern understanding.

It is also easy for people to make the mistake of applying a modern thought to what is an ancient text. For example, if someone playing baseball goes home, they score a point for their team. If a person did not know anything about baseball, they may think the person went to where they lived. The Bible is an ancient book, and we need to understand the Bible the way it was originally intended to be understood. For example, in the time of Yeshua, they were required to do certain washings including washing the body of a person who died. The translators translated a scripture about the baptism of the dead which if you understood that they washed the bodies of the dead before burial, then you would understand the baptism of the dead was referring to a ritual washing of the dead before burial and not what some people call baptizing the dead. After Yeshua died, the Bible says that some did this ritual washing of His body, and they were not able to finish it because the Passover was about to begin.

Here is an example of a scripture that has been theologized so the real meaning is hidden. We just read scriptures that conclusively tell us that we must also keep God's commandments to be saved. Romans 10:4 seems to say that the law has been done away with. **Christ means Messiah**, the Greek word translated **"end" is also translated as goal in other places**, the word **law could be translated Torah** which refers to the Old Testament commandments, and the word **"to" is the Greek word that means toward**. Romans 10:4 could be translated: "The Messiah is the goal of the Torah toward righteousness, for all who believe." **It could more properly mean, that the Messiah helps us to keep God's Old Testament Law.**

We just read in 1 John that not keeping the Law is sin and of the devil. So, those who insist there is nothing wrong with the present translation have it wrong. The substituted words I gave for Roman's 10:4 goes better with what Yochanan said, 1 John 3:4 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Again, the word lawlessness is to not to keep the Torah, God's Old Testament commandments! Verse 8 says, "He who sins is of the devil." Namely, he says, those who do not keep the Law, God's Old Testament commandments are living in sin and they are of the devil. Yeshua said He will reject those who do not keep the Law and that concurs with what His disciples taught! Do the Old Testament commandments still apply to life?

God's good law is forever.

Psalms 33:11 NKJV says,
The **counsel of the LORD stands forever**, the plans of His heart to all generations.

Psalms 119:152 NKJV says,
Concerning **Your testimonies**, I have known of old that **You have founded them forever**.

Psalms 119:160 NKJV says,
The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of **Your righteous judgments endures forever**.

Shaul says in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "We establish the law." He says the law has not been done away with, it is established. Saul says in Acts 24:14 NKJV, "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." Shaul believed in and taught God's Old Testament commandments. The word "way" is capitalized and should not have been. There are no small or capital letters in the manuscripts. **This is a cultural misunderstanding.**

The "way" was a common way to refer to how someone lived and not as a sect of Judaism. It is often used as an idiom, a cultural expression. Psalms 1:6 NKJV says, "For the LORD knows the **way of the righteous**, but the **way of the ungodly** shall perish." God knows who is following His Old Testament commandments, but those who do not follow God, the ungodly, are going to the lake of fire (see Daniel 12:1-3; Revelation 21:8, Revelation 3:5).

Also, the word walk is used in the same way, namely, how a person lives. Deuteronomy 5:33 NKJV says, "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 8:6 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall **keep the commandments of the LORD your God**, to **walk in His ways** and to fear Him." Also see, Deuteronomy 6:7, 10:12, 11:18, 11:22, 13:4-5, 26:17, and 30:16. Also, another important idiom in the Torah are the words "gathered to his people." Alive people join other people so it is referring to the future gathering of God's people in the future kingdom. It is a reference to eternal life. Genesis 25:8 NKJV says, "Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people." Also see, Genesis 25:17, 35:29, 49:33; Numbers 20:24; Deuteronomy 32:50. Of course there are many other cultural idioms.

Holiness is being separate in how we live.

Also, those who are holy, are those who keep God's good commandments. True believers live their life different than those who do not believe in the true God. We keep God's good commandments. There is no stamp of righteous that allows sinners to be in God's future kingdom and be holy. Remember, Yeshua (Jesus) said He will reject those who live in sin. 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." Many of us have been lied to. It is easy enough to see in the scriptures that we

are to keep God's good Old Testament commandments. Also, they are not difficult as some say. Deuteronomy 30:11 NIV says, "Now what I am commanding you today **is not too difficult for you** or beyond your reach." Some were for the priests, some were for men, some were for women, some were for farmers, etcetera. God's commandments apply to life; therefore, they are easy to remember and do. Keep the commandments that apply to you. **Shaul said, "Do not be deceived**." Do not be deceived by those who say we do not have to keep God's Old Testament commandments. They may say they no longer apply or they are old outdated laws but that is not true.

Watch out for the doctrines of men.
These misinformed people who do not believe in God's good law have **formed a philosophy** about the Bible and have made up a false religious system so they have answers that negates true doctrine. Watch out for them. Colossians 2:8 NKJV says, "**Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy** and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men." Their false doctrines are man-made. Colossians 2:21-22 NKJV says, "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle, which all concern things which perish with the using – according to the commandments and **doctrines of men**?" They will say that God's Old Testament commandments no longer apply or some other false statement. Some of these people are not much different than an atheist. Atheists do not believe in God but they still find themselves believing in something. The same is true for those who say the Old Testament laws no longer apply. They will say things like, "just love others," and then they must form their own concepts on how to do that.

When the Bible seems to be saying that God's Law, the Old Testament commandments are done away with, we need to leave that for a time when it can be explained. They could be changes made to the originals that heretics made. It is common knowledge to many scholars that the Romans and the Greeks hated the Jews and God's laws because the pagan Romans and Greeks considered the Jews unbelievers in their pagan religions. That's why we have pagan doctrine passed down to us in Christianity. Again, Easter is the multi-breasted pagan goddess of fertility. It is terrible to call the day of Yeshua's resurrection Easter.

We saw that the scriptures were changed to make it seem that God's good Old Testament commandments were done away and to make the Jews look bad. Some people even blame the Jews for Yeshua's death. The Romans put Yeshua to death. **The high priest at the time was installed by Rome and King Herod was installed by Rome**. You can look it up. The Romans were in control and they put Yeshua to death or anyone they considered a threat to keep their Roman leadership intact.

Yeshua said that the leadership installed by the Roman empire would put Him to death and the Gentiles would put Him to death. Mark 10:33 NKJV says that the chief priests and to the scribes, "Will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles." The Roman historian Tacitus bragged that the Romans put Yeshua (Jesus) to death. Those who were saying let His blood be upon us were sent by the chief priests installed by the Roman leadership (see Matthew 27:15-25). The Jews were not allowed to put anyone to death! The Romans put Him to death. Yeshua did not remain dead, so it is not human sacrifice as some deceitfully say.

Yeshua is the Messiah and He rose from the dead. King David says in Psalms 16:10 NKJV, "For

You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." Yeshua is that holy one. Christ in the following scriptures means to be smudged or anointed in the Greek and refers to Yeshua (Jesus). Christ is not His last name.

> 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 NKJV says,
> For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that **He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once**.

Yeshua is still alive and, in the heavens, and is waiting to return.

> Acts 1:9-11 NKJV says,
> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

Yeshua will return some day when God decides it is time (see Matthew 24:36).

We saw obvious changes made to the manuscripts like the one in the Epistle of James. In the Gospel of John, it seems to say that the Jews rejected Yeshua. John 1:11 NKJV says, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him." The Van Rensburg translation of the Hebrew Gospel of John from the Vatican manuscript Ebr 100 says, "But the world does not recognize Him." It is not the Jews that reject Yeshua, but the world. Many of the Jews accepted Yeshua because He taught the Law. Acts 21:20 NKJV says, "And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.'"

The word myriads appears to hide the fact that many people loved Yeshua because **He taught them to keep God's Old Testament commandments**. Strong's dictionary says the word "myriads" could be translated as "ten thousand times ten thousand, or also as "two hundred thousand!" Liars turn this around and say, "Too bad they followed the law." Remember, liars are not going to make it into God's future kingdom. Again, Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "**All liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone**." Changes were made to the manuscripts to purposely make the Jews look bad and to make it seem that God's good Old Testament commandments are done away with. If you have been fooled by false doctrine or someone's theology, repent. God will forgive you if you are willing to change and be obedient.

> Isaiah 1:18-19 NKJV says,
> "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**."

People sometimes have a favorite philosophy of the scriptures.
Some denominations interpret the scriptures in terms of believing or faith, or they interpret

them by some other made-up doctrine. They are developing a philosophy of the scriptures that blinds their minds to the truth. Faith in itself is important, but it is not the point of every scripture. They will then say that anyone who does not believe their made-up doctrine are blinded. The Bible tells us what doctrine is. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." You can go round and round trying to reason with these people because **they reinterpret the scriptures based on their theology and not truth**.

What are we to have faith in?

Faith is an important part of our Messianic belief. We are not to make up what we are to teach and do. The scriptures should define our beliefs. These scriptures in the book of Hebrews teach us the fundamentals that begin our journey of faith. They are the beginning point for what we are to believe and do. Faith must include the "first principles" of our faith and trust in God. We need to learn God's commandments so we know what is right or wrong, good or evil. We are to learn to be God's people and develop our ability to do this.

> Hebrews 5:12-6:2 NKJV says,
> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, **you need someone to teach you again the first principles** of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those **who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil**. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from dead works** and of **faith toward God**, of the **doctrine of baptisms**, of **laying on of hands**, of **resurrection of the dead**, and of **eternal judgment**.

We are to develop our ability to keep God's good commandments properly. We should also know the elementary principles listed which includes:

Repentance from dead works.
Faith towards God.
The doctrine of baptisms.
The laying on of hands.
The resurrection of the dead.
Eternal judgment.

Let's briefly talk about these principles and some other important principles.

"Repentance from dead works."

I like to use trust purposely to convey an active sense because we need to live like we believe in God. **Dead works in the Bible refers to sin**. Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "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?" Sin will keep people out of God's future eternal kingdom. We need to **do what is right**. The word righteous means to do what is right. Our obedience to God's commandments is doing what is right, and leads to righteousness. Again, Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "**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 <u>right and good</u>** in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you."

Why all the repetition about righteousness? It is because many people have been taught that they do not have to do anything to be righteous. They do not believe that living in sin leads to death, namely spiritual death and loss of eternal life in God's future kingdom like the Bible says. What did Shaul (Paul) say? Shaul said in Romans that living in sin leads to death and we are to repent of sin. We are to repent of dead sinful works. James 2:20 NKJV says, "But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" Faith without keeping God's Old Testament commandments and trusting in His good commandments is dead and leads to loss of eternal life.

We must trust in God's law. That is part of what we must believe. I am not talking about lots of man-made Christian or Jewish laws. A multitude of extra commands can be inappropriate and micromanage life. These extra laws can make following God difficult. The Bible warns us not to add or subtract from God's word. Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV says, "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." Do your best to discern appropriate ways to follow God.

Sometimes people's ideas or ideals can be evil. Watch out for ideals that are not biblical. Take for instance communism, which murdered over 100 million of its own people in the 20th century. A lot of their idealism sounds good and a lot of rich people bought into it, but their land and goods ended up being stolen from them and the poor and the rich ended up poor. It did not get rid of greed. Under communism, the leaders ended up being entitled and the common people poor. The entitled leaders have their own stores where they get anything they want and the common people must go to stores where they often cannot get what they need. The communist religion is a false religion. Any ideal can be termed a religion. The Communist religion is not biblical.

Also, let's talk about ritual. Ritual can be a good thing and is part of life, but some ritual is just ridiculous or micromanagement made up to be a commandment of God. If it is not a commandment of God, say so. Some ritual is commanded in the Bible. We are not to make up a lot of commandments to make sure we keep God's commandments. If something you do helps you to keep God's commandments or a commandment, do it. Don't impose it as though it is a commandment of God.

The Bible says that we can end up following made up commandments instead of following God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men." Also, consider this. If a person is not following God's commandments, they must be making up their own set of man-made rules for life instead of doing what God's says. It said in Isaiah that their heart is then far from God. Following non-biblical ideals results in following man-made and non-biblical ways to live. Extra inappropriate man-made commandments manufacture God. We do not want to follow false ideals or make up God, but to follow the Creator God and His good commandments.

Those who keep the extra man-made commandments can also be far from God. People can be so consumed about following a man-made commandment that they forget to keep God's commandments. Some even tear their toilet paper before Shabbat so they do not work on Shabbat because somehow, they consider that it is work to tear a piece of toilet paper. They must be very weak. They will put their lights on dimmers, so they do not have to turn on a switch on Shabbat because they think they are kindling a fire if they turn on a switch. They must be worried that their house will burn down on Shabbat if they turn on a light switch. We are commanded not to kindle a fire on Shabbat. Kindling a fire can be a lot of work. Do you see how ridiculous their man-made commandments are? I know of people who do these things religiously but get drunk or become incoherent on drugs on a regular basis. They follow man-made laws, but not all of God's laws.

We need to address the problem of keeping man-made laws and thinking we are okay with God. For example, the Torah teaches us that getting intoxicated is wrong and can lead to compromising situations or even other sins. Lot's daughters got their father Lot drunk, and they sinned by having intercourse with their father. Genesis 19:32 NKJV says, "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." The Bible forbids sexual relations between family members.

Getting intoxicated by either drink or drugs can cause severe problems, cause a person to hallucinate, say wrong things, and even commit sin like Lot did with his daughters. Proverbs 23:31-33 NKJV says, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things." Rabbi Shaul said that drunkards **will not be in God's future kingdom**. Again, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor **drunkards**, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." We need to understand what we are to have faith in; in this case we are talking faith in God's commandments. The Torah teaches us to not get intoxicated.

We should understand that faith includes several principles. It includes trusting in who God is, in His good commandments and repenting of behaviors that God says we are not to do. It includes the gift of the Holy Spirit in this temporary Messianic era, in the resurrection of Yeshua, in eternal reward for those who keep God's commandments, in eternal punishment for those who do not keep God's commandments, that Yeshua is the Messiah who died for our sins and will come back at a future time and rule in His future kingdom, as well as the other first principles. We will talk briefly about these and a few others. I would suggest that you would at least begin to work on the elementary principles and other principles that we are talking about and continue growing in your understanding and application of your faith so that you, **have your "senses exercised to discern both good and evil."**

Repentance includes trust in God's good commandments.

We need to trust in God. He is a good God and therefore His commandments are good.

> We do not have to second guess God's commandments. Psalms 119:68 NKJV says, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes."

God's faithfulness and goodness towards mankind has endured for all of time. God's law helps us in life.

> Psalms 119:90-92 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."

God is good and wants us to follow His commandments for our own good. This is a key scripture.

> Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good."

God is the creator and knows what is best for mankind. We need to learn and keep His commandments. Some are for men, some are for women, some were for farmers, and some commandments were for the priests. Apply what is for you.

> Psalms 119:73 NKJV says, "Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments."

People that keep God's commandments instead of their heart or good intentions often realize that God's commandments contain good judgment. Why make up what we think is right when we can have good judgment and knowledge?

> Psalms 119:66 NKJV says, "Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments."

We need good values for life. They can light our way so that we know the right path to take.

> Psalms 119:105-106 NKJV says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments."

Some value material things or value ideals other than what God teaches us. God's commandments though are extremely valuable, more than what gold, our own ideas, or what anything else has to offer.

> Psalms 119:127-128 NKJV says, "I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold! Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right."

God's commandments are truth. If you need something to help you with life begin to learn and keep God's laws and commandments.

> Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth."

People who believe in God have often seen their life transform for the better by keeping God's good commandments. For thousands of years people have benefitted from God's commandments. God's commandments were good thousands of years ago and they are still good.

> Psalms 119:151-152 NKJV says, "All Your commandments are truth. Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever." The good news is that God does not change and has given mankind His good commandments and they are good forever. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change."

Again, sin is dead works. Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "Sin leading to death." Living in sin leads to spiritual death and loss of eternal life in God's future kingdom. We are to repent from sin and keep God's commandments. It is an elementary principle. We will talk a little about the other elementary principles. First, we will talk about the Holy Spirit that was given on Shavuot, Pentecost.

<u>Having faith, trust, in the Holy Spirit</u>.
Also, in this temporary Messianic age, we have the Holy Spirit as our helper. The first believers in the Messiah Yeshua received the Holy Spirit. Yeshua said that God's commandments are our helper, and **He gave us another helper for life, the Holy Spirit**. John 14:15-17 NKJV says, "**Keep My commandments**. And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth." Also, since Yeshua is God (see Jeremiah 23:5-6), He gave us His commandments at Mount Sinai and the Holy Spirit is another helper. Shaul commands us to desire the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV says, "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts." These gifts of the Holy Spirit are for our benefit and are good. Yeshua said in Luke 11:13 NKJV, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" If you haven't been taught about these spiritual gifts, then you have not heard all you are supposed to have heard.

The word gifts in Romans chapter 12 is the Greek word *charisma* and these gifts are associated with the giving of the Holy Spirit.

> Romans 12:6-8 NKJV says,
> 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 are God given gifts and can be developed by our faith. For example, when I first began receiving prophecy, it was very simple at first. It is not our ideas, but God given information. Then through deep respect for others and for God's will, I learned to use prophecy to encourage others. The Bible says that prophecy is mostly for, "He who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men;" 1 Corinthians 14:3 NKJV. My experience has taught me that only occasionally it is for prophesying the future.

We have an online class to help you with the gifts of the Holy Spirit called, "Divine Healing Prayer Class." See our drop-down menu.

The spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit are also called manifestations (namely evidences) in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

> 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NKJV says,
> **The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one** for the profit of all: 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 individually as He wills.

Notice that each believer can receive these evidences of the Holy Spirit. When I first became a believer, I began receiving visions from God. God gave me the understanding of the visions by inspiration. I was not making up the understanding; God gave me the understanding of the

vision. Genesis 15:1 NKJV says, "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision."

Also, there are some spiritual gifts (charisma) that are given to leaders.

> Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV says,
> And 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.

It has been my experience that God gives these to faithful believers who keep God's commandments, have studied the scriptures, and teach the truths of the Bible. 2 Timothy 2:2 NKJV says, "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." For example, after being faithful to keep God's commandments, studying the Bible for many years, and teaching from the scriptures, God gave me a gift of prophesy. I had been using the prophetic already for many years in the fear of God and in a respectful and kind way. Watch out that you do not use the spiritual gifts in a prideful manner. Always be kind and humble in your use of God's gifts. God wants to give us His good spiritual gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:1 NKJV says, "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."

Yeshua says in Luke 24:49 NIV, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power from on high**." We are to look like we are God's people and that includes using the gift of the Holy Spirit and its associated evidences. Do not try to look weird like some like to do, but be filled with the goodness of God both from His commandments and the Holy Spirit. We are to be clothed with the Holy Spirit which is the power of God at work in us. Yeshua said in Acts 1:8 NKJV, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

This power is a witness that Yeshua rose from the dead and that we will rise from the dead. 1 Corinthians 4:20 NKJV says, "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power." This is not just a philosophy for life. Ephesians 3:16 NKJV says, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man." And in Ephesians 3:20 NKJV it says, "To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." What is at work in us? It is the Holy Spirit that **we are supposed to ask for and receive**. Acts 2:38-39 NKJV says, "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."

Anywhere in the world, a person can believe in the Messiah and ask for this gift. We are to ask for it and seek the Holy Spirit and its associated gifts.

> Luke 11:9-13 NKJV says,
> So I say to you, **ask**, and it will be given to you; **seek**, and you will find; **knock**, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a

> scorpion? **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!**

The work of the Holy Spirit in our life is available in this temporary Messianic era. We call our present era a Messianic era because the Messiah Yeshua made the giving of the Holy Spirit available. Yeshua will come again someday and begin a new perfect Messianic era. 1 Corinthians 13:10 NKJV says, "When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

Begin learning and growing in all the spiritual fundamentals. We need to trust God; we need to have faith in God. Keeping God's commandments is a basic doctrine that we need to believe in. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." Also, as we can see, receiving the Holy Spirit is another basic doctrine that we are to believe in which requires faith. The Holy Spirit is another helper, the first are God's Old Testament commandments.

The New Testament portion scriptures can provide insight on how to apply God's Old Testament commandments, but we must be careful to not be fooled by additions or changes made to the originals or poor translations that say we are to not keep the Law or that God has done away with His good Old Testament commandments. Psalms 33:11 NKJV says, "**The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.**" Let's continue to talk about some of the other elementary principles.

"Faith towards God."

Faith in God and faith towards God are two different things. James 2:19 NKJV says, "**The demons believe** and tremble!" Faith towards God means that we act as though we believe in God and in who He is. That begins by keeping God's Old Testament commandments.

We believe that God is the creator and provider for us through His creation. So, it makes perfect sense that God did not leave mankind to figure out how we should live. God gave us good commandments to live by and mankind had these commandments since the inception of time. For example, Moses knew that his sons should be circumcised. Joseph knew that adultery was wrong. So, early believers passed on God's commandments verbally. God had them written down while Israel was in the desert. The Bible emphatically says that before the Torah was written down that the Gentile Abraham kept God's commandments. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept **My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My law**." Some say that Abraham ate meat with milk so he did not keep God's commandments, but that law is nowhere in the Bible.

To be God's holy people requires we live in faith towards God and do what is right and keep God's commandments. 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**." God wants us to reap the benefits of following His Old Testament portion commandments and be His holy **special people**. Deuteronomy 26:18-19 NKJV says, "The LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, **that you should keep all His commandments**, and that He will set you high above all

nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a **holy people** to the LORD your God." In order to be holy, we must act holy by keeping God's commandments. It is then that we are His special people.

Those who do not live in true faith towards God will not be in God's future kingdom and fall short of God's grace. Hebrews 12:14-15 NKJV says, "**Pursue peace with all people, and holiness**, without which no one will see the Lord: looking **carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God**." Our actions demonstrate our faith in the true God. James 2:17-18 NKJV says, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

The Bible says that those who do not keep God's commandments insult God's grace and they will face the vengeance of God.

> Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV says,
> **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.

Shaul says that God will render to each one according to their deeds.

> Romans 2:5-9 NKJV says,
> **God, who will render to each one according to his deeds**: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil."

An evildoer is someone who does not keep God's commandments. Psalms 119:115 NKJV says, "Depart from me, you evildoers, for I will keep the commandments of my God!"

We are to grow up spiritually. Hebrews 12:14 NKJV says, "Those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their **senses exercised to discern both good and evil**." It is God's Old Testament commandments that are "right and good." Deuteronomy 6:17-18 NKJV says, "**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."

Now is your chance to repent of false doctrine. Now is your chance to repent of the dead works of sin. If you confess your sin to God and are determined to not do that again, God will forgive you.

> Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV says,
> The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity and**

transgression and sin.

Psalms 103:10-13 NKJV says,
He has not dealt with us according to our sins, or punished us according to our iniquities. 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.

Psalms 86:5 NKJV says,
For You, **Lord, are good, and ready to forgive**, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

Micah 7:18 NKJV says,
Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because **He delights in mercy**.

"<u>The doctrine of baptisms.</u>"
Most people are familiar with the water baptism of repentance. It is often public confession to renounce sin and follow God's commandments. The Bible has its roots in Israelite or Jewish practice (and not Greek or Roman practice) so we should call this a ritual immersion or washing. It is a symbolic ritual as are the other washings (baptisms). When a person goes under the water, they are said to be dead to their old person of sin and sinful values. When they rise out of the water, they are said to be risen to a new life; to being a person who will now keep God's commandments. Romans 6:11 NKJV says, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." When we go under the water, we leave our worthless ungodly life behind us and are now alive to God in Yeshua Messiah. We have a ritual immersion ceremony available on "The Basics" page of our website. A ritual immersion of repentance can be done at any time or by oneself.

Although these washings are primarily ritual and symbolic, it is evident that the washings in the Old Testament portion are still to be practiced because they are listed among the elementary principles of our beliefs. Like the Immersion of Repentance (Baptism) they remind us to be pure both on the outside and inside.

Notice it says in the Bible in Hebrews, "the doctrine of baptisms." There are special washings for men, for women, for the priests, and also for the washing of the body after death. Perhaps the washing of the body after death has to do with treating the dead body with respect and dignity. This washing is not commanded in the Bible, but we know that burial or cremation needs to be practiced so disease does not spread. Cremation is not wrong according to the Bible. Those that come in contact with a dead body were to practice a temporary isolation or quarantine most probably so they did not pass on a disease and also to wash oneself (Numbers 19:10-19). Certain washings were prescribed for the place where a person died or for things that were touched by those who were unclean.

People years ago did not always know why someone got sick. Some of the practices prescribed by God appear to be a way to protect us from disease. The Jews were sometimes persecuted by the Gentiles because the Gentiles were getting diseases and the Jews were not.

We do not have a temple now so the ritual washings for the priests or people to be able to go into the temple area do not have to be done. When the priests went into the Temple area, they were to wash. This would seem to be done for sanitary reasons, but regardless, it was a commandment of God. It is possible that some of the rituals had their purpose in keeping disease from spreading since that is what would have happened if those not clean went to the Temple area where there were many people.

It makes sense though, if a person is sick they should not fellowship with others and pass on their sickness. There are washings for married people after relations. There are washings for men regarding sexual emissions. There are washings for articles that come in contact with bodily emissions (Leviticus 15 16-18; Deuteronomy 23:10-11). There is a washing for woman for after her customary impurity (Leviticus 15:19-28). The people and priests were consecrated by washings at important times. Exodus 19:10-11, 40:12-15, Leviticus 15:15-18. There are ceremonial washings for being proclaimed clean from disease. Leviticus 13:6, 17:15. These are some of the washings that may apply to us.

We should practice the washings (baptisms) that apply specifically to us. Use good judgment in applying these commands. Also, not all washings require immersion and if water is scarce, the ancient writings like the Didache say to use what is available even if it is a small amount of water. Taking a shower could be a form of emersion for those who are not physically able to do emersion or there if there is not much water available. I accompany my ritual with a brief prayer stating that I am keeping God's commandment for washing. This is not difficult to do.

In our modern times we understand that washing, cleanliness, and taking care of ourselves should be a normal part of our everyday life. This demonstrates respect and care towards ourselves and others. It is often the deviant lifestyles in society that show their lack of care and respect for others by not taking proper care of themselves.

"<u>Laying on of hands.</u>"

<u>The laying on of hands was used for association in the Bible.</u>
A confession of faith was made with the laying on of hands on the Day of Firstfruits and the person laid their hands head on the sacrifice. We could also make a confession of faith on the Day of Firstfruits that identifies that we are keeping God's commandments. This could also be done at any time as well.

<u>We lay on hands to impart blessings, healings, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.</u>
As we lay on our hands, we ask God to stretch out His hand to heal. We cannot do a miracle or heal anyone, but God can and he will use us when we stretch out our hands and ask God to bless someone, to heal someone, or for a miracle Acts 4:30 NKJV says, "By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." God will sometimes do amazing things through us. One time I only just blessed a young girl and God healed her hearing. She had been deaf in one ear. A friend of mine made a last

minute prayer for a woman before returning to the United States from Africa. She had been in a car accident. She woke up the next morning and her headaches were gone and her crooked nose that she got from the accident was straightened out.

The most typical place to lay hands on someone is on the head. The High Priest would lay his hand on the head of the sacrificial goats on Yom Kippur. Men should only lay hands on a woman with the woman's permission.

In the Jewish community of Yeshua's time, it was understood that God will bless and heal through the laying on of hands. Matthew 9:18 NKJV says, "Behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, 'My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.'" Yeshua as our model often accompanied healing prayer with the laying on of hands. Luke 4:40 NKJV says, "When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and **He laid His hands on every one of them** and healed them."

Laying on of hands can also impart the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17 NKJV says, "They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." The leadership laid hands on Timothy to impart a spiritual gift. 1 Timothy 4:14 NKJV says, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership."

It is appropriate to lay hands on others to pronounce blessings. It can be appropriate to lay hands on others during special occasions or lay hands on our children and pray for them. Some lay hands on their children on Shabbat and bless them. I always look forward to others offering to pray for me and bless me.

"<u>Resurrection of the dead.</u>"

We are to be believe in the resurrection of the dead.

> Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV says, "And many of **those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt."
> Psalms 49:15 NKJV says, "But **God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave**, for He shall receive me."

Those that die and decompose will be raised from the dead.

> Isaiah 26:19 NKJV says, "Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and **sing, you who dwell in dust**."
> Job 19:25-27 NKJV says,
> "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and **after my skin is destroyed**, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and **my eyes shall behold**, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!"

Some will live in eternal glory; anguish will be done away with.

> Psalms 73:24-25 NKJV says,
> "You will guide me with Your counsel, and **afterward receive me to glory**. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You."

Isaiah 25:8 NKJV says,
"He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord **GOD will wipe away tears from all faces**."

We are to believe (trust) in the resurrection of Yeshua.
The reason I talk about trust is because we need to act like Yeshua rose from the dead and therefore believe that we also have something to look forward to. The fact that Yeshua rose from the dead and is still alive is an evident witness that there is a future kingdom that we can enter and that there is life after death. The Bible says that there is life after death, and Yeshua's resurrection is a witness to that. In times past when people were raised from the dead, they went on to die. Not so with Yeshua. He is still alive. Also, as I already mentioned, when we receive the Holy Spirit, it is a witness to us of a future resurrection and also that Yeshua rose from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 NKJV says,
For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once.

Romans 10:9 NKJV says,
Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.

"Eternal judgment."
There is a future judgement and reward that we must trust in and act accordingly. All must stand before the Messiah and be judged whether "sin leading to death," or obedience leading to righteousness." Again, Romans 6:16 NKJV says, "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?" If we live in sin, we will not be in God's future kingdom – it leads to eternal spiritual death. If we keep God's commandments and show trust in God, we will enter God's future amazing and wonderful future kingdom. The **word for "seat"** in the following verse is the Greek word ***bema*** **which is where the Torah is read** in Jewish synagogues. The Torah is the first 5 books of the Bible. Our Bible was written by Jewish believers.

2 Corinthians 5:10 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.

The picture we can draw from this verse is Yeshua standing in front of the *bema* with the Torah scroll set in front of him and he is judging mankind. Shaul appears to emphatically tell Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

There was no New Testament at the time; he is talking about the Old Testament portion! 2 Timothy 3:15 NKJV says, "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." Timothy's mother was Jewish (see Acts 16:1); the Holy Scriptures being talked about there in 2 Timothy are the Old Testament commandments. It goes on to say there in 2 Timothy that Yeshua will judge us; He will also judge those who are teaching false doctrine. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "The cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and **all liars** shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Let's get going people and begin spreading the truth.

Some will be detested and despised forever and those who are wise will be glorious forever.

> Daniel 12:2-3 NKJV says,
> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

The word wise in this verse seems to be a play on the word wisdom. A wise person is someone who lives a wise life, a life of wisdom. This refers to Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV which says, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." So those who keep God's commandments will shine like the stars forever.

Someday, believers who believe in and trust in God and act accordingly will put on immortality.

> 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 NKJV says,
> Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Believers who believe in and trust in God will experience the new kingdom of God.

> Revelation 21:3-5 NKJV says,
> Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

God can do what He says He will do because He is God, and He will do what He says He will do. The streets will be like pure gold it goes on to say.

> Revelation 21:19-21 NKJV says,
> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

There are those who do not believe and those who do not understand the scriptures the way they are supposed to. You do not have to be among them. God is the final judge. I hope that you will be a person of faith and trust, act accordingly, and make it into the future kingdom of God. If all we need to do is have faith, then why did Yeshua say it matters what we do in life?

Do what is "right and good." 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." Doing what is right or what is good is to keep God's commandments. Therefore, to bear good fruit means to keep God's commandments. Do not follow the crowd that lacks understanding. Bear good fruit.

Yeshua says, "enter by the narrow gate."

> Matthew 7:13-17 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**.

You will know them by their teaching and how they live. It they are not teaching us to keep God's good Old Testament commandments; they are false teachers.

> Deuteronomy 13:3-43 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.

There is a future eternal kingdom to come with the Messiah Yeshua as our King.
This temporary Messianic age will be replaced someday. Again, 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 NKJV says, "For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." In the meantime, before the 1,000 year reign

talked about in the Bible, we have some elementary things to learn and also some more advanced things to understand. The 1,000 year reign is talked about in Revelation 20:1-8. This scripture in 2 Timothy perhaps refers to our reign with Yeshua. 2 Timothy 2:12 NKJV says, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." Endure means to remain as we are no matter the circumstances. We need to faithfully learn and diligently keep God's Old Testament commandments, and also observe what applies to this temporary Messianic age.

It is my hope that I will see you in the future kingdom of God with the Messiah Yeshua. The word "Christ" means anointed (smudged) in the Greek. Yeshua is that anointed King who will reign forever. Revelation 11:15 NKJV says, "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

God has sent His Messiah Yeshua, a descendent of King David. He is, "Yĕ-hō-váh the righteous." The word LORD in all caps in the following verses is the exclusive name for God that is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. There are some other words used for God like Elohim or Yah, but Yĕ-hō-váh is pointed that way in over 2,000 manuscripts and is by far is the word most often used for God. Someday in the future Yeshua will rule and reign as our Messianic King.

> Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV says,
> Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Do not wait until it is too late to accept God and the Messiah Yeshua and begin keeping these basic principles of faith. These principles would be a good start and so are the 10 Commandments as well as the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is, Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV, "**You shall love your neighbor as yourself**: **I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes**."

We have a teaching on the 10 Commandments on our "Teachings Page." The Bible refers to God's Old Testament commandments as wisdom (see Deuteronomy 4:6). Psalms 90:12 NKJV says, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

There is a lot to learn but this should give you a good start to begin working on your faith in God. For those who are already knowledgeable believers, I hope this teaching will be an encouragement for you. Gain a heart of wisdom and do not rely on your own heart. I think God is a lot smarter than we are, don't you agree? That is an understatement for sure. Now is the time to begin following God the way we are supposed to. Isaiah 49:8 NKJV says, "In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You." I tell you; now is the time of salvation. Accept what God wants for you and repent of your sin and wrong beliefs. We have the ability to choose well. Eternity is a long time, so put your energy into

something worthwhile and devote yourself to following the truth and seek the future good and amazing kingdom of God.

All that a person has to gain in this world is nothing compared to what God can give us and what is in store for those who decide to follow God the way they are supposed to. Won't you commit yourself to do what is "right and good" and follow our eternal and good God? The following is just a small part of what we will experience.

> Revelation 21:18-21 NKJV says about the future kingdom,
> The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
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> Isaiah 25:8 NKJV says,
> He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces.
>
> Isaiah 35:10 NIV says,
> Everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

God does not want anyone to fail! 2 Peter 3:9 NKJV says, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." You can do it, be strong, be strong and may we be strengthened.