



**#51 Nitzavim Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20
and Teaching: Be a Faithful Servant
by Moshe Schwab**

Names

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

Terms

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

Introduction

This week's portion is Nitzavim. Nitzavim means "you all are standing" and begins with all Israel standing before God. Nitzavim can also mean established and an associated word in Hebrew (matz'vah) means pillar. Ya'akov (James) is referred to as a pillar in Galatians 2:9, an established one. Ya'akov acts as the head of the church in Acts 15 and not Peter (Kefa) as some say. The Roman Empire made up a false system of religion with Peter as the first leader and even made it illegal to keep some of God's commandments in the Bible. They made up this false religious system to distance their belief system from its true biblical Jewish roots. This false system of religion was passed down into Christianity.

Where are we situated? Do we desire to be God's people or are we following a made-up religious system? The buildings of brick and stone that people trust in and belong to will not get you into God's future kingdom. God does not want you to trust in stone or have a heart of stone. Instead, we must be in relationship with God.

Israel was to enter into a relationship agreement (covenant) with God. Some say it is like an ancient treaty. He will be God to them and they will be His people. Similarly, when we keep God's commandments, we are in relationship with God and He is our Father just as God was Father to Israel. Isaiah 64:8 NKJV says, "But now, O LORD, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand."

God as a loving Father gave us His commandments in the Old Testament portion to form us into His people, and He wants us to be part of His good family. A good father is both tender, but firm. Because our Father God knows what is best for us, He desires a good life for us, so he gave us His commandments to help us become, "the work of Your hand," the work of God's hand. When we believe on the Messiah Yeshua, we are to also receive the Holy Spirit and God's gifts to help us live right (see Acts 2:38-39; and 1 Corinthians 14:1).

Receiving the Holy Spirit is also a witness to us of the loving Father that we have. Some

believe the Holy Spirit is proof that they have eternal life, but that is not true. It is another helper to help us keep God's commandments. Yeshua says in John 14:15-16 NKJV, "Keep My commandments. and I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper. The first helper were the commandments given by the Father and Yeshua at Mount Sinai and in the Torah. "Another" helper is the Holy Spirit. God has reached out to us to mankind to deliver us from the slavery of sin.

Those who live sinful lives will not be in God's future kingdom. Shaul says in Ephesians 5:6 NKJV, "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV says, "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." Be ready always to stand in truth with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Be a good spiritually minded person. You can either set your heart on only living for worldly things or to do what is "right and good." Yochanan said in 1 John 2:15-17 NKJV, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Do not give up your eternal life for sinful desires. Living a sinful life will lead to the "lake of fire" forever, see Revelation 21:8.

We get nourished spiritually in order to get rid of wrong thinking. And, we also need to get rid of wrong teaching. Deuteronomy 6:18 tells us that God's commandments are "right and good." We need to understand that God is a loving and caring God who has our best interests at heart. It is not true that God imposes commandments on us for no reason at all. God knows what is best for us and wants us to change and to what is best. 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, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation." Give God a chance and see that His ways will bring blessings into your life.

What takes shape in the life of a believer after we grow up some is someone who goes from being hard and mechanical to someone who is thoughtful about what they do. When I was in the jungle doing ministry, the people there often used their power and influence to run things and their families. It was a harsh environment. When people began to learn God's ways, their lives became better as they applied God's commandments.

I remember the story of a one husband learning to love his wife and was seen picking a flower for her. He was changing his life from a harsh and domineering way to being a more caring and understanding person. We are not to hold onto grudges and harsh ways, but to be a loving people. Leviticus 19:18 NKJV says, "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." Shaul says the same in Ephesians 4:32 NKJV, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another."

Think of yourself as being a fresh blessing in life. Enjoy the process. Contrary to what the world offers, God offers a good and right direction for life. And God can also put a supernatural blessing on those who follow Him. Doing wrong can bring consequences and curses into people's lives. Doing what is "right and good" can bring good into our lives and even supernatural blessings from an all-powerful God! God can do little things and big things like raise someone from the dead. God woke me up in the middle of the night once and saved my life from a fire in my house! I have seen God do many things for me both big and small.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NKJV says, "If you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God." How awesome is it that the God of the universe will do things for us!

Hold on to living with a melody of gladness in your life. Unravel the words of God and let your life write a message of life in Yēhōvāh. The Psalms in the Bible are songs.

*Have joy in God and His commandments.

Psalms 16:11 NKJV

"You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. "

*Have joy we that we do not have to live cursed lives.

Psalms 30:5 NKJV

"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

*Have joy that we can know what is "right and good" and be blessed.

Psalms 5:11-12 NKJV

"But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield."

*Even the earth rejoices!

Psalms 65:13 NKJV

"The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered with grain; they shout for joy, they also sing."

*Have joy, sing to Yēhōvāh. Yēhōvāh is God's name that is used in the Bible over 6,000 times! Over 2,000 different manuscripts show God's name as being pronounced as Yēhōvāh. The ancient rabbis say this is the way God's name is pronounced and so do the Church Fathers! LORD in all caps in some Bibles is God's name, Yēhōvāh.

Psalms 9:2 NKJV

"I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Psalms 13:5-6 NKJV

"But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the

LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me.”

This time of year is important as are all of God’s feasts. I am not talking about the Gentile made-up feasts, the real biblical feasts. Those who keep God’s commandment to keep the Sabbath, which is observed every week, should always remember to make a big deal about the special feasts of God like Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot. They are God’s feasts! Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, “The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.”

Torah Study

In this portion, as Israel stood before God, it says they were to keep the words of their covenant with God; namely, their relationship with God. It was God’s intention that they become a people who were dedicated to do what is right. They saw the terrible lifestyle of the Egyptians and of those who they passed by on their way to Canaan. They were to understand that their lives would be cursed just like these other people were if they did not follow God’s commandments.

It says they may think everything will go well if they just do what they want to instead of God's way. This is an important point; it seems to be mankind’s nature to think that doing things our own way will work out fine, but we are not to do that. If they do not keep God’s commandments, the people will see their devastation and wonder what happened. They will know that they did not follow God the way they were supposed to.

It says in this portion that the things hidden belong to God, but God's instructions, in the Torah, which are revealed are to be kept. We should remember to keep God's commandments; God gave them to us for our own good. There are some things we do not know, but God has given us His wisdom to make us a "wise and understanding people," see Deuteronomy 4:6.

It goes on to say that when they turn back to God, God will bless them for keeping His commandments. That also applies to us in our era. When we repent of our sin, God forgives us, and we also return to our relationship to God.

Moshe tells them to choose life and keep God's commandments; they are not too hard for them. Mitzvah means commandment in Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB which says, "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you." There are some who say the Old Testament is too hard to do. It is not true. The extra man-made commandments are too hard to observe.

Yeshua referred to this verse and said His yoke is not too hard to keep. Yoke in Jewish understanding refers to the Torah, the Old Testament. Yeshua said about believers who are doing signs in His name, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Matthew 7:23 NKJV. The Greek word used for lawlessness is "*anomia*." *Nomia* was the word used by the ancient Rabbis for the Torah. *Anomia*, with the "a" in front of the word negates it. *Anomia* is then to not keep the Torah. Yeshua tells those who do not keep the Torah to depart from Him. Moshe then tells them to cling to God. Cling

can also mean to cleave or stay close. Cling, cleave, stay close to God by keeping His commands.

The Haftarah for Nitzavim is Isaiah 61:10 to 63:9. The original Haftarah included the verses Yeshua read just after He finished fasting (Luke 4:18-19). These verses would be read the week just before Rosh Hashanah. So, if we allow for a couple weeks, when we count back approximately 40 days for Yeshua fasting in the wilderness, we end up near Tisha B'av. Just before Rosh Hashanah, Yeshua quoted Isaiah 61:1-2 NKJV, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Yeshua said that these scriptures have been fulfilled. All of scripture has not been fulfilled yet. Some say that Yeshua has already fulfilled everything. The next part of the scripture that Yeshua did not read, Isaiah 61:2b says, "And the day of vengeance of our God." The day of God's vengeance has not occurred yet. Not everything has been fulfilled; there is still more to come.

This Haftarah says that Israel will have everlasting joy and will be a people who do what is right, right means to be righteous; they will be a people of praise. All will see this, and God will rejoice over them. They will enjoy the fruits of their labors. Clearly, God is not done with Israel as some say; those that say so are being deceitful. They believe in the false doctrine of "replacement theology." They often misinterpret the Bible and apply what it says in the Old Testament about Israel to Christianity because of their faulty theology.

Be a Faithful Servant **(A practical teaching to accompany the Torah teaching)**

During this season leading up to Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), we are to think about our lives and how we are doing spiritually. Sometimes we have talked about spiritual warfare in this season which is an important part of staying faithful. We also need to trust in God and His power. In our Torah study we mentioned that we are to cleave to God. We are to stay close to God and stay away from sin. In this Torah study, we also mentioned how we are not to rely on our own thinking and think that doing things our own way instead of God's is okay. We should do things God's way. Do not depart from God. Serve God; be a faithful servant.

God is powerful and His works are beautiful. We can each take part in what God is doing through His power.

The scriptures sometimes have so much to teach us. How amazing is God's creation. Somehow it just happens there is dry ground above the water on the earth. If the land was level all over the earth, the earth would be covered with water. How did we end up with dry ground? God spoke it into existence, "Then God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear;' and it was so;" Genesis 1:9 NKJV.

God's creation is beautiful; it reflects who He is. Psalms 111:2-4 NKJV says, "The works of the

LORD are great, studied by all who have pleasure in them. His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endures forever. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered." It is true, isn't it. The sciences study the creation of God. That statement should rankle a few scientists. In a number of cases, science can only speculate. Look how long it took man to figure out how to go to Mars. Science moves at a snails pace, doesn't it. When God spoke things into existence, it just happened. God can do that because He is God. Mankind takes a long time to get anything done; mankind is nothing compared to God.

God is God and We Are Not.

What is amazing about a relationship with God is that we can participate with God in life. If we keep His commandments, He blesses that and there is power associated with our obedience. The Torah says we can either have God's blessings or be cursed. If we do things our own way, we miss out on the power that God can put on our lives through our obedience. Sometimes, the consequences of doing what is wrong is not so severe, but just one big mistake can mess up our lives badly. Why not receive blessings instead of curses!

As believers in the Messiah, we also participate in the spiritual gifting that God gives us through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is good and so are God's gifts that are associated with the Holy Spirit. We need to be reminded of these things. "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!" Luke 11:13 NKJV. Notice the exclamation point at the end of this verse. Even the translators thought this verse conveyed importance.

Shaul says that the spiritual gifts are to be used by the believers. We see them doing this in 1 Corinthians 14:26 NKJV, "Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." Shaul might be pointing out that their meetings were a little tedious, but notice how different they were than our modern meetings. The early believers used their spiritual gifts!

Early believers sang (psalms), had teachings, revelation (prophecy, words of knowledge and wisdom), and speaking in tongues with interpretation. They used the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit.

We have different lists of spiritual gifts. There are probably many spiritual gifts. Remember, the Rabbis made incomplete lists. For example, it would be tedious to list every commandment so they would list a few of them. That is why we have different lists. The Rabbis would often summarize or give 2 answers to a question; for example love God and your neighbor. Hillel said, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."¹ That is two commands. Hillel was a Jewish rabbi who lived in the 1st century. Notice how he summarized the Torah. He wasn't saying not to obey the whole Torah by his summary and neither was Yeshua when He summarized.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_the_Elder

Do you see how important it is to understand the Bible in its Jewish context? The Bible even says the Gentiles were to learn and keep the Torah. Referring to the Gentiles: "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Acts 15:21 NKJV. It is sad how people can read the Bible and not understand it properly. Let's read about some of the spiritual gifts. To learn more about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how to use them go to: <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/prayer-class>. This is really important. The Holy Spirit even saved my life at least a couple of times!

1 Corinthians 12:4-10 NKJV lists a number of gifts:

There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But 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.

Here, the gifts are called a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Many of these gifts were used in the Old Testament portion including other gifts like inspiration to do different kinds of work.

In Romans 12:4-8 NKJV they are called gifts (charisma):

For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 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.

Ephesians 4:11 NKJV lists some gifts:

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Israel had all these gifts in Ephesians in the Old Testament portion; some of the prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah were apostles; they were sent. An apostle is someone who is sent; it is a common gift according to Ephesians. Shaul said, "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles;" Romans 16:7 NKJV. Junia is a woman's name.

Some churches spiritualize the word apostle to mean something that it is not; they are doing that out of pride, and they are being deceitful and controlling. These are some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but there are others; we know that because we have different lists of gifts. These gifts bring the power of God into the assembly of believers. Just like God's creation is beautiful, His spiritual gifts are both powerful and beautiful. Again for more information on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, go to: <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/prayer-class> for more teachings on the gifts/manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Our lives are to be centered and attached faithfully to God.

When we make something the center of our attention, we are keeping our eyes on it; we are to keep our eyes on the things of God and recognize His presence. God sees all we do. Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Keeping watch on the evil and the good."

In our portion for today it says, "That you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life;" Deuteronomy 30:20 NKJV. What a great scripture. Obey God, cling to Him, stay close to Him; He is our life. He is the one who gave us life, and we can choose to be with our good God for all eternity.

Work at being wholly clean people and don't carry a stained life with us.

Have you ever had to walk around with a stain on your clothing? What about a stained spiritual life? I was at a business conference once and at lunch time I went outside and a bird had stained my shirt without me knowing it. One of the millionaires who was there was kind enough to tell me and he even tried to use some water and a napkin to clean it. I was amazed by his caring attitude. Perhaps that was the secret to his success. Do what is right and good and God will bless you the bible says.

Ya'akov tells us to get rid of the sin in our lives, have clean thoughts, and think of doing what is right. Resist the devil and draw near to God. James 4:7-10 says, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." Ya'akov tells us we need to get serious about life and to be humble; we need to be willing to do what is right in the sight of an all knowing God.

"Draw Near to God and He will Draw Near to You."

We are not fooling God. No one can fool God. In fact, the Bible says God will not be mocked. Galatians 6:7 NKJV says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." God knows what is going on. Shaul said in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "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." God expects us to get with it; do not walk around with spiritual stain.

Be ornamented with keeping the norm spiritually and not at being a deviant.

People often identify people who are spiritual outcasts and keep their distance. Even unbelievers can sense a person who is deviant and not want to associate with them. Also, though we may hide our faults to others, God knows who we are. Yeshua did not mince words when it came to sin. He said about those who sinned, "For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside some are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness;" Matthew 23:27-28 NKJV.

Some can be the slickest and nicest people, but their innermost thoughts could be filled with all kinds of worthless sinful desires. Yeshua said in Luke 6:45 NKJV, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil." Are we doing good and keeping God's commandments? God knows, so make sure you clean up your life. Yeshua also said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven;" Matthew 5:16 NKJV. Remember good works in Jewish thought is to keep God's commandments. Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah to the world.

Now is a good time to set your life straight. We are coming up on Yom Kippur when we make a general confession of sins. Ya'akov said in James 1:12 NKJV, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." Psalms 1:1-2 NKJV says, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night." Let us serve Yĕhōvâh and be His blessed people.

Psalms 100:2-5 NKJV:

Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing. Know that the LORD, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

Serve Yĕhōvâh² with Gladness.

Some things God has hidden the Bible says, but we have His word to follow and we should do what we know and keep His commandments. We need to take care to continue to follow God; what God has given His believers is by no means a small matter. What God created is beautiful, His commandments are a blessing for us, and the work of the Holy Spirit is also good. God has given us gifts associated with the Holy Spirit and the early believers used them. We need to recognize that God knows us and sees us; we should stay close to Him. No one can fool God; we should not identify ourselves with those who are defiant or deviant. We should set our lives straight and serve God and be faithful.

²In 2,363 different manuscripts, God's name is pointed as Yĕhōvâh; once as Yĕhōvâh; never as Yahweh.