



**#31 Emor Leviticus 21:1-24:23**  
**Torah Teaching**  
**By Moshe Schwab**

**Names**

Kefa – Peter  
Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one;  
Christ  
    in the Greek means to be smudged  
Mishkan – Tent of Meeting in the desert  
Moshe – Moses  
Shaul – Paul  
Yeshua – Jesus' real name  
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)  
Yochanan – John

**Terms**

Haftarah – reading from the prophets  
Menorah – 7 candle Israelite lamp  
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible  
Mishkan – tent of meeting in the desert  
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible  
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the  
    Torah

The Torah portion for today is Emor and it means, "say." We often cover different biblical concepts and encouragement in our introduction. For example, God's Old Testament commandments give us 'wisdom and understanding' according to Deuteronomy 4:6, and God's commandments are "right and good" according to Deuteronomy 6:17-18. Often, when the Bible talks about wisdom or understanding, or doing what is right or good, it is talking about God's commandments and not our wisdom for life or what we think is right or good. The Bible says we need encouragement. Deuteronomy 6:7 NKJV says, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up."

It is important to understand how the Bible was originally intended to be understood. The Bible is God's word and we are not to change its meaning. 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." Also, 2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Psalms 119:160 NKJV says, "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever." So be careful not to misinterpret the Bible. We often cover biblical concepts to help us understand the Bible properly.

The portion Emor begins by saying that the Kohanim (priests) were not to make themselves unclean by touching the dead unless it was a close relative. The priest and for that matter, all believers are also not to do rituals that the pagans did like cutting gashes in their skin. They are to be holy for God. Being holy is to do things God's ways

and keep His 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 is an all-knowing and good God and wants what is best for us. **Righteousness means to do what is right** and keep God's commandments, God's law. Isaiah 51:7 NKJV says, "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults."

Some say that we get a stamp of righteousness by believing in the Messiah Yeshua. The Bible says that those who live in sin are not right with God and will not be in God's future kingdom. Shaul evidently felt the need to remind the believers about this, so they do not get tricked into thinking they are okay with God if they break God's commandments. Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says, "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.**" He told them before and he is telling them again. Those who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom.

It makes sense, to have a good relationship with someone is to respect them and listen to them. We are right with the creator God who cares about us by listening to Him and obeying Him. God appeals to us in Deuteronomy 5:29 NKJV which says, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" So why not listen to the creator of the universe and benefit from His good commandments. God wants things to go well for us, and He told how best to live.

We are to keep God's Old Testament commandments and also to accept the Messiah Yeshua as commanded in the Torah. Deuteronomy 18:18-19 NKJV says, "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. and it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." We are to accept Yeshua and His gift of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:38-39). Just like the law is our helper, so is 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."

God's commandments are the first helper, and the Holy Spirit is another helper. Some say that now that we have the Holy Spirit, we do not need the law. Yeshua said that He will reject those who do not keep the law. Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

God's people are to be a holy people. Those that say we do not have to keep God's commandments are not holy. 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.**" Those who do things their own way and do not pursue holiness through God's commandments and the Holy Spirit have fallen short of God's grace and will not be in God's future kingdom.

It is not enough to say you believe in God; we must also each commit ourselves to follow God's commandments. Perhaps we might think that all the people of Israel in the desert were automatically believers. We become believers by making a commitment, an agreement to follow God. Exodus 19:8 NKJV says, "Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." How can a person say they believe in something if they do not agree with it? That is the nonsense that some in Christianity believe.

Although it is not necessary, I make a commitment to God every day. I not only tell God that I believe in Him, but I also tell God that I value His good commandments and want to follow and keep His good commandments. I vote with my mind and actions. Years ago, I used to listen to a good Bible teacher who once said, "The devil is all the time voting against you and God is all the time voting for you, and we determine the election." We must choose to follow God's good instructions for life or reject them. God is voting for you. No one becomes a true believer in God without acting on what they believe.

James 2:18-20 NKJV says,  
 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. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

The Bible says there are devil spirits trying to influence us, so they must exist. We have the power to resist doing what is wrong. James 4:7-8 NKJV 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."

Our commitment to God brings God into our life and it influences those around us. We either bring God's goodness into our life and the lives of others or we do not. I would much rather bring God's goodness into the world than evil. I think most people want to do what is right and good, but their lives often fall short of that because they do not learn the truths they need for life and never read the Bible to find out what they are. For a lot of people, they base their life on things they think are right and good and not on what God says is right and good. The Bible testifies that God's commandments are truths for life. Psalms 119:30 NKJV says, "I have chosen the way of truth; Your

judgments I have laid before me." So, we need to base on life on the truths of the Bible.

Truths are always truths and will always be truths, otherwise they would not be truth. Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an **everlasting** righteousness, and **Your law is truth**. So, God's Old Testament laws are truths to live by. Psalms 119:151 NKJV says, "You are near, O LORD, and all **Your commandments are truth**." Also, Psalms 119:160 NKJV says, "The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous **judgments endures forever**."

God's commandments are sometimes referred to as mercy or lovingkindness towards mankind. They are not rules to burden us down, but are God's mercy and lovingkindness towards mankind. First, let's read Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV which says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes **which I command you today for your good**." God's commandments are for our own good and are God's lovingkindness towards us. Psalms 26:3 NKJV says, "For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth." Walking in the truth is to keep God's Old Testament commandments. 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**." Over and over the Bible tells us that God gave us His commandments to help us. Psalms 25:10 NKJV says, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

God's commandments of mercy and truth will always be truths for life and are for all believers for all of time. Psalms 100:5 NKJV says, "For **the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting**, and **His truth endures to all generations**." So, let's accept God's mercy and truths that we need for life. Proverbs 3:3 NKJV says, "Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart." It is God's commandments that we are to write on our fleshy hearts because they are truths for life, it is His merciful kindness to mankind for all of time. God's commandments endure forever. Psalms 117:2 NKJV says, "For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the LORD endures forever."

Therefore, we will be judged by God's truths. Made-up ideas and concepts may cause us to fall short of following truth. Psalms 96:13 NKJV says, "For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth."

The Old Testament law is truth, it is God's mercy towards mankind to help us in life, His lovingkindness, is for our wellbeing, it is forever and for all generations, and God will judge us by His good law. So, be careful to learn them and keep His commandments. These are all important concepts to remember. I do not hear people sharing them, but they should be. The Old Testament Law is **good doctrine**. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law." Do not forsake God's goodness.

Since God's commandments are good doctrine and truths to live by, they are like a medicine for mankind and the world. It says they can be "health to your flesh, and strength to your bones." People often want what is best for them. Why not learn and keep God's good, merciful, words of truth so that things can go well for us? These often-quoted scriptures are about God's good Old Testament commandments.

Proverbs 3:1-8

My son, **do not forget my law**, but let your heart **keep my commands**; for length of days and **long life and peace** they will add to you. Let not **mercy and truth** forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. **Trust in the LORD** with all your heart, and **lean not on your own understanding**; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. **Do not be wise in your own eyes**; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. **It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.**

Notice that these verses use some of the important concepts about the law we just talked about. God's commandments are God's "mercy and truth" for mankind. When people are in need of medical care, sometimes they need to go to a doctor so they can get better. So, it would make sense for people to work at doing things God's way to have a better life.

This scripture about the abundant life that God wants for us also teaches us that God's law is good. God's law can give us a more than abundant life.

Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV says,

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you **will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

Yeshua taught the law and wanted us to have the more abundant life that God wants for us. John 10:10 NKJV says, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." Millions upon millions of people have been helped by God's commandments over the ages. I am one of them and can attest to the goodness of God's law.

Yeshua warns us that narrow is the way and that we should be faithful to keep God's good commandments. Matthew 7:13-14 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." Some people teach just the opposite, don't they. They would have you believe that everyone is going to be in the future kingdom of God. Obviously, that is not true.

The following is a figure of speech that Yeshua uses to emphasize and encourage us to keep God's commandments.

Yeshua said in Matthew 5:29-30 NKJV,

If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Yeshua very much wants us to keep God's Old Testament commandments, and He came to help us do that so that we could have a better life. God wants what is best for us! Damaging our bodies is wrong. In fact, we are to even be kind to animals, so it should be obvious that Yeshua was using a figure of speech to get His point across. Deuteronomy 22:4 NKJV says, "You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." If we are to be kind to animals, how much more should we take good care of ourselves and treat others well. Yeshua points out in Luke 14:5 NKJV, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" So be conscientious and caring towards others. Religions that do not treat others with kindness and respect are false religions.

Peace is an important part of life. We need to allow ourselves to be at peace in life. Peace can come from not having an uncaring or lazy attitude towards life. It is when we are fully engaged with life that we can have peace. When we do the best we can in all of life, we can then have peace knowing that we did our best. That does not mean we are full of worry, but we learn to relax and trust in God as we engage with life. Isaiah 26:3-4 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever."

Living a dedicated spiritual life will lead to peace. Psalms 29:11 NKJV says, "The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace." I can truthfully say that I have led a more satisfying life through being dedicated spiritually. Psalms 119:165 NKJV says, "Great peace have those who love your law." We can have great peace in life through God's truths for life. Having peace is important in life and renews us physically and mentally. Proverbs 14:30 NKJV says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body." Only if everyone kept God's good law so we could have peace in life. Isaiah 14:7 NKJV says, "All the lands are at rest and at peace; they break into singing." The world would be a better place if only we all kept God's good commandments.

### **Here is more to consider.**

Stay connected to our good God. God helps us in life.

Proverbs 14:26 NKJV says, "In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge." God's children listen to God and find refuge

through His commandments. God's children are to fear God, to have a deep respect for God. That respect should lead us to have a deep trust in God and keep His commandments. We can trust in God because He is our all-knowing and good God who has our best interests at heart. Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV says, "What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today **for your good**." Those who are God's children are those who respect and trust in God. God's children will have refuge, they will have hope.

Rabbi Shaul tells us to be strong. 1 Corinthians 16:13 NKJV says, "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong." What is the foundation of our faith? It is the good things that God has given us to help us, namely His commandments and the Holy Spirit. Some people say all we need to do is to have faith. What are we supposed to have faith in? What are we supposed to trust in? James 2:17-18 NKJV says, "Thus also 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."

One of the basic tenets of our Messianic faith in God and the Messiah Yeshua is to keep the good works of God's commandments. Not keeping God's commandments is sin and is referred to as dead works. Hebrews 6:1 NKJV says, "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." We are to repent from sin, from dead works and have faith. Romans 6:11 NKJV says, "Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin." Ephesians 2:1 NKJV says, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Those who live in sin, who live in dead works, will not be in God's future kingdom. James 1:15 NKJV says, "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." When the Bible talks about dead works it is talking about din. Do not be deceived, Shaul says. 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." There is another list in Galatians. Jewish lists are not intended to be complete lists and that is why the list in Galatians is different. Giving complete lists can be tedious. So, just because you do not see a particular sin or commandment not listed it does not mean that you will be excused for your negligence. Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says, "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." God expects us to keep all His commandments. They are God's commandments which He gave to us for our own

good. Deuteronomy 6:24 NKJV says, "And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always." God's commandments were good, are good, and will always be good.

When I talk about this, I frequently get prompted to talk about God's forgiveness. God will forgive us if we repent of sin, if we repent of dead works.

Psalms 103:10-13 NKJV says,

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor 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.

We are to respect God's commandments (to fear God) and keep His commandments. Those who do not respect God do not keep His commandments.

We are not trusting in a philosophy but in a real and true eternal God who gave us His commandments and the Holy Spirit. We are connected to God by following Him and doing what He says. James 4:8 NKJV says, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." How do we draw near to God? We stop sinning and being double-minded. Double-minded means that in some instances we are committed to doing what is right and at other times we are not. When we are double-minded, we are not committed to God and His commandments.

We are also to be a people who listen to the Holy Spirit. Again, we most importantly are to identify with who we are supposed to be and how we are supposed to act through God's commandments. Proverbs 15:4 NKJV says, "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit." Someone who helps others to live right in what they say and do gives life. Someone who has an evil distorted view of life in speech and actions destroys life. Don't you want to be the kind of person that brings good into your life and the life of others through His commandments and the gift of the Holy Spirit?

The Messiah Yeshua gives the Holy Spirit liberally to those who believe on Him, but we must ask Him for the Holy Spirit.

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 Holy Spirit is another helper. God has always been our helper. He helped the ancient believers. Deuteronomy 33:26 says God helps us. The giving of the Holy Spirit is a special act of God in this temporary Messianic era for the believers in the Messiah. Let's look at some of the things that God's special gift does. Romans calls them gifts, the charisma which are associated with 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.

Isn't that something! These are things that God empowers through the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians mentions other gifts. They are referred to as evidences there or manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Notice that it says these evidences are for each of us who believe in the Messiah and not just a selected few. This is another list. Again, lists in the Bible are often not comprehensive lists. That is why this one is different. In the same way, God's commandments are often summarized by a few commandments. Again, it would be tedious to mention everything that belongs in a list at times.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 NKJV says,

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. 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 gifts. They are God empowered gifts and not personally developed gifts.

God's favor has given us special wisdom, knowledge, teaching, prophecy, and so much more. This does not sound like the Holy Spirit is only our conscience as some believe. Don't be fooled by those who downplay the work of the Holy Spirit. See our teachings on praying for others for examples of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is important. If you want some instruction, go to our Devine Healing Prayer Class — <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/prayer-class>. We explain the gifts of the Holy Spirit and give examples in the class.

The key to a relationship with God and God's power in our lives comes out of the life we lead. It is the vein and arteries that provide spiritual life. We often talk about how God is life giving and that He is a God of love. How could we expect to tap into what God wants for us if we are not willing listen to Him, to follow His commandments, and to seek those things He wants for us like the Holy Spirit?

There are some people who only believe in ritual. Then there are some Jews who don't believe in the Messiah and are following the directions of the rabbis who are just people. They often follow extra man-made laws and ideas. Some of the things they teach are not the commandments of God, but of men. Ritual is not a bad thing and can establish the form for our meetings and activities, but most of these forms of activity are not commanded by God. They are made up! What is important?

We easily understand how our blood supply gives nutrients to our bodies. Yet, why don't people understand the need for a healthy spiritual life that can sustain us spiritually? Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." This was written so that we would remember to follow the Torah — they are God's words for us from the Torah. Yeshua quoted this verse so He must have thought those words were true (see Luke 4:4).

So why aren't people doing what the Torah teaches us? Some have been talked out of the Torah by false teachers who have developed a false man-made theology. Shaul prophesied in 1 Timothy 4:3 NKJV which says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." The context is about the scriptures that Timothy learned from his Jewish mother, the Old Testament portion scriptures.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV says, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." Acts 16:1 NKJV says, "Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed." There was no New Testament portion at the time Shaul wrote this. He has to be talking about God's Old Testament scriptures. 2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV says that the Old Testament scriptures are "profitable for doctrine." The Bible clearly says that the Old Testament law is doctrine. Proverbs 4:2 NKJV says, "For I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake my law."

Since we are not to live by bread alone but by God's commandments in the Torah (Deuteronomy 8:3), we need to be aware of the situations we are involved with. If you need to fight spiritually, then stand strong, pray, and rebuke the devil if you need to. 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 NKJV says, "Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." We should represent God in our day-to-day life and demonstrate the attitudes of a believer.

What attitudes should we have?

\*Live a godly life (and imitate God), do what is right, don't give into temptation. Fellowship with God during the day. Be organized in life and take care of yourself, we

are created in God's image. Care about what God cares about and His commandments and the Holy Spirit.

\*Proverbs 3:5-8 NKJV says,

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

Learn and know truth so you know the path you are to take so you don't do evil. Learn how to apply God's commandments. The Old Testament promises us they will give us health! Some quote these verses from the Old Testament portion and then say the Old Testament portion is done away. How senseless is that. That is how theology works. The Bible says one thing, they say another. Learn the God given path we are to follow.

\*Galatians 5:22-26 NKJV says,

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Since these are the things the Holy Spirit works in us, these are some of the ways how God wants us to act. If we resist these things, we are resisting the work of the Holy Spirit. As we already mentioned, the Holy Spirit is a very special gift in this temporary Messianic age! There is a future Messianic age to come.

God is there; seek to have a life that values what the Bible teaches.

People are often lured into disobeying God like a fish. Do not take the bait. Are you better than a fish? The fisherman puts bait on a hook in order to lure a fish. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 NKJV says, "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." Do not be snared by evil or the devil. The devil is real according to the Bible.

Why do those who live in sin oppose themselves? It is because they are doing what is wrong and bringing evil into their lives. They are snared like a fish and are captive to the devil and his rebellion against God. There is a devil who rebelled against God and the devil wants you to rebel and go to the lake of fire with him. Isaiah 14:12-13 NKJV says, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." The devil wanted to be God and do things his own way. Do not be like him.

Revelation 20:10 says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." Those who do not take control of their life can be deceived either by their own false thinking, or through the devil. Those who do not take control of their life and keep God's commandments also rebel against God and will also end up in the lake of fire. Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But 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." If you are not trusting in God and keeping His good commandments then you are not believing in God, you are unbelieving.

We do not have to stay trapped. Through God we can escape the traps and pressures of sin that lure us, and God will forgive us, but we must be sorry for our sin and be committed to stop sinning. Psalms 103:11-12 NKJV says, "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." To fear God is to deeply respect God. Respect His good commandments and begin doing what is right.

There is joy, security, happiness, and satisfaction through living in God's light and truth. People often assume that their job, money, home, car, family, hobby, fun activities, etcetera are going to make them happy, but happiness can be fleeting. These things are not bad things, and it is important to function well in life. But people often can completely revolve their lives around these things instead of God. We may make something other than God the center of our lives only to end up disillusioned or dissatisfied at some point. What can really bring us satisfaction and happiness over a lifetime?

Years ago I began to talk to one of my cousins about Yeshua. I began sharing with him some scriptures and we began short spontaneous talks about the Bible. After a couple months, he was loving his relationship with God and loving his life. It was then that he confessed to me that he had been deeply depressed and despondent and had even thought of killing himself. I was shocked. This is a guy that had a great job, a beautiful home and family, and had everything he could possibly want.

His life turned right side up when God and the Messiah entered his life. Who says that the Messiah Yeshua doesn't bring peace and satisfaction in life! It wasn't long after he believed that he told me one day that he wanted to be a holy person, to do what is right, to be righteous. Again, Isaiah 51:7 NKJV says, "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart is My law." All of us that aspire to follow God should eventually get to the point where we want to be holy as we grow up spiritually.

God is in the business of saving lives in many ways. There are myriads of ideas on what is good for us to eat. Why not make God's food laws first in the area of food. For example, shrimp is an organism that lives on waste matter. Why put that in your body? Sexual sin passes on disease. I've heard that 25% of male homosexuals have aids, a deadly sexually transmitted disease. Also, the Bible says that violence can cause the

death of those involved. Over 2,000 people per year are killed in gang related activity. Suicide causes over 40,000 deaths in the United States alone each year according to one article online. As we can see, being satisfied and doing what is right is important. Following God gives us a life of satisfaction and it is life saving. My cousin went from depression to joy through the Messiah Yeshua. He went from being disillusioned about life to being happy and satisfied.

The Pew Foundation did a survey on people in the United States a few years ago and they found that only 34% of the people in the United States considered themselves very happy. That is only one out of every three people. We'd think that most of the wealthy would be very happy, but only 49% of the wealthy considered themselves to be very happy. Of those who go to a place of worship, 43% considered themselves very happy; so that percentage is just a little lower than those who were wealthy. Yet, we'd expect more people in the United States to be in the category of very happy. What has gone wrong with our society, a society that considers itself to be the model for freedom and happiness for the individual?

To understand how our modern society thinks, we have to go back to the Renaissance where science became the language of society. This type of thought continues to this day. In modern society we substitute rationale and scientific thinking for godly values. So, we end up with our brains set to this pattern of thinking. Anytime we make a decision our minds switch into a progression of information and feelings based on our society and scientific thinking.

Years ago, I was watching a TV show that featured these two sisters from another country. I noticed how much their ideals and behavior matched the people group of where they came from. It was actually stunning. Then there was the logical process that they went through that was based on what was right for them rather than any logic. This was all based on a few preferences from their societal norm – how their society viewed things. It was a rationale that really didn't seem so bad.

What is the real basis they needed for happiness? The Bible describes people who formulate their own values as 'doing what is right in their own eyes.' Proverbs 12:15 CJB says, "Fools suppose their way is straight, but the wise pay attention to advice." What better advice can we have than to get the Bible's advice. It has been a source of wisdom for thousands of years.

In my own life I have noticed that I am most happy when I value what God values. I remember years ago that someone told me that I can get quiet and talk to God. I went to a quiet place by myself and started talking to God and to my surprise I sensed His presence. I was thrilled. God wants us to know Him and one of the best ways is through the words He has already given us in the Bible. The Bible says that it is God's word and the Bible contains God's commandments to help us in life.

We all need a better way with which to begin our process of decision making and how we live, and not just something that we make up ourselves. It is probably hard to imagine anything wrong with our process of thinking, but it is often based on years of decision making that has been processed by us. This process for some of us has been, for some extent, without God or the Bible at the center of our thinking. The problem with that is, the creator God knows what is best for us and our thinking then is devoid of the first process in thinking that should take place. This faulty process which often contains lots of ideas from many man-made sources often removes God from the equation of our values and decisions.

Think of this process as flipping a switch. When we make a decision, a switch flips in our heads that automatically leads to an outcome based on what we believe deeply inside us, in our hearts. Our minds are much more complex than a computer, but let's use a computer as an example. We click to open a program that begins the process that is already set up in the computer to begin that program. In the same way, our process is a sum of what we've learned from school, society, our parents, our friends, our congregation, from our need for acceptance, etcetera. Even if we have made God a priority, we still have some secular stuff there.

Rabbi Yochanan (John) 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.

Perhaps we look at this scripture and think, "I love God, I don't want to do wrong, and I am not going to let worldly things control me." That's pretty good but also think about what Yochanan is saying based on what we are talking about. The world can have a negative effect on us. Wow, Rabbi Yochanan is a very smart guy! Some people call the pull of the world from our past "baggage," namely things from our past that can influence us to sin. Also, we have the present pull of society that is always there to distract us spiritually.

If we keep God's commandments, the handbook for life (the Bible) out of the equation of decision making, that weakens our relationship with God, can cause us to have an endless devotion to the worldly (just like Yochanan warned us), and can eventually break down our faith. It is easy to make something worldly a priority at times in our lives. People are often engaged in an endless cycle in their lives to find satisfaction, but they cannot find lasting satisfaction though these worldly ideas because they have little or no actual basis in truth.

Some make our children our goal for a satisfied life. We may try to control every aspect of their life and fail to impart our true mission; namely, to give them a satisfying and meaning life through the creator God. Eventually, they grow up and begin living their

own life and begin the same exhausting process that failed to give us satisfaction. We can make up our own values only to become disillusioned by the outcome. Some people actually allow their children to run their home thinking that this will help their children to develop. Their home becomes confused and disorderly. The parents should know better. They have given up their authority and power to lead their children and teach them truth. Psalms 119:142 NKJV says, "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth." God's truth was meant for all the people of the earth as many as would believe on Him and follow Him. Psalms 100:5 NKJV says, "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." People can get locked into something that gives them satisfaction for a while, but it usually doesn't last.

Even a dedicated believer can lose spiritual focus and energy and join in on this endless cycle to find satisfaction in life from worldly things. Anyone of us can get impatient and begin looking for fleeting satisfaction from worldly things. We mostly see this in the secular world where people leave jobs or spouses, become workaholics, become overly absorbed in a hobby, live their lives through TV shows, overindulge themselves with something or things, endlessly try to appear successful or beautiful. People will do almost anything to find satisfaction, even engage in some dangerous activity, and defy death by doing some strange, extraordinary feat.

People will become disillusioned and dissatisfied at least at some point in their life. One wealthy lady I once knew alluded to being misguided by the riches she had amassed. She had been filling her life with things that many people would only dream of. I was standing in the amazing foyer of their mansion with a six-foot-wide staircase on the one side, large beautiful life size portraits on the side of the staircase, and huge beautiful banisters. It isn't wrong to be successful, but she also needed to do things God's way and find God her creator and the Messiah Yeshua. She needed to stop the cycle of errant thinking and put her central values in God and the Bible and find satisfaction in the truths from the Bible and God.

I'm not just talking about mere mental ascent, but fully anchored peace and trust in God with God at the center of our lives. When we look back on our life, we should be able to see the thread of faith in God, in His commandments, and the work of Holy Spirit in our life. We can feel satisfied in the eternal verities that have resulted from that. Rabbi Shaul said in 2 Corinthians 4:18 NKJV, "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." He is talking about the very important spiritual things of life that result in eternal consequences.

Often a godless centered lifestyle can lead to endless frustration. It's like trying to reinvent the wheel for a lifetime. I used to know an architect and he designed a building for a company. The company used his design for their other buildings. Doing this saved them a tremendous amount of time, money, decision making, and anguish.

That's what God does for us. Basing our lives on God and the truths of the Bible can save us a lot of anguish, disillusionment, and dissatisfaction. Basing our lives on God diminishes anxiousness, can give us a good sense of direction, and give us a more satisfied life.

You name it; there no end to what people can come up with as a basis for life. Ecclesiastes 1:8-9 NKJV says, "All things are full of labor; man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun." There is nothing new under the sun even though you may think there is.

What can be a better basis for life than the Bible? Can you even believe how appropriate that scripture applies to what we are talking about? This scripture in Ecclesiastes is attributed to Solomon who lived about 2,900 years ago! Some say the Bible is old and out of date, but that's not what we see here. The Bible is relevant and can be a powerful source for living. Hebrews 4:12 NKJV says, "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That's an amazing scripture. The Bible is not a dead useless book but gives us deeply valuable insights and direction for life.

We need the truths of the Bible to get us moving in the right direction and to help us make better more informed decisions. We need to be constantly learning and relearning biblical principles and applying them. Hebrews 3:13 NKJV says, "Exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Do not be deceived by sin. We need to keep "reaching forward" as Shaul says in Philippians. That is the way to true satisfaction and happiness in life.

Rabbi Shaul says in Philippians 3:13-15 NKJV,

I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind.

We need to make God, the Bible, and the Messiah the center of our lives and the root of our decision-making process. We need to apply what we learn and make it part of our family, work, congregational life, fun activities, and every part of life. Our faith is not just for when we go to congregation. I would say to the person who keeps trying to find satisfaction in life, "Have you tried God yet? It's worth a try." God is in the business of giving us a more satisfying life and saving lives. Over 40,000 people a year in the United States commit suicide according to one online article; satisfaction is important. I've seen many people become happier and more satisfied with life when they believe in God and the Messiah Yeshua. We need to aspire to biblical virtues and a holy and righteous life; in Hebraic thought that is what it means to be a tzadiq, someone who

does what is right. Do you want to be a tzadiq? The Bible tells us over and over to live right, be righteous. Believing in God and doing things His way is important.

God's ways are the way to true satisfaction and happiness. The world has it backwards; having godly virtue is not old-fashioned. Science, the atheist Communist religion, and the other Atheist religions have not given man a happier life. Does knowing how far the Sun is from the Earth help us in life? Our thought patterns need to change, and we need to keep working on the correct patterns for living. Worldly thinking is not thinking the way we need to think. Living with worldly thought patterns can lead to dissatisfaction and frustration and even worse. For example, the Communist religion is responsible for the murder of more than 90 million people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That makes it one of the most murderous religions to have ever existed. We need the instructions of our creator God and the handbook for life, the Bible. Don't lose your dedication. Keep moving forward and put God at the center of your life.

The following scripture was intended for Israel and can be applied to believers from all ages, it can apply to anyone who sincerely seeks God. Jeremiah 29:11-14 NKJV says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD." If you want to live right, if you really want lasting satisfaction, you need to make God the basis for your life and how you live. We need to trust God; He has plans for us and we can have a hope and a future, a life of satisfaction through Him.

Seek those things that above where we live above the issues of the world. Rest in God's goodness and truth.

We may look like any other person, but we are different because we act from the good values we have learned from God. Those around us may not know our every motivation. Only we know if we properly measure up to 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." Also, Psalms 119:6 NKJV says, "Then I would not be ashamed, when I look into all Your commandments." We are to be diligent to keep God's "right and good" commandments and not be ashamed.

Rabbi Shaul seems to refer to Deuteronomy 6:17-18 and Psalms 119:6 in the New Testament portion where it says we are to be diligent to know God's commandments and not be ashamed. The New Testament is based on the Old Testament. 2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Strong's dictionary says the word ashamed can mean free from blame. We need to be diligent so that we are free from blame. Every person is responsible to know God's commandments and to do what is right. That is why everyone in ancient Jewish societies learned how to read.

Archeologists have even found ancient letters written by Jewish women (in the Cairo Geniza). Everyone learned to read so they could learn and keep God's commandments.

Also, it is important to understand that when Shaul wrote Timothy, there was no New Testament. Christians often apply 2 Timothy 2:15 to the New Testament but Shaul is telling Timothy to be diligent to learn the Old Testament commands. They are truths for life and therefore are "right and good."

The word dividing in 2 Timothy can be understood as in the word expound according to Strong's Dictionary, namely we are to rightly explain God's commands. The Hebrew manuscripts had spaces between the words. We see the words spaced in the Dead Sea Scrolls. We should not only know God's commandments, but to be able to explain how to use them according to Shaul. For example, if we find something that is valuable, we should try to find the owner. I did this one time by asking around if someone lost some money and was able to find the person that lost their money.

Often, the police will hold onto something of value that is turned in and if not claimed, they will give it back to the finder. This is an application of Deuteronomy 22:1-2 NKJV which says, "You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. And if your brother is not near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it."

Some incorrectly teach that the word dividing in Timothy has to do with dividing the words in the ancient manuscripts. The words were not run together in the Hebrew. The Hebrew words have spaces between them and there are also paragraph spacings between the sentences. Just look at a picture of the Dead Sea Scrolls online. Even in the ancient Greek there are sentence and paragraph markers. Shaul is saying that it is our responsibility to know and keep God's commandments. We are each responsible to know them and keep them.

Our godly values are often unseen and the gift of the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua is also unseen to others. Believers in the Messiah have the gift of the Holy Spirit that is at work in us. We should understand that we are to use God's Messianic gift and know how to explain how it is used. See our Divine Healing class for lots of examples and information on the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some people oppose God's good gift, but they should not. Luke 11:13 NKJV says, "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!" God's gift of the Holy Spirit is good so do not listen to those who say otherwise. He is not going to give you something fake, something that will hurt you, or something disappointing.

As a young boy, I remember thinking that a bowl of plastic fruit looked pretty good to eat but after I picked up the apple on top, I realized it was fake. God is the creator of

the universe. He can give us good things. God has no reason to try to fool us. The Holy Spirit is good, and Yeshua said it is another helper. The first helper are God's commandments and the Holy Spirit is another helper (John 14:15-17 NKJV). God gave us His commandments that are "right and good" and help us in life. The Holy Spirit is also good and will help us in life.

### In Conclusion.

So, stay dedicated to God and bring God's goodness into our life and the lives of others. God's commandments are like a medicine that can give us a better life. Stay engaged with life and with God so you will have a peace filled life. Stay connected to our good God. God helps us in life. Respect and trust in God, His commandments, and the Messianic gift of the Holy Spirit. We do not live by bread alone, but also through God's good gifts, His commandments and the Holy Spirit to help us live right. Do not be lured into disobeying God and living in sin and evil. If you are trapped by sin, change and instead be committed to God. God is a merciful and good God who will forgive us if we are committed to change and to do what is "right and good."

There is joy, security, happiness, and satisfaction through living in the light. People often assume they will get satisfaction in life through the things of the world instead of living by spiritual truths. Many people rely on a faulty process which often contains lots of ideas from man-made sources that often removes God from the equation of our values and decisions. People can make their goals around the fleeting satisfaction of obtaining worldly things. Often, a godless centered lifestyle can lead to endlessly going from one worldly concept or goal to another.

The Bible is not a dead useless book but gives us deeply valuable insights that we need for life. It can lead to greater joy, satisfaction, and happiness in life. We need the truths of the Bible to get us moving in the right direction and to help us obtain true lasting satisfaction. Seek those things that above where we live above the issues of the world. Rest in God's goodness and truth. God gave us His commandments to help us in life and another helper, the Messianic gift of the Holy Spirit. God is the giver of good things and wants us to accept His favor and help.

### **This is our Torah study for today.**

Emor means, "say." This portion begins by saying that the Cohanim (priests) were not to make themselves unclean by touching the dead unless it was a close relative. Some commandments were just for the priests, and some were just for the High Priest. They are also not to do rituals that the pagans did like cutting gashes in their skin. They are to be holy for God. That would be a good practice for all believers. We are not to do what the pagans do (see Deuteronomy 12:30-31). The Cohanim are also not to marry a divorced woman, a prostitute, or a woman who is not a virgin. The daughter of a Cohanim is to be pure. The Cohanim are to be consecrated and anointed with oil.

God's leaders are consecrated to God and are to be shown honor. Giving them honor gives honor to God. Shaul (Paul) said that leaders are to be given double honor (see 1 Timothy 5:17-18). No descendant of Aaron who has a defect should be allowed near the veil. No one who is unclean is to come near the holy things until he does what is necessary to be clean again.

No outsider or servant is to eat holy food (that is for the priests). If eaten accidentally the person is to restore what is eaten plus one-fifth. Free will offerings should have no blemish or any type of defect. God has sanctified Israel to be their God. They are to keep Shabbat, Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, Shavuot, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot. They should not reap to the corners of their fields. The details and dates are then given for each feast.

The Bible says that the lights that God created are there so we can know when we are to meet with God. Genesis 1:14 says they are for signs and seasons. Seasons is the Hebrew word *mo'edim* (*mo'edim* means meetings). I remember asking during one of my teachings why we are to know when the Jewish months start (the ancient new moon is when the moon reappears). A smart lady immediately said that it is, so we know when God's feasts are. Again, they are God's feasts, get that in your head.

They were to use pure oil for the menorah, and it was not to go out. They were to make bread for the tabernacle and the Cohanim were to eat it there. Those that blaspheme the name of the Lord or murder another man were to be put to death and those that cause injury were to make restitution. The portion concludes with them stoning a man who was blaspheming God.

I should mention that the Jewish Bible says that blaspheming God is to say His name. It is just the opposite. Not using someone's name is to curse them. Deuteronomy 29:20 NKJV says, "The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, **and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.**"

That is not how the Hebrew reads and is a false interpretation of what is written. Using God's name as a curse word or cursing God using His name is what is wrong. However you refer to God, you should do that with reverence.

This portion has laws about contact with the dead, how to keep hair (don't copy the pagans and their weird behaviors), marriage of the priests, those who are qualified to offer sacrifices, who can eat from the donations, a mikvah (which means immersion) requirement to be clean, animal sacrifices, the Lord's name and not to use it blasphemously, the Lord's feasts, leaving crops for the poor, fasting on Yom Kippur, living in booths on Sukkot (was for Israel), using clear oil for the Mishkan lamps, and restitution.

We have already learned about the importance of not committing lashon harah from past portions of the Torah. Lashon harah is evil speaking. Shaul talks about saying good things in Philippians 4 and Ya'akov (James) talks about how the tongue can be used for good or evil. Each portion of the Torah gives us important background on things talked about in the New Testament portion. Without this background people tend to apply the New Testament scriptures mindlessly.

*The New Testament portion comes from the Old Testament portion.*

Both Yeshua and Shaul used the Old Testament for their teachings. Should we keep 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." They are God's feasts so why wouldn't we? It amazes me that people observe man-made feasts, holidays, and celebrations; but when it comes to God's feasts, they say they are not for them. They are in essence saying to God that His appointed times (His *mo'edim*) are not important.

If we are not to observe God's feasts as some say (which seems ludicrous), then why are we supposed to look forward to observing them in the new heaven and earth? Isaiah 66:22-23 NKJV says, "'For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me,' says the LORD, 'So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,' says the LORD." New Moons celebrate the calendar year set up by God and they are used to know when to celebrate God's feasts, so this refers to keeping God's calendar and God's feasts. The Sabbath refers to God's weekly feast which is from our Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset.

We do not have a Temple at this time. So, we cannot give the thank offering sacrifices. God has given us the Holy Spirit to give thanks during this time while we wait for our future home in the future kingdom of God. Shaul talking about the gift of Speaking in Tongues says we give thanks well to God when we Speak in Tongues. He says he Speaks in Tongues, "More than you all." 1 Corinthians 14:17-18 NKJV says, "For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all."

We in general do not Speak in Tongues for the benefit of others unless it is interpreted, but it is a way for us in this era where we can give thanks to God. It appears that the book of Hebrews talks about this giving of thanks through Speaking in Tongues that we have until the future kingdom of God. Hebrews 13:14-15 NKJV says, "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

Another way to give thanks to God is to follow His commandments and be thankful for them. We show our appreciation by believing in God's commandments and keeping them with the right attitude. Deuteronomy 28:47 NKJV says, "Serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart." We trust in God and in the commandments that He has given us. Psalms 5:11 NKJV says, "But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You." We acknowledge God's goodness for us and love His good commandments. Psalms 119:47 NKJV says, "And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love."

Some laws like keeping God's feasts are easily applied, other laws can be applied appropriately (like making restitution), and others can't be done. For example, we can't always enforce the death penalties from the Bible because our country defines how and when that is to be done. We should not be an evil doer in the country we live in. Our country allows for restitution for damages; that is something the Bible tells us to do also.

I have heard people say things like we cannot observe God's feasts in Jerusalem anymore so we cannot keep them. That is just ridiculous! They say these things because they do not want to do what God says. They will say that is not true; they want to do what God says, but the next sentence out of their mouth tells us where their heart is. They are resisting God and not us. Who can't rest on Shabbat? Yeshua said that we can worship God wherever we are now. John 4:21NKJV says, "Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.'"

We can keep God's feasts wherever we are. That is what the ancient believers did who did not live in Israel. Also, the Old Testament portion made allowances for those who lived far away from Jerusalem. People just make up excuses not to follow God. Just because they do not follow God, you do not have to follow their bad example. We should stop fighting God and try to do what He tells us to do. Drop your man-made philosophy of life with its man-made doctrine and start doing what the Bible says. The Bible tells us to help others and the needy. My niece's husband once asked me why Christians hate the poor. What a poor example some Christians have been.

*Be a good example and do things God's way.*

We should do things God's way even though we may not understand why. Perhaps the commandment limiting contact with the dead could help reduce problems related to disease. We saw disease being spread a number of years back during an Ebola breakout because of customs regarding the dead. Also, perhaps it was the custom of idol worshippers in ancient times to do specific things related to idol worship with their hair. We probably should be careful not to emulate any practice associated with idol worship or any of the despicable things that unbelievers do. Unbelievers will do weird things with their hair, in how they dress, and with their body. Do not be tempted to follow their ridiculous behaviors and dress.

Should we still fast on Yom Kippur (the day of forgiveness of sins)? Yes, because Yochanan (John) said we all sin and need to confess our sin in 1 John. Since he is Jewish, he probably is not only referring to our daily acts of repentance and confession (which we should be doing), but also to a general introspection and confession of sins on Yom Kippur (that he most certainly would have been thinking of). A general confession of sins may reveal other sins we need to repent of.

Should we live in booths on Sukkot? This command is directed at Israel and perhaps has more to do with the Sinai covenant. Not all commands are pertinent for the Messianic believer although we can surely participate if we so choose. Living in booths should remind us of God's care for Israel and for His care for us.

For Messianic believers, Sukkot also should remind us that God does indeed care for His people and that we are to seek His help at the throne of His favor as it says in Hebrews 4:16. There is a change of perspective in the Brit Chadashah (the New Testament portion); the Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit) lives in us so we each have direct access to God.

Also, we should be mindful to help those in need. The Bible commands us to give to the needy. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 NKJV says, "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do." Essentially, 1/3 of our tithe is to be given to those in need, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

If we damage anything, we should make restitution. It has always been understood that the "eye for an eye" in this portion did not mean a literal eye for an eye, but that restitution should be made to others we have harmed. In pagan cultures, unjust retribution was practiced. Say that you injured someone unintentionally. Perhaps the rich in that pagan culture could have you killed instead of making proper restitution. An "eye for an eye" refers to proper restitution. People just do not understand the Bible properly.

The counting of the Omer at this time before Shavuot perhaps reminds us of the anticipation of God's provision as Israel was harvesting their food at this time. He not only provides for us physically but gave us the law on Shavuot (Pentecost) and the Holy Spirit on Shavuot. The Book of Jubilees says that Noah celebrated Shavuot for God saving him from the flood.

I include thanks during this time of the counting of the Omer for all God provides, and for the gift of His law (the Torah which means instruction) and the gift of the Holy Spirit. You could do this at your evening meal.

The Torah repeats itself a lot. Repetition is often used for emphasis in the Bible. We should always want more of God and be willing listeners and doers. There is a difference between Greek education and Jewish studies. The Greeks learn to improve themselves, but the ancient believers in God learned so they could be dedicated to God and learn God's instructions and values for life. It is not a division of focus as some say, our focus should be on living right and following God, on being dedicated to God. Learning a trade is important, but learning how to live life extends into every area of our life. Some wonder why there are so many successful Jews and Christians. It is because they learn godly values for life that they can apply to all of life.

The Haftarah for Emor is Ezekiel 44:15- 31. The Cohanim who are the descendants of Tzadok who took care of God's house when Israel went astray are to perform the service of the sanctuary. They are to wear linen; nothing that will make them sweat. They are to trim their hair, marry a virgin or the widow of a Cohen (priest), teach the people what is clean or unclean, and judge the people. They are to keep God's Shabbats and festivals holy and not come in contact with a dead person unless they are a close relative. They belong to God, they are to live off the offerings, and they are not to eat anything that dies naturally or is torn to death.

This Haftarah portion reiterates some of the commands for the Cohanim given in Leviticus. They were to teach the people God's commands. God is to be their inheritance. We as believers in Messiah have the Holy Spirit and have the Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit) living in us. Of course, we must be faithful and live like a true child of God. If we disown God and do not live like a child of God, He will disown us. 2 Timothy 2:12 NKJV says, "**If we endure**, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us." So, stay faithful to God's instructions for life, His commandments.

**Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts. (We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)**

**A Cohen is only permitted to be ritually unclean for the death of close relatives.** This also teaches us that we are to mourn for the dead. Leviticus 21:1-3

**The conditions for a Cohen for marriage.** Leviticus 21:7.

**Those who serve in the Temple are to be consecrated.** Leviticus 21:8.

**The High Priest is commanded to not enter a dwelling of a dead person.** Leviticus 21:11.

**The High Priest can only marry a virgin and not a widow.** Leviticus 21:13-14.

**A Cohen who has some disfiguration cannot serve at the Temple.** Leviticus 21:17-21.

**A Cohen with a temporary blemish is to serve or enter the Temple.** Leviticus 21:21, 23.

**A Cohen who is unclean cannot serve or participate at the Temple.** Leviticus 22:2-9.

**A non-Cohen is not to eat of the holy things of the Cohen.** Leviticus 22:10.

**A priest's daughter who married a non-Cohen cannot eat of the holy things.** Leviticus 22:12.

**They were not to mix regular food with the holy food.** Leviticus 22:15.

**Blemished offerings are not accepted; only non-blemished offerings are acceptable.** Leviticus 22:20-22, 24-25.

**They could not offer an animal and its young on the same day.** Leviticus 22:18.

**Offerings should be at least 8 days old.** Leviticus 22:27.

**Yĕhōvāh's name is not to be profaned. According to Strong's Dictionary, profaned means wounded. We are not to cause injury to God's name.** The context refers to saying something negative about God or cursing using God's name. Some say we cannot say God's true name. That is not what it says. If you respect someone, you use their name properly and with respect. You would not call someone you respect, "The Name" as some do for God. So, by never sayings God's true name, they wound God's name. Leviticus 22:32.

### **God's Feasts, Leviticus 23:1-2 NKJV.**

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, **these are My feasts.**"

**God's Sabbath, Leviticus 23:2 NKJV.**

Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

**The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, Leviticus 23:4-8 NKJV.**

These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

**The Feast of Firstfruits, Leviticus 23:9-14 NKJV.**

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

**The Feast of Shavuot, Leviticus 23:15-21 NKJV.**

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the LORD. And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before

the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

**Leave the corners of your field for the poor and stranger and do not glean your harvest. Leviticus 23:22 NKJV.**

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

**The Feast of Yom Teruah, Rosh Hashanah, Leviticus 23:23-25**

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it; and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

**Yom Kippur, Leviticus 23:26-32 NKJV.**

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.

**The Feast of Sukkot and the Eighth Day, Leviticus 23:33-44.**

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, speak to the children of Israel, saying: The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD. On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work on it. For seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It is a sacred assembly, and you shall do no customary work on it. These are the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a

burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD. Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. So Moses declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

**In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:**

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God, which is pronounced, Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used 6,521 times in the Old Testament portion according to Strong's Dictionary. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name. So, why not use God's real name? According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. In that verse and everywhere we see a name for God in all capitals (in some of our Bibles) it is this exclusive name for God, Yě-hō-váh. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah which means to exist. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. He is our eternal God and creator. I want to honor God's name. Will you also honor God's name?

Some people call God Hashem which means "the name." They dishonor God's name by not using His name (see Deuteronomy 29:20). When we honor someone, we use their name in an appropriate way. Christians for the most part do not use the true name of God. Why not begin using His true name and honor Him? Do not be afraid to use God's real name with respect. I say this in order to encourage you to use God's real name because it points to God being our eternal creator.

The ancient rabbis say that is God's name. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. I have seen God's name pointed as Yě-hō-váh in the Aleppo Codex. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה).

Numbers 6:27 says we are to put God's name on His people. So, let's put God's name on His people.

Let's say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּ  
 יָאֵר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְךָ  
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.