



#21 Ki Tissa Exodus 30:11-34:35
Torah Teaching and Teaching, Keys to a Good Life
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
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
Torah
Ki Tissa – the 21st Torah portion
(We also use transliterations from Hebrew)

Even the little things that God does are amazing by mankind's standards. People miss the obvious greatness of God as they go through life because their thoughts are focused on life apart from God; so, God becomes hidden to people. All the while, God's greatness should be evident. Mankind often values what is esoteric, what is rare or not normal. The things of God are both wonderful and amazing. They are not rare but are all around us. We miss the greatness of God because our focus contradicts the knowledge of God.

Who knows why God does what he does. In this portion both rich and poor give the same amount for atonement. Perhaps this means that God accepts all believers equally. Some things that God does are obvious while others are not. That does not mean they do not have a purpose or an effect. There is a tendency for people to value those who are extraordinary. In this portion, the credit for those who led the work on the Mishkan was given to God; it was God who gave them the wisdom. There is a lot we could say about this. Did not God give mankind the ability to work out things mentally. Even more so, God can help us so much more than just what natural knowledge has to offer. Spiritual wisdom is over and above natural wisdom and is unfathomable in its work and effect.

Ki Tissa means "when you take." This portion begins by God telling Moshe to take up a census of everyone over 20; everyone was to give a half shekel as an atonement which was to be used in the service of the Mishkan. We are not told the reason for the atonement for the census, but perhaps it is also to keep them humble and show them their need for God. Then it says they were to make a copper laver for the priests to wash their hands and feet at the Mishkan, and also make a specific anointing oil and incense which was not to be used except at the Mishkan. Bezalel and Oholi'av were given special spiritual wisdom for the work of the Mishkan and the others working on the Mishkan would also receive wisdom from God to do the work.

They were to keep Shabbat for, "In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the

Sabbath day and hallowed it;" Exodus 20:11 NKJV. This is quoting Genesis 2:3; Shabbat was meant for all believers. Shabbat is not just an agreement between Israel and God. Since the creation, mankind knew that God rested on the seventh day (our Friday night and Saturday during the day) and observed Shabbat; also, the Bible says we are to imitate God. Leviticus 20:26 NKJV says, "And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine." Yeshua said, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect;" Matthew 5:48 NKJV. God rested on the 7th day and made it holy.

The 7th day is not Sunday; that was changed by a **pagan to honor the s-u-n god.** " On March 7, 321, however, Roman Emperor Constantine I issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating: all judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon the **venerable day of the sun.**"¹

Then God gave Moshe the stone tablets made by the "finger of God." The tablets are inscribed by the finger of God in stone both times (Exodus 31:18, 34:1); it shows God's immense power as stone is one of the hardest materials to work with. For example, concrete is used in all our buildings and most of our roads because of its rock hardness.

God can do what no person can do.

Meanwhile, while Moshe is on the mountain, the people become impatient and make a golden calf to worship. Moshe intercedes for the people and God then decides not to punish Israel. We should remember that God is merciful. We should repent, decide to do things right, and ask God for forgiveness. We commit sin against God by not trusting in Him and keeping His commandments. Therefore, we must seek God's forgiveness. We may need to make reparations and seek others forgiveness as well. Not everyone will be amenable to our efforts or it may not be possible at times because of circumstances; at that point we can only ask God for forgiveness.

Moshe then comes down the mountain and is angry and throws the tablets down and destroys the golden calf; he had the golden calf ground down into powder and threw it into the water and made the people drink it. Aharon blames Israel for the idolatry. God was displeased with the idolatry of the golden calf and because Israel did not trust in His power.

God is especially displeased with idolatry; He is the one true God, and we should be careful not to give credit to any other god or power. Right after the sin of golden calf, God has Moshe tell them to keep Shabbat. That is the day that God rested after He created everything. Honoring Shabbat says that we believe that God is the creator.

Moshe asks for those who are for Yĕhōvāh to support him and the Levites that support him kill 3,000. At the real Mt. Sinai, there is an ancient graveyard. Again, Moshe intercedes for Israel. Some end up dying from a plague as result of the idolatry that was committed. The Lord tells the Israelites to take the land and drive out the inhabitants, but the people instead mourn. God is displeased with Israel and tells them to remove their extra adornments (ornaments). Before

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

the Mishkan was built, Moshe would go outside the camp to meet with God in his (former) tent. The cloud would descend at the entrance to the tent when Moshe entered; God would then speak to Moshe. The people would watch Moshe go out to the tent and the cloud would then descend at the entrance. Joshua would also stay at the tent.

Moshe asks that the Lord go before them and the Lord says that He will. When Moshe goes up the mountain with two tablets that he had made, the Lord passes before Moshe and proclaims His goodness. From Exodus 34:6-7 the Jews have put together the 13 attributes of God's mercy.

We learn of a good God in this portion, that He is a God of mercy and that His people can count on Him. We should also remember that we can count on Yĕhōvâh and our Messiah Yeshua. Messiah refers to the Hebrew word HaMashiach which means the anointed one. Yeshua is our anointed King who died for our sins so we could be forgiven. He rose from the dead and will someday return as our ruler and King.

Yeshua the Messiah is our anointed King.

In this portion, God is to be their "banner" in all they do. God promises the land to Israel and He says that He will drive out the inhabitants. Israel was not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and Israel was to destroy their idols. They are to observe the three main feasts and not come empty handed to them; the firstborn of everything belong to the Lord; they were to redeem their firstborn sons. Moshe is again on the mountain for forty days and God inscribes the tablets. When he comes down his face shined and it scared the Israelites, so he put a veil over his face. There are two accounts of God writing the 10 commandments with His finger; Moshe went up the mountain several times and not just twice.

The Haftarah for Ki Tissa is 1 Kings 18:1-39. In these verses Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal and the first one whose god responds with fire is the true God. The prophets of Baal fail even though they are very zealous for Baal. Elijah taunts the prophets of Baal and when it comes to his turn, God burns up the sacrifice and even the stones and water that surrounded it.

In this Torah portion, we see God demanding the respect He deserves and that He is a merciful and good God. In the Haftarah God evens burns up the stones at the sacrifice. The stones that burned up perhaps remind us of the commandments that God inscribed in stone with His finger. We should know that our God is the true God and there is no other God, but Him. Israel was to be faithful and trust in Him and we should be faithful to Him and trust in Him too.

1 Kings 18:38-39 NKJV says, "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" They declared that 'Yĕ-hō-vâh (יהוה) is Elohim, Yĕ-hō-vâh (יהוה) is Elohim.' They used God's true name and said that Yĕ-hō-vâh is the true God. It says in Exodus 3:15 that Yĕ-hō-vâh will be God's name forever. The word Lord or Adonai (depending on the translation you are using) is Yĕ-hō-vâh in the Hebrew.

Keys to a Good Life
(Accompanying teaching for the Torah Portion Ki Tissa.)
By Moshe Schwab

God wants to give us blessings; seek Him.

The Psalms are songs. It is a type of writing or genre. The psalms are emotional expressions inspired by God involving life and dealing with God's truths. In the psalm here, the word "selah" just means the music is paused (stops) for a moment. It is not spoken.

Psalm 67:1-7 NKJV says,

"God be merciful to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, Selah. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Then the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

We ask God to be merciful to us and bless us because we have turned toward Him. This is a Messianic song that asks God to bring blessings to the nations and that someday in the future, all people will come to know Yĕhōvâh; all people will someday turn towards God. God brings great joy to His people; He does what is right (righteous). Someday, Yeshua will govern the earth as HaMashiach (the anointed King) and the earth will be blessed.

We see in this Psalm the truth about the goodness of God. The world at present does not know the true God, but someday the people of the world will know God and the world will be a world of incredible blessing. Until Yeshua comes to reign, we can make God and our Messiah the king of our lives and serve Him. As we turn to Him, He will bless us. Who does not want blessing in their lives? God's ways unlock the keys to living life.

It is hard to believe that the world will someday be a place of blessing for all, but that was God's intention from the beginning. We can take part in that now to some extent by turning to Him in life and follow His commandments. Presently, the world is in a panic over a new strain of virus. I wonder if people have considered that mankind has brought that on themselves by not listening to God.

We have the COVID-19 virus because people were doing something with bats. That is something that God tells us not to eat. There was the pig (swine) flu; God says we are also not to eat pig. Then there is Ebola which comes from eating monkey; that is also a food that we are not supposed to eat. God gave us the food laws to protect us. The Old Testament laws were given to us because God cares about us. God's commandments help us to do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18) so when we do them, we are doing good works.

Israel committed idolatry with the golden calf in this portion and 3,000 ended up dying because of their sin. Sin brings pain and death. Homosexual practice is wrong according to the Bible and 32 million people have died as of 2018 because of AIDS that was spread initially by homosexual practice. Those who say that homosexuality is okay have participated in the deaths of those

people. They say it is okay, so more people keep dying. It is unfortunate that people continue to do disobey God. God did not bring this on them. God knows what is best for us because He created us. Why is there so much pain in the world; it is because mankind has brought it on themselves. God knows what is best.

The world will be a better place when God rules the earth. In the meantime, we need to seek God with all our heart to secure the blessings He wants for us. Stay strong chaverim (friends). God passes in front of Moshe and 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." Exodus 34:6-7 NKJV. God brings good; we see His good attributes in those scriptures.

Here are some more attributes of God:

Yĕhōvâh Rāfah – Yĕhōvâh heals

God says that Israel will not have the diseases of the Egyptians if they follow Him. This brings to mind some of our present-day diseases. We would not have them if we followed God properly. Many of the ancient rabbis thought Isaiah 53 was about the Messiah. Isaiah said the Messiah would heal us in Isaiah 53:5 NKJV, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed"

In the book of Matthew 8:16-17 NKJV it says, "When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon- possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.'" Yeshua still heals us! One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is Gifts of Healings. Perhaps thousands are healed everyday through the power of the Messiah Yeshua.

Yĕhōvâh Yireh – Yĕhōvâh will provide

It is used for when God provides a sacrificial ram to take the place of Isaac. Perhaps we can deduce from this that God is the provider for our relationship with Him. Also, God has given us His commandments so that we can do what is right and be in relationship with Him; He has given us the Holy Spirit through the Messiah Yeshua to help us live right. The Holy Spirit is our helper (John 14:26); God provided a sacrificial ram to take the place of Isaac and the Messiah Yeshua took our place as a sacrifice for our sins. God continues to provide for a relationship with Him.

El Shaddai – God Almighty

There is some disagreement on its exact meaning. The ancient rabbis say that El Shaddai is Almighty God. God is the mighty and true God and not a God of wood or stone. Perhaps that is why Abraham calls God El Shaddai because Abraham rejects idolatry and follows the true God.

El Olam – Forever God

God will not change; He is God forever and there is none like Him. Atheists say the world was created by the "big bang," but where did the big bang come from. It takes an act of faith to believe in the big bang. Why not believe in an eternal God?

El Elyon - God most high

God is over all and is worthy of our worship. We are to be humble towards our God.

Adonai - Master

God is our master, and we must follow Him and obey Him. We are not slaves to the world but choose to follow our God and King.

Yĕhōvâh Nissi – Yĕhōvâh is my banner

This is in our portion for today. God is with us, protects us, and gives us victory. God gave Israel victory; He is the banner for His people forever. Deuteronomy 20:4 CJB says, "God is going with you to fight on your behalf against your enemies and give you victory." Shaul says in 1 Corinthians 15:57 NKJV, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The world is busy trying to put together the puzzle of life; God has given us great light.

People should understand that, but they do not know God. What is this light? Shaul (Paul) talks about it in Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:7-14 NKJV:

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: 'Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.'"

He says that we were once without understanding the truth from God. Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV says about God's commandments, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding ... 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" We are now to be people of understanding (light) about the things of God and learn God's commandments (what is acceptable to do). We are not to partake of the worthless works of those who live without understanding (and live in darkness and sin). We are to learn and do the truths from God and identify sinful things. The works of those who live without God's commandments are shameful and it is shameful to even speak of those things. God's commandments give us understanding (light) and His understanding and commandments show us the way to live. Stop sleeping spiritually; stop doing worthless works of darkness (dead worthless sinful works); the Messiah came to help us understand how to keep God's commandments. Our God and Messiah has given us great light.

People are searching to unlock the keys to life.

The God of the Bible has given us the keys to a blessed life. Not only that, eternal life! If only mankind would listen to God. I have had lots of conversations about doing things God's way. I tell people that God wants us to love others and that the world would be a better place if we all did that. People often agree with that statement. It is not too hard to understand that doing things God's way unlocks the keys to life.

I think about how I can be good to my friends and family every day. The Bible tells us to love one another and so much more. If only we listened to God; the Bible tells us to:

*"Have peace with one another." Mark 9:50 NKJV

*"Love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. John 13:34 NKJV

*"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." Romans 12:6-8 NKJV.

*"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. Romans 12:10 NKJV

*"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Romans 12:15-16 NKJV

*"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." Romans 15:7 NKJV

*"That you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Romans 15:14 NKJV (admonish means to caution and encourage)

God's ways work better than mankind's' ways. Mankind does not understand this.

We are supposed to have peace with each other, love one another, help each other through serving each other, be kind, respect each other (giving preference), be like minded, do not be proud, accept each other, encourage each other. This all sounds pretty good. I do not know about you, but I want what God wants for us. What is wrong with people?

They just do not want to understand do they. God told Isaiah:

"Go, and tell this people:

'Keep on hearing, but do not understand;

Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

Make the heart of this people dull,

And their ears heavy,

And shut their eyes;

Lest they see with their eyes,

And hear with their ears,

And understand with their heart,

And return and be healed." Isaiah 6:9-10 NKJV

It is any different today? Isaiah wrote this about 2,600 years ago. Mankind just keeps doing things its own way. Some say the COVID plague was developed in a lab. What were these people thinking? We need to start listening to God and it starts with us.

The sin of idolatry caused the death of 3,000 for Israel in this Torah portion. Sin in our world has caused untold sickness, pain, and death. **God gave us His commandments because we need His help; that is an understatement.** God is not trying to take away our fun but protect us. Someday the world will be a great place to live when God is in charge and not mankind. Seek God and His goodness and blessings. Mankind is all the time trying to figure out life, but God has already given us the map to having a good life and that life is through Him. If only we would listen to God, we would understand the keys to a good life. God's ways work better than mankind's' ways. God knows what is best for us. If only mankind would come to understand this.

The Aaronic Blessing

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 over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

According to Exodus 3:15, Yě-hō-váh is God's true name forever. Of course, we should use His name with respect. Yě-hō-váh is an acronym formed from the Hebrew verb hayah. Yě-hō-váh means, He existed, He exists, and He will exist. I want to honor God's name.

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. Over 2,363 manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. 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). I encourage you to use God's real name with respect at times.

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

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

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ
 יְאָר יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךְ, וַיַּחֲנֶךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֶלְיָךְ, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

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.