

#53-54 Ha'azinu-Vezot Haberakhah Deuteronomy 32:1-34:12 By Moshe Schwab

Shabbat is a day of rest and it includes those days of rest that are associated with God's feasts. Perhaps think of your day of rest as a day at the beach sitting with your arms resting on a lounge chair. We sometimes go on vacation to step out of our cycle of working on stuff. Keeping Shabbat is intended to bless our lives. We will be keeping Shabbat in eternity.

Isaiah 58:13-14 NKJV

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy day of the LORD honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,
Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking your own words,
14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Isaiah 56:1-8 NKJV

1 "Keep justice, and do righteousness,
For My salvation is about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.
2 Blessed is the man who does this,
And the son of man who lays hold on it;
Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from doing any evil.
3 Do not let the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying, 'The LORD has utterly separated me from His people;'
Nor let the eunuch say, 'Here I am, a dry tree.'
4 For thus says the LORD:
'To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,
5 Even to them I will give in My house
And within My walls a place and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.
6 Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—
7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
 Will be accepted on My altar;
 For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.'
 8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
 'Yet I will gather to him
 Others besides those who are gathered to him.'"

Isaiah 66:22-23

"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.
 23 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."

Aren't these scriptures wonderful. It wasn't Christianity that changed the day of Shabbat. It was Constantine who made Sunday a day of rest to the pagan god Mithras, the sun god. Also, it wasn't Christianity that stopped keeping God's feasts. It was through edicts made by the pagan Roman religion in the 300s. The Bible says in Jeremiah 16:19 NKJV, "O LORD, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, 'Surely our fathers have inherited lies.'"

What is the in the spotlight of our lives? We are often drawn to new and attractive devices and even ideas, but what is the best things, the best ideas for life? The Bible says God's commandments are "right and good;" Deuteronomy 6:18 NKJV. So, keeping God's commandments are the best way to live. Remember, Noah received grace because did what was right and good. It says that Noah taught God's commandments in the Jewish writings. Genesis 6:8-9 NKJV says, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God."

Our lives can be busy and interrupt our spiritual train of thought, but don't always stay in that place; bring your thoughts back into relationship with God. We need to apply ourselves well to life, but there is more than that to a blessed (happy) life. We also need to make sure to seek God every day and throughout our day. Psalms 63:1 NKJV, "O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water." 1 Chronicles 16:10-11 NKJV says, "Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His face evermore!"

I will sometimes look out at a lake and just let my mind be at peace. There is something special about enjoying God's creation. Never forget that we are God's people. As we are faithful and active believers, we are special to God. Proverbs 15:3 NKJV says, "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." Hebrews 4:13 NKJV says, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Jeremiah 16:17-18 NKJV says, "For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. And first I will repay double for their iniquity and their sin."

The writer of Hebrews tells us that living deliberately in sin will not go unpunished (Hebrews 10:29-31).¹ Shaul in the New Testament portion tells us that those who live in sin will not be in God's eternal kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).² 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." I share this because people need to know this. I wouldn't want anyone to experience that.

Let us thank God for He is good and has our best interests at heart. He wants us to do what is "right and good" (Deuteronomy 6:18) for our own benefit.

Psalms 139 NKJV

1 O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
 You understand my thought afar off.
 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down,
 And are acquainted with all my ways.
 4 For there is not a word on my tongue,
 But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
 5 You have hedged me behind and before,
 And laid Your hand upon me.
 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 It is high, I cannot attain it.
 7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
 Or where can I flee from Your presence?
 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
 If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
 9 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
 And Your right hand shall hold me.
 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"
 Even the night shall be light about me;
 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
 But the night shines as the day;
 The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
 13 For You formed my inward parts;
 You covered me in my mother's womb.
 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
 Marvelous are Your works,
 And that my soul knows very well.
 15 My frame was not hidden from You,
 When I was made in secret,

¹ "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV.

² "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 NKJV.

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
 And in Your book they all were written,
 The days fashioned for me,
 When as yet there were none of them.
 17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
 How great is the sum of them!
 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
 When I awake, I am still with You.
 19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!
 Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.
 20 For they speak against You wickedly;
 Your enemies take Your name in vain.
 21 Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?
 And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?
 22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
 I count them my enemies.
 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
 Try me, and know my anxieties;
 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,
 And lead me in the way everlasting.

This week is not a double portion, but we are finishing the book of Deuteronomy this week. The portion Ha'azinu is a prophetic song about the future of Israel that God wanted Moshe write for them. The gist of the song begins by praising God and then a brief history of man. God was our Father from the inception of His created work on earth. He chose Israel, protected them in the desert, and prospered them in the new land, but they turned away to idols and would arouse God's anger so that He would turn away His face from them. In the end He would avenge their enemies and atone His people. Moshe tells Israel that they were to teach their children the Ha'azinu song so they would understand the urgency of its message.

We should also understand the urgency of doing what is right. First of all, God gave us His commandments to bless us and help us. They are a demonstration of God's favor (grace) towards mankind and they are not a burden.

Deuteronomy 4:5 NKJV

"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments;"

Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV

"Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding;"

Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV

"The peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;'"

God's commands are not too hard to keep, Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you;". Yeshua refers to this scripture and says in Matthew 11:30 NKJV, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Yoke in Jewish thought refers to the Torah. Yeshua as God, gave us the Torah and it is not a burden. It is the extra commandments by man that are a burden. In Yeshua's time there were thousands of extra

man-made laws.

Light refers to understanding in the Bible; God gave us "wisdom" and "understanding" (light) (Deuteronomy 4:6). God's ways turn us from darkness to light. His ways release us from evil powers that are out to make us slaves to sin. Yeshua said He came, "To open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." Acts 26:18 NKJV. Shaul said, "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." 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NKJV.

The devil works undercover so as not to expose that there are spiritual powers that are against us. People sometimes experience these lying powers and instead of believing in God; they think it is the power of the mind or ghosts. Someone once told me that they believed in ghosts and he thought that ghosts existed. I asked him if he believed in God and he said no. I then asked him, if he experienced these strange supernatural events and believed in them, why didn't he believe in God? God is real and He knows us and wants us to know Him and His goodness.

The Messiah Yeshua came to help us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We talked about that some last week. Also, Yeshua is over all (Ephesians 1:22 NKJV God, "Put all things under His feet.") and through His name we have authority over demonic powers. Philippians 2:10 CJB, "That in honor of the name given Yeshua, every knee will bow."

The Haftarah portion is Hosea 14:2-10 and Micah 7:18-20; also Joel 2:15-27 because this Shabbat is during the high holy days and is called, Shabbat Shuva, Shabbat of return. It is a very interesting Haftarah reading from the prophets.

Hosea tells us to return to the Lord. God will take away our sin and God will revive us. God's ways are right and those who do what is right will live (walk) by them. Micah says that God delights in mercy. He will cast our sins into the deep places of the sea. On Rosh Hashanah, some of us threw bread into water to represent this and watched the bread disappear. It is a ritual symbolism of God's forgiveness. Is all ritual wrong? This ritual was taken from the scriptures.

I talked a little about ritual on the video last week. Some people say we have to do certain rituals. Then others say that we can't do them. Saying we must do or cannot do something is making up commandments. We are not to make up misapplied commandments (Deuteronomy 4:2). There are properly applied applications of the Torah; for example, the New Testament has hundreds of commandments that are properly applied from the Old Testament.

What pleases God? Is wearing a hat or not wearing a hat a big deal? Is something that has some biblical relevance okay to do? Probably. Do we have to light candles for Shabbat? No, but we should acknowledge the beginning of Shabbat on Friday night by some means. People are saying we can't do anything that is Jewish because the Jews keep rituals as commandments. If it is not a pagan ritual; if done in the proper context; and we have the right attitude, it is not wrong. Most rituals are not commandments of God. We should never say something is or is not

a commandment of God when it isn't.

Here is an example where we can use some ritual. Moshe and the prophets instituted readings from the Torah. That would be commanded by God. Ritual involved with the Torah readings can vary. Even in life, there is some ritual. There are people who say we can't do anything Jewish; not even read the Torah. Wasn't Yeshua a Jew? Isn't Yeshua God and God gave us the commandments in the Old Testament and the Torah (Torah means instruction)? I've often thought these people who say we can't do anything Jewish either misled or anti-Semitic.

Ritual is something we do every day. We also follow rituals that others have advised us to follow. Ritual can be a good thing because it can help us get through life. Some ritual is wrong though. Again, telling people that a non-essential ritual is a commandment of God is wrong; especially ritual that micromanages life and is nonsense. What does not putting up an umbrella on Shabbat because you are putting up a structure have to do with anything sensible? Yeshua quoted Isaiah and said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men;" Matthew 15:9 NKJV.

Another example is, we now know that Constantine changed the day of worship to the day of the Sun god. Worship on Sunday is a commandment of men. It wasn't because Yeshua rose on Sunday. And I quote, "Constantine decreed (March 7, 321) *dies Solis*—day of the Sun, 'Sunday'—as the Roman day of rest." [Constantine said,] "'On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed.'"³ The real day of rest is Shabbat, Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset. We inherited the wrong day from the pagan church of the Roman Empire.

Let's continue on. In the Haftarah, Joel tells us to blow the shofar to call for the assembly of God's holy people. The bridegroom will come for His bride. The priests beg God to spare His people so that their inheritance will come to pass. God's people will not be ashamed. This is a picture of the end times when the Messiah will come for His bride. We hope to be among those people. Hallelujah, we will not be ashamed. It will come to pass for the believers from both the Old Testament and our time. It says in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day." Yeshua came for all believers.

For Further Study

Stay Faithful, Never Give Up

There was a silly comedy done years ago that had the saying, "never give up, never surrender."⁴ That's true for life and should be especially true for our spiritual life.

Seek God's light. Let His word direct us.

Moshe told Israel they would fail some day; he told them this so they wouldn't give up. They came back to their land from Babylon and got their lives back together. This is a process we do

³https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_Invictus

⁴From the movie, "Galaxy Quest."

over and over as believers in the true God. This is a Shabbat of turning to God.

In this Messianic age, the first thing we are to do is to turn toward God by keeping His commandments and accept the Messiah. We are to receive the Holy Spirit. We can tell God we want His Holy Spirit and He will give it those who believe in the Messiah Yeshua. In the future, we may receive a spiritual gift that is associated with the Holy Spirit. My experience has been that everyone who seeks spiritual gifts, will receive them; so be patient and seek them (Shaul said, "Desire spiritual gifts;" 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV).

Yeshua said we are to receive the Holy Spirit as our helper. John 14:15-16 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 Holy Spirit is helping us to keep God's commandments. We need to turn to God, repent, keep His commandments, accept Yeshua as the Messiah, and receive the Holy Spirit as our helper (as well as God's gifts of the Holy Spirit).

Kefa said, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." Acts 2:38-39 NKJV. Isn't that great; it's a promise from God to us and our children and even those afar off. Perhaps Kefa never thought that people all over the world would be receiving God's Holy Spirit. I don't know what his idea of afar off was. We are surely far from Israel and a couple thousand years later; God's calling is still true for us today.

We have both God's word to lead us and the Holy Spirit now in this Messianic age. As we saw in the scripture portions for today, we are to keep God's commandments and not sin. They told us to return to God; God wants to give us His mercy. He blesses us for following His instructions (Torah means instruction). Psalms 43:3 NKJV says, "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me." The idea of being led by God begins with His commandments. Then the Holy Spirit helps us in the details of life and lots more.

Oddly, there are some people who think we are only being led by the Holy Spirit. The context of the scripture about the Holy Spirit is keeping God's commandments. Yeshua said first of all, we need to keep His commandments. "Keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper;" John 14:15 NKJV. Could it be any plainer? Over and over the Bible tells us to keep God's commandments.

Stay connected to God; His ways support us and are good.

God's word is a light to us and so is the Holy Spirit. Psalm 119 has many great scriptures about keeping God's commandments.

From Psalm 119 NKJV:

10 "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!"

16 "I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word."

30 "I have chosen the way of truth."

40 "Behold, I long for Your precepts"

50 "This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life."

65 "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments."

72 "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver."

162 "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure."

In order to grow spiritually, we may need to change how we do some things and even stop how we are doing other things.

Years ago, I tried to study the Bible and pray every day, but the business of life kept me from doing that. I had to form the habit of doing that every day. Now I do it automatically. If my day gets away from me, I spend my evening in study and prayer.

Psalms 5:3 NKJV says, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You." Talking about Yeshua, "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed;" Mark 1:35 NKJV. Mark 6:46 NKJV says about Yeshua, "And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray."

Let's form good habits. Hebrews 5:14 NKJV says, "Those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." 1 Timothy 4:7 NKJV says, "Exercise yourself toward godliness." We work at doing good and forming good habits. When we come up to a problem, then we will be ready to do what is right.

Money is often a driving force in our lives. It speaks loudly to us.

When I first went out on my own, it wasn't well planned. I got a job; I got a place to live; and I had 2 dollars that I had borrowed to live on until I got my first pay check. Some of you are probably thinking wow, that must have been hard. I sure learned the lesson of working for a living. I had to work or I would starve.

We must also allow God to speak loudly into our lives.

Some can put all their effort into making money and not give God a proper place in their life. Remember what Psalm 119:10 NKJV said, "With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!" Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV says that, "Man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD." God tells us to live good and blessed lives; then someday we will be with Him for eternity. Hebrews 14:12 NKJV says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

God knows what we do and He is the almighty judge. We will have to give an account for our lives. Do we do good or evil?

When I wrote down what I thought God wanted me to share today, I didn't have any idea how things would fit together. I just shared about holiness and then I looked at this last thing God wanted me to talk about. "He is the almighty judge!"

It amazes me sometimes how flippant people can be with the Bible. Guess what, people who don't follow God's commands are bringing pain and evil into this world. God is just and He will judge mankind. Shaul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 NKJV.

Notice how it says "terror of the Lord." I don't think we hear that in too many churches nowadays. It says we will be judged for the "good or bad" we have done. Strong's says the word "bad" means, "bad, evil, harm, ill, noisome, wicked." It's not just things we think are bad, it's what God says is wrong. This may come as a total surprise to you, but the word for judgment seat, is the Greek word *bema* which is the word Jews use for where the Torah is read. How about that! Again, it says in Psalms 119:65, "You have dealt well with Your servant, O Lord, according to Your word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments." If you want to be dealt with well for eternity, keep God's commandments.

*God doesn't want anyone to fail. He cares
about mankind; He is a God of mercy.*

We are coming up to Yom Kippur the day of confession of sins. The Jews do a general confession of sins, sort of like Daniel was doing in the Old Testament portion. Yochanan said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:9-10 NKJV. We need to confess our sins and seek forgiveness. We can do this anytime, but this is the day God ordained us to do that. We are to afflict ourselves in some manner like fasting and not work on Yom Kippur. You can find my teachings and prayers for Yom Kippur on our website under: <https://www.teshuvahsa.org/observing-the-feasts>. Scroll down to Yom Kippur.

Kefa said in 2 Peter 3:5-9 NKJV:

"For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Isn't that great. **God is a good God and doesn't want anyone to fail.** Yochanan says he saw the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from heaven in the book of Revelation. Perhaps he had a slow motion action replay. God could restore Jerusalem in a split second. Perhaps God slowed it down for him so he could experience it. Yochanan also said, "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;" Revelation 21:8 NKJV. There is a lake of fire for those who don't obey God. This may terrify you, but better for you to know now than have to face that at your time of judgment.

God gave Israel a song so they would be reminded to be faithful to God. It is important that we remember to do what is right. God gave us His words in the Bible and the Holy Spirit to lead us and help us. Ritual is often not a commandment of God; misapplied

commandments are not God's commands. Not all ritual is wrong. The portion tells us there has never been a man like Moshe; at least not until Yeshua Messiah. Yeshua even healed everyone in some cities.

As believers, we need to keep seeking God and never give up. Stay connected to God and His word. In order to grow spiritually, we may need to change some things in our lives. Money is often a driving force for us, but God should also be very important. We will have to give an account to God for how we live. Stay faithful to our good and just God.