



#45 VaEtchanan Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11
Torah Teaching
By Moshe Schwab

Names

Kefa – Peter
Moshe – Moses
Shaul – Paul
Yeshua – Jesus
Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets
Parashah (portion) – one of 54 portions of the Bible from the Torah
Rabbi – Jewish leader
Tanakh – Old Testament portion
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

VaEtchanan means, "and I pleaded." Moshe begins by relating that he asked God if he could go into the promised land; he would not be allowed to go. Instead, Joshua would lead Israel into the land. In this portion, the 10 commandments are listed again.

I would like to begin by talking about prayer. Be thoughtful in life and pray. Of course, God expects us to do our part in every situation, but do not minimize what God can do. Whatever you are dealing with, be specific about how you are going to work things out and pray to God and ask God for help about what you intend to do. Prayer is an important topic because God will help us at times, and we need God's help in all of life.

When we talk about praying for things in life, we are not just talking about praying about the spiritual things of life, although it is always a good idea to talk to God about the spiritual things you intend to take on. Since believers in the Messiah receive the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit can help us to work out many of the details of both our spiritual life and any and all things in life.

I like to talk about my one cousin who became a believer and began praying to God for help with the computer systems he worked on. He worked mostly large company mainframes, so they are very important for companies. This one time he went to help these two men who had been working on a mainframe for 24 hours straight. He prayed and he had the mainframe working in 10 minutes. That is the power of prayer. It was a combination of knowhow and God that got things going.

I remember my cousin telling me a story about this one mainframe that was malfunctioning at random. It turned out that a huge machine in the neighborhood would operate at random during the day and inject noise into the electric line. Imagine trying to figure that one out. No task or problem is too big for God. Isaiah 40:28-29 NKJV says, Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength."

God will sometimes help us in the moment even without us asking. It makes sense that we should trust in God and ask for His help and God will also help us at times. Jeremiah 29:11-12 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." God is a good and caring God. Do not forget to pray and ask God for help. God wants good things for us, but we also need God's help to help us serve others and not just for our selfish desires. James 4:2-3 NKJV says, "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Stay under God's peace where we live in joy and not by the pettiness of the world. Do not be consumed by worldly thoughts that can steal your joy. I have talked to people who are more concerned about a situation than they should be. They hold onto something like it is a matter of life and death when it is not. I am not saying that we should not take some things very seriously. Yet do not let situations wear you out.

I knew someone years ago that was so consumed by his job that he ended up having stomach problems from it. He could not stop his worrying and died young due to complications caused by his anxiety. He was a really nice and kind person; it was too bad that he was not able have peace and joy in life. Sure, we need to take life seriously, but God also wants us to enjoy life. Psalms 16:11 NKJV says, "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

First of all, follow God's commandments. They teach us how to live life. Then have joy and enjoy life. God's commandments bring joy into our lives because they are good. Psalms 119:47-48 NKJV says, "And I will delight myself in Your commandments, which I love. My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, which I love, and I will meditate on Your statutes. Obviously, he is talking about the Old Testament commandments. Many of the scriptures talking about the goodness of God refer to God's good commandments.

Have you ever known someone without joy? Jeremiah 15:16 NKJV says, "Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. God's commandments sustained him in life. Nehemiah 8:10 NKJV says, "Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'" The context is keeping God's feast of Rosh Hashanah also known as Yom Teruah. The Old Testament feasts are God's feasts and not just Jewish feasts. If you believe in the true God, then God's feasts are also for you to keep and have joy.

Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." God's feasts are connected with times of joy. That is why Shaul says in Philippians 4:4 NKJV, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice!" We are supposed to be observing God's times of joy.

Our era seems to be a time skepticism. People lack God's truths, and they do not keep God's feasts. When we have truth and live in the truth, we can have the joy and strength of Yehovah to move forward in life. What is the basis for your life?

Do not take on too much so that your life is one unending life of tasks. We have a choice. We can either have a balanced life or overwork ourselves. It is our choice. Psalm 118:24 NKJV says, "This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." Do we take the time to rejoice, or do we ignore the joy we are supposed to have in life? Psalm 119:93 NKJV says, "I will never forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life." God gave us life and life it is made up of many things and not just perpetual work. Isaiah 40:31 NKJV says, "But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Notice it doesn't say we are to keep running until we faint. I am all for being industrious. Accomplishing tasks can be fun and rewarding. Rest is a good thing especially on God's days of rest that He gave us. Everyday does not have to be a day of unending tasks.

The weekly day of rest or Shabbat is the 7th day, our Friday evening at sunset to Saturday evening at sunset. The biblical day begins in the evening at sunset. Genesis 1:5 NKJV says, "Evening and the morning were the first day." Shabbat was instituted at the time of creation. It is not just a Jewish day of rest. We need to talk about this frequently because some have been misguided by pagan religion that was passed down into Christianity. Genesis 2:3 NKJV says, "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made."

Sunday was made a day of rest by Constantine to the pagan Sun god Mithras and passed down into Christianity. God does not want us to mix pagan practice with our faith. Deuteronomy 12:31 NKJV says, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods." The word abomination means disgusting. If it is disgusting to God, it should be disgusting to us. We should have a heart for what God says and not do things our own way.

If you have to leave your brick building where you go to church, it is only made of stone. Yeshua said in Matthew 5:13 NKJV, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men." If your church is following pagan practice, the building is only worthless stone you are leaving. Have joy in God's times and not pagan practices absorbed by some of Christianity.

Overworking or doing anything without having a balanced life can cause problems in life. I knew this person would come into work early in the morning and often not leave work until 7 PM. She got a lot of thanks for her work, but she was sacrificing her life to the company she worked for. Is giving up your life for work worth it? Is giving away you joy worth it?

Ecclesiastes 2:20-24 NKJV says,
 Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. For there is a man whose labor is with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days are sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God.

Life contains a balance of many things. No one thing is all there is to life. Notice that the intense labor and striving of his heart brought him sorrow and a burden. There is more to life than just work. Sometimes when a company folds, people will lose their identity. Perhaps they have given away their life and then the job that gave them an identity for 30 years is no longer there. This is even true of some parents after their children move out. They have given their life for their children, and they feel an emptiness in their lives after the children are all moved out.

Be thoughtful in life and pray. Stay in God's peace and live in joy and do not live by the pettiness of the world. Do not take on too much in your day-to-day life so that your life is one unending life of tasks. Overworking or doing anything without having a balanced life is a misdirected life and can end up being a burden instead of a life of peace and satisfaction.

Torah Study

VaEtchanan means, "and I pleaded." Moshe begins by relating that he asked God if he could go into the promised land; he would not be allowed to go. Instead, Joshua would lead Israel into the land. In this portion, the 10 commandments are listed again, we find the command to love God with all our heart, and the command to put up scriptures at our entrances. Moshe tells them to listen to the commands of God and do not add or subtract from them. He says that if Israel keeps God's commandments, all the nations would see their wisdom and understanding.

It is important to understand that the commandments in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion) give us a good life. Some say His commands are done away, but God says the wisdom of the Old Testament commandments would be a witness to the nations. In this portion it says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;'" So why are some people saying that God's commands in the Old Testament portion are not for us?

God does not change; therefore, His commandments still help us.

They have been taught a system of man-made philosophy that has been passed down to us. It says in Numbers 23:19 that, "God is not a man, that He should lie." So, who is lying, God or man-made theology and philosophy? These people who are subtracting from God's commandments will have to face God someday. It also says in this portion in Deuteronomy 4:2

NKJV, "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."

Since God's commandments give us the wisdom of an all-knowing God, we ought to be hanging on every word. I know someone who played pro basketball, and I still remember almost every word they told me on how to play basketball. That's how we should be listening to God. The Shema is also in this portion, and it says in Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." How do you love God? Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always." The Old Testament portion commandments are good and keeping God's commandments shows God that we care about His heart for us.

Why wouldn't we want to listen to an all-knowing and good God that has our best interests at heart?

We have enough troubles in life let alone doing things contrary to God's commands. The consequences of not keeping God's commands brings evil into the world. There are at least 39 words of encouragement to keep God's commandments in this portion, maybe more. Do you think it is important to keep God's commands! Shaul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-2 NKJV, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. There was no New Testament at the time; he is talking about the Old Testament portion! 2 Timothy 3:15 NKJV says, "And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." Timothy's mother was Jewish (see Acts 16:1); the Holy Scriptures being talked about there in 2 Timothy are the Old Testament commandments. It goes on to say there in 2 Timothy that Yeshua will judge us; He will also judge those who are teaching false doctrine. Teach people to keep God's commands.

Some say that Israel did not follow God and were failures, but that is not true. I had a pastor tell me they were all failures. Only some did not follow God correctly. Deuteronomy 4:3-4 NKJV says, "Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the LORD your God are alive today, every one of you." Some 2 million people made it into the promised land! The fact that the Bible mentions that some did not follow God the way they should lends to its credibility. Those failures would have been omitted to make them look good if they did not take God seriously.

In today's portion it also talks about God being merciful if we return to Him (see Deuteronomy 4:30-31). The word covenant is in these verses. Covenant refers to an agreement. If we agree to follow God, He will forgive us. Some use the word "covenant" to mean that God's commandments do not apply to us. The Bible says that those who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom. They have turned away from God. 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." Do not be confused by the philosophy of religion of those who have explained away

God's good commandments. We are in relationship with God if we listen to Him and do what He tells us to do.

Also in this portion, Israel was to tell their descendants about all the events that took place from Egypt until their entering the promised land. We too should talk about the goodness and power of God both in the Bible and from our own experiences. For example, a friend of mine prayed for a blind person and stuff began oozing out of the blind man's eyes and the blind man was healed miraculously and could now see. Another friend of mine prayed for a teenager with one leg shorter than the other and while he had his hand on the boy's leg, the leg grew to the same length as the other leg. I have witnessed many miracles and healings, and I also have been healed miraculously at times. I have a two-volume book about God healing people.

Moshe then tells them about when they stood before Yĕhōvāh¹ and what they experienced at Mount Sinai. The mountain was ablaze, and they heard God speak from the sky. He says they are not to make any representation of God to worship. They were to be an inheritance to God. Moshe tells them not to forget their covenant, their agreement to follow God by worshipping idols. Israel would be destroyed if they worshipped idols. If they repent though, God will not forget them. In this era, we make an agreement to follow God, His commandments, believe in the Messiah Yeshua, and receive the help of the Holy Spirit.

Just like not all those who were in the desert and at Mount Sinai, we can either continue to follow God or do things our own way instead of God's way. Set your heart on following God and do not live in sin. Hebrews 10:29-31 NKJV says, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." If you are living in sin, get with it. You can do it. God says His commandments are not too hard. Deuteronomy 30:10-11 NIV says, "Obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." Do not believe those who say it is too difficult to keep God's commandments.

The 10 Commandments.

Let's talk about the 10 Commandments. Remember, there are more than 10 commandments in the Bible, but we will talk about a few of these commandments today. First, we should talk about how to interpret and use God's commandments. Deuteronomy 4:2 tells us not to add or subtract from God's commands. God's commandments are simple, but we also have to apply them to life and new situations. I like to use some of Shaul's examples on how to apply the Torah.

¹ Ye-Ho-VAH is pronounced as, "Yĕ" like the word "yes," "Hō" like "home," and "Vāh" as in "pah;" Yĕ-hō-vāh. The accent is on the -VAH. Exodus 3:15 says that this will be God's name forever. It means, He existed, He is, and He will be. We are to pray using God's real name: "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them;" Numbers 6:27 NKJV. If we are not using God's real name, we are not putting His name on His people.

He uses the doctrine of the Old Testament portion to explain that leaders may need to be supported. 1 Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV says, "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.'" In another place Shaul says that he worked (see Acts 18:1-4) to support himself, but in some cases a leader needs to do a substantial amount of work for the people he is helping to follow God and needs support.

All the scriptures in the New Testament portion are applications of the Old Testament portion. That is why we have some 1,050 laws in the New Testament portion according to some who have counted them, but only a few hundred currently applicable laws in the Old Testament portion. For example, here is an application of the Old Testament law in the New Testament portion. Ephesians 4:32 NKJV says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." We are to kind to others and forgive them. Leviticus 19:18-19 NKJV says, "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes." Leviticus tells us to love others and to forgive by not holding onto grudges. Shaul uses other wording to explain how to love others, but it is the same message.

Most of the virtues and encouragement to love and treat others well in the New Testament portion are applications of Leviticus 19:18-19. Those who count commandments say that to be kind and tenderhearted are additional commandments, but they are just appropriate applications of Leviticus. Shaul is trying to help us to follow God's commandments. He provides proper applications. Philo of Alexandria, a first century Jewish Philosopher, called synagogues "schools of virtue." This most likely comes from teachings on the practical applications of the Torah, the Old Testament portion. Note, we also see that these scriptures in Leviticus 19 tell us that to love others is to keep God's Old Testament commandments, "Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. You shall keep My statutes."

The commands in the Old Testament portion have good applications to life. The problem arises when we make up commands that do not apply properly. For example, let's talk a little about the command about keeping Shabbat holy (Shabbat means rest). I have explained a number of times that the pagan Roman Empire changed the day of rest (Shabbat) to the day of the pagan Sun god and that has been passed down into Christianity. For those of you who have missed this, here is the quote again.

The following is a quote from The Sabbath Truth online:

The Roman emperor Constantine, a former sun-worshiper, professed conversion to Christianity, though his subsequent actions suggest the "conversion" was more of a political move than a genuine heart change. Constantine named himself Bishop of the Catholic Church and enacted the first civil law regarding Sunday observance in A.D. 321.

On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrate and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agricultural work may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often

happens that another day is not so suitable for grain growing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. - Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. III, chap. 75.

So, some additions or changes to God's commandments are absolutely wrong. In fact, God considers adopting any pagan practice as disgusting, an abomination. Deuteronomy 12:31-32 NKJV says, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it." You will have to stand before God someday. Will you keep doing things that are disgusting to God?

So, we must try to apply proper applications of the Torah. For example, the Old Testament portion tells us to return an ox to its owner, namely what belongs to others (see Deuteronomy 22:1). An ox can be very costly to replace. My mom explained this commandment to me and told me that we should try to find the owner of something that was lost, but if it was just a small amount of money and we did not know who lost it, we could keep it. That is a proper application of the Torah. So, if someone loses a quarter and I see it happen, I give it to them, but a quarter just laying on the ground is okay to keep. One time I found a huge sum of money and found the owner of the money and gave it back. Sometimes people will report losses to the police, and we can let the police know what we found. If they cannot find the owner, the police should give the money back to us.

It is generally agreed that God's commandments often need explanation and need to be applied to life. In what ways can we make sure we do not put other gods before the true God? How do we apply the law not to steal or the law not to covet? Let's cover some of the 10 Commandments. Remember, we are looking for proper applications. Some applications make keeping God's commandments difficult and God's commandments are not supposed to be difficult to apply. We do not have the time to talk about all the possible applications, but we can talk about some of them. Again, Deuteronomy 30:10-11 NIV says, "Obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." God's Old Testament commandments are not too difficult. Also, some people or denominations number the commandments differently than they appear in the Bible and even change the ones they do not want to keep! Read the Bible.

The first commandment, Deuteronomy 5:6-7 NKJV says,

"I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."

When Israel was in Egypt, they were in bondage to a people who were slaves to false God's. Instead of being slaves to false ideals and gods, followers of God are to follow what the creator God says. This commandment therefore also references God as the creator because it talks about the power of God. The first commandments does not mention idols that some lump

together with this command. That causes some to think it is all about idols and nothing else. So, how could we apply this commandment?

Since it says we are to have no other gods before God, we should have nothing in our lives that supersedes the true God. Yeshua said that loving God is the first and great commandment (see Matthew 22:38). It says in Deuteronomy that to love God is to keep His commandments. We show God the respect that is due the creator God by listening to Him and keeping His commandments. Deuteronomy 11:1 NKJV says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always."

People may think this command only refers to idols of wood and stone, but it should remind us to respect God for who He is and not make ourselves God of our own lives and do what we think is right instead of what God says. Jeremiah 17:9 NKJV says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." We are not to value other things, people, or activities more than we value God. These other things, people, or activities instead of God then become more the reason for our values than for doing what God says to do.

People can make a god out of love and think that is the way to live. Their own ideas on how to love then lead them in life instead of what God says. People can make a god out of science. Science is concerned with facts that we can learn by observation. God's commandments come from an all-knowing creator and good God who wants to help us live with and not with facts that just anyone can learn. Some people make a god out of being smart. People often think that if they have a lot of information, they will know how to live life. Again, they are just learning facts and not how to live right. In the United States, people often talk about how smart their children are, but not about how they are committed to living right. Therefore, they lack the ability to live the way they should, and our society is deteriorating.

The second commandment, Deuteronomy 5:8-10 NKJV says,

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

This command tells us not to bow down to anything other than God. While we can show others the respect that is due them, we are not to treat them as we would treat the creator of all things. This also would include treating anything material as though it was God.

There is a danger in making any representation of God and people then treating objects as though they were God. Over the ages, people have done this and have bowed down before these representations of God and prayed to them. That breaks this commandment. We are not to make anything or obtain anything that we might pray to or bow down to. These things would include pictures, art, or objects that we might pray to, bow down to, or treat as though they were God or any representation that replaces God. A good luck charm is something that replaces God. Of course, any object that is presumed to have special powers replaces God. Sometimes people can even make what their actions or their home a god.

Some people worship those who are accomplished, their building where they go to meet, art, nature, or other objects. Beauty is not bad, and God gave it to us to enjoy, but it can be used to replace God if viewed the wrong way. People can follow things that are eye catching or the accomplished music they hear. That is why concerts are often popular. These things can draw people to them, but they are not God. Some people are so drawn to entertainment type congregations. They will not go anywhere that does not have this. Seeker friendly congregations often have entertaining meetings to draw people and ignore teaching people the truth from the Bible.

The sins of the parents are often passed onto succeeding generations. Their children often follow the traditions of their parents and so continue sinning. We should understand that the Bible says that the parents are not to be punished for the sins of their children and the children are not punished for their parents' sins. So, the curse mentioned does not apply to those who keep God's commandments (see Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20). Notice that the blessing is much bigger than the curse. Deuteronomy 5:10 NKJV says, "Showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

The third commandment, Deuteronomy 5:11 NKJV says,

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain."

The word "take" can also mean to bear or carry according to Strong's Dictionary. The word for vain can mean, "emptiness, vanity, falsehood" according to Strong's Dictionary. This presents a problem for those who think this; commandment only applies to swearing or not using God's name properly. The verse could actually be translated, 'You shall not bear the name of the LORD your God falsely.'

A person who says they believe in God and lives in sin is living a false life. In America, we call these kinds of people two faced. Some say they are hypocrites. Most often, a hypocrite is someone who is leading a double life. Sometimes people believe someone who has sinned, and then repents is a hypocrite. They are technically not a hypocrite but are trying to change and do what is right. At least they are trying to do what is right unlike some who do not care how they live and are okay with doing wrong. Most people sin at times and then repent and commit themselves to not do that again. Then God forgives them.

Psalms 103:10-12 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." Those who deliberately live in sin and say they are believers are the true hypocrites. The commandment says that God will not hold them guiltless. They may fool people into thinking they do what is "right and good," but they do not fool God. Yeshua's depiction of these kinds of people is very graphic. Matthew 23:27 NKJV says, "For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." Unbelievers often live a double life and deliberately appear to be

good people, but they are not. They may even see themselves as good people, but only by their own standards which are sometimes evil.

People sometimes use God's name in an empty negative way, inappropriately, to cuss with, or to fool others into thinking they will follow through in what they say. They are also bearing God's name inappropriately.

Some people say they cannot say God's real name and instead call God, "The Name." 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 and is pointed as Yě-hō-váh in the Hebrew manuscripts in over 2,300 different manuscripts and can be pointed that way as many as 50 times in just one manuscript. Since God's name is used as Yě-hō-váh 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 believe it is disrespectful not to use God's real name at times and I think Yě-hō-váh honors God for who He is. I do not use Hashem for that reason.

The fourth commandment, Deuteronomy 5:12-15 NKJV says,

"Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." The word "observe" in this commandment is the Hebrew word *shamar* which mean to keep or to guard. We are to guard the Sabbath. In our era, there are many people who do not guard the sabbath. Holy means to set it apart. We are to get our work done on 6 days, set the Sabbath apart, and make the Sabbath a day of rest.

Notice that it says that it is a day of rest for everyone, even those who serve us and for our animals. The scripture here qualifies keeping the Sabbath by referring to God's power when God brought them out of Egypt. God's power refers back to God's creation of the heavens and earth in Genesis.

The weekly day of rest or Shabbath is the 7th day, our Friday evening at sunset to Saturday evening at sunset. The biblical day begins in the evening at sunset. Genesis 1:5 NKJV says, "Evening and the morning were the first day." The Sabbath, also known as Shabbat, was instituted at the time of creation. The creation is cited in the commandment in Exodus. Exodus 20:11 NKJV says, "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." Some say that the Sabbath is a Jewish observance, but obviously, the Sabbath was instituted for mankind as a day to set apart at the time of creation.

We need to talk about this frequently because some have been misguided by pagan religion that was passed down into Christianity. Genesis 2:3 NKJV says, "Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." Notice that the commandment in Exodus Chapter 20 references the day of rest that God made holy at the time of creation. Sunday was made a day of rest by Constantine to the pagan Sun god Mithras and passed down into Christianity. God does not want us to mix pagan practice with our faith. Deuteronomy 12:31 NKJV says, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods." The word abomination means disgusting. If it is disgusting to God, it should be disgusting to us. We should have a heart for what God says and not do things our own way.

The fifth commandment, Deuteronomy 5:16 NKJV says,

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you."

We are to honor both our father and mother. According to Wikipedia, "Honor manifests itself as a code of conduct, and has various elements such as valour, chivalry, honesty, and compassion. It is an abstract concept entailing a perceived quality of worthiness and respectability that affects both the social standing and the self-evaluation of an individual."

So, honoring our parents can mean that we stand up for them, treat them well, are loyal and sincere with them, care about them, give them respect, and affirm them. Most parents deserve some of these things or all of these things unless they are evil. Even parents that are unliked should be treated well to some extent if possible. Discontinuing a relationship with parents because of non-sinful behavior is therefore wrong. Adult children can learn to have a relationship with even difficult parents and honor them. We will cover the last five commandments next week. We will read the last 5 of the 10 Commandments in our commandments section.

In this portion, Moshe tells them that Yēhōvāh is God and there is no other so keep His commands. Moshe then creates three cities of refuge for the unintended killer to flee. Again, Moshe tells them to listen to God's commands and then repeats the 10 words, the Ten Commandments they heard at Mount Sinai; he again talks about their encounter at Mount Sinai. He says listen to God's commands so that they may have a long life and then he gives them the Shema in Deuteronomy 6. Part of the Shema says in Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Yeshua quotes this in Matthew 22:37. Since Yeshua quotes this, why do some say the Old Testament is done away with? Both Yeshua and Shaul (Paul) quote the Old Testament portion. Shaul says in Romans 3:31 NKJV, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law." The law is established not done away. These seemingly so smart people who are evidently not so smart, contradict what Shaul taught.

Moshe tells them again to observe God's commands and to tell their children all that God did for them. He says observing God's commands will make them righteous (in other words, it will help

them to live right; righteous means to live right). Some don't understand what the word righteousness means and treat it more like a stamp of approval instead of what it really means. It means to live right. Also, Israel was to go and take the land and get completely rid of the idolaters there and their idols. Yĕhōváh kept his promise to their ancestors (so he will keep His promise to them), and therefore they were to obey God.

This Torah portion is often read near Tisha B'Av which is a day morning for the loss of the of the first and second Temples and the date of other Jewish disasters. It would be an appropriate day to fast on. We are not commanded to fast on Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of Av on the Jewish calendar). It is connected with this portion because Moshe tells them that they will be scattered among the nations in this portion. It also says in this portion that God will not forget His covenant with Israel. God will restore His people to Him when they repent.

Over and over in this portion, we see Moshe reminding them to keep God's commandments. The writer of Hebrews says the same thing (in Hebrews 3:5 to 4:2). As Moshe says there are dire consequences for not following God, the writer of Hebrews says the same. Hebrews 3:12 NKJV says, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Contrary to what some say, we can depart from our relationship with God. It is important to maintain our relationship with God. Watch out for people who may give exciting or interesting teachings, but don't bring you into a proper relationship with God. Shaul also talked about those with itching ears; watch out that you are not one of them (see 2 Timothy 4:3). Have a deep faith and follow God's commandments and not superficial beliefs.

The Haftarah for VaEtchanan is Isaiah 40:1-26. In Isaiah 40, Isaiah says that Israel is to take comfort. The glory of the Lord will be revealed. Isaiah says that mankind is like the grass that dries up, but the word of God stands forever. 1 Peter 1:23-25 NKJV quotes from this: "Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because 'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.'" We are to live by God's commandments in this age which stands forever. Those who keep God's commandments will be with Him forever. Psalms 111:7-8 NKJV says, "All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." They were truths for life in Old Testament times and they are still truths for life.

**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.)**

Deuteronomy 4:5-6 NKJV says,

"Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'"

Deuteronomy 4:15-19 NKJV says,

"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. And take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage."

The 10 Commandments are listed in Deuteronomy 5:6-21 NKJV says,

6-7 I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.

8-10 You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

11 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

12-15 Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

16 Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

17 You shall not murder.

18 You shall not commit adultery.

19 You shall not steal.

20 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

21 You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Remember, the 10 Commandments are important, but they are not the only commandments listed in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NKJV says,

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Deuteronomy 7:2-6 says,

"You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth."

The Aaronic Blessing.

We need to explain why we use God's real name in the Aaronic blessing. Some believe we are not supposed to use God's name, but they are mistaken. 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. Won't you also honor God's and use His true name with respect at times. The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. 2,363 different 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). 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:

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּ
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְךָ
 יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשָּׂם 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.