



The Torah portion for today is Lech Lecha and it means, "go forth yourself." The portion Lech Lecha begins with God telling Abram to leave Haran when he was 75 years old to go to the land that He would show Him, and that God would give the land of Canaan to his descendants.

I would like to begin today by talking about those who wish to break down truth.

It is important to understand what the Atheist religions are doing in order to resist what their religions teach and stand strong in God's truths. Often, these atheist religions think there are no truths for life, they do not believe there are any truths to live by. This is often one of the tenets of their religion. For example, those who only believe in science say their truths are the only truths for life, but science is just information and does not tell us how to live.

Not only that, but science also makes up truths. They will say that their theories are absolutely true, but theories are just theories, they are only guesses. Science is supposed to be an evaluation that leads to some type of absolute concrete conclusion. They insist that their guesses are absolute truths.

Also, science lately has tended to devalue life. Science will say that life is unique and special and search for life on other planets because they are fascinated by life, yet they tend to devalue life on earth by making as though life on earth is just a very little part of the life in the universe. There are some leading scientists who think of human beings as no more than a rock if that. I remember Carl Sagan saying that 'Nature was, is, and will always be.' His supposition devalues the uniqueness of life. In my opinion, life is very special, even more so than even a star. A star is only a composition of natural elements and not a living breathing and thinking life form.

Worldly values are often the things that are taught in our schools in the United States instead of spiritual values. Parents often focus on worldly values in their home. For example, parents will talk about how well their children are doing at school or in some activity instead of how well they are following God. That is something that needs to change so that we convey the importance of our spiritual values and a spiritually centered life. Very little of the early teaching that I encountered when I was a new believer was about the differences between what the world believes and what it means to be a believer in the Messiah and God.

I did not understand that culture and much of Christianity did not teach what the Bible teaches. Culture and especially the religions that do not believe in a god can be antagonistic towards believers in the true God. They value their own Atheistic, Humanistic, or Communist

religions. As I have mentioned at times, the Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion says that any ideology is a religion even if it does not involve a belief in a God. Some religions are only a philosophy on how to behave and not a belief in a god.

People have been duped into thinking that religion only involves belief in a God. Therefore, in the political world in our country, the courts in our country have been partial to those of Atheist religions. They have made those who observe religions that believe in God be taught the religions of the Atheists, Humanists, and Communists. Atheists want their religion taught. That is another tenet of their religion. The courts have mindlessly succumbed to the atheist religions' prejudice against people who believe in God.

Another tenet of these religions is to teach dissatisfaction and rebellion in society even if that society is a good society. They want their religion to take over the countries of the world and they incite wars, rebellion, and violence.

The people who observe atheist religions often have no tolerance for those who believe in God. In school, they hear what they already believe and those who believe in God must listen to the atheist viewpoints taught as though they are truth. The atheist religions are religions of intentions and observed facts. They may come up with good intentions. Coming up with intentions is another tenet of these religions to follow. Their good intentions are not necessarily truths for life.

Intentions do not always produce truth. In fact, intentions can be evil. Hitler believed that those who could not contribute to the advancement of their society be put to death. We call that murder for convenience's sake. I remember watching a movie about the German genocide during the World War 2 era, and in the movie, an elderly man who probably worked all his life to support his family and build their society was trying to convince the German interviewer that he could still be productive.

Also, facts do not give people the ethical tools for a good life. How does knowing how far the Sun is from the Earth help us to treat others right? People are being taught to value facts over how to live life.

There are also those who do not have any godly values and are against keeping the commandments of our good God that are in the Bible. There is an assault by these various factions/religions on the truths in the Bible. And they attack anything that they do not like and will attack spiritual values as if they are nonsense. I watched a show once about this supposedly very intelligent person. He thought just like Hitler and said that we should murder people who were not productive.

These atheist religions often think that believing in God is nonsense. Murder for some of them has been and still is a viable option to control their society. Communist China murdered anyone who did not go along with their system of government. They murdered 70 million of their own people for not believing in the tenets of their government. These people were just trash to them. The children were even rewarded for telling on their parents and their parents were then put to death. These were real murders and not just the result of war. China and

other communist countries still put its citizens in concentration camps, and they use the people for forced labor and body parts. They call their concentration camps re-education camps.

Controlling societies often maintain their control over their country by any means necessary. These people who are against God's good ways and against believers in God, can be a real problem to the freedom of the people in a country. When I was younger, I did not understand how far these people would go to overthrow the freedom in any country in order to establish a godless sinful society and to establish their ideology and a Communist, Atheist, or Humanist Religion in that country.

We should be careful to follow the Bible and not the agenda of these people. We need to be a people of the book and keep God's commandments. Also, we need to understand that some of Christianity and Judaism no longer believes in keeping God's good commandments. One pastor of a large church up north told me personally that the Bible is worthless. They are essentially saying that believing in God is worthless. I have heard of Rabbis saying in front of their congregation that they did not believe in God. We sometimes have pastors and rabbis teaching good advice instead of the spiritual truths from the Bible.

Our faith in God is being attacked on a regular basis. Do not succumb to their indoctrination, prejudice, and lies. For example, they will say the Bible believing religions do not help others or they will cite the Christian crusades. The Bible commands us to help others over and over. It has been well documented that the people of Bible based religions help people much more than any of the atheist religions. Also, the crusades only lasted for a short while over the 2,000 year life span of Christianity. They talk like it happened just yesterday, but it occurred some 900 years ago. The atheist religions murdered over 100 million people in just the 19th century which makes them the most murderous religions that have ever existed. They continue to murder people who do not go along with their wicked religious systems. So, do not be fooled by their false religious systems. Follow God and the commandments in the Bible. God knows what is best for us and wants what is best for mankind. Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good."

For lots of great information on identifying the Atheist and Communist religions see Dennis Prager's book entitled, Still the Best Hope. It is available as an audio book.

We have an addendum that repeats the above following our teaching for today.

I frequently point out that if nations just kept the commandments to not murder and not covet, we would have fewer wars. That is the amazing impact of just two of God's commandments. The 10 Commandments are good commandments and so are the other commandments in the Old Testament. Also, there are many good applications of the Old Testament commandments in the New Testament portion.

God commandments are not difficult. Deuteronomy 30:11 NIV says, "Now what I am

commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." Rabbi Yochanan also says the same. 1 John 5:3 NKJV says, "His commandments are not burdensome." People can make God's commandments difficult by adding extra man-made laws, but God never intended for us to add lots of extra laws so that we end up following what people say and not God. Isaiah 29:13 NKJV says, "Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men."

Let's look at some of the scriptures about God's commandments to refresh our memory. We all need encouragement to keep God's commandments. Society, the Atheistic Religions, false religion, and those who hate us are pulling and pushing on our faith and commitment to God and truth at every opportunity.

We are to have a deep respect for God and do what He commands us for our own good. We love God by showing God we trust in Him and so follow His Commandments. God is a good God who has our best interests at heart.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 NKJV says,
 What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good.

What God does is sure and true and therefore His commandments are sure and true. Therefore, it makes sense that they would be sure and true forever. An awesome respect for God helps begin our understanding of spiritual wisdom, the truths we need for life.

Psalms 111:7-10 NKJV says,
 The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He has sent redemption to His people; He has commanded His covenant forever: holy and awesome is His name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

God's commandments are forever and are worthy of praise forever.

We need good judgement, and we can learn good judgement through God's commandments. God is good and His commandments are good. Do not succumb to the lies of those who do not believe in God. Keep His commandments with your whole heart.

Psalms 119:66-69 NKJV
 Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments.
 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word. You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes. The proud have forged a lie against me, But I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.

What does the Bible say about truth? God's words and His commandments are truth.

Psalms 25:10 NKJV says, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His

covenant and His testimonies." Living God's way is to live the right way, the true way of life. Do not be fooled by the word covenant. It simply means agreement. Those who follow God agree to follow His commandments. Some make a man-made theology out of the word covenant and say it refers to different eras. Everyone who follows God decides to follow God and makes an agreement, namely a covenant to follow God. Our God is a God of lovingkindness, of grace, of favor towards mankind because He has given us the true way to live. Psalms 26:3 NKJV says, "For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth." Some say the Old Testament portion no longer applies. Is the true God no longer a God of lovingkindness. Their reasoning is sick and ridiculous.

Years ago, some of my believer friends would talk about the difference between what God teaches us to do and His light, as opposed to living in darkness. We would say that living in darkness without God is like walking around in a dark room and running into the walls. We need to change our thinking and live by God's truths, so we stop running into the wall. Psalms 43:3 NKJV says, "Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me." We need to know God's truths for life, in the inward parts. Psalms 51:6 NKJV says, "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom." After we know the right and true way to live, then we can apply what we have learned so we have the wisdom we need for life.

Knowledge that is not applied is just knowledge. When I was young, someone told me to keep practicing the same basketball shots until I could make them consistently. Just knowing that a basketball is to go in the hoop will not make the ball go in the hoop. In the same way, we need to practice doing things the right way, so we know how to keep God's commandments.

Be at peace in your spiritual life and control your thinking. Have victory over worldly thinking and have joy.

What does doing things God's ways do for us. We learn to control our thinking and reject foolishness. Doing what is right makes life go better and gives us peace. Psalms 29:11 NKJV says, the LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace." Psalms 119:165 NKJV says, "Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble." When we trust in God's ways it gives us peace. Isaiah 26:3 NKJV says, "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." Trusting in God's commandments helps us to have more peace in life.

In order to follow God and His commandments we need to stop arguing with God and keep His commandments. We also need to stop listening to those who tell us we can do what we want instead of pleasing God and doing what God tells us is right. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV says, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity." Keep your thoughts in the right place and if you think otherwise, change your thinking and do what God says to do. Believe in God's commandments and stop doubt and doublemindedness towards God.

Doublemindedness is saying you believe in God, but you do not trust God enough to keep His commandments. Do not let false thinking in. Sin is not keeping God's commandments. God's

law. 1 John 3:4 NKJV says, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Do not let sin into your life.

Torah Study

Lech Lecha means, "go forth yourself." The portion Lech Lecha begins with God telling Abram to leave Haran when he was 75 years old to go to the land that He would show Him; God would give the land of Canaan to his descendants. God has not yet changed Abram's name to Abraham. In the last portion, Abram leaves Ur with his wife Sarai and his cousin Lot and his father Terach. The Jewish writings tell us that Abram resisted idolatry and believed in the one true God. The book of Jasher says he was raised for a while with his believing relatives from the house of Noah. Noah supposedly died just before Abraham was born, but some writings say Noah was still alive.

God's protection would be with Abram and God would bless the whole earth through Abram. Through Israel and God's believers, God has blessed the earth. The world has received evident witness to this blessing. The most prestigious award for contributions to the world is known as the Nobel Prize. Of the some 900 Nobel Prizes awarded since 1901, about 261 of those were given to Jews as of this writing.¹ At present, the Jewish population is extremely small and insignificant to that of the world population. So, some 29% of the significant contributions to the world were made by a people group who is an extremely small (less than half a percent) part of the world population. This is additional proof that the blessing given to Abraham has blessed the world. But let's not forget about the greatest Jew of all time, Yeshua Messiah.

*The entire world has witnessed the blessing given by God to Abraham.
It should lead people to accept the true God.*

Yeshua backed up who He is and did amazing things. Yochanan said in John 21:25 NKJV, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." Matthew 8:16 NKJV 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." Yeshua demonstrated who He is. Yeshua also gave Himself for our sins.

The Bible says no one could take Yeshua's life without Yeshua allowing that (see John 19:11). Yeshua did not become God. The Messiah is also God, Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey as recorded in Jeremiah 23:5-6 CJB which says, "The days are coming," says ADONAI when I will raise a righteous Branch for David. He will reign as king and succeed, he will do what is just and right in the land. In his days Y'udah will be saved, Isra'el will live in safety, and the name given to him will be ADONAI Tzidkenu [ADONAI our righteousness]. The word ADONAI is the exclusive name for God, so Yeshua is God.

The Messiah is God. He was God who came as a man and is a fulfillment of the promise given to Adam and Eve earlier in Genesis 3:15 NKJV. The devil, "shall bruise His heel" refers to the

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

suffering of the Messiah. The Messiah will, "bruise your head" refers to the victory over the devil through the Messiah.

God planned that the Messiah would give Himself. Isaiah 53:6 NKJV says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Yeshua did not stay dead but rose from the dead (see Psalm 16:8-11). Yeshua is that Faithful One who rose from the dead. Some 500 people saw Him at the same time after He rose from the dead (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-6). Yeshua is now waiting for the end of time when He will return and reign as it says in Jeremiah.

We are to repent, accept Yeshua as the Messiah and receive the helper, the Holy Spirit that the Messiah has provided for us. Acts 2:38 says, "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." Because Yeshua came through the lineage of Abraham, Abraham also blessed the world with the Messiah!

After Abram gets to Canaan he goes to Egypt during a famine and tells Sarai to say that she is his sister (she is his sister, but she is also his wife). He is afraid for his life and is protecting his life. Kings used to take some men's wives and have the husbands killed. Pharaoh gives gifts to Abram for Sarai to be his wife, but after some plagues in Pharaoh's house, Pharaoh finds out that Sarai is Abram's wife, and he sends him away with gifts. After they get back to Canaan, Abram becomes wealthy and there was some quarreling between Abram's and Lot's herdsmen. Lot goes off to the east to live, but he finds out that the men of Sodom are very evil. Lot went off to the east instead of staying with Abram, the person that God chose to bless the earth.

There is a lesson in this. We should try to work things out with others. Also, Abram was chosen by God, and we should honor and respect those that God chose to lead us. Notice that Abram was a man of peace. Instead of demanding where he would live, he deferred to Lot. Also, when Lot gets taken away as war booty, Abram goes to war and recovers him and defends him. This teaches us that we need to be ready to defend ourselves from evil people.

God instructs Abram to walk through the land that God was giving him. As Abram returns from rescuing Lot, Melchizedek meets Abram. Abram gives Melchizedek 10% of the war booty, they have bread and wine together, and Melchizedek blesses Abram.

According to the Jewish writings, Melchizedek is Shem – Abram's 7th great grandfather. Melchizedek means King of Righteousness; he was king of Salem which later became Jerusalem. Melchizedek, Shem, worshiped El Elyon, God most high. He had a prophetic school there. They probably knew each other from Abram's stay in the house of Noah. Abraham spends time learning about God from Shem when he gets to Canaan according to the ancient writings. They both most likely left Chaldee because of the unrighteous king, Nimrod. Some think that Melchizedek is God, but he is identified as the king of Salem in the Bible and not God.

Melchizedek is another messianic type. Noah was a messianic type and saved mankind. Since

Melchizedek was Shem, he lived before the flood and after the flood for a long time. Yeshua also lived before the flood, but as God, came in the form of a man. Yeshua prays in John 17:5 NKJV, "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Yeshua knew who He was.

After this, God again promises Abram that he would have many descendants, tells him about their enslavement in Egypt, and tells him that that his descendants will inherit Canaan. After sunset God makes a covenant with Abram and gives him the specific territory boundaries of the land He was giving Him. Abram still does not have children, so Sarai gives Abram her servant. Abram had a child by Hagar when he was 86 and they named him Yishma'el.

We should note that God intended people to marry and have children and that the model for marriage from Genesis is between one man and one woman (see Genesis 2:24). Those who had multiple wives created tensions in the home. For example, Hagar and Ishmael were asked to leave. Later, Joseph was sold into slavery by his stepbrothers.

When Abram is ninety-nine years old, God tells Abram to walk in His presence and have a pure heart. God changes Abram's name to Abraham and reaffirms an everlasting covenant with him. Abram means exalted father and Abraham means father of multitudes. God tells him that circumcision was to be a sign to Abraham and his descendants of God's eternal covenant. Notice that it is an eternal agreement.

Circumcision is for all male believers in God.

Some say that circumcision is only a Jewish commandment, but it was meant for all believers. Shaul (Paul) teaches circumcision. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution?" Let me explain what is going on in the New Testament portion. The Torah teaches us to save lives; also, Yeshua taught us we are to save lives and in Luke 14:5 NKJV He says, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" Yeshua is quoting the Old Testament portion (see Deuteronomy 22:4). Saving a life supersedes a commandment in the Torah. It is okay to break a commandment to save a life. Be careful with this concept. Some people make up excuses not to keep the Torah and that is a sin.

Since adult circumcision is dangerous, adult circumcision should not be done according to the Torah. **Some early believers in the Messiah were disobeying the Torah** and saying adults must be circumcised. They were putting peoples' lives in jeopardy by requiring adult circumcision. Circumcision is not as important as saving a life (see 1 Corinthians 7:19) because we are created in God's image. That is the reason for the tension involving circumcision in the New Testament portion. Gentiles were accepting the Messiah, and they were being wrongly told by some to be circumcised. We see references to this in Shaul's letters and since some do not understand the Jewish context, they teach wrong doctrine. They say circumcision is for the Jews. Abraham was not a Jew, but a believer in the true God. God told the believer Abraham to circumcise himself and all the males.

Circumcising male babies is still to be done according to Shaul; it is a sign for believers. He taught circumcision (Galatians 5:11). Also, the Holy Spirit is a sign for all believers in the

Messiah Yeshua in this present age.

Next, God changes Sarai's name to Sarah and God says he will bless her and make her the mother of nations. Sarai means princess and Sarah means noblewoman. God tells Abraham that his son Yishma'el will have twelve sons, but Isaac will be heir to God's covenant. The portion ends with Abraham having all the men in his household circumcised.

Of particular note in this portion, God tells Abraham to walk in His presence – perhaps this is referring to the time in the Garden when Adam and Eve walked in the presence of God, but we see all true believers in the Old Testament portion walking with God. The believers in the past like Noah walked with God. Although believers in the true God no longer lived in the Garden, they could still acknowledge God's presence, live in His presence, and walk with God. New Testament believers often do not understand that the Old Testament believers also could talk to God and God could speak to them. Since many people do not believe in the Bible properly and its correct context, their wrong circular theology creates a false belief system that lacks a relationship with God. They take scriptures out of the context of the Bible to support their false powerless doctrine.

The false doctrine of being saved by faith only.

The New Testament portion quotes a scripture in this portion about Abraham. Genesis 15:6 NKJV says, "And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." The context of this scripture is that God saw that Abraham believed what God told him about having a child and Abraham did what was right (was righteous). Strong's Dictionary says that the word translated righteous can also be translated as the word "right." There is a whole lot more to doing what is right than just a one time promise from God. It takes more than just having faith one time to be in a proper relationship with God. Some think it is actions and not faith that will get them into the future kingdom of God. Others think it only takes faith.

In Shaul's time and even in our time, some people think that a one time action will get them into God's future kingdom. For example, some believe being water baptized will get them into God's kingdom. Does having water poured over a person or a person being dunked in water make us right with God? It sounds very superficial, doesn't it? What does a one time event have to do with how a person lives their life?

Water baptism is symbolic of making the decision to follow God and the Messiah. We go down into the water with the idea that our previous actions and the way we lived is done away with, we are dead to that way of life. When we rise out of the water, we are then committed to doing things the "right" way, God's way, and keeping His commandments. Romans 6:3-4 NKJV says, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism is symbolic of our decision to stop sinning and to do things God's way, to live a new life, "in newness of life."

So, baptism is important, but it is the beginning of living a new life. It does not mean we are going to be in God's future kingdom. We also need to follow God the way we are supposed

to. In my family, circumcision was a sign that you accepted God. If you did not circumcise your children, you were rejecting God. Does circumcision mean that the baby that is circumcised will be in God's future kingdom? It is a first good step, but the baby must also grow up and follow God and His commandments.

Shaul (Paul) teaches circumcision because it is a commandment of God. Shaul says in Galatians 5:11 NKJV, "I still preach circumcision." As we just demonstrated, the Torah and Yeshua teaches us to save lives (see Luke 14:5). Also, we are created in God's image. Adult circumcision is not necessary because it is dangerous, but baby boys are to still be circumcised. It is a symbolic act. Baptism is usually done later in life when a person can make an informed decision or wants to repent from sin. It does not replace circumcision.

Who will be in God's future kingdom. Revelation 22:14-15 NKJV says, "**Blessed are those who do His commandments**, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie." Those who live in sin will not be permitted to enter God's future kingdom. Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV says, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." We must do works that demonstrate we have faith.

Ya'akov uses an example from Abraham's life that showed Abraham did both faith and works in order to be right with God.

James 2:21-24 NKJV says,

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

There must have been people at the time of Ya'akov (James' real name) that had the wrong idea and thought that they only needed faith to be right with God and not works. Those who live in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God the Bible says.

What was Shaul talking about in Romans? For the most part, he is making an argument that we must take a step of faith and believe that Yeshua is the Messiah. Romans 4:2-3 NKJV says, "If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." The issue here is faith, namely faith in the Messiah Yeshua. Just because we are circumcised or baptized does not ensure we will make inherit the kingdom of God. We also need faith. Also, just because we have faith, it does not mean we will be in God's future kingdom unless we keep His commandments. The Bible says we need faith and works.

People have the tendency to focus on scriptures and beliefs they already believe in and leave

out scriptures that give them the complete picture. For example, I might look at a picture of a person who is smiling and ignore the puppy in his hands.

God's commandments give us wisdom and understanding (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and are "right and good" (see Deuteronomy 6:17-18). In fact, the scriptures tell us over and over and over that God's commandments help us and are good. Why then do some say otherwise? They only see what they want to see or the false teaching they learned. If people took the scripture in James about needing works and faith seriously, they then might understand what Shaul was getting at in Romans.

God does not want us to fail, but it seems that mankind just wants to keep teaching half-truths. In order to get people to believe in half-truths there has to be some truth to it. For example, faith is important, but some say that all we need to do is believe in God. They say all you need is faith, all you need is faith, all you need is faith. James 2:19 NKJV says, "The demons believe." The demons are going to the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10 NKJV says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone." We also have to demonstrate we believe by keeping God's commandments.

We do not talk about this to malign those who are teaching error. They are unlikely to change. We want you to make it into the future kingdom of God; we care about you and so does God. That is why it says in 1 John 3:4 NKJV, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." Those who do not keep the law are living in sin. That is what it says. Then it says in 1 John 3:8 NKJV, "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." So those who do not keep the law are of the devil.

Abraham did more than just believe one time. Genesis 26:5 NKJV says, "Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." The word for laws in this verse is Torah. God's laws were passed down from believer to believer until they were written down. In 1 John, the word lawlessness is the Greek word *anomia*. *Nomia* is the Greek word used by the ancient rabbis for the Torah – the first 5 books of the Bible. The "a" in front of the word *nomia* negates the word so *anomia* means to not keep the Torah. Therefore, it says in 1 John, sin is to not keep the Torah, and sin is of the devil. Matthew 7:23 NKJV says, "I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" Yeshua will say to those who practice lawlessness (*anomia*), "I never knew you." Shaul (Paul) says in 1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ." Yeshua kept the law, Shaul kept the law, and we are to keep the law.

Why do we have so many differences in beliefs in our day? It is because of the wrong teaching that has been passed down to us. God's 10 Commandments and His other commandments are not too hard. Deuteronomy 30:11 ASV says, "For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee." Moshe said God's commandments are not too hard. There was no New Testament when 1 John was written. 1 John 5:3 NKJV says the same, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome."

God's commandments were given to us by an all knowing and loving God who has our best

interests at heart. God says in Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you." 1 John 1:5 NKJV says, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." Therefore, God's commandments are part of God's lovingkindness for mankind. Psalms 26:3 NKJV says, "For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth." Psalms 25:10 NKJV says, "All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

Back to our previous thought about God telling Abraham to walk in His presence. Believers in Yeshua not only have the opportunity to walk in God's presence but have His presence in them through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is truly a coveted honor for us. The Holy Spirit is our helper to keep God's commandments and is also with us to help us in life. John 14:16-17 NKJV says, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth." Yeshua said that God's commandments help us, and the Holy Spirit is another helper to help us. In particular, we should also understand that the Holy Spirit should help us to not to have to put a fence around the Torah, namely so that we do not have to make up extra man-made laws.

The word Hebrew.

Abraham and his family are called "Hebrews." They were not from around there so the people who lived there named them for where they were from, namely from "beyond the Euphrates." That is the definition given by the Brown-Driver Briggs Hebrew Lexicon.

The rabbis made up a meaning (through an acronym of the word Hebrew). The rabbis say the word Hebrew means those who have crossed over. Some mistakenly think that the word Hebraic has a better meaning than the word Jew. The word "Jew" comes from Judah which means praise. What is better? Crossed over from the pagan land of the East or "praise." Shaul says we are to be God's people of praise, not pagans who crossed over from the East. Ephesians 1:14 NKJV says, "Thus bring him praise commensurate with his glory."

The Bible says in Deuteronomy 26:5 that after Passover, we are to declare our humble pagan roots; we were Arameans who came from the east; in other words, our roots were pagan. It is an act of humility. We are to give thanks for the amazing opportunity to be God's people. When we give thanks around the time of Passover, we should consider how good God has been to us. God has given us the opportunity to live right through His commandments and the Holy Spirit that is given through the Messiah Yeshua.

In the Bible, we confess our pagan roots as an act of humility (see Deuteronomy 26:5). We have so much to be thankful for. We could still be living in sin, but thanks be to our God who has delivered us from our pagan roots and made us His people through His commandments and the Messiah Yeshua.

The biblical concept of humility in the scriptures.

Also, some mistakenly take the Jewish concept of humility out of context and say there is nothing good about us and we are all sinners. Shaul quotes Psalm 14 in Romans 3:23. Psalm 14 is about unbelievers. Psalms 14:4 CJB says, "Don't they ever learn, all those evildoers, who eat up my people as if eating bread and never call on ADONAI?" Shaul uses Psalm 14 in

order to produce humility towards God. He wants them to accept the Messiah. Also, in no way are we to live in sin. We can do good because the Bible says we do what is "right and good," namely by keeping God's good commandments, see Deuteronomy 6:17-18. The, "we can do nothing good," is just another example of man-made theology creating man-made doctrine. Remember, idols are also man-made? It should be noted that without God's good commandments that mankind often chooses to do wrong instead of what is right.

Some last thoughts.

Abraham endured many tests to his faith and remained faithful. God's promises to Abraham came as a result of Abraham's faithfulness. We should understand that we too will face testing in life, and we should remain strong and faithful towards God. Abraham left his homeland because God told him to go the land of Canaan. That required some risk. God promised Abraham a son in his old age. The Hebrew suggests that that Sarah had stopped ovulating, so the birth of Isaac was a true miracle (see Genesis 18:11).

Abraham believed that God would provide a son for him and Sarah even though he had doubts at times. This should remind us to get back on our feet when we fail. Spiritually, we do not stay on the ground and crawl around like a baby. We ask for forgiveness and get back up and stand strong in God's commandments. Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV says, "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." Do not stay down; get up and walk. Show God you will keep His commandments.

The Haftarah.

The Haftarah for Lech Lecha is Isaiah 40:27-41:16. In Isaiah, just before this portion begins, it talks about how great God is compared to the nations. In Isaiah 40:15 CJB it says, "The nations are like a drop in a bucket, they count like a grain of dust on the scales." In this portion God asks Israel why they complain; God does not grow weary, and His ways cannot be understood. He strengthens the weak; those that hope in Him will be renewed. God is over all and is the victorious God of Israel. He will bring them from the ends of the earth and their enemies will be destroyed. God will help them so that Israel will have joy in the Lord.

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."

Our God gave our father Abraham help, strength, and blessings; and God will help us too. We join in the blessings of Abraham and the believing line through the Messiah Yeshua. Shaul said in Galatians 3:14 NKJV, "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus." May the blessings that God give those who keep His commandments and believe in God come upon you whether Jew or Gentile. God can do what He says he will do; after all, He is God. And God will fulfill all that He has promised.

**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.)**

Mankind is not allowed to curse those who follow the true God. They will be cursed for doing so. We should also understand that God will also judge every person at the end of time. Those who mistreat believers will suffer the consequences for eternity. God has blessed Abraham and his believing line and all believers who associate with him. Believers in the Messiah become part of the believing line of God's people. Genesis 12:3, 17:26-27; Luke 17:1-4; Galatians 3:14; Ephesians 2:19.

We are to obey God when He speaks to us. Genesis 12:4.

We are to protect life. Abraham was concerned about his life, so he lied to protect his life. We are created in God's image, and we are to protect life. Genesis 12:11-12; Deuteronomy 22:4.

We are to work out things peaceably with others as much as we are able. Genesis 13:8-9.

It is okay to protect ourselves and others from murder and greed, especially protect fellow believers. Genesis 14:14-16.

We are to do a blessing with bread and wine. Believers in the Messiah are to do a remembrance ceremony with bread and wine. Genesis 14:18; Matthew 26:26-27.

We are allowed to take back our losses from those who illegally took them. Genesis 14:16.

We are not to take advantage of others even though we have the power to do so. Genesis 14:22-24.

God has given specific land to the believing line of Abraham that was passed down from Isaac to Jacob. It has been given to them for eternity. Genesis 15:18-21, 17:9, 17:21.

Believers are to circumcise their children on the eighth day. It is an everlasting agreement, a covenant. Covenant is a word that describes an agreement. It is still valid. Genesis 17:11-13; Shaul (Paul) taught circumcision of baby boys. Galatians 5:11 NKJV says, "I still preach circumcision."

God will bless our prayers at His discretion. Genesis 17:20.

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

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. What an honor it is to be a people of the creator and true God.

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

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ
 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.

Thank you for being with us today. We will now have an addendum on the Atheist religions.

The Agenda of the Atheist Religions

(The agenda of some of the Atheist religions and the religion of Communism.)

It is important to understand what these religions are doing in order to resist what their religions teach and stand strong in God's truths. Often, these atheist religions think there are no truths for life, they do not believe there are any truths to live by. This is often one of the tenets of their religion. For example, those who only believe in science say their truths are the only truths for life, but science is just information and does not tell us how to live.

Not only that, but science also makes up truths. They will say that their theories are absolutely true, but theories are just theories, they are only guesses. Science is supposed to be an evaluation that leads to some type of absolute concrete conclusion. They insist that their guesses are absolute truths.

Also, science lately has tended to devalue life. Science will say that life is unique and special

and search for life on other planets because they are fascinated by life, yet they tend to devalue life on earth by making as though life on earth is just a very little part of the life in the universe. There are some leading scientists who think of human beings as no more than a rock if that. I remember Carl Sagan saying that 'Nature was, is, and will always be.' His supposition devalues the uniqueness of life. In my opinion, life is very special, even more so than even a star. A star is only a composition of natural elements and not a living breathing and thinking life form.

Worldly values are often the things that are taught in our schools in the United States instead of spiritual values. Parents often focus on worldly values in their home. For example, parents will talk about how well their children are doing at school or in some activity instead of how well they are following God. That is something that needs to change so that we convey the importance of our spiritual values and a spiritually centered life. Very little of the early teaching that I encountered when I was a new believer was about the differences between what the world believes and what it means to be a believer in the Messiah and God.

I did not understand that culture and much of Christianity did not teach what the Bible teaches. Culture and especially the religions that do not believe in a god can be antagonistic towards believers in the true God. They value their own Atheistic, Humanistic, or Communist religions. As I have mentioned at times, the Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion says that any ideology is a religion even if it does not involve a belief in a God. Some religions are only a philosophy on how to behave and not a belief in a god.

People have been duped into thinking that religion only involves belief in a God. Therefore, in the political world in our country, the courts in our country have been partial to those of Atheist religions. They have made those who observe religions that believe in God be taught the religions of the Atheists, Humanists, and Communists. Atheists want their religion taught. That is another tenet of their religion. The courts have mindlessly succumbed to the atheist religions' prejudice against people who believe in God.

Another tenet of these religions is to teach dissatisfaction and rebellion in society even if that society is a good society. They want their religion to take over the countries of the world and they incite wars, rebellion, and violence.

The people who observe atheist religions often have no tolerance for those who believe in God. In school, they hear what they already believe and those who believe in God must listen to the atheist viewpoints taught as though they are truth. The atheist religions are religions of intentions and observed facts. They may come up with good intentions. Coming up with intentions is another tenet of these religions to follow. Their good intentions are not necessarily truths for life.

Intentions do not always produce truth. In fact, intentions can be evil. Hitler believed that those who could not contribute to the advancement of their society be put to death. We call that murder for convenience's sake. I remember watching a movie about the German genocide during the World War 2 era, and in the movie, an elderly man who probably worked all his life to support his family and build their society was trying to convince the German

interviewer that he could still be productive.

Also, facts do not give people the ethical tools for a good life. How does knowing how far the Sun is from the Earth help us to treat others right? People are being taught to value facts over how to live life.

There are also those who do not have any godly values and are against keeping the commandments of our good God that are in the Bible. There is an assault by these various factions/religions on the truths in the Bible. And they attack anything that they do not like and will attack spiritual values as if they are nonsense. I watched a show once about this supposedly very intelligent person. He thought just like Hitler and said that we should murder people who were not productive.

These atheist religions often think that believing in God is nonsense. Murder for some of them has been and still is a viable option to control their society. Communist China murdered anyone who did not go along with their system of government. They murdered 70 million of their own people for not believing in the tenets of their government. These people were just trash to them. The children were even rewarded for telling on their parents and their parents were then put to death. These were real murders and not just the result of war. China and other communist countries still put its citizens in concentration camps, and they use the people for forced labor and body parts. They call their concentration camps re-education camps.

Controlling societies often maintain their control over their country by any means necessary. These people who are against God's good ways and against believers in God, can be a real problem to the freedom of the people in a country. When I was younger, I did not understand how far these people would go to overthrow the freedom in any country in order to establish a godless sinful society and to establish their ideology and a Communist, Atheist, or Humanist Religion in that country.

We should be careful to follow the Bible and not the agenda of these people. We need to be a people of the book and keep God's commandments. Also, we need to understand that some of Christianity and Judaism no longer believes in keeping God's good commandments. One pastor of a large church up north told me personally that the Bible is worthless. They are essentially saying that believing in God is worthless. I have heard of Rabbis saying in front of their congregation that they did not believe in God. We sometimes have pastors and rabbis teaching good advice instead of the spiritual truths from the Bible.

Our faith in God is being attacked on a regular basis. Do not succumb to their indoctrination, prejudice, and lies. For example, they will say the Bible believing religions do not help others or they will cite the Christian crusades. The Bible commands us to help others over and over. It has been well documented that the people of Bible based religions help people much more than any of the atheist religions. Also, the crusades only lasted for a short while over the 2,000 year life span of Christianity. They talk like it happened just yesterday, but it occurred some 900 years ago. The atheist religions murdered over 100 million people in just the 19th century which makes them the most murderous religions that have ever existed. They

continue to murder people who do not go along with their wicked religious systems. So, do not be fooled by their false religious systems. Follow God and the commandments in the Bible. God knows what is best for us and wants what is best for mankind. Deuteronomy 10:13 NKJV says, "Keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good."

For lots of great information on identifying the atheist and communist religions see Dennis Prager's book entitled, Still the Best Hope. It is available as an audio book.