



#36 Beha'alotecha Numbers 8:1-12:16
Torah Teaching
By Moshe Schwab

Names

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

Yochanan – John

Terms

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

Beha'alotecha means, "when you set up." The portion Beha'alotecha begins with instructions about the menorah for the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The Menorah is shaped like a tree, and it gives light to the inside of the Mishkan.

God is the creator and provider. He cares about us and wants what is best for mankind.

We talk about this a lot because we need to make an effort to understand this. Since God is the good creator, He has no bad intentions for us. Jeremiah 29:11-13 NKJV says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." This scripture was written for believers who were having a tough time at that time. It shows us that although we can go through tough times, that God still wants what is best for us.

Not only that, it is God's desire to act on our behalf at times. My experience has been that God is incredibly good to us. Look at what God did for Israel in the desert. God gave them food and water for 40 years! We do not find God by doing things our own way but by seeking God with our whole heart. We do not follow our own heart but do things God's ways. Proverbs 3:1 NKJV says, "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands." We are to hold onto God's commandments and keep them. Proverbs 4:4 NKJV says, "He also taught me, and said to me: 'Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live.'" We are to watch out for what enters our heart because it will influence how we act. Proverbs 4:23 NKJV says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life." Be wise and keep God's commandments so that you do not fall. Proverbs 10:8 NKJV says, "The wise in heart will receive commands, but a prating fool will fall."

We exhibit God's truths for life and can bring His goodness with us.

First, let's talk about truth. Some say there is no true way to live. We all know that doing some things is wrong. I know someone who is in pain everyday because her daughter died from someone's else's negligence. That can be a tough thing to go through. The Bible teaches us to care about others. Genesis 1:26 NKJV says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image,

according to Our likeness." People are created with the ability to be creative and good, to use our abilities to care for ourselves and others, to be levelheaded, to be kind and helpful, to be considerate and respectful, to do what is right and be honest, to be able to listen to others and learn to be a better person, to stand up for what is right and good, and so much more. There is a lot of value in the life of just one individual person. We need good truths for life though, so we use our abilities well.

We learn to do what is true and good from a good God. Psalms 119:68 NKJV says, "You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes." We are so privileged to know and follow a God who is good. 1 Chronicles 16:34 NKJV says, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!" Psalms 100:5 NKJV says, "For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations." God's commandments were good in times past, are still good, and will be good forever. It does not take much thought to realize we need truths for life with so many different and opposing ideas in our world today.

These next scriptures in Psalms 19 are good to remember. God's law is perfect and helps us in life. His law gives us wisdom and they are right. They are something to get excited about because they are truths for life.

Psalms 19:7-11 NKJV says,

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.

Since God's commandments are truths for life, they help us to do what is right. So, stay strong and keep God's commandments because they are good, perfect, right, pure, enlightening, are forever good, and worthwhile. Take the confusion out of life, do what is worthwhile, and follow God's and His good ways.

Understanding the Bible is not difficult, and neither is keeping God's commandments.

Some people say that keeping God's commandments is difficult but that is not true. The Bible says that God's commandments are not too difficult. Deuteronomy 30:11 NIV says, "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." You just need to begin keeping God's commandments and form good habits. If you begin to feel tense, learn to control your thoughts and respond thoughtfully and in kindness. Unless it is a dangerous situation you do not need to yell.

Sometimes people will complicate life with lots of man-made ritual. Ritual is part of life and helps us to accomplish tasks, but extra ritual is most often not a commandment of God. My dad told me it was too difficult to be Jewish, but he was referring to the extra man-made ritual that we do not have to keep. Start with the 10 Commandments and then begin to learn how to apply them and the other commandments in the Old Testament portion. We call it the Old Testament portion because it was written a long time ago, but it still applies to life. God gave us

good commandments and they are still good; God does not change. Malachi 3:6 NKJV says, "For I am the LORD, I do not change."

Since I mention the 10 Commandments, let's take a few moments to read them.

From Exodus 20:3-17 NKJV:

Number 1,

You shall have no other gods before Me.

Number 2,

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.

Number 3,

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.

Number 4,

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 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 cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 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.

Number 5,

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Number 6,

You shall not murder.

Number 7,

You shall not commit adultery.

Number 8,

You shall not steal.

Number 9,

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Number 10,

You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Take some time to think how you can apply these commandments. There are more than 10 commandments in the Old Testament portion that we need to keep, and do not be confused by some who change what the Bible says. For example, the command not to bow down to or serve any likeness of anything has been omitted by some.

Let's take just a little time to consider the commandment not to murder. Murder according to The American Heritage Dictionary is, "The killing of another person without justification or excuse, especially the crime of killing a person with malice aforethought or with recklessness manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life." So war is wrong, but a country defending itself against aggressors is okay because it is saving life. Sometimes, the only way to stop evil is for good people to stand up against countries that commit murder as was the case in World War 2 when Hitler was defeated. Also, a person is allowed to defend themselves from a would-be murderer.

The Bible says that the penalty for murder is death. This was commanded since the inception of time. Genesis 9:6 NKJV says, "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man." This is so people will be deterred from committing murder. Prosecuting murder keeps the land from becoming defiled by murder – "for blood defiles the land."

Numbers 35:30-33 NKJV says,

Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not sufficient testimony against a person for the death penalty. Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land.

So those who oppose the putting to death of murderers are causing murder according to the Bible. There is more that can be said about this commandment, but we will continue on with our teaching for now. Perhaps you can think through some of the other commandments and how they can be applied.

God does not try to trick us, but always wants what is good and best for us. Numbers 23:19 NKJV says, "God is not a man, that He should lie." Learn God's commandments and begin to apply them. When you make a mistake decide you will do better next time, do what you can to make amends, and ask God for forgiveness. You need to know this scripture. Psalms 103:11-12 NKJV says, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." In our Messianic era, the Messiah Yeshua provides atonement for our sins provided we are truly sorry and are committed to not sin again (see 1 John 1:9-2:2).

Stay focused on doing things God's ways. We are to grow spiritually and learn and develop godly patterns in life.

Have you ever tried to throw a ball to someone or tried to catch a ball? It is not an automatic ability. There are many things in life that require effort to learn and know how. I remember trying to teach my son how to catch a ball when he was two years old. I demonstrated what I wanted him to try to do and then I tossed the ball gently towards his hands. When he caught the ball, I told him how good he was doing. Each time he caught the ball it built up his confidence. That is what we need to do. We need to build up our confidence by keeping God's commandments and not giving up. We can accomplish the tasks in life and with persistence and we can accomplish important things both personally and spiritually.

This next scripture tells us that we all have to deal with temptation and that others have dealt with the same issues that we have. We can overcome our temptations with God's help.

1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." You can do it. Do not make up excuses and work at keeping God's commandments.

This important scripture in Joshua tells us to be strong spiritually and courageously follow the truths of God's commandments. Sometimes, people will refer to this scripture and just say they will be strong and courageous. That is a good way to accomplish things in life, but most of all, it refers to keeping God's law, His commandments. We should know them and consider how to apply them. Keeping God's commandments will help us to have a better life.

Joshua 1:7-8 NKJV says,

Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

It is good to have a committed attitude, especially when it comes to God's commandments.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NKJV says,

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Rabbi Shaul (Paul) said that we need to discipline ourselves so that we do not "become disqualified. Shaul warns in other scriptures that those who live in sin will not be in God's future kingdom (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21). Stay faithful and be strong and keep God's commandments and laws. Do not turn away from God.

God is the creator and provider. He cares about us and wants what is best for mankind. My experience has been that God is incredibly good to us. We do not find God by doing things our own way but by seeking God with our whole heart. We exhibit God's truths for life and can bring His goodness with us. We learn to do what is true and good from a good God. Some people say that keeping God's commandments is difficult but that is not true. The Bible says that God's commandments are not too difficult. Stay focused on doing things God's ways. We are to grow spiritually and learn and develop godly patterns in life. Stay faithful and be strong.

Torah Teaching

Beha'alotecha means, "when you set up." The portion Beha'alotecha begins with instructions about the menorah for the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The Menorah is shaped like a tree, and it gives light to the inside of the Mishkan. The Torah is referred to as a tree of life that gives us light because it gives us wisdom and understanding. Just as the menorah gives light to the Mishkan, the Holy Spirit that resides in the believers of Messiah Yeshua gives light to believers in Messiah.

The ancient rabbis will speculate on things written in the Bible. There are seven lamps for the menorah and there are seven words to the beginning of Genesis. These are interesting ideas, but they are just ideas. The rabbis make up quite a few of these diversions. The base of the menorah is the root of the tree and represents God. It has three legs. Why not four or just one? Perhaps this represents Yĕhōvâh, Yeshua, and the Ruach Hakodesh. Just like the Shema says Yĕhōvâh, Eloheinu, Yĕhōvâh echad – God, God, God is one.

The L'vi'im (Levites) were then cleansed and then the people of Israel laid hands on them; the Levites were a wave or elevation offering for Israel so the Levites would serve Israel at the Mishkan. Israel observed the Passover, but some were unclean; those who were unclean were to observe the Passover the next month on the 14th day of the second month. A cloud covered the Mishkan during the day and at night it appeared as fire. The cloud would give Israel relief from the heat during the day and warm them at night.

When the cloud moved Israel would break camp and follow it. It is a physical picture for us to follow God. The portion then describes what they did for each type of trumpet blast from the two silver trumpets. They were a large group of people, so they needed signals for how to proceed when the cloud moved. They used the trumpets to signal when the next tribe was to begin moving and for other purposes like for war and for the feasts. This teaches us we need order in what we do.

In the second year on the twentieth day of the second month (the 20th of Iyar) the portion describes how Israel set out. The very same prayer that is said before the procession of the Torah scroll in synagogues is in this portion starting in Numbers 10:35. This symbolic procession is a reenactment of Israel following God. Also, we are to follow God's commandments and the Holy Spirit.

It then says the people were complaining and it angered the Lord. This teaches us to not have negative attitudes and be complainers. The spirit of God rested on the 70 elders and also two others. In response to the two others that prophesied, Moshe said that he wished all the Lord's people were prophets. The Lord sent them quail, but the Lord struck them with a plague for their complaining. They had cattle to eat and the manna that God gave them was sufficient to keep them going, so this complaining probably had to be a longing to return to Egypt instead of being satisfied with the true God and His provision.

Aaron and Miryam speak against Moshe and Miryam is stricken with snow white scales. Moshe had a special relationship with God and spoke to Him face to face. They should have known better than to be critical of Moshe. Be satisfied in life and not negative. Negative thinking has been proven to affect a person's health. Moshe speaks to God on Miryam's behalf, and she is healed; she must remain outside the camp for 7 days. The cloud did not move for 7 days, so Israel remained encamped for 7 days while Miryam remained outside the camp. They moved on after she returned, and the cloud began moving. Perhaps this a picture of the patience and mercy of God. They all waited so perhaps this teaches us to have patience with others.

Also, it says that Moshe saw the likeness of God (יהוה) in Numbers 12:8. God appeared to and talked to Abraham in Genesis 18:33 which says that Yĕhōvāh (יהוה) went His way after talking to Abraham. God talked with Adam in the Garden of Eden. God appeared to Jacob and the Bible says that God appeared to Isaac as well. God can appear as a man; He can do what He wants. The Messiah is to be from the line of David and God – Jeremiah 23:5-6.¹

We see Israel as a nation laying on hands so the L'vi'im (Levites) would serve them. There is an apparent transference taking place by this laying on of hands and that is what the laying on of hands is for. We especially see this on Yom Kippur when the priest atones for the sins of Israel by laying hands on the scapegoat and sending it away (see Leviticus 16). As the scapegoat leaves, it signaled the atonement of Israel's sins.

They were the true believers back then and that was the way God provided for their forgiveness until the Messiah came. They knew this was a temporary measure until the Messiah came. Similarly, we see Yeshua dying for our sins, raising from the dead, and going away like the scapegoat. Yeshua will return at a future time.

Yeshua as God touched others and people were healed. This is a typical way of Jewish prayer. It is most often done by touching the other person's head. In the present, we often pray and lay on hands in God's name to impute God's healing, blessing, etcetera. Acts 4:29-30 is an example of this. As we lay on our hands, God stretches out His own hand to heal and bless. It is not us doing the healing; it is God doing the healing.

The Jewish procession of the Torah and the Jews following the cloud in the desert is a picture of Israel following God, it is a picture of Israel obeying (following) God, of believers in Yeshua

¹ “Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” Jeremiah 23:5-6 NKJV. Note the word LORD in all caps is God's name (יהוה). So, the Messiah from the line of David is יהוה.

following God, and of believers in Yeshua following the lead of the Holy Spirit. Yeshua tells us to follow Him in Matthew 16:24. He tells us to take up our execution stake. The word for "cross"² in the Greek is "execution stake" according to Strong's Greek Dictionary. This is in stark contrast to the easy believability that is being preached today. Yeshua said in Revelation 2:10 NKJV, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." We are to keep God's commands and stay faithful. When you say a prayer to accept the Messiah, that is only the beginning of living out our faith. Believing in God means we are to actually act like we believe in Him and be faithful to His commandments.

In this portion, Moshe says that he wished all God's people were prophets. It has always been God's intention that we fellowship with God personally. That close connection was lost when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, but that connection has been restored to some extent now through the gift of the Holy Spirit; believers in Yeshua are commanded to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39). It is not true that God did not speak to His people in the Tanakh (Old Testament portion). The entire Tanakh is filled with people encountering God and God speaking to them. Some say that God does not speak any more; has he lost His voice? Remember the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. Elijah mocked the pagans because their pagan gods were powerless (1 Kings 18:20-40). The true God is not powerless; your denomination may be powerless, but why should He speak to a people who will not listen to Him anyway and those who just make up their own doctrine?

Also, we see dire consequences being administered by God to people who complain, have bad attitudes, or speak against God's anointed. Let us be ever mindful to avoid complaining, to avoid bad attitudes, and be careful what we say about those in authority, especially our spiritual leaders. The rabbis say we should be careful not to commit lashon hara, evil speaking. Rabbi Shaul tells us to think about what is praiseworthy (see Philippians 4:8).

The Haftarah for Beha'alotecha is Zechariah 2:14-4:7. God says that someday He will dwell among the Israelites. We know that He literally did that when Yeshua was here, and He will do it again someday. God then says that He will remove Israel's sin in one day. Yeshua did that for us when He gave Himself on the stake. That will be completely fulfilled at the time of His future return in the New Kingdom of God. The portion concludes with, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," in Zechariah 4:6. The Holy Spirit is our helper to help us live right and walk with God in the here and now. We also expect that someday the Holy Spirit will keep us pure forever and we will not sin anymore. Those that do not want to live right will end up in the lake of fire for eternity.

**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.)**

² The word "cross" may be a symbol of what Yeshua did for us, but the cross symbol has pagan origins, and a cross can be used for the purposes of idolatry. "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; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them;" Exodus 20:4-5 NKJV.

If Passover is missed, Passover may be kept in the next month. Numbers 9:11-12.

The sounding of the two trumpets. This can also show us that we need order in life. Numbers 10:9-10.

The Aaronic Blessing.

ADONAI or LORD in all caps in our Bibles is the name for God which is pronounced Yě-hō-váh. Yě-hō-váh is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament portion. Since God's name is used that many times, it is evident that we should be using His real name.

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

The ancient rabbis say that Yě-hō-váh (יהוה) is God's name. 2,363 manuscripts of the Bible point God's name as Yě-hō-váh, once as Yě-hō-věh, never as Yahweh. The church Fathers said God's name is Yě-hō-váh. Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 NKJV, "You shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Yeshua is quoting Psalm 118:26; the word "LORD" in that verse in Psalms is Yě-hō-váh (יהוה). 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, וַיְשַׁמְרֶכָּ
 יֵאָר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחַנְּךָ
 יֵשֶׁא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיִּשְׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹמִים

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

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

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

Thank you for being with us today.