

Torah Study

Names

Kefa – Peter
Moshe – Moses
Pesach – Passover, Yeshua is our Pesach lamb
Shaul – Paul
Shavuot – Pentecost, a spring feast of God
Sukkot – God's Feast of Tabernacles in the Fall
Yeshua – Jesus
Yĕhōvâh – God's real name forever (Exodus 3:15)
Yochanan – John

Terms

#47 – the 47th portion for 2019-2020
Haftarah – the weekly reading from the prophets
Parashah – (portion) one of 54 portions of the Torah
Rosh-Hodesh – the 1st day of the Jewish month
Shabbat – the 7th day of commanded rest by God
Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

We begin our teachings with a Torah study and then continue on with some further topics that I came up with while praying. The Torah portion for this week is Re'eh and means, "behold" or "see." What do we see? Do we only see the world or do we also see things spiritually? What are the most important things to us? Is this world all there is? Revelation 21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." Obviously there is something more important than our own views and ideas.

In this portion, Moshe (Moses) begins by telling Israel that if they obey God's commands they will be blessed and if they don't, they will be cursed. Psalm 34:8 NKJV says, Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" Notice how it says "see." That is from the same verb as "re'eh," namely the verb ra'ah. The psalmist said that we will see the goodness of God if we trust in Him and His commandments. I have experienced this supernatural work of God; it is not by chance. If you obey God's commandments, you will "see" too.

We've talked about the good eye and the evil eye some. The good eye looks at things from a positive perspective and that includes, trusting in God. The evil eye is filled with cynicism in life and distrust in God. Yeshua tells us that in order to help others, we need to see right. Matthew 7:5 says, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." It's true isn't it. People have all kinds of opinions so they don't see right; they don't want to follow the truth of God's word. They are hypocrites; they could have truth, but instead they trust in themselves. True believers are not hypocrites because they are in the process of trying to live right. In this portion it says that God tests us to "see" if we will trust in Him (Deuteronomy 13:4). Stay faithful always and pass our tests.

They were to destroy all the idols and places of idolatry after they enter the land of Canaan. They were to go to the place that God would put His name and rejoice in His presence with their offerings. They were not do what is right in their own opinion. They were not to make up their own commands and misapply God's commands.

We should understand that God's commandments can be misapplied. Some 1,500 years later

in Yeshua's time they had thousands of misapplied commandments. Many of these commandments micromanaged life or added unneeded ritual. The ancient rabbis substituted their own ideas instead of listening to God. They made it so that only what the rabbis said was to be followed and kept. They weren't following God the way they were supposed to. They made up whatever they wanted to. The Bible says we are not to live by man-made opinion and not to change or misapply God's commandments, "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;" Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV.

The portion continues; they could eat meat, but not the blood. They were not to inquire about how the pagans worshiped; the pagans even sacrificed their children. This teaches us that we must be careful not to engage or associate with anything that has to do with a false religion or idol worship. We should not look into pagan religions like Buddhism, Islam (which is a false religion that teaches murder and the Koran instead of the Bible), Hinduism, Catholicism (which teaches idolatry), Kabbalah Judaism (which teaches spiritualism; the Bible teaches that spiritualism is wrong), and others that teach false doctrine (for example, those that don't believe Yeshua (Jesus) is the Messiah and God, and those who don't believe in keeping God's commandments). They were not to listen to anyone who told them to worship another God even if they were their family or produced signs (Deuteronomy 13:2-6). A true prophet teaches God's commands. If they tell you not to keep God's feasts and keep the feast of the bare-breasted goddess Ishtar (pronounced easter). Don't do it. Keep the resurrection of Yeshua, not the feast of some pagan god.

*Shaul said those who don't keep God's
commandments will not be in the future kingdom.*

Believers in modern society make excuses not to follow God the way the Bible says. They make themselves as gods to the people and tell them things like there are only two commandments or just follow the Holy Spirit. They then have to make up their own ways to follow God instead of what the Bible says. They change God's commandments into their own rules. Shaul said those who don't keep God's commandments will not be in the future kingdom (Galatians 5:21). The Israelites were to put to death anyone who would lead them to believe in an idol, even if it was a whole city. Don't listen to those who teach false religious practice or false doctrine; as we can see, God takes this very seriously.

They were not to gash themselves or shave their hair over their foreheads (in other words, they were not to do things associated with idolatry and false religions). They were given food laws. They could eat an animal that has both a divided hoof and also chews the cud. They could eat fish that have fins and scales. They were not to eat certain types of birds or anything that swarms or anything that is dead. Why don't people want to listen to God's advice? There are perhaps hundreds of ideas on how we should eat. What about what God tells us? He knows what's best for us. Eating healthy in reality is eating things God tells us. It goes without saying we can eat fruits and vegetables. If God said that some foods were not good to eat, why would that change now? People are not trusting in God, that's all.

They could exchange their goods to bring money to buy offerings at the place God chooses. Every 3rd and 6th year they were to provide support for the Levites, widows, and orphans. The other years they brought their support to Jerusalem. Every seven years they were to have a shemittah year (year where they rested the land); also on that year, debts were forgiven and slaves were set free. Although the Rabbis had the Israelites giving more than 20%, the Bible actually commands us to give a little over 10%. Deuteronomy 15:10 NKJV says, "You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand."

God can bless us because He is God and He will bless you for giving. Notice that Shaul quotes this in 2 Corinthians 9:7. He bases his teaching on the Torah. Yeshua said in Matthew 7:23 NKJV, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" The word lawlessness uses the word used for Torah (nomia) from the Septuagint;¹ those who do not keep the Torah practice "anomia," lawlessness. Yeshua will reject those who don't keep the Torah; they practice lawlessness, "anomia."

If a slave wished to remain a slave then they could drive an awl through their ear and be a slave forever. Shaul talks about being a slave for God. He chose to be a slave for God in service to God; all believers are also to be slaves for God instead of slaves to the standards of the world. Just as Israel was freed from pagan Egypt so they could serve God, we are freed from sin by the Messiah so that we should serve God. They were to help the needy and not withhold their help. There will always be poor people. Nothing defective is to be offered to the Lord. Instructions are given about observing Pesach. They were to observe Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot and appear before God on these three feasts. We too should get together on these feasts.

They were to appear before the Lord for the three feasts. God's feasts not only have something to do with Israel, but are relevant for those who believe in Yeshua. The Bible even says they will be celebrated in the eternal future kingdom of God. Isaiah 66:22-23 CJB says, "For just as the new heavens and the new earth that I am making will continue in my presence, 'says ADONAI,' so will your descendants and your name continue. Every month on Rosh-Hodesh and every week on Shabbat, everyone living will come to worship in my presence, 'says ADONAI.'"

The Haftarah for Re'eh is Isaiah 54:11 to 55:5. Isaiah says about a future time; the ravaged city will receive great riches. Your children will have peace and nothing will prevail against you. He says come to the water come buy food without money; come to me and live. Even the nations will run to you because the Lord glorifies you. God will give Israel great future blessings. God has given His blessings freely if they will come to Him. We also need to come to God and Yeshua and He will freely give us these future blessings too.

¹ The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures by 70 rabbis in the 2nd century BC.

For Further Study

Preparing "to See" Spiritually

(A practical teaching to accompany the Torah portion Re'eh – See!)

While Praying:

- * Living right requires some thought and effort.
- * Work on the mechanics of your life in Messiah so you are ready to do what you should do.
- * We don't live life waiting for something to occur, but we are proactive.
- * Doing things God's way is not the same as following the works of the world and the pride of life.

The first thing we need to understand and "see" as Messianic believers is that Yeshua is the Messiah and He came to give us His gift of the Holy Spirit. Kefa tells us, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call;" Acts 2:38-39 NKJV. We are to live a changed life (repent, turn towards God – Teshuvah) and start keeping God's commandments. Baptism means we accept the authority of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) and baptism itself is the ritual act representing becoming new through the Messiah. We are to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which is our helper to keep God's commandments and give us direction in life.

We then begin a lifelong journey of studying the scriptures to find out how we are to live and to remind us how to live. The Jewish rabbi Hillel said we begin our journey by loving others and also learn how to keep God's other commandments in the Torah.² The early Gentile believers were also told to learn the Torah. "But that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath;" Acts 15:20-21

* Living right requires some thought and effort.

Do you remember a time when someone was angry with you and how you responded? There are several ways to respond. Most of the time we want to open up a line of communication if we can with those we care about; if not right away, perhaps after things have cooled down some.

The Bible has a lot to say about how we communicate:

James 1:19 tells us to restrain our anger.

Proverbs 15:1 says a soft answer can keep things calm.

Ephesians 4:19 tells us to build others up.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillel_the_Elder

Colossians 4:6 says we should be kind and courteous.

2 Timothy 2:16 says to watch that we talk with respect.

Colossians 3:8-9 NKJV has a lot to say, "But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another."

So how do we react to anger? We can restrain our anger; we can speak softly to calm things down; we can be courteous and respectful regardless. We can only do so much. Sometimes people don't want to work things out. We need to be prepared to do what is right. Be thoughtful and planned on how you deal with life's situations; put in the time and effort to learn how to live right.

* Work on the mechanics of your life in Messiah so you are ready to do what you should do. When we learned how to drive, we learned how the car operated and learned the laws so we could drive safely. It's the same things with life. We try to understand our roles and how the Bible tells us to live life. If we are children, we understand that we are to listen to our parents; they are in charge. Proverbs 1:8 says, "Hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother." If we are at work, we do our best at the job and follow directions. As workers, we represent ourselves no matter if we work for others or for ourselves. The Bible says to work for God. "Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established;" Proverbs 16:3 NKJV.

Find out what God says about your roles in life and start learning how to apply God's commandments in your life. Be diligent to learn to do what is right. 2 Timothy 2:15 NKJV says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God." Also, we need each other and are to encourage each other. That's why we need teachings like these, so we can be reminded to follow God. Hebrews 3:13 NKJV says, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Work at applying God's commandments. Get to know them and practice using them.

* We don't live life waiting for something to occur, but we are proactive.

Have you ever heard the word proactive? It means to be in control of your life; we don't want our lives to be out of control in the physical or the spiritual realm. There are plenty of scriptures that talk about taking care of ourselves. We are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), so we should value ourselves and others and take care of ourselves. We should have a proper perspective on life and think about our spiritual condition first. "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content;" 1 Timothy 6:6-8 NKJV.

Being proactive means we have a plan, but always keep in mind the plan God has for you. Perhaps God wants you to be a great leader, mathematician, or scientist who loves God. It was an engineer who visited the real Mt. Sinai over and over so we could know where it is today. Perhaps God also wants you to teach others the truths of the scriptures. We

desperately need people who understand the proper Jewish biblical context and understand the scriptures as they were originally intended. The scriptures must be understood in a Jewish biblical context or they will not be understood properly.

* Doing things God's way is not the same as following the works of the world and the pride of life.

The Messiah came for the purpose of, "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works;" Titus 2:11-14 NKJV. We should stop doing what is wrong and followings the methods of this world. We are to use our heads, live right, and look forward to the return of our Messiah Yeshua. He came so that we would stop disobeying God's commandments and so we can be a pure and special people who keep God's commandments. We are to be a special people of light and understanding.

Because we know how to live through keeping God's commandments and because we are helped by the Holy Spirit, we can bring so much light (understanding) into the world. There are whole countries that are dedicated to hate because of their false religion. What a difference believing in the Messiah can make. He truly wants to bring peace and save the world from hate and sin, and teach people to love one another (John 15:12). We need to teach people about Yeshua and the true God. God wants to bring His light to the world. Be part of what God is doing so that not only you see, "re'eh," (the name of our Torah portion for this week) , but that others will see the light too.

Shaul (Paul) tells us to be lights, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:8-10 NKJV. What could be wrong with goodness and doing right (righteous)? What is acceptable to God and Yeshua? Yeshua said to keep God's commandments. "If you love Me, keep My commandments;" John 14:15. The Torah says, "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always;" Deuteronomy 11:1-2 NKJV.

God gave us His word and His commandments so that we will be blessed and see His goodness. We need to learn how to live right and that comes from following what it says in the Bible. Do we deal with anger how the Bible tells us to? Learn and be ready to follow what the Bible says. We need to study the scriptures and be encouraged in them. Have a proper perspective of life and put God first. Do things God's way; don't follow the methods of the worldly. Love God and be a person of light, and do what is right and good.