

פרשת
ובחוקתי
Parshiyot Bechukotai

*Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-27:34, Jeremiah 16:19-17:14
Matthew 16:20-28*

**Studying the Commandments is considered as having
Fulfilled Them**

This week's Torah portion opens with *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-5* saying, ג אִם-בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם: ד וְנָתַתִּי ה' גְּשָׁמִיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָהּ וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פְּרִיֹ: ה וְהִשִּׁיג לָכֶם דִּישׁ אֶת-בְּצִיר וּבְצִיר יִשָּׂיג אֶת-זֶרַע וְאֶכְלֶתֶם לְחֶמְקְכֶם לְשִׁבַע וַיִּשְׂבַּתֶּם לְבָטָח 26:3 *'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 26:4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 26:5 'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. (NASB)* What we find here is a great blessing upon one's life if a person is careful to obey the commandments of God to carry them out. An important point to notice is how the text is written using the words בְּחֻקֹּתַי and מִצְוֹתַי where the Lord God calls these *"my statutes"* and *"my commandments,"* respectively. These are God's commandments for His people. The question we have to ask ourselves is *"are we His people?"* When the church of the second and third centuries began to drift away from her Jewish roots, misconceptions developed concerning the as-

pects of God's Law, the Torah. This was due to the influences of Greek philosophy and pagan ideas. The first misconception that entered into the doctrines of the church was concerning the inherent goodness of the Torah. To the Hebraic mind, the primary purpose of the Torah was to teach humanity how to hit the mark in life (defining sin and rebellion) as opposed to committing sin (missing the mark). In the Greek Language, there is only one word for Law (nomos) and so when speaking of the "*law of God*" or the "*law of sin*" or the "*law of the Spirit of life*," or the "*law of Christ*," etc it is often difficult to discern what is being spoken of in the NT. (*Romans 7 and 8 shows the goodness of God's law as the law of the Spirit, as opposed to the law of sin and death and the body.*) To the Greek thinker, the "*law*" (nomos) had a negative connotation, whereas for the Hebrew mind, the Torah had a positive image. This then led to the misconception that the Law and Grace are polar opposites and the Torah was replaced by the age of grace. Once the Torah is understood from the Jewish perspective, as the instruction of God as a way of life for His people, the error is exposed. This idea of the opposing concepts of Law vs. Grace was developed from the false pagan view that the Jews were saved by works, while the Church was saved by faith. Many early Gentile believers mixed Gnostic ideas with their Christian theology and concluded that the God of the Jews was a harsh, legalistic God as opposed to the God of love described in the NT. The 1st century church understood the Lord God of Israel as being the one true God who is immutable, having one place of salvation by faith in both the OT (Tanach) and the NT, a plan which involved the Messiah of God. The prophet Daniel wrote some 600 years prior to Yeshua being on this earth of the Jewish concept of repentance and trust in the God of Israel for His Mercy (Grace) apart from any works of the Law (see *Daniel 9:18*). In the opening to Parashat Bechukotai, we find the blessing of God to those who would obey God's Word putting faith into action in a practical way, and then seeing the Lord's blessing come upon His people of faith. This is the role of the Torah in our lives, to have a way to express our faith that is pleasing to God.

The Rabbis describe these things in a similar way saying the following according to the Talmud Bavli.

Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 5a

The Sages taught with regard to the verse: “If you walk in My statutes” (Leviticus 26:3): In this context, “if” is a term that means nothing other than supplication, i.e., God is hoping that the Jewish people will observe the Torah. And similarly, it is stated: “Oh that My people would hearken to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways, I would soon subdue their enemies” (Psalms 81:14–15). And it states: “Oh that you would hearken to My commandments! Then your peace would be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea. Your seed also would be as the sand, and the offspring of your body like its grains” (Isaiah 48:18–19).

The rabbis say the word “if” (אם) is supplication (prayer) and speak of God’s hope that His people would walk in His ways. The end result is the Lord God would subdue our enemies and peace would flow like a river and the Lord would bless us with many children. The rabbis also make an interesting statement in the following quote from the Talmud Bavli.

Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 61b

The Gemara asks a related question: Granted, according to the opinion of Rabbi Meir, this is the reason that it is written: “If you walk in My statutes” (Leviticus 26:3), you will receive blessings; conversely: “And if you shall reject My statutes” (Leviticus 26:15), you will receive curses. However, according to the opinion of Rabbi Hanina ben Gamliel, why do I need both of these clauses? The Gemara answers: They are both necessary, as it might enter your mind to say: If you follow My statutes you will receive a blessing, whereas if you reject My statutes you will receive neither a blessing nor a curse. The verse therefore teaches us that the rejection of God’s statutes warrants a curse.

The discussion involves the verse “‘If you walk in My statutes’ (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3), you will receive blessings, and on the other hand,

'And if you shall reject My statutes' (Vayikra / Leviticus 26:15), you will receive curses.” The reasoning is one may think one will receive a blessing if one obeys God’s Word, and nothing will happen if one disobeys God’s Word. This is exactly what we see going on in the Church theologies that teach *“we don’t have to obey God’s Law”* under the assumption that all one has to do is say they believe in Jesus and all is good. This concept divorces the idea of faithfulness from our lives. It also follows through from the pagan idea that one earned his/her salvation in the OT and now in the NT God changed that. This is the theological teaching point of dispensationalism and it completely misses the mark on the role of the Torah in our lives, and is rooted in a pagan way of thinking. The point is, the Torah was never meant as a means to earn one’s salvation. The Torah was meant to be a way of life to walk in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth as a people of God who are already delivered and redeemed. This week’s Torah portion draws out this concept saying אַם-בְּחַקְתִּי תֵלְכוּ, *“If you will walk in My statutes”* the Lord God will command the clouds and the soil and the trees all of which have been created only for your sake, to do their share, and He will bless us.

The point these things ultimately are speaking to us about is in light of what these Scriptures are saying, whether we are willing to submit our lives to God our Father in heaven according to His word and to Yeshua the Messiah? *James 4:7* states *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (ὕποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ ἀντίστητε τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ φεύξεται ἀφ’ ὑμῶν, Delitzsch: לְכֹן הִכָּנְעוּ לְכֹן הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְיַצְבוּ נֶגֶד הַשָּׁטָן וַיִּכְרַח מִפְּנֵיכֶם לְכֹן הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְיַצְבוּ בְּפָנֵי הַשָּׁטָן וַיִּנּוּס מִפְּנֵיכֶם עַל כֵּן הִכָּנְ- BSI: אֲשַׁתְּעַבְדוּ עו לְפָנֵי אֱלֹהִים. אֵהִתְיַצְבוּ נֶגֶד הַשָּׁטָן וַיִּכְרַח מִפְּנֵיכֶם (הַכִּיל לְאֱלֹהֵא וְקוּמוּ לּוֹקְבַל סַטְנָא וְעַרְק מִנְכוּ) In James the word submit is translated from the Greek word hupotasso (ὕποτάγητε). The word hupo means *“under”* and the word tasso means *“to arrange.”* Hupotasso therefore means to be subjected or in subjection to something. The word translates as *“to obey”* and the Hebrew translation writes this as הִכָּנְעוּ meaning *“to surrender.”* This word means to place one’s self under obedience or to be obedient to as a servant and is the way the Peshitta opens on *James 4:7* (אֲשַׁתְּעַבְדוּ). The Greek word *“to ar-*

range” one’s self under the command is a divine viewpoint of living according to a new way of life in obedience to God’s Word rather than to one’s own way of thinking. When we order our lives according to God’s word, we are surrendering our will to that of our Father in heaven. James is speaking of having a humble and submissive heart which is a choice that we make. This is the same idea we receive when reading the opening passages to this week’s Torah portion, אִם-בְּהִקְתִּי וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם, *“If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out.”* The idea of resisting the devil and he will flee is connected to giving the evil one a place by our sins. Submitting ourselves to God’s word requires the daily choice to walk in God’s ways, and doing so requires help from our Father in heaven (by His indwelling Spirit). This means those who are called by the Name of God, and by His Messiah Yeshua, daily make the choice to submit themselves to God for the work of His Spirit in their lives allowing the Lord to transform them into the image of His Son Yeshua. The Lord God Almighty uses the situations in our lives giving us opportunity daily to submit to Him according to His word (*Romans 8:28-29*). We then accept His mercy to walk according to His Word in repentance and learn to draw near each day. We learn about these things through the study of God’s Word and by applying God’s Word to our lives. We choose to submit to God for the purpose of growing spiritually. This is a process and is very important as the Lord God has made His dwelling place in our hearts. As a result, the Lord gives us the blessing of peace that comes from humbly surrendering and submitting our lives to Him on a daily basis, nothing in this world can compare to the mercies and peace the Lord gives us.

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-26*.

Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-26

26:3 ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 26:4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 26:5 ‘Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing

time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. 26:6 'I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. 26:7 'But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; 26:8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 26:9 'So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. 26:10 'You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. 26:11 'Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 26:12 'I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 26:13 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect. 26:14 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 26:15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 26:16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. 26:17 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. 26:18 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 26:19 'I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. 26:20 'Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. 26:21 'If then, you act

with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. 26:22 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted. 26:23 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 26:24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. 26:25 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26:26 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.

ג אִם-בְּחִקְתִּי תִלְכוּ וְאֵת-מִצּוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם: ד
וְנִתְתִּי גִשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנִתְּנָה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָה וְעֵץ הַשָּׁדֶה יִתֵּן
פְּרִי: ה וְהִשִּׁיג לָכֶם דִּישׁ אֶת-בְּצִיר וּבְצִיר יִשִּׁיג אֶת-זֶרַע
וְאֶכְלֶתֶם לַחֲמֶכֶם לְשִׁבְעָה וַיִּשְׁבַּתֶּם לְבִטָּח בְּאֶרְצְכֶם: [שְׁנִי]
ו וְנִתְתִּי שְׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וּשְׁכַבְתֶּם וְאִין מִחְרִיד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חַיָּה
רָעָה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְחָרַב לֹא-תַעֲבֹר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם: ז וַרְדַּפְתֶּם
אֶת-אֲיִבֵיכֶם וְנָפְלוּ לְפָנֵיכֶם לְחָרַב: ח וַרְדַּפוּ מִכֶּם חֲמֹשֶׁה
מֵאָה וּמֵאָה מִכֶּם רַבָּה יִרְדַּפוּ וְנָפְלוּ אֲיִבֵיכֶם לְפָנֵיכֶם לְחָרַב:
ט וּפְנִיתִי אֲלֵיכֶם וְהִפְרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִקִּי-
מִתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם: [שְׁלִישִׁי] [חֲמִישִׁי כִשְׁהֵן מַחוּבְרִין]
י וְאֶכְלֶתֶם יֶשֶׁן נוֹשָׁן וַיִּשָּׂן מִפְּנֵי חֲדָשׁ תּוֹצִיאֻ: יא וְנִתְתִּי
מִשְׁפָּנִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְלֹא-תִגְעַל נַפְשִׁי אִתְּכֶם: יב וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי
בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְהִיִּיתִי לָכֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְאֹתָם תִּהְיוּ-לִי לְעָם: יג אֲנִי
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִהֵיטֵב
לְהֵם עֲבָדִים וְאֲשַׁבֵּר מִטַּת עַלְכֶם וְאוֹלֶךְ אֶתְכֶם קוֹמָמִיּוֹת: פ
יד וְאִם-לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ לִי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ אֵת כָּל-הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלֶּה:
טו וְאִם-בְּחִקְתִּי תִמְאָסוּ וְאִם אֶת-מִשְׁפָּטִי תִגְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם

לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי לְהַפְרֹכֶם אֶת-בְּרִיתִי: טז אָף-
אֲנִי אֶעֱשֶׂה-זֹאת לָכֶם וְהַפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם בְּהִלָּה אֶת-הַשְּׁחָפֶת
וְאֶת-הַקְדַּחַת מְכַלּוֹת עֵינַיִם וּמְדִיבַת נֶפֶשׁ וּזְרַעְתֶּם לָרֵיק
זֶרְעֵכֶם וְאָכְלֶהוּ אִיבֵיכֶם: יז וְנָתַתִּי פָנַי בְּכֶם וְנִגְפַתֶּם לְפָנַי
אִיבֵיכֶם וְרָדוּ בְכֶם שְׁנֵאֵיכֶם וְנִסַּתֶּם וְאִין-רִזְף אֶתְכֶם: יח
וְאִם-עַד-אֵלֶּה לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ לִי וְיִסְפַּתִּי לִי־סָרָה אֶתְכֶם שְׁבַע
עַל-חַטָּאתֵיכֶם: יט וְשִׁבַּרְתִּי אֶת-גְּאוֹן עֲזֹנְכֶם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת-
שְׁמֵיכֶם כַּבְּרִזָּל וְאֶת-אַרְצְכֶם כַּנְחֻשָׁה: כ וְתִם לָרֵיק כְּחֶכֶם
וְלֹא-תִתֶּן אַרְצְכֶם אֶת-יְבוּלָה וְעֵץ הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִתֶּן פְּרִיו: כא
וְאִם-תִּלְכוּ עִמִּי קָרִי וְלֹא תֵאָבֹו לְשִׁמְעַ לִי וְיִסְפַּתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם
מִכָּה שְׁבַע כַּחַטָּאתֵיכֶם: כב וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי בְכֶם אֶת-חַיֵּת הַשָּׂדֶה
וְשִׁפְלָה אֶתְכֶם וְהִכְרִיתָה אֶת-בְּהֶמְתְּכֶם וְהִמְעִיטָה אֶתְכֶם
וְנִשְׁמָו דְרָכֵיכֶם: כג וְאִם-בְּאֵלֶּה לֹא תִנְסְרוּ לִי וְהִלַּכְתֶּם עִמִּי
קָרִי: כד וְהִלַּכְתִּי אִף-אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם בְּקָרִי וְהִפִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם גַּם-
אֲנִי שְׁבַע עַל-חַטָּאתֵיכֶם: כה וְהִבֵּאתִי עֲלֵיכֶם חֶרֶב נִקְמַת
נָגֶם-בְּרִית וְנִאֲסַפְתֶּם אֶל-עָרֵיכֶם וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי דָבָר בְּתוֹכְכֶם
וְנִתְתֶּם בְּיַד-אוֹיֵב: כו בְּשִׁבְרֵי לָכֶם מִטֵּה-לָחֶם וְאָפוּ עֶשֶׂר
נָשִׁים לַחֲמֻם בְּתַנּוּר אֶחָד וְהִשִּׁיבּוּ לַחֲמֻם בְּמִשְׁקָל וְאָכְלֹתֶם
וְלֹא תִשְׁבְּעוּ:

In the opening passages of this week's Torah portion from *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3-5* we read, **ג אִם-בְּחֻקֹּתַי תִּלְכוּ** וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעֲשִׂי- תִם אַתֶּם: ד וְנָתַתִּי גִשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנִתְּנָה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָה וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֶּן פְּרִיו: ה וְהִשִּׁיג לָכֶם דִּישׁ אֶת-בְּצִיר וּבְצִיר יִשִּׁיג אֶת-זֶרַע וְאָכְלֹתֶם לַחֲמֻם לְשִׁבַע ה' וְיִשְׁבְּתֶם לְבִטָּח בְּאַרְצְכֶם: *26:3 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 26:4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 26:5 'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. (NASB)* The rabbis say the reason the word חֻקוֹתַי, “*My statutes,*” is in the plural is an allusion to the two aspects of Torah (i) the Mishnah, and (ii) the written Torah. The idea is this word indicates the unity between

the oral and written Torah. The reason the Torah uses the term (הליכה, walking) when speaking about the חקים (statutes) is to remind us that one needs to be occupied with matters of Torah even when engaged in walking on one's way, much as when the Torah said in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:7* וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בְּדַרְךְ *“and when you walk on the way.”* The reason the Torah uses the word for walking (הליכה, תלכו) is to consider our ways coupled with this idea of turning back to God's decrees (see *Tehillim / Psalms 119:59*) Based on the Zohar (volume 3 page 202) the Torah can be studied on four different levels (Pardes) the פשוט, רמז, פשוט, and סוד. These four methods between them account for what the sages call the 70 facets of the Torah. Each of these 70 facets is perceived as being a *“path”* one walks in the study of God's statutes. Notice how the concept here has studying being connected to obeying the command, applying it to life. When we take God's word and apply it to our lives, this is considered studying the Word of God. Based upon *Mishley / Proverbs 3:6*, we read Solomon saying, בְּכָל-דְּרָכַיָּךְ דָּעָהוּ, *“In all your ways acknowledge Him,”* Maimonides writes in chapter 3 of Hilchot Deyot that *“a person should set his mind on having a perfect body in order to possess the physical strength to devote himself to Torah.”* The idea here is to take care of ourselves, eating healthy, exercising, so that we have the physical strength to study God's Word and to actually put God's Word into action in our lives. Note the connection to both studying and applying God's Word leads to this conclusion. The words וְאֵת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעַשִּׂיתֶם אֹתָם *“and keep My commandments so as to carry them out”* are perceived as the framework for investigative Torah exploration. The rabbinic literature states as long as the purpose of Torah study is to lead to performance of God's commandments, the Torah encourages the pursuit of diverse paths of study. (*Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3 Part 1-46*) These things again teach us how everything we do is spiritual, and as our lives touch this world, we are having a spiritual impact upon something or someone at any given time. This should cause us to think about how we live our lives on a daily basis and why there is such a high biblical imperative to study God's Word, to place it upon our hearts, and to practice our faith in the application of God's Word to living.

The spiritual connectedness to our faith and our actions is described

in the following way according to the commentary *Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3*:

Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3 Part 1

אם בחקותי תלכו, “If you walk in My statutes, etc.” In *Torat Kohanim* they explain this as follows: “if the Torah had spoken only about בחוקותי, I would have assumed that what was meant were the מצות. Now that the Torah added the words ואת מצותי, the word בחקור־תי cannot apply to the מצות seeing the Torah already wrote about them. The additional word בחקותי therefore teaches us that one has to toil in order to get Torah knowledge.” The reason the Torah refers to toiling over Torah by using the expression חקה is because there is a commandment to study matters again and again even if one had already studied them several times and they have been well absorbed. G’d wants us to study Torah out of a fondness for it and this is why He formulated a statute to that effect. We find that our sages in *Kohelet Rabbah 3* state that G’d decreed that we will forget part of what we learned in order that we should sit down and learn it repeatedly.

What is being taught here in the rabbinic commentary is the idea of applying God’s Word to our lives (toiling) and of the divine inspiration learning something new each time one goes through the Torah each year. The reason the rabbis go on and on about the importance of Torah study is because of the matter of authentic faith. The Talmud Bavli *Menachot 110a* describes faith in God’s Word connected to study in the following way, רבי יוחנן אמר אלו תלמידי חכמים העסוקין בהלכות עבודה “*And Rabbi Yohanan says that there is an alternative explanation of the verse: These are Torah scholars, who engage in studying the halakhot of the Temple service. The verse ascribes them credit as though the Temple was built in their days and they are serving in it.*” The idea here is through faith, studying the halakhot in the scriptures on the Temple service ascribes credit

as though the temple were built and one was performing the services. This is similar to the faith that one has in Yeshua the Messiah, in His atoning sacrifices, it is as if one has by faith brought to the Temple the appropriate sacrifices. (Notice how the NT idea of believing upon Yeshua is a rabbinic concept.) Now these commands on the blessing and the curse are juxtaposed to the laws on the Shemita and Yovel which relate to being faithful and obeying God's Word, as we saw in last week's Torah portion. Having faith and being faithful will lead to the Lord God of Israel bringing rain in its season at the appropriate times along with a blessing on the harvest, one's job, and family (offspring). The rabbis say, *"The Torah compensates for the performance of a specific command. Whenever a commandment is not capable of fulfillment by a person (such as all the legislation involving the priesthood for non-priests) study of the relevant portion in the Torah is accounted for the person studying it as if he had personally fulfilled that commandment."* (Talmud Bavli Menachot 110a, Or HaChaim on Vayikra / Leviticus 26:3 Part 18) Therefore, accordingly, we understand the phrase -אם תלכו followed by וְאֵת-מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ to mean that *"if you study the commandments then you will be considered as having fulfilled My commandments."* Note that this does not mean that one may study and then not apply God's Word to living. (Note also this rabbinic concept to *"fulfill"* does not mean to do away with, but to properly perform a command. This is how Yeshua used the command in *Matthew 5:17* and we can see this proper usage of the word fulfill in the rabbinic commentary.) The word תִּשְׁמְרוּ means you are anxiously awaiting an opportunity to physically fulfil such commandments. As a result the phrase וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם, *"so as to carry them out"* carries the meaning that you will not only receive the reward for studying God's Word but for having also put God's Word into action. This is why the NT holds such a high standard to love and knowing our Father in heaven and His Messiah Yeshua. (*1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 John 2:6-10*) This is what it means to have faith by being faithful to God's Word. This draws us back to the idea of submitting ourselves to God's word requires the daily choice to walk in God's ways, and doing so requires help from our Father in heaven by His indwelling Spirit. This means those who are called by the Name of God, and by His Messiah Yeshua, daily make the choice to submit themselves to God for the work of His Spirit in their lives al-

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lowing the Lord to transform them into the image of His Son Yeshua. Are you doing this each day as the Scriptures are teaching us to do? These are all Torah centric concepts, which adds more credence to why the Torah and the Gospel Message go hand in hand!