



Who is Yeshua the Messiah?

Part 7: The Word of God

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{NOTE: The actual oral sermon and video recording varies from these notes to some degree, but this “transcript” gives you a general idea of the direction of the message.}

{Title slide} Shabbat shalom, brothers and sisters. We’re retuning to our “Who Is Yeshua the Messiah?” series today and for the foreseeable future, unless the Spirit moves otherwise, and I’m both excited and also a bit overwhelmed by the topic we’re going to tackle next. It might seem on the surface that “The Word of God” is a rather straightforward subject, but there is so much to discuss here that I don’t think we can ever plumb the depths of it all. Honestly, this is a blessing, because it means we have forever to better understand God. His eternally searchable Word means our relationship with Him will never grow old, and we will find new facets of our Beloved every time we look. In that light, I want to bring enough of God’s Word forward for your consideration to fan the flames of desire in you to forever search Him out, so help me God. And so, as the Holy Spirit has shown us throughout the Scriptures, the Word comes forth from the heart of the Invisible Father in His Wisdom, and by God’s Word all things come into being to glorify God. His Word never returns to Him without accomplishing its good purpose. God also gave His Word as inspired instruction by His Holy Spirit to the prophets, who wrote it down so God’s people might be blessed by it and glorify the Father. God later sent His Word to become flesh and dwell among us as Yeshua the Messiah, who showed us by His example how to live in God’s Word perfectly. He also offered up His perfect embodied Word as a sacrifice on our behalf, so that all who accept Him for salvation and follow His example will bring glory to God. In these latter days, God has sent His completed Word to dwell within us so that we might ourselves be molded into His image and follow Him into His Kingdom. In brief, the Word of God was God, is God, and forever will be God, because the Word comes forth from the heart of God, and Yeshua Himself is the Word of God who became flesh

and dwelt among us so that all who take Him into themselves can also become one with God.

{New slide} Let's get started, then, by taking a look at the prophet Isaiah's inspired words, which provide a wonderful overview of God's forever living Word and how we ought to interact with Him. In Isaiah 55, verses 6, we read: "Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near." God gives us the opportunity today to seek Him, for while we live His Way is available to us. Yeshua Himself taught us how to do this in Matthew 7:7-8, where we read: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Just like with any relationship that becomes meaningful, God invites us to pursue Him in order to discover the desires of His heart, and God expresses the desires of His heart by His Word. How else, then, could we seek God other than by embracing His Word, which He gave us so that we might know Him? God's Word is His love language, and by His Word God has explained how we might come to know Him and love Him. Yeshua, the Word of God who became flesh who is One in being with God, said in John 14:23, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the Word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me. These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." We therefore seek God by embracing His Word, which is His loving instruction that He gave us before Yeshua, which is also the Word Yeshua spoke to us when He came in the flesh, and which is also the Word the Spirit teaches us to do when we pursue the Father through our enduring trust in the Son. And when we seek the Word of God, then God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us to help us seek Him further. This is how we find God. But as Yeshua also explained, if we do not live by the Word of God, then we do not love God and therefore cannot come to know God, for God is one in being with His Word. By rejecting God's Word, we reject God and cannot find Him. Now, if you find yourself in this situation, there is still hope—there is still time—but do not delay!

{New slide} Continuing in verse 7 of Isaiah 55, we read: "Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." To disregard the Word of God in any of His manifestations is wicked, but when we return to the Word,

God welcomes us into His presence. In the very beginning of His ministry, the LORD Yeshua explained this, according to in Matthew 4:17, where we read: “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” To repent means to change direction; it means to turn away from our own ideas and to live according to the Word of God. Because the Word of God had become flesh in Yeshua, God was truly dwelling among His people during His human life, and those who turned toward Him received His salvation. To come into an intimate relationship with the Word of God, then, is to literally dwell in His Kingdom. We can see the opposite is also true. According to Proverbs 16:25, “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” To die is to live apart from God—to be eternally separated from Him. If we pursue our own way and our own word apart from God’s instruction, we separate ourselves from Him and lose the power of His life-sustaining Spirit. If we die in this state, it becomes permanent. But if we turn away from our own sin path and instead follow the Way of life that God showed us by His Word, we are invited to dwell with Him in His Kingdom. Even if we die, we live because we know Him. God abundantly pardons those who trust in His Word and live according to it. In Psalm 119:105, David wrote in agreement with the LORD’s instruction here. There we read: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” It is by living according to God’s Word rather than our own way that we dwell with Him, and when we trust Him, He will help us every step of the way. David confirmed this in Psalm 37:23-24, where we read: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD, And He delights in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the LORD upholds him with His hand.” As I’ve explained before, the Hand of God is another metaphor that refers to Messiah Yeshua. Our hand moves according to our will, just as Yeshua acted according to the Father’s will. He showed us the Way we ought to go to live with God according to the Word He spoke, and every way that He spoke against leads to death. We ought to know His Word.

{New slide} As Isaiah 55 continues, then, in verses 8-11, we read confirmation of this interpretation: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.” And this is quite a blessing for us, isn’t it? When we seek the thoughts and ways of the LORD, we leave behind our own ways that lead to death. He raises us up in His own better Way that leads to life, and He accomplishes this through the knowledge of His Word. Continuing, we read: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do[es] not return there, But water[s] the earth, And make[s] it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it

shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” — — Let’s break this down: By God’s Word, He made the worlds, He gave instruction to His image bearers, He provided grace to those who fall short but turn back to Him, and He planned to collect the good results at the end of all things, all for His own glory. God’s Word returned to Him profitable; He accomplished God’s greatest pleasure, which was to create a kingdom to share with His image bearers forever. This is consistent with what we previously studied about God’s firstborn, for “He is the image of the invisible God” and “all things were created through Him and for Him,” according to Colossians 1:15-18. His ways are higher than our ways in every way we might imagine and more. His thoughts, which materialized in the form of His Word, are beyond our understanding, and yet He has come forth so that we might seek His understanding and continuously seek Him and find Him. Yeshua is the Word of God that never returns to God void, but rather accomplishes all that He pleases. In John 3, verses 13-15, Yeshua explained “heavenly things” to Nicodemus the Pharisee, tying Himself directly to the prophecy of Isaiah 55. There Yeshua said, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” You see, the Word of God who was in Heaven came forth from the heart of God by His Wisdom as the Son of Man, “the image of the invisible God,” so that He might redeem a people for Himself. Those who believe in Him—all that He was, all that He taught, and all that He accomplished—will “not perish but have eternal life.” The Word was lifted up in Yeshua’s resurrection, and He did not return void to the throne of Heaven. He accomplished everything for which God sent Him. “It is finished,” He explained. When He was lifted up, He removed the sting of death from sin. It was sin that was nailed to the cross and put to death for all who believe, but the Word was risen up profitable. All who repent and believe in God’s Word will indeed be lifted up with Messiah, and in this all who were created for Him will live with Him forever for His own pleasure.

{New slide} I want to take you back one more time and show you how God indeed has declared the End I just described from the beginning. Isaiah prophesied in chapter 46, 9-10, “Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.’” I have to ask you: How else would God declare anything other than by His Word? Does He give counsel without opening up His mouth? As we read from Psalm 119:105 earlier, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” It is God’s Word Who brings order to chaos and light to darkness so that we might enjoy

the counsel that He declares for our good, is it not? You see, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” according to Genesis 1:1. Before God created, God eternally existed. His Wisdom existed and His Word existed in His thoughts—those ways that are higher than our ways and those thoughts that are higher than our thoughts. We cannot fathom eternity, for it is beyond our understanding, but God is the Great I Am, and there He was before creation forever and ever, and He also is now and ever shall be. And yet, there was a moment when God created the spiritual realm and the physical realm that did not previously exist, and in the very first verse of the Bible, we can deduce that these realms were united. It was not God, but rebellion against God that brought darkness. You see, according to 1st John 1:5, “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” Thus this darkness in Genesis 1, verse 2 that was above the deep, was a type of chaos that rose in opposition to God’s plan. Without getting into too much depth here, we ought to understand that this was the moment when created heavenly beings rebelled against their Creator God, but our loving and holy God already had a plan to counter this aggression. His Spirit was hovering above the waters. I want you to picture the pure and holy goodness of God just vibrating with the power of the Almighty, ready to burst. And then it happened: God brought forth His Word from within His heart. We read: “Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. In this coming forth, “God saw” that the light “was good,” because this light was the very goodness of God that came forth from within Him to redeem His creation. First, God separated the light from the darkness, because God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. God is holy, and in Him there is no evil. No darkness could dwell in God’s Kingdom of light. God’s Word, you see, is this light that came forth from Him, and it is His Word that brought order to chaos through God’s instruction given to the prophets, and that same Word became flesh and dwelt among us as Yeshua the Messiah. Our Savior was God’s plan from the beginning.

{New slide} The Apostle John explained this Truth in His Gospel, where we read in verses 1-5: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” How could the darkness comprehend that which overcame it—that which had victory over it in every way? Verse nine adds, “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world,” for God desires redemption for His image bearers—those who model their lives after His Word. And then verse 14 explains, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The glory of

God—the light of God—it was His Word, just as we saw in Genesis, and now we can understand that this Word came forth in the flesh as Yeshua the Messiah to instruct us according to all of His perfect ways. This Word, Yeshua, was there in the beginning. Just as in Genesis 1:1, where we read, “In the beginning God,” John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word.” The syntax is identical—it’s meant to convey the eternal pre-existence of Yeshua. But just to make sure we don’t gloss over this, please note that when John wrote, “the Word was with God and the Word was God,” the Greek does not allow another translation. It reads “ho Logos ēn pros ton Theon kai Theos ēn ho Logos (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος),” which directly translates to “the Word was with the God and God was the Word.” It’s not ambiguous. Yeshua, the Word who became flesh, was with the one and only true God and He was that God. It was Yeshua who came forth from eternity to bring about a plan for creation and redemption so that He could separate a people for Himself who would live with Him forever. This is what it means that the Word was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. The purpose of this life is to turn away from our own wicked ways and to follow God’s true and righteous Way, which is His Word—a light to our path and a lamp to our feet, all the way into His Kingdom.

{New slide} You see, John also explained in verses 12-13 (Chapter 1), “as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” When we are born again through faith in Messiah Yeshua, we become sons and daughters of God who walk in the light of the LORD, which is to walk according to His written and living example. This was the will of God from the very beginning. It was the very thing that God intended when He spoke His Word, “Let there be light,” but the light of God was not fully realized in the world until Yeshua died and then rose from the dead. We read in Hebrews 1, verses 1-3, “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,…” It was only after He rose from the dead that He expressed the brightness of God’s glory in its fullness, and there He expresses the light of God forevermore. As we’ve discussed in previous messages, this is the moment when Yeshua became the firstborn of God’s inheritance and the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He came for this purpose—to die and then rise up. And yet, when He lived in the flesh, He declared the Father’s essence and made Him known to the world as the Light

of the world Who came forth from the mouth of God. As we read in John 1:18, when Yeshua came in the flesh, the visible Word of God declared the invisible Father. He spoke, and the Word of God came into the world with every breath. Again, as we've read in Colossians 1:15, Yeshua "is the image of the invisible God." The Word of God that had come forth through the prophets into Scripture, was now revealed with full meaning and purpose through the life of Yeshua on the Earth. He came to call a people to Himself so that we might be set apart for His Kingdom. But to be counted among His people, we have to receive Him and believe in His name, for this is the will of God for His children.

{New slide} Yeshua explained this Himself in John 12, verses 44-50, where we read "Then Yeshua cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me. And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the Word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.'" First of all, I want you to understand that this passage divides the sheep from the goats. Many look at this passage and believe it separates Yeshua from God—that it shows a subordinate man speaking to His God—but I want you to see that this verse actually demonstrates the exact opposite. If Yeshua is just a man, how can we look upon Him and see God? If Yeshua comes as a light into the world so that whoever believes in Him should not abide in darkness, how is He anything other than the Word that God spoke at the beginning to shine in the darkness and overcome it? After all, as John pointed out elsewhere, "God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all." If Yeshua was someone other than God, He would by default speak His own words in rebellion against God, just like any other man. He would follow His own way rather than the Way of God. But Yeshua spoke according to the Father's authority and the Father's command—His Word was not His own word; rather His Word is the Word of God that brings eternal life. He spoke whatever the Father told Him to speak because He is one in being with the Father, and He could not speak anything else, because He was God. It is specifically because Yeshua spoke the Word of God that His Words will be used to judge all people on the Last Day.

{New slide} John used prophetic imagery in Revelation to explain this very same thing to us, specifically relative to the Judgement that is coming at the End of the Age. I'm not going to read the whole passage, but here are some key verses from Revelation 19:11-16, where we read: "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ... and His name is called The Word of God. ... Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS..." When we turn to Hebrews 4:12, we read that "the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." What Word is the writer referring to here? The only Word there is, Who according to Hebrews 13:8 is "the same yesterday, today and forever." Yeshua the Messiah is the Word God spoke to the prophets, He is the Word who came in the flesh and dwelt among us, He is the Word who rose from the dead and now intercedes for us, and He is the Word who will judge us on the Last Day. The Word of God is consistent. He is "living and powerful," and yes, He comes as a sharp sword straight out of the Mouth of God. He rules by His Word, He governs by His Word, He judges by His Word, and He shows mercy according to His Word. He is "Faithful and True" and all of His judgments are righteous. The nations—all of them, including Israel, will be judged by the Word of God on the Last Day. Only those who have surrendered to the Word—who have forsaken their own way and returned to the LORD through faith in Messiah Yeshua—will receive the abundant mercy of God. The LORD searches our hearts and knows our will to serve Him. He intercedes for those of us who trust Him. He pardons those of us who seek Him with everything we have.

{New slide} In the beginning, when God said, "Let there be light," and there was light, and when God separated the light from the darkness—good from evil—He established His plan to redeem His creation and eliminate the darkness forever. He sent His Word into the world to redeem those who would surrender themselves to Him, and He raised His Word in glory, so that where He went, His followers could also go. On the Last Day, the LORD will raise up His children as a bride adorned for her husband. This multitude of people will also appear together as the population of an eternal city—New Jerusalem—and this people will dwell with God forever in His Kingdom. Revelation 21:1-4 poetically explains God's plan for His people in this way. We read: "Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. [Remember that the deep is specifically what the



darkness covered. Now it is no more. We read on:] Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’” Adam’s fall will be forgotten, because Yeshua’s rise will be remembered forever. Sin, suffering, death—all of these things—will be eliminated, for life everlasting and righteousness will be firmly established by God’s Word. God will judge all people by His Word, condemning the unfaithful, while those who trust in Him and keep His Word will be purified by the Word to dwell with God forever. The light of God’s Word will shine in the darkness and the darkness will be no more. Later on in verses 23-25, we read confirmation: “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).” In other words, Yeshua Himself, the Passover Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Word of God who became flesh, will illuminate the eternal Kingdom, because He is God—the light—and in Him there is no darkness at all. There will be no night there—no darkness—no evil. All people redeemed through faithfulness to the Word of God will walk in His eternal light and the people themselves will bring glory to God through their faithful worship. The Word of God and the people He redeemed for Himself will dwell in unity forever. Those called into God’s Kingdom will have chosen by their free will to follow God’s Word through God’s own free-will offering for all creation. It is through love, and not by coercion, that God will establish His kingdom in righteousness!

{New slide} I want to transition to a final point in today’s message highlighted earlier in Hebrews 1:1-2, where we read again: “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,...” The common denominator here is “God spoke,” and of course, in both instances, He spoke according to His Word, who is Yeshua. Today, God speaks to us through His Spirit of Truth, who dwells inside those of us who trust in the Son and show our love for God by keeping His commandments. We all know that Yeshua explained in John 14:15-18, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” These commandments are the same ones that God spoke to us by His Son, and they are not different commandments than those given beforehand when God spoke them to His prophets. God has preserved the written Scriptures for us to revere, and He has given

us His Spirit to help apply this Word to our daily lives. If we desire to keep the commandments of God, the LORD will send His Holy Spirit to help us, and He Himself will dwell within us and guide us according to His Word. Yeshua said in John 14:26, “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” In Yeshua, we have an advantage over those who lived before: We now have His example to show us how to keep God’s commandments. We can literally “love one another” as Yeshua loved us, because we can look to how He specifically dealt with certain situations and imitate Him—He is the living Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. And He is the living Word who dwells within us and teaches us all the ways of God. What a blessing!

{New slide} In serving God today, it's also important to recognize that we are held to a higher standard than those who came before us because of the advantages Yeshua has given us in His coming forth. John warned in Revelation 14:12, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Yeshua.” The Legacy Standard Bible reads, more accurately, “Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua.” We have to have this testimony of two in order to endure with God until the end. And to keep the commandments of God, we have to know what they are by meditating on the Word of God day and night. We also have to know the Son and trust in His finished work as well as His promises by surrendering our lives to the Way He showed us and the work He accomplished for us. The stakes could not be higher. In Hebrews 10, verses 28-29, the writer explained, “Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?” The standard is higher now that Yeshua came in the flesh to die for our sins, and then rise up. Is it a small thing that God sent His Son to suffer and die for His people? There is nothing of greater importance, and because of this grace we ought to follow God's instruction that has come to us by His Word. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:17, “if, while we seek to be justified by Messiah, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Messiah therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!” We cannot become transgressors against God’s Word while also claiming salvation by His Word. God’s Word is consistent—it does not contradict. In order to be considered righteous in God’s eyes, we ought to showcase our faith and obedience in His Word, for His Word saves us. As James 2:26 explains, just “as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Our duty is

surrender to the Word of God so that we can continue walking along the narrow path with God all the way into His Kingdom.

{New slide} Many people point to Matthew 5:17-20 and explain that Yeshua fulfilled the law and the prophets with His death and resurrection, and therefore we are not subject to the law of Moses, but that is not what Yeshua explained in these verses. We read: “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” In His life on the earth, as the Word of God who became flesh, Yeshua indeed fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, but this saying means something very different than what most imagine. The word “fulfill,” or “plēroō (πληρώω)” in the Greek, means to make full, to fill to the fullest, or to liberally supply with what is necessary for subsistence, according to Thayer’s Greek-English lexicon. In other words, Yeshua came as the Word of God made flesh to perfectly execute the Torah and show us how to also fulfill the Torah so that we can follow Him into eternal life. Yeshua also said, according to Matthew 16:24, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” We have to sacrifice our own ways and take on His Holy Way given to us by His Word in order to follow Yeshua into His Kingdom. Secondly, if you go back to our series on the Elementary Principles of Messiah, note during the section on the Resurrection from the Dead that no man rests in the Kingdom of God until the Last Day when Yeshua will raise us up. Therefore, when we read that those in the Kingdom today call us “least” or “great” depending on whether we keep and teach the commandments, we ought to understand that Yeshua is referring to His heavenly angels, and these same angels are the ones who are going to help Yeshua with the harvest of souls on the Last Day, separating those who have done good from those who have done evil. There is only one option for us if we want to make it into God’s Kingdom, and that is this: We have to demonstrate our faithfulness and love for Yeshua by keeping and teaching the commandments of God. Finally, you might think that the Scribes and Pharisees were righteous and exceeding their righteousness is impossible, but the testimony of Scripture does not bear this out to be true. They thought of themselves as righteous, but they were not, and for this they were humbled by the Word of God. In Matthew 23, Yeshua gave the Scribes and Pharisees a scathing review, calling them lawless hypocrites. In verses 27-38, we read: “Woe to

you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” If you were to examine another witness in Matthew 15 or Mark 7, you might note that these Scribes and Pharisees taught as doctrine the commandments of men, but ignored the commandments of God, which is the Word of God. Rather than set up worldly rules that make us appear righteous, we ought to focus our effort on following God's Word, for it is an eternal and consistent path to everlasting life. We need to humble ourselves before God completely, understanding that without His help we cannot walk righteously before Him. It is by His grace alone that we are saved. Without Him, our souls are worthy of death. When we submit to the Word of God completely, we might find the narrow way to life everlasting.

{New slide} In Psalm 18:30, David explained, “As for God, His way is perfect; The Word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.” Indeed, those who keep the commandments of God and faith in Yeshua will endure in His love until He comes to bring His people into His Kingdom. Just as Yeshua explained in John 14 that God's Holy Spirit would help us keep His commandments, David explained the same in Psalm 18:28, where we read: “For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.” If there is any way in us that is unrighteous, we ought to ask the LORD to help us uncover it so that we can humbly return to His narrow Way. Only when we are humble and contrite in spirit does the LORD look upon us with His favor. As David prayed in Psalm 139, verses 23-24, so should we: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.” Likewise, we ought to ask the LORD to heal us with His mercy, as David did in Psalm 51:10-11: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” We should be examining ourselves daily to humble ourselves before the LORD, for this is how we can have confidence, through faith, that He will exalt us by His grace.

{New slide} It's when we demonstrate our faithfulness to Yeshua by abiding in the Word of God that we can express the confidence of David in Psalm 18, verses 20-23, where we read: “The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.” Yeshua, when He came in the flesh,

presented the same exact message by way of a parable in Luke 6, verses 46-49, where we read: “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.” It is in obedience and faithfulness to the Word of God, which is the rock—that firm foundation Yeshua spoke about in this parable—that we endure until Yeshua returns to bring us into His Kingdom. On Him alone we can stand and endure in this life, but without Him we will be washed away into the sea of darkness, which ultimately will also be destroyed.

{New slide} The Word of God, if nothing else, is consistent throughout. According to John 5:39, Yeshua told the Scribes and Pharisees: “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.” He didn’t say they were wrong. Indeed, the words of eternal life are explained in Scripture, but all those words point to Yeshua, the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us, so that all who believe in Him will inherit eternal life. We have to have a testimony of two—faith in Yeshua and obedience to God’s commandments—for the light of God to shine in us. Yeshua added in John 5:46-47, “if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?” The foundation for our faith in Yeshua comes from the Torah written down by Moses, and in the rest of the prophets. The written law gives us black and white instruction for life and points to the coming of Yeshua, but Yeshua gave the Word of eternal life that shows us God’s heartbeat in His instruction. For example, in Matthew 5:27-30, Yeshua explained God’s heartbeat for His seventh commandment, “You shall not commit adultery.” There we read: “‘You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” It’s not just about following the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law. And Yeshua has given us His Holy Spirit so we can rightly divide His Word of Truth. Similarly, Yeshua said that those who are angry risk judgement for murder, and those

who say they will do something and then fail to do it are guilty of evil. Indeed, Moses's prophetic Word takes on new, refreshing life when taught by the Word of God Himself. With Yeshua, we don't only know the letter of the law, but also the Spirit of the Word that has so much more meaning for us as we seek to know and imitate our God.

{New slide} After God gave Moses the Ten Words from Mt. Sinai, which we affectionately call the Ten Commandments, the people of Israel were afraid to listen to His voice because they were concerned about the consequences of hearing His Word. Perhaps we can relate. So long as we don't know the law, don't we feel more comfortable going about our business in ignorance not knowing whether we're breaking it? That being said, is ignorance of the law ever a good excuse? We have former police officers in the room. Ask them this question. God explained that Moses would serve as a mediator for the people to ease their terror. Moses would explain the law to the people, and the people would go to Moses with their disputes. But later Yeshua would come, a Prophet like Moses—an eternal Mediator, the eternal High Priest, a Prophet forever, and He would demand an audience. Obedience to His Word is not optional. In Deuteronomy 18, verses 18-19, we read: "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him." As we read earlier, Yeshua, the Word of God, would speak every Word the Father commanded to Him. He would present the commandments as the Son of God, the promised One sent to redeem a people for Himself. But those who failed to listen to Him would be judged according to the same Word which He spoke. The words, "whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him" are not as precise as they perhaps ought to be. Maybe a better rendering is this: Those who reject the Word of the LORD will be burned up in the fire of judgment when the Son returns and opens up His mouth. The Word that comes forth from His mouth will destroy anyone who has disregarded Him. This is why we, who are now following Yeshua, are called to go out and teach the commandments of God to all new disciples we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. All men and women will be held accountable if they do not obey the Gospel, and we will be held accountable if we do not offer it to them. As Paul wrote in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." It is incumbent on us to spread the Word of God to all with ears to hear, so that the Holy Spirit can convict those with ears to hear and bring them into the obedience of Messiah. We are saved by the Word of God not to continue in sin but to walk in the righteousness of God forevermore. In Romans 6:20-23, Paul wrote, "when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you

have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our LORD." I don't know about you, but I have no desire whatsoever to be free from righteousness, for I desire to live forever with God, who is righteous. Thanks be to God for His mercy, so that when we seek Him and His Word, He will abundantly pardon us for the ways we walked in which we are now ashamed. Today is the day we ought to seek the Word of God in all forms, while His mercy is shining down upon us. Whether the Word given through the prophets, the Word who came in the flesh, or the Word that dwells within us by the power of God's Holy Spirit, we ought to humble ourselves before Him, for God has made us to be a people for Himself to enjoy in His inheritance for His glory. Our role is to say yes each and every day and to follow Him anew. "His mercies are new every morning." Next week, we will continue to explore the topic of God's Word, but from another angle. For now, I pray that you abide in the Word of God, now and forever, Amein. Shabbat shalom.