

Torah's relevance for Christians

Parashat Ki Tavo([D'varim/Deuteronomy 26-29:8](#)) 5782 B"H

Discussing Torah can be divisive (though it shouldn't be!)

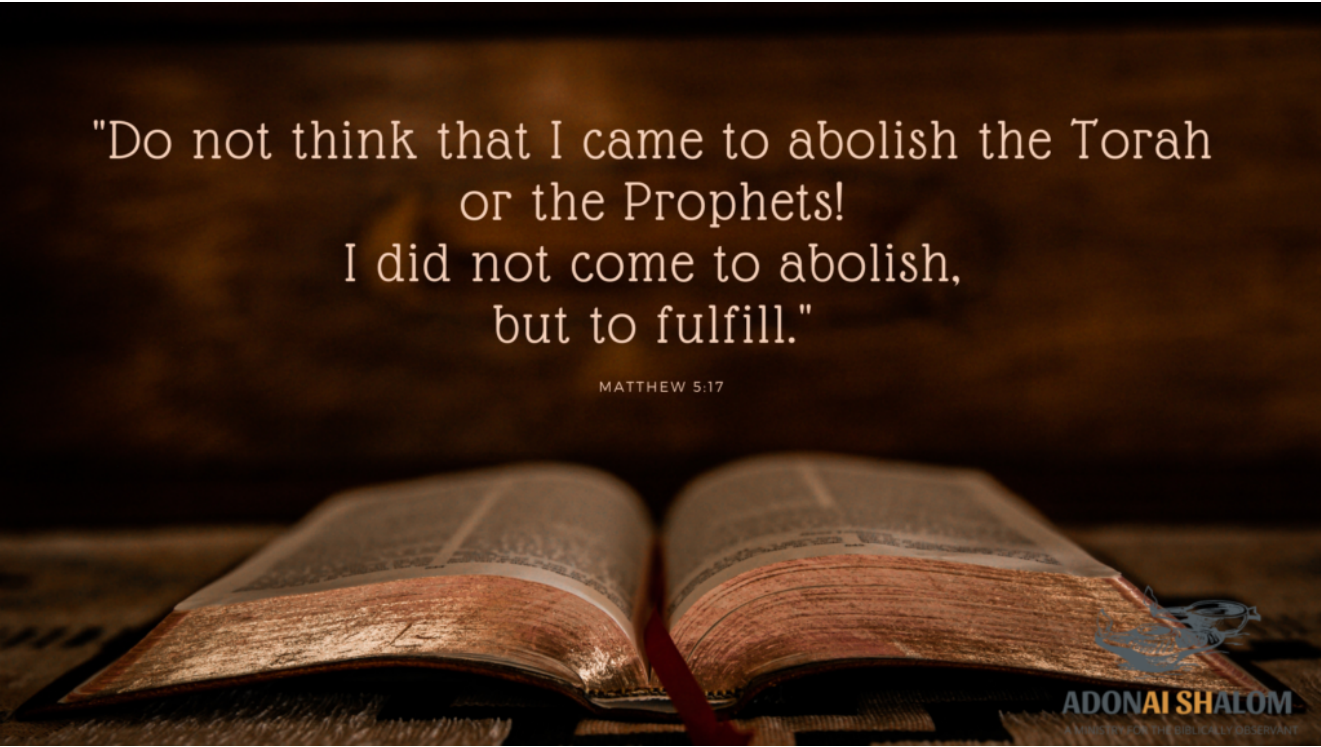
Discussing the Torah among those who believe in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) can be divisive.

But it really ought not be so.

After all, the King of all kings said this:

["Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17](#)

He did not come to abolish the Torah or any of the other Scripture writings of the prophets. He came to fulfill them . . . so Torah remains important and relevant!



"Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah
or the Prophets!
I did not come to abolish,
but to fulfill."

MATTHEW 5:17

ADONAI SHALOM

Instructions for Life

I know I have mentioned this before, but for those who may be new to the blog, Torah refers to the first five books found in the Bible, sometimes called the Pentateuch.

In most Christian circles, these books are referred to as the Law.

But the Hebrew word, "*Torah*" means **more** than "Law." In fact, we could say it is softened a bit. *Torah* is the word for "instruction." God gave us **His instructions** to follow.

Ah, but I suppose you are thinking "this is impossible! There is no way we could possibly follow everything written in Torah!"

Right you are, my sister or my brother.

It would be completely impossible for any of us to perfectly keep the commandments in Torah.

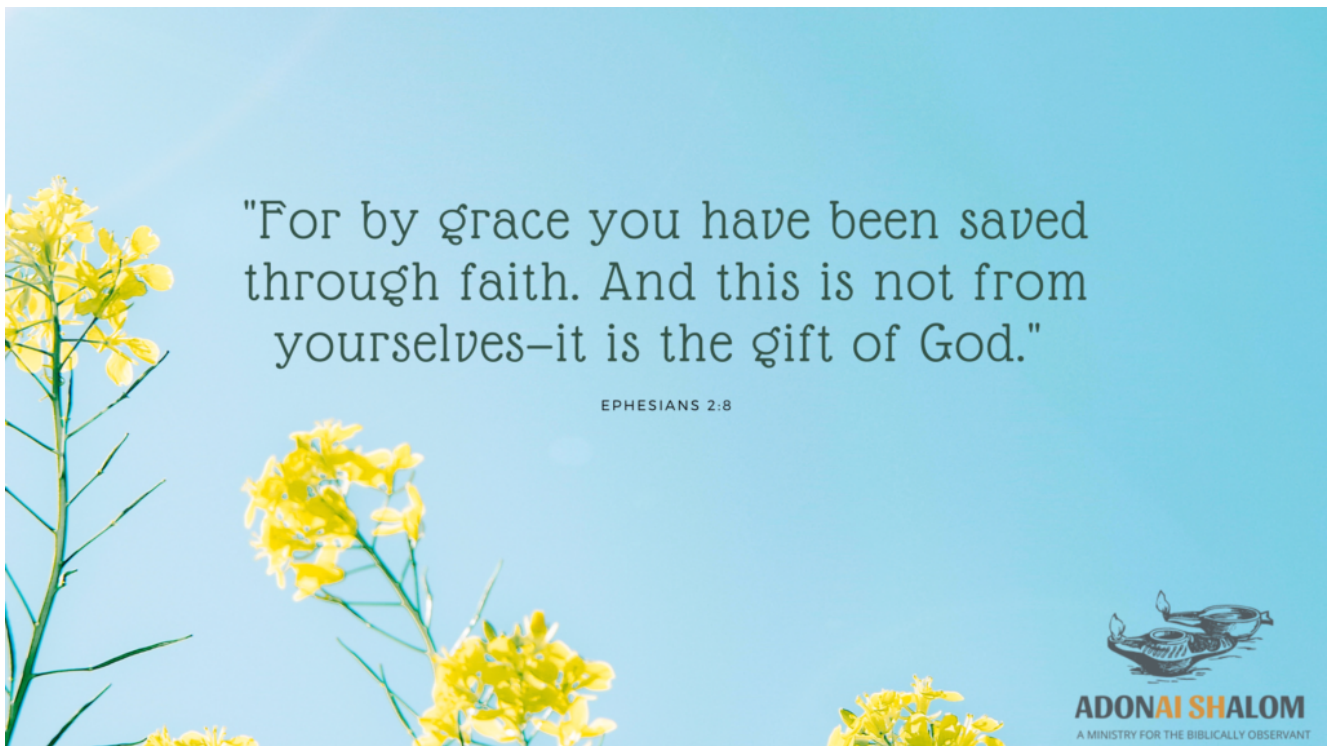
But, Messiah told us in the same chapter of Matthew to ["be](#)

[perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48](#)

[If we love Him, we are to keep His commandments. \(John 14:15\).](#) He has done away with the **curse** related to not keeping the entire law, but living in holiness and following His commandments/instructions for life still matters.

We are to strive for perfection, knowing [we will fall short](#) – but His grace and mercy are there to wash over us and make us holy. Our works will NOT save us. We are saved by His grace:

[“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves—it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8](#)



Disregarding Torah often leads to Replacement Theology

Replacement theology is an erroneous doctrine.

This doctrine has taught that the church has superseded Israel and that the Law has been abolished.

The danger with replacement theology is that the Hebrew Scriptures (including Torah) ultimately get neglected and the continuum through time of the history of salvation and grace becomes broken and misunderstood. Disregarding Torah can be devastating – anti-Semitism has flourished in places where Torah is criticized. We need only remember the Holocaust – how many Bible-believing Christians in Europe actually contributed to (whether directly or through apathy) the extermination of their Jewish neighbors? If you're interested in reading more on this topic, check out my article on [“Replacing Replacement Theology”](#) here:

[*Replacing replacement theology: is the church the “New” Israel?*](#)

Preaching today must move beyond motivational speaking

I read an [article](#) just last week from [Answers in Genesis](#) that caught my attention because in it, the author suggests that the number one reason millennials are leaving the church is due to their **lack of understanding of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures)**.

Have you noticed that so much preaching today has become reduced to spiritual motivational speaking?

When Scripture is sparingly used, young people hearing the Good News do not get the full picture.

They do not understand the powerful continuity between the prophetic nature of the Hebrew Scriptures and the glorious fulfillment shared with us in the New Testament (Brit Chadashah).

If we ignore Torah, we will lose generations to confusion and

disinterest.

Torah gives us a solid and balanced foundation for teaching and preaching from the *New Testament*!



Blessings for Obeying Torah (and the entire Word of God)

[D'varim/Deuteronomy 28](#) assures us that if we “listen obediently to the voice of ADONAI your God, taking care to do all His mitzvot . . .”

He will

1. [Set you high above all the nations of the earth](#)
2. [All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you \(Deuteronomy 28:1-2\)](#)

I hear so many believers quote several of the blessings found in [Deuteronomy 28](#):

[Deuteronomy 28:3](#) “Blessed will you be in the city, and blessed

will you be in the field.”

“Blessed will be the fruit of your womb, the produce of your soil, and the offspring of your livestock – the increase of your herds and the young of your flock.” Deuteronomy 28:4

“Blessed will be your basket and your kneading bowl.”
Deuteronomy 28:5



“Blessed will you be when you come in, and blessed will you be when you go out.” Deuteronomy 28:6

"Blessed will you be when you come in,
and blessed will you be when you go out."

Deuteronomy 28:6



The chapter goes on to say "[every undertaking of your hand will be blessed](#)" (Deuteronomy 28:8).

You will "[overflow in prosperity . . .](#)" [Deuteronomy 28:11](#)

There is a reason this chapter is so popular!

But as I wrote in a previous article, [don't stop reading D'varim/Deuteronomy 28 at verse 14!](#) The blessings are listed, but we mustn't stop there!

If we quote these verses, but take them out of the context where they are found (*in Torah!*), we are misunderstanding these blessings.

[Don't stop reading Deuteronomy 28 at verse 14](#)

What happens if we disregard God's Word?

["But if you will not listen to the voice of ADONAI your God,](#)

to take care to do all His *mitzvot* and statutes that I am commanding you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you . . .” Deuteronomy 28:15

This verse is followed by a lengthy list of some very terrifying curses.

“All these curses will come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed—because you did not listen to the voice of ADONAI your God, to keep His *mitzvot* and statutes that He commanded you.” Deuteronomy 28:45

The point is reiterated several times in the passage:

“If you do not take care to do all the words of this Torah, the things written in this scroll, to fear this glorious and awesome Name, ADONAI your God, then ADONAI will make your plagues and the plagues of your descendants extraordinary – terrible and prolonged plagues, severe and prolonged illnesses. He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt that you were afraid of, and they will cling to you. Also every illness and plague that is not written in the scroll of this Torah, ADONAI will bring on you, until you are destroyed.” Deuteronomy 28:58-61

We are setting ourselves up for devastation if we refuse to familiarize ourselves with the **basic principles** found in Torah. The blessings listed above were assured to those who would obey and follow the LORD and His instructions. In like manner, the curses were assured to those who refused to do so. We must acknowledge the seriousness of the issues at stake!

If we determine that Torah is no longer relevant in **any** way, we are ultimately denying Yeshua (Jesus) as King of Israel! He is One with the LORD, He is God, the God of Israel and we must never deny His divinity and Lordship.

“For ADONAI is our Judge,

[ADONAI is our Lawgiver,](#)
[ADONAI is our King–](#)
[He will save us!” Isaiah 33:22](#)

Yeshua, God’s Son, (Jesus) fulfilled Torah because we fall short. But He did not abolish it. There is so much to learn from Torah . . . from the ways of the LORD. His instructions are given so we will know how to live a righteous lifestyle and live in a manner that pleases Him.

Are we free from the curses as followers of Messiah?

Absolutely.

If we are true followers of Messiah.

Today, there are many who may say, [“Lord, Lord . . .” but do they really know Him?](#)

If we have genuinely repented, and if we embrace the entirety of His Word, those curses will not fall upon us. We are free from the curse of the law because our Messiah became a curse for us when He died on the cross for our sins:

[“Messiah liberated us from Torah’s curse, having become a curse for us \(for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”\).” Galatians 3:13](#)

Biblical Lifestyle

We are beyond blessed to live in a time when we can connect with other believers so easily and evaluate our posture on positions that the church has taken over the years. More and more followers of Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) are learning about the Biblical lifestyle found in the wholeness of God’s Word and it is an exciting time to be a part of as more and more people take Scripture more seriously!

We are nearing the New Year (Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashanah) and I pray that you will dedicate time, effort, and most importantly prayer, as you more closely walk with the Messiah of Israel!

The Guardian of Israel

Parashat Ki Tetzei ([D'varim/Deuteronomy 21:10-25](#)) 5782 B"H

Prudence and Safety are prioritized in Scripture by the Guardian of Israel

Have you ever driven on a mountainous road that lacks guardrails?

Or looked off the edge of such a road to see a huge drop-off just a few inches or feet below you?

I have traveled to countries where guardrails appear to be *optional!*



"I was right on the cliff-edge, ready to fall, when God grabbed and held me." Psalm 118:13, the Message
Similarly, I have also visited churches where safety does **not** appear to be a top priority:

Children running wild; old and broken toys, equipment, or safety latches; and poor supervision. The amount of safety and security measures set in place tends to be directly related to the congregational community's level of affluence and education. I know I am generalizing, but wealthier, more affluent congregations *tend* to implement stricter safety policies, particularly for the children's ministry areas while less affluent (and also, *typically* less-educated) congregations often brush aside safety. Those who take safety less seriously usually have the faith that God will protect the children in the nursery with or without things like functioning baby safety gates.

Yes, the Guardian of Israel can protect us despite our weaknesses, lack of resources, or lack of education.

But, the LORD actually *expects* us to be prudent.

We should seek to be well-rounded in our education – in that

we study Scripture, but we also study and analyze our safety measures!

We should make changes as we become more educated. Just as we ought to study Scripture deeply, we should seek the richness of prudence in the practical aspects of life so we can be an example to the world of what *to do* versus what *not to do*!

A “safety-first” posture should be adopted for all children’s ministries (and all ministries in general, of course!)

One of the congregations we pastored was comprised almost entirely of Central American immigrants. Most of these dear brothers and sisters in the LORD spoke different tonal dialects like K’iche’ and Chatino. Because they had grown up in remote villages, many had not mastered the Spanish language – let alone English. Some had been sent into the larger cities as children to learn Spanish and receive education, but others had not received more than about a second grade education. Our brothers and sisters had difficulty with reading the Bible, but they loved the LORD nonetheless.

As the congregation grew, it became necessary to implement a children’s ministry. We expected the people to be **joyful** that they had reached this important milestone as a congregation. But it was the opposite! There was resistance. Most in this congregation did **not** want a children’s ministry.

This is why we always say . . . pray for your pastors!

As my husband and I tried to prayerfully discern what the underlying issues were, we came to some realizations:

Worship was the only time during the week when many of these mothers of large families felt they had a break. They did not want to be responsible for a class of *more* children. The men

and women had become so accustomed to the screaming and crying of young children that they must have learned to tune it out. They wouldn't even attempt to quiet their children during the services, most of the time.

We had to gradually teach the importance of **godly discipline and order**.

Setting up a standard nursery staffed by the members of the congregation would be a challenge because both the men and the women feared things like background checks due to their immigration status. We realized we would need the partnership of documented individuals, even if they were from another congregation, in order to staff a legitimate nursery/children's ministry. Thankfully, the LORD sent some young women to fill this role for a time.

*It turns out that our situation was not entirely unique. Many ministry leaders of primarily-Hispanic congregations have faced similar issues when it comes to guiding young immigrant parents. Often, the parents are barely entering adulthood themselves and **simply need some wise and caring instruction**.*

Safety had to be a priority. We didn't want children bumping their heads on hard surfaces or playing with objects that could poke their eyes. And we most certainly didn't want any infants falling out of an unsecured crib.

We had to be patient, but also firm.

The Guardian of Israel requires Guardrails for safety:

We taught our congregation what the LORD says about safety:

"When you build a new house,
you are to make a guardrail for your roof,
so that you do not bring the guilt of blood on your house
if anyone falls from it."

D'varim/Deuteronomy 22:8



["When you build a new house, you are to make a guardrail for your roof, so that you do not bring the guilt of blood on your house if anyone falls from it." Deuteronomy 22:8](#)

I absolutely **love** that this provision is in Scripture.

We are to concern ourselves with the well-being of others. **We must build into** our homes, our lives, and our ministries **safety protocols to ensure the safety of everyone.**

That said, we must also concern ourselves with the mental health of our people. Those mothers who needed a break needed the reassurance that they wouldn't be responsible *every.single.week* for that children's class. A rotation needed to be implemented to ensure fairness and rest.

The Guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps, but He knows we all need to rest in His presence. Ministry leaders: ensure that your nursery workers are getting time to worship, too.



“Behold, the Guardian of Israel never slumbers nor sleeps.”
Psalm 121:4

Don't slip off the edge

Ministry issues like the one I just described are enough to make pastors feel like they are going bonkers. The children's ministry issue was just one of so many strange conflicts that we dealt with over the years. The enemy is astute and always seeking to discourage and devour! And sadly, we have heard those reports of ministry leaders who have gone off the edge, either falling into unfathomable sin or taking their own lives.

I am thankful to the LORD for the patient strength of my husband and the persistence and resilience He gave to both of us as we navigated those situations.

See, the world today is about to fall off a cliff.

And the devil wants to run as many people off that cliff as possible.

Whatever you do, don't slip off the edge. Don't take the bait.

[Wear the armor of the LORD and resist the wiles of the devil.](#)

Trust in the Guardian of Israel alone.

I heard one colleague describe it so very simply in a recent sermon: *"The world has gone insane!"*

D'varim/Deuteronomy speaks to the "severely disordered state of mind" of today's world

Merriam-Webster defines "insane" as "exhibiting a severely disordered state of mind."

The world has indeed become severely disordered.

Children are growing up being bombarded by all sorts of things we didn't have to deal with just 30 years ago.

The author of confusion is working hard to mislead and deceive the next generations

Just recently, my two boys were enrolled in a swimming class at the local YMCA.

There was a boy in the class who was wearing boy's swimwear but with pink goggles and hoop earrings. The child's mother insisted that the swimming teacher use female pronouns to describe her son, and this young boy (younger than 10) was being called by a girl's name.

It was a tragedy to witness.

Because my children are homeschooled, we have been somewhat distanced from this very real reality that has become normal outside of our wonderful little homeschool bubble.

The transgender agenda is being pushed upon children and it is a true battle being waged for the souls of the children of our nation. **My children expressed great confusion at having a boy in their class who was being called by a girl's name.** Why should children be exposed to all of this nonsense? It really is so sad. I am thankful that my children know the Guardian of Israel, the Guardian of their souls and their eyes are open to what is going on around them.

The world's agenda is (mal)aligned with the enemy of our souls, and we must be vigilant to detect how and where the enemy is trying to pull our own children toward the depths of confusion.

A few years ago, I was looking for a tie for my husband to go with a new suit. I was in the men's section of a department store and I kid you not, practically every single tie was floral! Yes, I know some masculine guys can probably pull off a few flowers, but these were mostly all pink. It took me a long time to finally find something suitable (and masculine-looking). The world aims for the feminization of men and the masculinization of women. The reason for this is simple: **the devil thrives on disorder.**

I read an interesting commentary recently that rightly observed how the women's section of stores has degraded into selling mostly things like ripped jeans and stringy tops – as though it is a competition to see who can dress the **least** classy, the **least** modestly.

I personally choose to wear skirts and it is next to impossible to find nice ones at the stores. The world of today does not want women to embrace femininity. But **what does the Bible say?**

["A man's apparel is not to be on a woman, nor is a man to wear woman's clothing—for whoever does these things is detestable to ADONAI your God." Deuteronomy 22:5](#)

The Word of God confirms that there are distinct roles intended for men and for women.

But **the world chooses to act in defiance** to God's created order.

We see this with the way the LGBTQ+ movement has reappropriated the rainbow for their cause. The rainbow was intended for the **LORD's** children – those who are truly His sons and daughters through faith in His Son, **who repent of their sins rather than glorify themselves or their pride.**

The severely disordered state of mind (what we call "insanity") that is infecting the world is a mentality that has also **quietly seeped into the church.**

The fact that Bible-believers are defending claims of stolen elections, fake news, and practically paving the way for a future American dictator demonstrate that **even the church itself has gone astray.** Politics and the church really don't mix.

Is it wonderful when we have elected leaders that care about their evangelical constituents?

Of course.

But we have too many elected leaders that **use** their evangelical constituents. Many don't actually care a bit about their constituents or their viewpoints so long as they stay in power. Yet too many who claim to follow the LORD have become blinded to this, convinced the politicians actually want to defend their freedoms. Anyone can spout off propaganda that they care about your freedom, but that alone doesn't make it true. Be discerning.

How many Christians *belligerently* refused to wear a mask in the beginning of the pandemic, when it was clear lives were at risk and no immunizations were yet available? It had so much

more to do with political parties than actual prudence and those who participated in such behavior ought repent.

Belligerence is not a fruit of the Spirit.

Even if we personally don't see the need for a new crib mattress or larger budget for the children's ministry, we need to **think of the needs of others so we do not act like the reckless, belligerent world.**

[God requires prudence, care for our neighbor, and precaution taken.](#) In all situations.

Regardless of political affiliation and personal preferences, we must demonstrate righteousness judgment, kindness, and compassion.

We must be careful that we do not unwittingly become part of the insanity around us.

We must remain level-headed.

True believers have the [mind of Messiah!](#) We must act like it!

En garde: Are you ready for the battle ahead?

I never had a chance to try fencing, but when I was in about the fifth grade, I got to watch a live presentation on the sport from the local university. I've always thought it looks like fun! Now I watch my boys with their toy swords having sword fights and I am convinced they would really love it, too.

No one near us teaches the sport, though, so I guess it is just not for us.

I did study French, though, so I know that a common term in fencing is "en garde!"

You have to be ready, on guard, so you can win a battle.

Are you “en garde?” Are you:

Prepared with a strategy?

In the right physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual condition?

Wearing the right armor?

Are you ready to be on the offense when necessary, but able to defend yourself?

*Do you have the self-awareness to know when you are **too** aggressive?*

Do you know when to take a step back and guard your tongue?

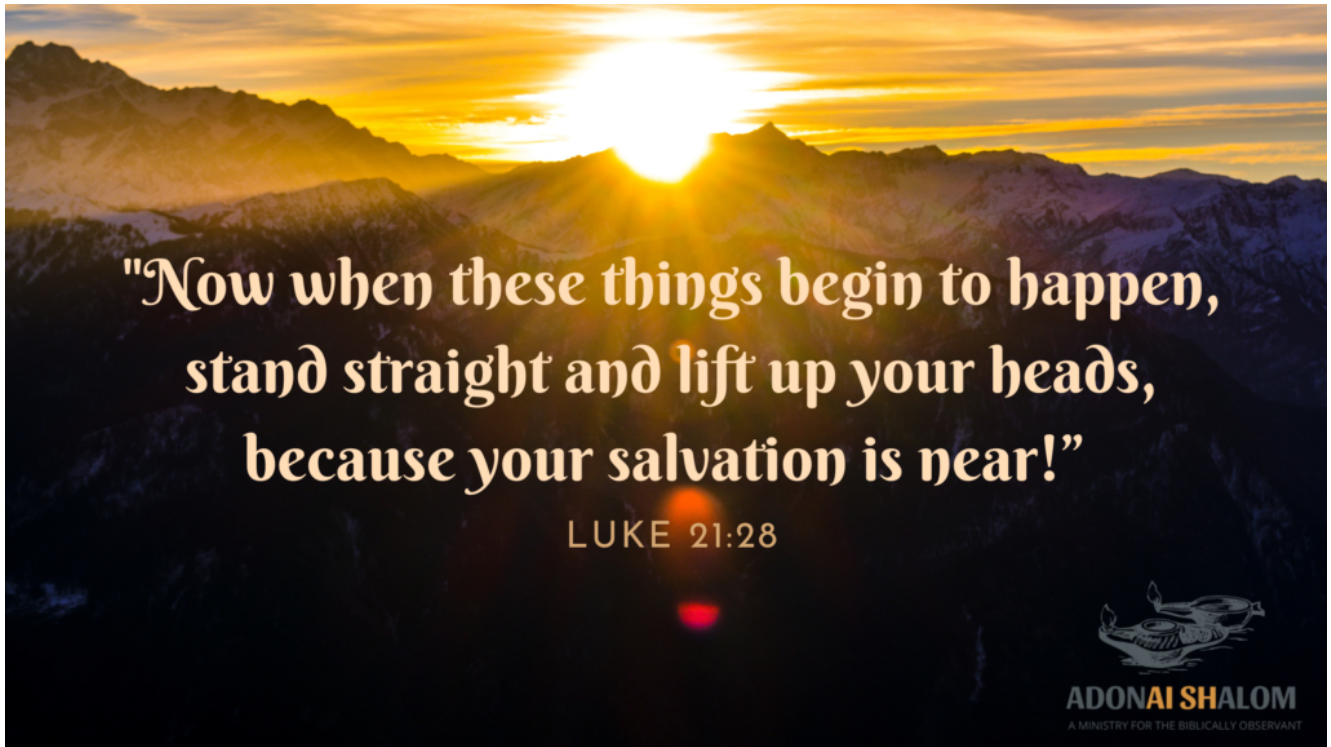
The world is not going to get any better, in fact, things are only going to take a turn for the worse.

How's that for uplifting?

I do not intend to get you down today. On the contrary, I want you to be ready.

I want you to be confident and actually quite enthusiastic because the crazier this world gets, the brighter we can shine because we know our redemption is near.

[“Now when these things begin to happen, stand straight and lift up your heads, because your salvation is near!” Luke 21:28](#)



The Guardian of Israel wants to guard you and protect you

Your salvation is near if you have trusted in the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua (Jesus Christ). The Guardian of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps is ever so perfectly aware of the world we are living in and He has done all He can so we can be [in the world, but not of it.](#) The world will perpetually choose darkness and confusion, but you are placed in this world to show the Light of Messiah, that some perhaps would choose the way of salvation.

The Guardian of Israel will guard you and protect you if you will walk in His ways!

The Word of God is like our safety net:

The world rejects order and discipline.

The world chooses recklessness and darkness.

The world mocks those who would build a guardrail, deriding

them by saying they worry too much.

Be a light. Yes, we have faith which triumphs over fear, but we also seek to live prudently so that we will honor the Word of the LORD.

Our homes and houses of worship must be safe places so that everyone may thrive!

Trust in the Guardian of Israel, YHWH, the LORD Most High today!

Is there something from which you particularly need the LORD's protection today? Have you ever faced a struggle or conflict in ministry? How have you overcome those challenges? Do you have a favorite Bible verse that helps you endure? How can we pray for you or your ministry today? Do you have a testimony that you would like to share about how the LORD has protected you and your family? We'd love to hear from you! Please leave a comment/reply below! Also, please consider subscribing to our monthly newsletter so you can keep updated and receive extra resources straight to your inbox! We promise not to overwhelm your inbox.

[*Leviticus and Children's Ministry*](#)