

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!)

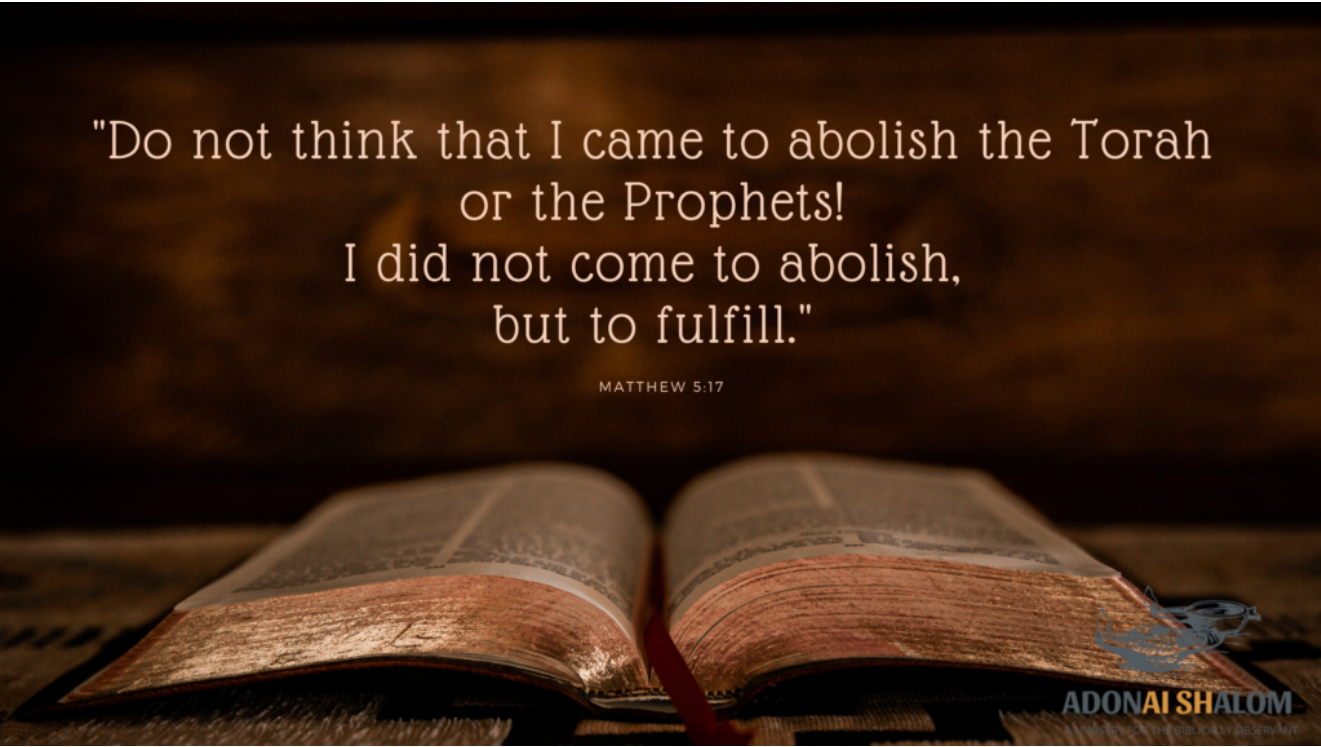
Discussing the Torah among those who believe in Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) can be divisive.

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!

An open book with aged, yellowed pages is shown from a top-down perspective. The book is open to a page with text. The background is dark and slightly blurred. The text is centered and reads: "Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." Below the text, in smaller font, is "MATTHEW 5:17". In the bottom right corner of the image, there is a logo for "ADONAI SHALOM" with a small graphic of a dove and the text "A JEWISH VOICE FOR THE GENTILE WORLD".

"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

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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.

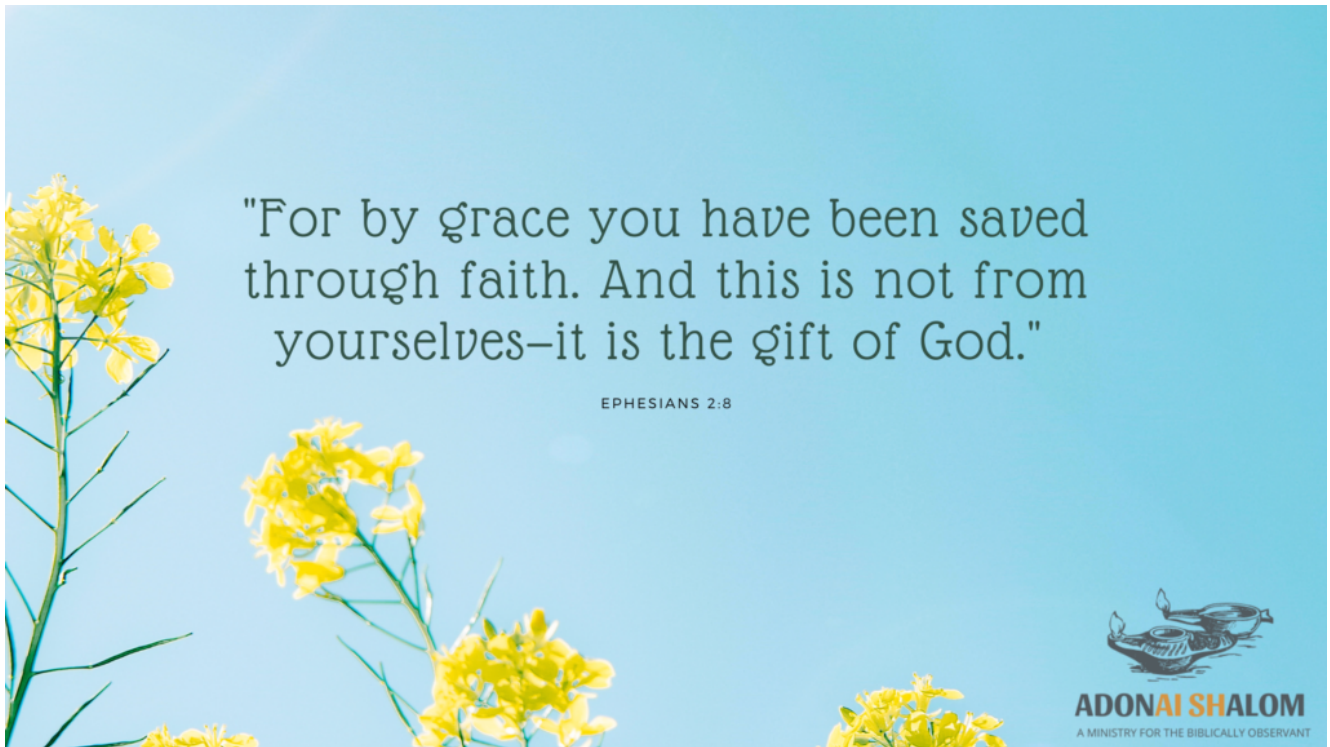
But, Messiah told us in the same chapter of Matthew to ["be](#)

[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!

Don't stop reading Deuteronomy 28 at verse 14

Parashat Ki Tavo 5781 B"H

The first part of [Deuteronomy \(Devarim\) 28](#) is a favorite for many. And who wouldn't like it?

[". . . all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you, if you listen to the voice of ADONAI your God . . . "](#)
[Deut.28:2](#)

Blessings will abound! Blessed will you be in the city, in the field, your children, your land and produce, your flock ([verses 3-6](#)). Your enemies will flee from you! ([v.7](#)) You will lend and not borrow, you will be the head and not the tail ([v.12, 13](#)).

What's not to like?

Certainly all of us who claim to love Adonai resonate with these promises. Surely, we are established as His holy people ([v.9](#)) and surely we walk in His ways. Right?

["Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of ADONAI and they will stand in awe of you." Deut. 28:10](#)

Ok, now the pride meter might be rising.

“Everyone will be in awe of us.”

“We are His people, and we cannot fail.”

Uh oh. We may be getting on a slippery slope, my friends.

Blessings require us to **LISTEN** and to **OBEY**

These blessings are *contingent* upon consistent relationship with the Holy One of Israel. These blessings don't just come because we have professed faith. These blessings **require** us to constantly LISTEN to what His Spirit is saying and obey what is written in His Word.

It is only natural for us to dwell on the things we like and try not to think about the stuff that we don't. **But we are not called to be natural, we are called to be spiritual.**

Many believers know parts of Deuteronomy 28 very well – but if you check closely, those commonly cited passages are all found in the first 14 verses of the chapter.

I don't hear anyone talking about the curses! And understandably so . . . they are overwhelming! *Terrifying*. But we must acknowledge the reality that there are REAL curses that DO afflict those who choose to disobey God.

There are 69 verses in Deuteronomy 28, not just 14. MOST of those verses describe the *destruction* that will come to those who turn from ADONAI'S instructions.

Most people are concentrating on only 20% of the entire

chapter. Most of us are ignoring 80% of Deuteronomy 28.

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BUT THERE IS HOPE!

The curse of sin and death has been broken.

But if we do not understand what we have been saved from, ***we are missing half of that very blessing***. Also, if we do not understand that sanctification is an **ongoing process** and that we either **invite blessing or demise** into our lives based on our **choices (even after receiving salvation)** we are prone to confusion and a less dynamic understanding of the relationship we hold as children of the Most High God.

THE CURSES ACTUALLY REVEAL HOW AMAZING LIVING UNDER *BLESSING* REALLY IS

You don't ***have to*** live under any curse. **You have the choice** to follow the Savior, who chooses to bless us when we repent and reject a cursed life of sin and death.

How great a salvation! We were destined for curse but the Son of God, Yeshua ha Mashiach (Jesus the Christ) came to earth, died for our transgressions, our failings, and our disobedience, so that we may have life eternal if we believe in His Name.

We must confess that He alone is Lord and follow His ways.

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The curses outlined in Deuteronomy 28:15ff are so **horrific**

that it just makes me think of just **how awesome the gift of salvation truly is**. We have been saved from terror, a hopeless, despairing future and so freely given love, security, and peace – the shalom that surpasses all understanding. So many people fear “keeping Torah,” citing legalism and claiming irrelevance, but if only they would understand how Torah illuminates what pleases God and rather than bind us, it **fre**es us to more fully understand the richness of our salvation!



Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,
a worker who does not need to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15



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2 Timothy 2:15

So let's commit ourselves to

**reading the entirety of the Bible,
not just the parts we like.**

Because even in those passages that seem so difficult or even dreadful to read . . . – even there in the depths, we can find the glimmer of the Gospel. He has given us hope and a future, so let's learn and study the whole Word so we can step into our callings as ambassadors for His glorious Truth.

Shalom!

