

What is the Torah?

Torah is what is commonly referred to in the New Testament as “the law”. The law is a unit of 613 commandments given by Yahweh through Moses to the people of Israel. Leviticus 26:46 states

“These are the laws, rulings and teachings that God himself gave to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses.”

The word Torah means much more than law, which implies a harsh system of legalism in today’s western mindset. Torah comes from the Hebrew word yarah which means to direct, instruct, teach, throw, or cast (1). It was intended to teach and instruct the people of Israel in Yahweh’s ways. As the apostle Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16, 17

“All scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living; thus everyone who belongs to God may be fully equipped for every good work.”

It is important to note that the “New Testament” was not even completed at this time and would not be canonized as “scripture” for another 2 centuries. So what scripture was Paul referring to? The Old Testament, of course, which Paul was a master of, being trained all his life as a Pharisee.

The commandments of the Torah are contained in the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Many Christians view the law as the moral law, the civil law, and the ceremonial law and believe we still have the moral part of the law, but the other parts were “done away with”. Or that Jesus/Yahshua fulfilled them. In the Hebrew mindset, though, the Torah has always been considered one unit. Let’s take a look at what Yahshua actually said about the law, or Torah in Matthew 5:17-20

“Don’t think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish but to fulfill. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a jot or tittle will pass from the law until every thing that must happen has happened. So whoever disobeys the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Many believers who read this respond that he was talking to the Jews and not to the gentiles, implying that Yahweh has a separate standard for the “church” than he does for the Jews. Matthew is thought to be the earliest written of the four gospels. So, now let’s look at one of Paul’s final epistles, or letters, to the Romans which was obviously directed at gentile believers. Romans 3: 31 states plainly

“So then do we make void the Law through our faith? Heaven forbid! Rather, we establish it.”

The theology that the “church” has different guidelines in life is clearly a false teaching. In fact, the church, to 1st century believers, was the Greek word ecclesia which means assembly or congregation (2). It does not anywhere in its meaning imply a specific nationality, ethnic background, citizenship, or religious affiliation. In Paul’s view the “ecclesia” was neither Jew nor Gentile, but all were one body in the Messiah. In his epistle to the Ephesians 2:11-13 he states:

“Therefore remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth – called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised – at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the commonwealth of Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God’s promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of Messiah’s blood.” Also in verse 19 he says:

“So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s family.”

Who are Yahweh’s people in this context? Israel. Paul explains this process using the analogy of an olive tree having wild branches grafted into it in Romans 11:17, 18

“And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you.”

Now that we understand that all believers were considered the assemblies of the Messiah, and part of the commonwealth of Israel, we might find it easier to relate to the “Old Testament”. The Torah was not the laws of the Jews; they were the laws of Yahweh, and they weren’t done away with by Yahshua or Paul. If you still are unconvinced let’s take a look at a third witness. James. James 2: 17 says

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

Let me rephrase this for you into a Hebraic mindset: Grace without the Law is dead. Let me expound further: Salvation without Obedience to Yahweh's commandments is useless. Better yet, let's let Yahshua say it His own way. In Matthew 7: 21 He says:

“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name? And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

The excuse that Christian theologians use to say that the law is done away with comes from a misunderstanding of what the Torah is. The Torah was never, is not, and will never be a means of salvation. It was not designed for that purpose. It was always meant to be coupled with faith. Neither the law by itself or faith by itself will save you. Only in recent Rabbinical Judaism has the Torah been perverted into a means of salvation (just as Christianity has done with faith alone). Rabbinical Judaism is based more upon the Mishnah and Talmud which are commentaries by rabbis on the Torah. As in the “church” some of their interpretations are incorrect. On a side note: if all Christian interpretation was God-inspired we wouldn't have a thousand denominations. So, just because a pastor, Televangelist, or bible college professor said so does not mean it's accurate, or true (likewise, whatever I say should be studied for yourself). Back to the topic, the Torah was designed to do a number of things. It was put in place to show what sin is. 1 John 3:4 says

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”

In other words sin is a transgression of the commandments contained in the Torah, which was given by Yahweh to Israel, of which you have been made one with through the blood shed by the messiah on the cross, according to Paul.

The Torah was also there to point to the Messiah. There are over 300 prophecies in the “Old Testament” about Yahshua and not all of them have been fulfilled. So, if someone tries to tell you when Yahshua died on the cross and said **“It is finished”** (John 19:30) that He meant the “Old Testament” was done away with; at that point they are just ignorant of the scriptures in their entirety. The prophecies that concern his coming as a reigning King (which is yet to come) were in the “Old Testament”. The people of Israel were so looking forward to this advent of the Messiah that they missed the fact that the scriptures also say that the Messiah would

first come as a suffering servant and remove the sin from the House of Israel (Isaiah 53/Ezekiel 36). And there are many other prophecies concerning end-time events that have yet to happen that come from the “Old Testament”. Here are some to look up for yourself:

Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 37, Zechariah 14. Just to name a few.

Another aspect of the Torah was its teachings and instructions. The shall and shall not. The question you must first ask yourself before we go any further is: Would God tell you to do something over and over knowing you couldn't do it and punish you for not doing what he knew you couldn't do. NO! Deuteronomy 27:26 says

“A curse on anyone who does not confirm the words of this torah by putting them into practice”. All the people are to say, ‘Amen’.”

God is not sadistic and cruel. Yet this is exactly what Christianity teaches about the law: The messiah came to free you from the burden of the law because you could never keep all those commandments. This is blatantly against scripture and is a lie from the very father of lies, Satan, who always contradicts God's word. For the Word says in Deuteronomy 30:11-14

“For this command which I am giving you today is not too hard for you, it is not beyond your reach....On the contrary, the word is very close to you—in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore you can do it!”

Yahweh told Israel to obey his commandments over 20 times in the book of Leviticus, and over 52 times in Deuteronomy! I have the verses underlined in my Bible if you would like to look them up; I will be glad to provide every one of them. Does it sound to you like God wants His people to be obedient? I believe He does.

The Torah carries two sides to its commandments. This is shown in the verses of Deuteronomy 30:15-20

“Look! I am presenting you today with, on the one hand, life and good; and on the other, death and evil—in that I am ordering you today to love Yahweh your God, to follow his ways, and to obey his commandments, regulations, and rulings; ... (19) Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving Yahweh your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him—for that is the purpose of your life!”

The commands of Torah are life and death, blessing and cursing, good and evil. The breaking of Yahweh's commands produces death, cursing, and evil. This is the “law”

that the Messiah freed us from: the law (principle) of sin and death which Paul understood and taught in Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yahshua our Lord.”

The word used for law in the New Testament is nomio which can mean Torah, or laws of the New Testament, or figuratively as a principle (3). We are still expected to keep Yahweh's commandments after we are saved, but if we do sin; we have a covering in the sacrifice of Yahshua. We have forgiveness and not punishment= death, cursing, and evil. 1 John 2:3-5 says

“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

What word would John, a first century Jew, be talking about? Let me remind you again that the “New Testament” was still not completed nor considered scripture, at this point, by anyone. Also note that John was not talking about just anyone's words but God's word. The commands given by Yahshua were still God's word as he only spoke what His Father instructed him to say, and as we saw in Matthew 5, Yahshua didn't do away with the Law, or the Prophets. He fulfilled them. This means He completed its purpose. The word for fulfill is plerow which means “to make full, to fill, or to fill up” like filling a jar of water. It can also mean “to make complete in every particular way, to render perfect.”(4) The “New Testament” is what Judaism is supposed to become. Trust in God to redeem us from our sins, not redeem us while we sin. Salvation is just the beginning and it comes from faith in Yahshua **and** repentance from “our” ways, **sin**, and turning towards “His” ways, **torah**. This is the purpose, the meaning of our life! Truly Yahweh is Love, Mercy, Patience, and Kindness to save us from a life of sin, through the sacrifice of Yahshua, and renew a right spirit in us, through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so we can cling to Him.

Hebrews 8:10 shows exactly what the “new covenant” should be.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days,’ says Yahweh: ‘I will put my Law/Torah in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their God and they will be my people.”(5)

Notice that he didn't say he would make the covenant with the “church” but with the House of Israel. The scripture never **ever** mentions a separate covenant with the

Jews and with the Gentiles. In fact this process of writing the laws on our hearts is called the circumcision of the heart, of which Paul says in Romans 2:28, 29

“For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”
(6)

So, guess what? If you are in the New Covenant and your heart is circumcised, in Paul's eyes, you are a true Jew. So, if Paul considered believers as citizens of Israel, true Jews, and no longer considered new believers as Gentiles; where's the room for Gentile replacement theology? The truth is: It is a false doctrine caused by the rising anti-Semitism and integration of paganism in the early roman-catholic church, and the failure of the Protestant Reformation to purge these things from the “ecclesia”. As the Messiah said to a group of Pharisees in Matthew 15:6-9

“...thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men’” (7)

The particular theology that the “church” replaced Israel is called Dispensationalism, and was *invented* almost 200 years ago by a man named John Nelson Darby. As I have shown through the words of the apostles, the Messiah, and God himself, this is a sad misinterpretation of scripture. Christians were always meant to follow all of God's teaching and instructions: The Torah. There is still much to expound upon about the Torah, and many scriptures to be reconciled and put back in their proper context. It would take a book to do that large of a study, however, so I strongly encourage everyone to study these things for your self and look up each of the verses I have quoted in their context. May Yahweh bless us all with the revelation and wisdom to come out of “Babylon” (paganism) and back to His word.... All of it! B'Shem Yahshua HaMoshiach, Amen.
In the name of Jesus, let it be so.