

TORAH



Jesus and His Unshakeable Connection to The Jewish Scriptures

Photo: Atlanta Jewish Times, www.atlantajewishtimes.com

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14, JKV)

“On the one hand he strengthened the Torah of Moses majestically...and not one of our Sages spoke out more emphatically concerning the immutability of the Torah.”

(25 prominent rabbis from Israel and abroad, Israel Today, January 2020)

Jesus gave the Torah (what Christians call the “Old” Testament) more power when He proclaimed that not even the smallest letter would pass away until its purpose is complete. ***“...verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18).*** Jesus also said whoever tries to weaken even one of the smallest commandments (in the “Old” Testament) will be the least-esteemed and regarded as small in the Kingdom (**Matthew 5:19**). Have Christians perhaps misread and maybe even mischaracterized His relationship with the Hebrew Scriptures? If the Torah is dead and no longer applicable then why did Jesus stand up and teach it and why does He, as King, read it to the nations as prophesied in Isaiah 2:3? The Church continues to lay aside the

very commandments which God said, ***“...would never pass away” (Matthew 24:35).*** The conclusion of the matter is that the controversy Jesus had with His religious friends was to “show how best to observe the Law, but none, it is argued, about whether to observe it...Jesus was a staunch defender of the Torah against what He perceived to be threats to it from the Pharisees.” (Jewish Gospels, Rabbi Daniel Boyarin).

The word “immutability” used by the rabbis in the above quote shows that God is unchanging in His Character, Will, and Covenant Promises from Genesis to Malachi. Also, what is written from Matthew to Revelation—is “written.” If every Bible in the world were destroyed, it would not change God’s Everlasting Words. Sadly, there is

a famine of the Word in many churches. ***“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord GOD, “That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11).*** Sermons filled with the “meat” of God’s Word are rare from today’s pulpits and often leave the sheep hungry when they depart. The Torah was always in the Heart of Jesus. If one throws out the Torah, they are throwing the Lord’s Words away as He was and is the *“Living Torah.”* It was the basis for His answers, and His questions to others. The New Testament is built firmly upon the “Old” Testament.

Jesus will Deliver the Torah

While attending church camp in my youth, we would hear the early morning bugle, indicating it was time to rise and pledge allegiance to the American flag and then attend prayer services. May this message bear the sound of allegiance to God’s Words and present a call to arms **to read the whole Counsel of God.** If Jesus loved the Torah so much, if He taught only from the Hebrew Scriptures at the time, He was alive on earth, and if Jesus was and is the “Living Torah” made flesh, then why have Christians been taught to ignore it? It’s time to blow the bugle and wake everyone up!

I read recently of a Christian speaking to his neighbor. “My priest told me the Old Testament is no longer relevant, and, as Christians, we only need to read the New Testament. So I don’t base anything on the Old Testament.” With hardly a thought, the Old Testament was dismissed as ancient and outdated information. (Story from Friends of Israel, www.foi.org). How sad but this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Speaking of icebergs, they are usually a small part of a much bigger problem. A famous ship once went down (Titanic) because it ignored an iceberg. The “Church” has hit an iceberg when it comes to its *“missing link”* (Israel) and the ignorance of the Torah is shocking to our Jewish friends who are surprised at how little Christians know about God’s Words from the *whole* Bible! They find it difficult to believe that Christians would read only the New Testament and leave out the foundation upon which it stands. It is easy to see Christians have been “programmed” by Church Fathers who believed in Replacement Theology. The end result is a generation of Christians who have been taught to forsake the Hebrew Scriptures, fear the mention

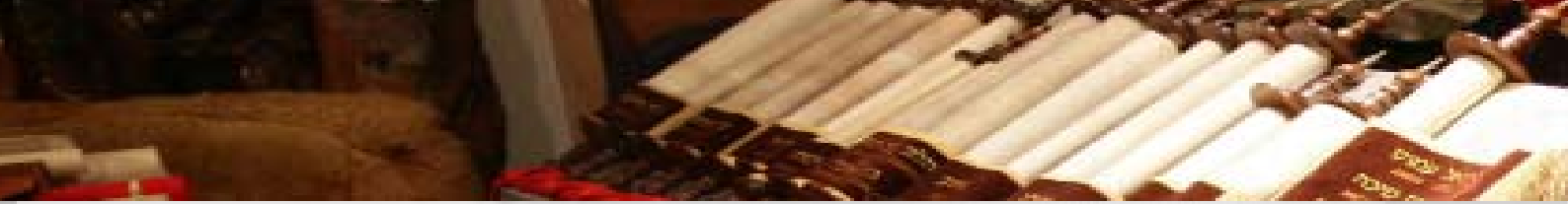


“But at the end of days...Torah will go forth from Zion and the Word of Adonai from Jerusalem” Isaiah 2:3; Micah”4:2-3.

of it, or worse yet, freeze when they hear the word “Torah!” If only in their minds, they have thrown it in the dustbin.

Time is running out. How can anyone’s lamps be burning if they snuff out the Torah? Torah will always live on as the basis of the teachings of Jesus because of His Jewish background. When the Coming Kingdom is established on earth, it will be Jesus who will deliver the “the Law” from Zion to the world. Jesus, as King and Messiah, will speak the words of His Father to the nations. ***“And many people will go and...He will teach us His Ways...Torah will go forth from Zion and the Word of Adonai from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2-3).*** If Christians forsake Torah now, will it not sound strange coming from the lips of Messiah?

The Jewish baby Yeshua (Jesus) that was born, arrived to a Jewish world and into the home of an observant Orthodox couple (Yosef and Miriam), a/k/a Joseph and Mary in Christianity, who lived by the Torah in His childhood home. Most Christians today get as nervous as a cat on hot bricks and work themselves up into a state of extreme



nervous worry about being drawn “under the Law.” Immediately they think “bondage.” We are living in days similar to the days of Noah. The people of Noah’s day were into every wicked way there was—including genetic alterations. God’s creation is again being manipulated through AI (artificial intelligence) and God’s Holy Word is being ignored. The planet on which we live is heading towards a “no boundaries for anyone—live as you please” world where lawlessness abounds. ***“And because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold...”*** (Matthew 24:12). Mankind was never meant to live without rules and guidelines.

What is termed the “Old” Testament teaches us what is “clean and unclean” and “holy” and “defiled.” Paul reminds us that ***“Whatever things were written before were written for our learning”*** (Romans 15:4). Some Christians forget that ***“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”*** (2 Timothy 3:16). The Hebrew Psalmist clearly states ***“The teaching of HaShem (the Lord) is perfect...making the eyes light up”*** (Psalm 19:8). Where were we ever taught the deception that we don’t have to study the entire Bible—but only the “New” Testament? There is absolutely no evidence anywhere to prove that Jesus ever put an end to the Jewish Scriptures...as I said at the beginning, He gave it more power by His Words.

The Lord’s main contention in the New Testament was with the religious and how they interpreted God’s Word from their own traditions and commentaries. He did not question the Torah. He questioned men. Those who had added to God’s Words and the way in which they defined it. Christianity has also added to God’s Word through creeds, dogmas and extra-Biblical traditions. We must be very careful to follow God’s Word as God gave it and as it was written down on the Scrolls of ancient history.

Jesus did not come to fulfill the New Testament, He came to fulfill the Torah. (There was no New Testament at the time.) Jesus kept the Law per-

fectly for us, and paid the debt we owed. He can never be separated from His Father’s Words in the Scrolls. Torah and the New Testament, connect in wonderful ways and confirm one another beautifully as all Scripture leads to the Father—the ultimate One True and Almighty God—and Jesus is our High Priest before God.

If the Jewish Scriptures show that Paul was still Torah observant some 25 years after his revelation of the Messiah, shouldn’t it cause Christians to rethink the traditions of Church fathers who preached against the Torah? Jesus reminds us, ***“In everything, then, do to others as you would have them do to you. For this is the Law and the Prophets”*** (Matthew 7:12).

The Didache: Teachings of the Apostles

Toby Janicki creates an indispensable scholarly resource for believers in Jesus in his book *“The Way of Life,”* the rediscovered teachings of the twelve Jewish apostles to the Gentiles called the Didache. Jewish believers in Jesus maintain that neither Yeshua nor His first followers envisioned a separate and distinct faith movement outside of, or disconnected from, the Judaism of Jesus. They never started a new religion, but rather, understood themselves as a sect within the Jewish community.

Faithful to the Torah, the early Jewish believers were loyal to Yeshua the Nazarene and proclaimed His message of repentance and the Coming Kingdom announced by the prophets. From the Didache, we learn that the early believing community had visiting teachers, and it asserts that those who supported and upheld the Torah “should be received as from the Lord.” Noel Rabinowitz, Ph.D, Professor of Biblical Studies, Israel Study Center suggests, “It will make some cringe to suggest that the early church (*ekklesia*) embraced Torah obedience as the benchmark of ethical behavior.” But today we look at truth, and not that which we’ve been taught by clerics and church forefathers in the past who had no revelation at all about their Hebraic foundations.

In the Kingdom to come on earth, religion will not rule. The King will reign and deliver the

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4.

Holy Scriptures as His Father wants it them to be delivered. It will "go forth" to the nations, and He alone will deliver it—not rabbis, not scribes, not pastors—as the King of all Kings tabernacles among mankind. Won't it be wonderful to spend an eternity learning the height, width, breadth and length of the love of God found in His Everlasting Words and to learn to cherish those Words? ***Let's remember it was God's Word in the Jewish Scriptures that resurrected a nearly dead nation when all hope was lost! The words came alive and brought the People of Israel back to life!*** Church in the nations! Do we really want to throw those Eternal Words of God "in the dustbin" or continue to disregard them because we are afraid of "coming under the law?" We need to rid our people of this fear. Granted, Israel still cannot see Jesus; however, let us not in arrogance and spiritual pride continue to feel that they are spiritually dead, for they are **far from it**. With the "return" to Israel has come a deep searching of understanding God and His Words.

All Scripture is Divinely Inspired

In a previous issue of *For Zion Sake*, I wrote about Paul always calling for his Torah Scrolls (on parchment in ancient times) when he was on

his journeys. (You can view that issue by visiting the CFI website).^{*} He let everyone know that he could not do without them! ***"Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchmen"*** (2 Timothy 4:13). If this be the case for Paul, then how can the Church ignore 77% of the Bible? There are 283 direct quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures in the New Testament. In the American Standard Version of the Bible, the words "It is written" appears 913 times—the Revised Standard Version 924 times and in Young's Literal Translation 971 times. We must always remember that ***"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"*** (Matthew 4:4). Jesus said, ***"What I teach is not mine, but belongs to Him that sent me"*** (John 7:16). While the Torah itself cannot make one perfect before God, our High Priest modified it but did not abolish it; therefore, its principles, ethic and moral codes, what is "clean and unclean" stand as unchangeable according to the Master.

Do you know of someone who might be thirsty for living water but will not read the "Old" Testament? Why not begin to pray that the whole counsel of God might open up as it hap-

pended to the disciples of Jesus while walking on the dusty roads of Israel as recorded in **Luke 24:15-32**. For many, once we took a sip from the wells of Jacob, the very words Our Lord Jesus drank from daily and lived out, only made us become more thirsty to study deeper both the Torah along with the New Testament.

I agree with the rabbis—***no one has ever spoken about the ageless and permanent immutability of the Old Testament like Jesus.***

Sharon Sanders

