



Blessings in the Living Torah, Yeshua,

Giving of the Law

"In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai... So Israel camped there before the mountain." (Exodus 19:1-2)

The children of Israel had just been redeemed by the blood of the Passover lambs. By faith, they had applied the blood of these innocent animals in obedience to the command of the Lord. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob then opened the Red Sea for His people, and delivered them from Egyptian bondage in a very dramatic way. They were free! But it has been rightly said that true freedom was theirs only after they received God's Law on Mount Sinai. For then, they would know how to live out their faith. They would know what to do to receive God's blessing and what not to do to avoid being cursed. In other words, the Truth would set them free!

By careful calculation, Jewish authorities determined that God gave the law to Moses on the day of *Shavuot* (Sha-vu-OAT), which literally means "weeks," and occurs seven weeks plus one day (50 days total) following the Feast of First Fruits. In English, this feast is known as Pentecost, since the word means fifty in Greek. *Shavuot* this year is May 28th (evening) to May 30th.

The giving of the *Torah* on Mount Sinai is generally referred to as the Revelation, or *Mattan Torah*. This pivotal event in the life of the Jewish people and, indeed, in the history of all mankind, was accompanied by thunder and lightning, a quaking mountain, fire, clouds of smoke and the piercing sound of a shofar. God was really trying to get the attention of His children! (See Exodus 19.)

The God of Israel spoke ten sayings or commandments that day, which at one time formed the moral and ethical code of many nations, including the USA. We call them the Ten Commandments, and they begin with the words, *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me"* (Exodus 20:2-3). When God had finished speaking, the Israelites were trembling (Exodus 20:18). They asked Moses to speak with them, because if God spoke with them, they were afraid they would die. Moses replied, *"Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin"* (Exodus 20:20).

The "Perfect Ten" (The Ten Commandments) are, in a sense, a test! They let us know what God considers sin. We actually have a friend who ministers to college students and uses a questionnaire based on the Ten Commandments to bring about awareness of sin. He has seen big, burly football players begin to have tears in their eyes while presenting them with the Law of God!

Following the Ten Sayings (in Hebrew, *aseret-hadibrot*), the Lord gave Moses various laws to guide the life of His people: laws concerning servants, violence, animal control, responsibility for property, moral and ceremonial principles, justice, sabbaths, and the three annual Pilgrim feasts. He also gave detailed instructions concerning the Sanctuary, Ark of the Testimony, Table of Showbread, Golden Lampstand, the Tabernacle and the Priesthood, and all that concerned them.

The Revelation given by God to Moses was recorded in five books, also known as the Pentateuch, or in Hebrew *Chumash*, meaning "five." While these five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, contain much more than "law," that will be our focus in this newsletter because the Lord has something to say to us in this regard.

Purpose of the Law

We have already seen that redemption from Egypt preceded the giving of the Law to God's People Israel. Therefore, people could not be made right with God on the basis of obeying the Law. But they could please God. They could show Him their love for Him by their submission to His will, and they could find out what was and was not SIN.

Rabbi Saul explains the purpose of the Law in Romans 3:19-20, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

Is the Law bad? Consider Romans 7:7, *"...Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'"* Rabbi Saul concludes this portion of Scripture by saying, *"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good"* (Romans 7:12).

Isn't it the same in parenting? If we never told our little ones, "It's wrong to take something that doesn't belong to you," or "You must always tell the truth," how would they know the difference between right and wrong? Standards set boundaries. Laws define sin. Proverbs 1:8 says it well: *"My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother."*

D.L. Moody, a great man of God of the nineteenth century, has been quoted as saying, "God being a perfect God, had to give a perfect Law, and the Law was given not to serve men, but to measure them." How do YOU measure up?

- Is God first in your life? (Commandment #1)
- Are there any idols in your life? (Commandment #2)
- Do you ever take the name of the Lord in vain? (Commandment #3)
- Do you keep the Sabbath day holy? (Commandment #4)
- Do you honor your father and your mother? (Commandment #5)
- Have you taken a stand against murder (abortion)? (Commandment #6)
- Have you had sex outside of marriage? (Commandment #7)
- Have you ever taken anything that was not yours? (Commandment #8)
- Is lying part of your way of life? (Commandment #9)
- Do you envy what other people have? (Commandment #10)

We are all guilty before a Holy God (Romans 3:19). We all fall short of His standards. The Law is a schoolmaster that shows us our need of a Saviour: Yeshua the Messiah. *"What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed [Messiah] should come to whom the promise was made..."* (Galatians 3:19).

What happens when Jews and Gentiles receive Yeshua and are justified by faith? *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."* (Romans 3:31) Joseph Shulam, in his commentary on Romans, explains this verse as follows, "Paul assures his Jewish readers that faithfulness to Yeshua does not 'annul' the *Torah*, but makes it stand as the "goal" of God's righteousness to all men, both Jews and Gentiles."

Yeshua and the Law

Yeshua was the only one who kept all 613 commandments found in the Torah. That is because He is God. No mere man could keep the entire Law. Yeshua's most important comment about the

Law was: *"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"* (Matthew 5:17-19).

There are some who say that the Law has passed away. This is not true, according to the words of our Messiah, since heaven and earth are still with us.

Yeshua came to fulfill—to make full, render complete in every particular, bring to realization, interpret properly, the Law. He is the fulfillment of the Law. Romans 13:10 says that *"...love is the fulfillment of the law."* God is love. He fulfills the Law through His Son Yeshua. This does not make the Law obsolete.

Yeshua raised the Law to its highest standard. Athol Dickson in his book **The Gospel According to Moses** mentions that the Sermon on the Mount is essentially a commentary on the *parasha* (Torah portion) *Mishpatim* (the portion of Exodus the rabbis called "Laws"). "A comparison of Exodus 22 and 23 and Matthew 5 will demonstrate that Jesus' followers live under very strenuous requirements far above those commanded through Moses. In his sermon, Jesus raises the standard of behavior from 'do not strike' to 'don't even be angry enough to strike;' 'from take life for life' to 'turn the other cheek;' from 'charge no interest' to 'give away your money'..."

The Messiah went beyond the letter of the Law and taught His talmidim about the spirit of the Law. His underlying focus was always love. He said that the entire Law could be summed up in two commandments: Love God; Love your neighbor. The Messiah fulfilled the Law by becoming the once and for all eternal sacrifice for sin, and by providing the power for His followers to obey the Law of God by faith, working through love. Through the New Covenant, the Law is engraved on the fleshy tablets of our hearts, rather than on tablets of stone. This causes us to proclaim, *"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day"* (Psalm 119:97).

Daniel Gruber in **Torah and the New Covenant: An Introduction**, wrote: "...for both Jews and Gentiles there are changes that take place when the law that God has given us is written on our hearts. It becomes second nature to us. It is no longer an external standard that we strive to attain, but a life that proceeds from the Spirit of God within us... Through the New Covenant, God puts His law, His statutes and ordinances, and His Spirit in the hearts of His people." (See Ezekiel 36:26-28.)

As Dr. David Stern mentions in his **Jewish New Testament Commentary**, Yeshua's death and resurrection brought an end to the need for Jewish people to try to earn God's favor through the system which results from perverting the Torah into legalism. "This oppressive legalistic system kept the Jewish people imprisoned under guard until Yeshua came. God's plan has always been that His people might turn from legalistic rule-following to trusting and being faithful to Yeshua, with His Law engraved on their hearts."

Lawlessness!

The Lord has been speaking to us about the lawlessness that has overtaken our country and our world. This is a sign of the end-times. Yeshua, in instructing His talmidim concerning the days in which we live, said the following: *"And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:12-14).

What exactly is lawlessness? Sin is lawlessness. It is living as if there were no absolutes, no divine standards, no Law of God. *"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."* (1 John 3:4) The Greek word "anomia" means absence of law or absence of Torah. It is lawlessness when the Law says, *"You shall not murder,"* and we murder 3,700 babies a day through

abortion in our country. It is lawlessness when the Law says, "*You shall not commit adultery*," and millions of people engage in extra-marital and pre-marital affairs, and live together with no thought of getting married. Oprah Winfrey, who has been rightly called, the "high priestess of the new morality," is a vocal proponent of lawlessness. She encourages homosexuality if anyone feels at all "inclined," and has said that she could never worship a God who said He was "jealous" (Commandment #4). (Of course, she doesn't understand a God who is so passionate for His people, that He jealously yearns for them to live according to His Law so that they might be blessed.) It is lawlessness when most of the sitcoms shown on TV mock parents, especially fathers. Honoring father and mother (Commandment #5) is not "old-fashioned;" it is obedience to the Word of God.

God's Law has not only been removed from many public places, but it seems to have been removed from many homes as well. The moral fiber of our society is swiftly unraveling. We would do well to have tassels on our garments like the Israelites of old! The Lord said to Moses, "*And you shall have the tassel [tzitzit], that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined... and be holy for your God*" (Numbers 15:39-40).

Yeshua also exhorted His followers to keep His commands, as proof of their love for Him. Lawlessness could even mean eternal separation from the Messiah. He Himself said it: "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall 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!'*" (Matthew 7:21-23).

Those who choose to live as though God's Law does not exist will suffer terrible eternal consequences. (See Matthew 13:40-41.) They are agreeing in spirit with the one coming who will proclaim a world free from God's law. "*For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders...*" (Thessalonians 2:7-9). This is the Anti-Messiah who is yet to appear. Reject him and his spirit. Fulfill the Law by loving God and others!

Shavuot blessings,

Neil & Jamie

We would deeply appreciate your prayer covering while on our 2009 Mercy Mission to Israel. Please pray according to the first letter of your last name. We leave for Israel on May 31st at 4:05pm and return on June 11 at 4:45am. We arrive in Tel Aviv on June 1 at 9:35am. Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. God bless you for interceding.

Times to intercede according to the first letter of your last name:

6 A.M.-8 A.M. A, B, C	4 P.M.-6 P.M. P, Q, R
8 A.M.-10 A.M. D, E, F	6 P.M.-8 P.M. S, T, U
10 A.M.-12 P.M. G, H, I	8 P.M.-10 P.M. V, W, X, Y, Z
12 P.M.-2 P.M. J, K, L	10 P.M.-6 A.M. Those whom our Father wakes up to pray!
2 P.M.-4 P.M. M, N, O	

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They Loved the Torah (Bk)

Star of David with Ten Commandments- Sterling Silver, includes 18" chain. Actual size from tip to tip of star is 1/2 in.



See mailback for pricing!