



Shalom B'shem Yeshua!

Shavuot: The Giving of the Law

Beginning on the evening of June 3, we will celebrate *Shavuot*, The Feast of Weeks, which is also known as Pentecost. We will be commemorating the "giving of the Law" at Mt. Sinai, and the "giving of the Spirit" on Mt. Zion.

God directed the Israelites, "...seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven" (Lev. 23:15-17). The Feast celebrated several different aspects of God's provision.

First of all, it celebrated the beginning of the wheat harvest, which depended on God's provision of rain, and upon which Israel depended for bread, their staple food. It is also celebrated as the day upon which God gave His covenant people the Torah, their rules for living. It was the Torah which completed the transformation from a multitude of slaves in Egypt to one nation under God.

After God entered into covenant with Israel, the Bible separated the world into two groups: **Ami** (Hebrew for "my people") and **L'Goyim**, the nations. The two leavened loaves offered during this feast can therefore be seen, in a prophetic sense, to represent these two groups- Israel and the nations of the world. They were both filled with sin (leaven), both in need of deliverance, and both waiting for the time when God's Spirit would be given, signifying the sealing of the New Covenant (Acts 2).

Under The Law

From time to time we are reprimanded by someone with, "Now brother, remember, the Bible says we are not under the Law." Our response is usually a question: "Since we are 'not under the Law' does that mean we can murder anyone we disagree with?" "Can we commit adultery any time we feel the urge?" Although Paul's letters do use that phrase on several occasions, we need to look at what he is referring to in context, and then we need to look at the entire Bible for clarification.

What is The Law?

The Hebrew name for the first five books of the Bible is Torah, which actually means TEACHING. The Torah begins with the story of Creation and continues with a record of God's special friends like Adam, Enoch, Noah and Abraham. The Torah also includes the history of the world, at least as much as God thought we needed to know. The Torah also includes the rules to live by that God gave His covenant people, the descendants of Abraham. The emphasis of these rules is summed up when God tells Moses: "*Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy'*" (Leviticus 19:2). In essence, God tells them, that they are to be different from all the other people on the earth, just as He is different from all the other gods that those people worship.

The balance of what is usually called the Old Testament is composed of the Prophets (*Neviim*), and the Writings (*Ketuvim*). The Hebrew name for the complete Jewish Scriptures is the TANACH. It is an acronym created from the first letters of each of the three parts. Jewish people usually call their

Bible the Holy Scriptures, the story of the relationship between God and His Covenant People, and the actions of God and His Covenant People. It is much more than the laws that Israel was to follow as a covenant partner with God.

After the promised New Covenant was opened to the Greek speaking world, the meaning of TORAH shifted from "teaching" to "law," because of the Greek cultural context in which ideas, theories, and philosophies were more important than relationship and action. (See Acts 17:16-21.)

What Kinds of Laws Are There?

The Torah does contain many rules and regulations, and for that part of it, the term Law is appropriate. The "laws" fall into five categories. First of all there are the CIVIL LAWS. These have to do with oxen that gore people, boundary markers, inheritance and rules concerning items that are lost. This particular group of laws was for a specific people, at a specific time, in a specific location. They are the foundation upon which the Civil Laws in our country were built. Our civil laws have to do with stop signs, rules for owning property, IRS codes, and the other rules that bring order to our society. They regulate the way people live within a community. As culture and times have changed, these laws have been modified to reflect those changes, while maintaining the underlying principles.

Then there are the MORAL LAWS, summarized in the Ten Commandments. The first part of the Moral laws regulates how people are to live with God. They begin with: Remember what God has done for us. Worship God only. Don't worship any images. Don't take the Name of God in vain. When questioned about which was the greatest commandment, Yeshua summarized these by saying: "...*you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*' *This is the first and great commandment*" (Matthew 22:37-38).

The second part of the Moral Laws regulates how people are to live with each other. Don't lie. Don't steal. Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. I don't think anyone would say that these have been done away with, especially since Yeshua raised them to a higher level by extending them from the outside to the inside. (See Matthew 5:21-28 for His teaching about murder and adultery.) These are the guidelines for Yeshua's second commandment: "...*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*" (Matthew 22:39).

The Moral laws have been with us since the beginning of creation when God punished Cain for murdering Abel, and they will be here with us at the end of creation when murderers, liars, and the sexually immoral will be prohibited from entering heaven (Rev. 22:15). Although our contemporary culture has become very flexible in adjusting them to suit people's passions, especially the lust of the flesh, the Moral Laws are eternal.

Next are the FESTIVAL LAWS summarized in Leviticus 23. Each of these was given as an everlasting or eternal ordinance to Israel. "*The Feasts of the Lord*" (Leviticus 23:1) were given as the curriculum whereby the "children of Israel," regardless of their age, would celebrate what God had done for them in the past, so that they would know what He could do for them in the present, and their children would know what He would do for them in the future. It is still a great curriculum, and we are happy to be using it in our homes and congregation today. It is a teaching structure, not a way to righteousness.

Next we come to the SACRIFICIAL LAWS. They were a way to temporary righteousness with God. Yeshua, the "Lamb of God" was the final sacrifice for sin. All who accept His death as the price for their right standing with God have obtained His righteousness. The Sacrificial Laws were terminated with Yeshua's sacrifice as the "*Lamb of God.*" That's what He was referring to when He said: "*It is finished*" (John 19:30), and, "*Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill*" (Matthew 5:17). He was the FINAL SACRIFICE accepted by God. With His death the SACRIFICIAL LAWS were fulfilled.

Finally, we come to the LAW of SEPARATION. Over and over God told Israel: *"...be holy because I am holy"* (Leviticus 11:44). Part of that holiness, or difference from all other people, was to be made apparent by what Israel ate, wore, and how they worshipped. We too are called to be a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9) and because our God is Holy, we are to be holy. With God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are to become more like Yeshua as each day goes by. Our holiness is not to be measured in our foods or clothing, but rather in the degree that the *"fruit of the Spirit"* is manifested in our life. As Yeshua's brother James put it: *"...he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does"* (James 1:25).

Could Israel Keep the Law?

NO! And Adam and Eve couldn't keep it when there was just one rule: *"...of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die"* (Genesis 2:16-17).

Why couldn't they? Because there is a war within us between the flesh and the spirit, as Rabbi Saul (Paul) wrote; *"For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish"* (Galatians 5:17), and again *"For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice"* (Romans 7:19).

God in His mercy offered Israel an alternative to the Law written on tablets of stone. Through the prophet Jeremiah he said: *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more"* (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

God was offering a solution to our inability to keep His Law. He was going to write it on our hearts, instead of on tablets of stone. He promised; *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them"* (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Not Under the Law

Paul did indeed write that we are not under the law. In fact that phrase occurs in at least two of his letters. Let's take a look at them in context. In chapter six of the letter to the Romans, Paul writes: *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law [of sacrifice for righteousness] but under grace"* (verse 14). He is correcting people who have become righteous through Yeshua's sacrifice to not use God's grace as an excuse to sin, and not just to sin, but to become slaves to sin; *"...we should no longer be slaves of sin"* (verse 6)... *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?* (verses 16)... *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our Lord"* (verse 23). His meaning is clear: Don't use grace as an excuse to sin.

Paul also uses the expression "not under the law" in his letter to the Galatians. Here he is writing to a congregation which has become embroiled in the question of circumcising Gentile believers in Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah. *"...certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" (Acts 15:1)* They were teaching this because the three requirements for a Gentile to convert to Judaism were a sacrifice, circumcision, and immersion in water. That's why when Peter, who has been sent by God to the Gentile Cornelius, sees that God has given the Holy Spirit to him, he proclaims: *"Can anyone*

forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (Acts 10:47). Peter is saying that since Yeshua is their sacrifice, and God has circumcised their hearts, how can any more than water immersion be required for their conversion? Clearly, God was no longer requiring that Gentiles, who decided to join the Jewish people in worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, be circumcised in their flesh. At this point, Peter could have written the phrase "they are not under the law." And that is exactly what the leaders in Jerusalem decided when the matter was brought to them. (See Acts 15:6-11.)

If You Are Led By the Spirit, You Are Not Under the Law.

Paul begins the final chapter of his letter to the congregation in Galatia by exhorting them to, *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Messiah has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage"* (Gal 5:1). He continues by saying, *"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law"* (Gal. 5:13; 16-18). It is God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us, that gives us the power to be victorious and overcome the desires of the flesh.

Paul concludes by describing the Law of Separation for a follower of Yeshua when he writes, *"... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Messiah's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires"* (Gal. 5:22-24).

In his letter to the Romans, Paul concludes his teaching on "LAW" in total agreement with Yeshua's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount with the following, *"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."* (Romans 13:8-10)

May we all strive to live in the Spirit and be conformed to the image of our Messiah Yeshua, who has purchased our righteousness with His own blood.

In Yeshua's love, by His grace,

Neil & Jamie

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - June 2014

LOCAL TV STATIONS

<u>AIRTIME:</u>	<u>STATE:</u>	<u>CITY:</u>	<u>STATIONS:</u>
TUE 6:00 PM	AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4
MON 10:00 PM	FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22
THU 11:30 AM	FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45
SUN 1:30 PM	FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45
SAT 10:30 PM	FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61
SUN 2:30 PM	GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16
SUN 1:30 PM	IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40
THU 6:30 AM	ID	Twin Falls	KJCY TV 38
SUN 1:30 PM	MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25
THU 8:30 AM	NC	Goldsboro	WHFL TV 43
SUN 4:00 PM	NJ/NY	NYC/New Jersey	WMBC TV 63
THU 5:30 AM	OR	The Dalles	KRHP TV 14

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DirecTV

SUN 4:00 PM Ch. 93 or 900 - WMBC
FRI 8:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
 MON 11:30 PM Ch. 371 - Church Channel

Dish Network

FRI 8:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
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