



haDerek - a Guide to the 'Hebrew' Way

PART 2 — the ACTS of the Apostles

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In Part One of this series, we found that the “way” of God is a deliberate walk that, when coupled with faith, leads one to the Tree of Life. A great example of that walk was Abraham – the father of the faithful – who gained favor with God by his faith, and then exhibited his faith by how he walked. We also found that the ‘way’ is synonymous with the Torah.

In this study, we’ll look at a number of examples where, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Messiah Yeshua, the disciples and believers continued in the Torah walk as they strove to spread the gospel of His coming Kingdom.

After His resurrection, Messiah Yeshua appeared to His disciples on a number of occasions. Matthew records one such occasion in the area of the Galilee, on a mountain where He had instructed them meet. At that time, He told them -

^{NKJ} **Matthew 28:19-20** ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age."

This “great commission” statement has often been understood to mean that the disciples were to go throughout the known world, teaching all the nations that their sins are forgiven if they will simply accept “Christ”. But that’s not what He said. He said to go throughout the nations, teaching the nations to observe all the things He had commanded, or instructed them in. So that begs the question “What were some of the “things” he taught them to observe? Let’s just see -

^{NKJ} **Matthew 19:17** So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

This is pretty straightforward . . . if you want life, keep the commandments. To His Jewish audience, that was pretty simple . . . “keep”, or walk in the Torah. In fact it’s even more clear when you see the words He used. In that passage (as well as the Matt. 28 passage), the Greek word for “keep” is “tayreho” (Strong’s 5083), a word that means “to keep”, but also “to attend to carefully”, “to watch” and “to preserve”. This same word is used in the LXX¹ to translate the Hebrew word “shamar” (guard, protect) in this piece of wisdom –

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 19:16** He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, *But* he who is careless of his ways will die.

The instruction to “keep” and “observe” the commandments is repeated over and over by the Messiah -

^{NKJ} **John 14:15** " If you love Me, keep My commandments.

^{NKJ} **John 14:21** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

^{NKJ} **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

¹ LXX = the Septuagint; the 2nd century BC translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek. A very valuable tool when trying to match Greek words back to the Hebrew.

^{NKJ} **John 15:10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

Thus it's quite clear what Yeshua told His disciples to teach. But is that what they ended up doing? Did they continue to teach the ancient Hebrew ways given to Moses by God, or did they go off in another direction?

We've been told for the past 1900 years that when Yeshua was nailed to the cross, that "terrible" law . . . the Torah . . . was nailed to it as well and died with it. So if that's the case, would it not stand to reason that His disciples would have illustrated that "freedom from the Torah" by their actions?

We've all heard the old adage, "actions speak louder than words". In other words, a person's actions speak louder of a person's heart and way of thinking than does his words. The book of Acts is a historical record of the actions of the disciples, as well as Yeshua's brother James, and of Paul. Isn't it interesting that for some reason God saw to it that in the Christian Bible, this book was placed in front of the writings of the apostles? Could it be that He knew that there would be theologians like Martin Luther who would twist the words of the apostles in order to convince us that they were teaching against the Torah, and because of that, God placed Acts where He did so we could see their actions before we read their words?

So let's take a look at the **ACTIONs** of the apostles to see what they believed about the Torah.

- Asking about the restoration of the Kingdom²

^{NKJ} **Acts 1:6** . . . "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Even before Yeshua ascended to Heaven, the disciples were asking about the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. Now that might not seem like much until you remember that David's kingdom was a kingdom built on laws – the Torah. So for them to be looking forward to the kingdom implies that they were looking forward to all it entails, including the Torah.

Peter continued to speak of the "restoration" of all things (Acts. 3:21) which would include the restoration of the proper understanding of the Torah.

- Luke's use of the term "Sabbath day's journey"

^{NKJ} **Acts 1:12** Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey.

Though not an apostle, and though it may have simply been a habit, Luke (obviously a Torah keeper) referred to this rabbinic tradition which was based on the Torah.

- Continued to observe, or at least reference, the Torah mandated festivals

^{NKJ} **Acts 2:1** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

^{NKJ} **Acts 12:3** And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.

^{NKJ} **Acts 18:20-21** When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, but took leave of them, saying, "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

² Search for "Solomon's Kingdom" on this web site

^{NKJ} **Acts 20:6** But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

^{NKJ} **Acts 27:9** Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,

In these passages, we see Peter along with the rest of the disciples observing the Feast of Pentecost, and later (12:3) continuing to go to Jerusalem for Passover (see vs. 19). Later, we find Paul making every effort to keep the festivals in Jerusalem, or at least delaying a trip until the festival (Passover) is over. Then the reference to the “fast” – Yom Kippur which precedes the rainy season in the Middle East which typically begins in October.

- Prayed at “the hour of prayer”

^{NKJ} **Acts 3:1** Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth *hour*.

It was apparently their custom that whenever they went to Jerusalem, Peter and John would go to the Temple during the times of the morning and evening sacrifice to either pray or to offer sacrifices themselves. (See also 10:30)

- Referenced “the Prophet like unto Moses”

^{NKJ} **Acts 3:22** "For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.

To the Jewish people of that day, Moses was considered to be the “law giver”. He was the one who helped the people understand the Torah. Peter correctly identified Yeshua as that prophet, and later in the same passage (vs. 26) indicated that Yeshua would cause them to “turn” away from lawlessness, i.e. – failing to keep the Torah.

- Corrected Ananias and Sapphira in regards to their oath

^{NKJ} **Acts 5:1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

In this passage, it's implied that Ananias and Sapphira sold their land as part of a vow they had made in regards to the support of the disciples' message. Unfortunately, they only paid part of the vow and therefore broke the commandment regarding vows.

^{NKJ} **Numbers 5:9-10** 'Every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. And every man's holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be his.' "

According to the Torah, they would have had the opportunity to make restitution for what they had done, but because they lied about it, they died.

^{NKJ} **Deuteronomy 23:21** " When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.

Thus Peter held them to the Torah standard, even in regards to vows.

- Continued to observe the food laws

^{NKJ} **Acts 10:14** But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

Even though some may (incorrectly) say that the food laws were changed, it's clear that up to this point Peter continued to follow them. Thus, there is no indication that the Torah had been relaxed in regards to food.

- Preaching in the synagogue

^{NKJ} **Acts 9:20** immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

^{NKJ} **Acts 13:5** And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant.

^{NKJ} **Acts 13:15** And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

^{NKJ} **Acts 14:1** Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.

Paul and the disciples went to the synagogue to preach their message. If they had been teaching that Yeshua did away with the Torah, they would have never been given an audience.

- Instructed the Gentiles to hear Moses being taught in the synagogue

^{NKJ} **Acts 15:21** "For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

The Acts 15 Conference has been used by many to claim that the "gentiles" are only required to do 4 things, but James made it quite clear that they were to attend the synagogue and learn the entire Torah.

- Spoke positively of the Temple and the Torah

^{NKJ} **Acts 6:13** They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law;

False witnesses made charges that Stephen had spoken against the Torah and the Temple. If it had been the case that they had taught that the Torah was no longer in effect, what need would there be of false witnesses?

Here we've seen 10 different ways and 17 specific examples of how the apostles showed - by their actions - that they still held the Torah in high esteem. If there is a case to be made that the apostles believed the law had been "nailed to the cross", they certainly did not show it by their actions, and since "actions speak louder than words", we can assume their words followed their actions.

Shalom Aleichem