



haDerek – a Guide to the ‘Hebrew’ Way

More Difficult Scriptures

by Tim Kelley

When we began this study, we saw that God’s “way” is a path that should lead us back to the Tree of Life. God intended for us to eat freely from the Tree of Life, but thanks to our common father and mother – Adam and Eve – we’ve been cut off from having access to that tree and have instead been eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil from that time forward. As a result, the “way” that we’ve been taught has been a mixture of good and evil. From time to time we think we are following the way, then find out that the way our teachers and leaders have been taking us is not really the path back to the garden, but is instead, a side road . . . maybe a muddy dirt road, that gets us stuck in a pit. It’s at that point that we have to turn around – repent – and get back on the path.

In Paul’s defense before Felix, the Roman governor of Judea, he said –

Acts 24:14-15 ¹⁴ "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵ "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust.

According to what Paul wrote, the way is a combination of what was written in the Torah as well as that of the prophets. This is understandable because the prophets point out the behavior of the Israelite people that was abhorrent to YHVH. A good example is that of Isaiah –

Isaiah 58:13-14 ¹³ " If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, From doing your pleasure on My holy day, And call the Sabbath a delight, The holy day of the LORD honorable, And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, Nor finding your own pleasure, Nor speaking your *own* words, ¹⁴ Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.

What this example shows it that though Moses gave us instructions in the Torah in regards to the Sabbath, the words of the prophet helps us to see God’s intent in a clearer fashion. Another example is that of covetousness. The Ten Commandments tell us not to covet, but the prophets give us an example –

^{NKJ} **Micah 2:1** Woe to those who devise iniquity, And work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, Because it is in the power of their hand. ² They covet fields and take *them* by violence, Also houses, and seize *them*. So they oppress a man and his house, A man and his inheritance. ³ Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, against this family I am devising disaster,

In the first century, there were two major sects of Judaism along with a number of smaller sects. One of the larger sects – the Sadducees believed in “sola scripture”, especially in regards to Torah observance. They were extremely critical of all “oral tradition”, but they also had little regard for the prophets as well. Thus when they tested Yeshua in regards to the resurrection of the dead (which they could not see in the Torah)¹, He answered -

Matthew 22:29 " . . .You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

¹ Their argument about marriage was invalid base on the fact that in the resurrection, man will become at least equal with the angels (Psalm 8:4-5), and that angels are either sexless or male. The only angels described in Torah are portrayed as male (Gen. 18:2). All other portrayals of angels are in the Tnakh, and in all cases they are portrayed as male, though they may be sexless since all Hebrew nouns have gender and the default gender is male. The Sadducees would not know that all angels are male (or sexless) if they do not study the Tnakh.

In this passage, the Greek word for “mistaken” is “planao” (Strong’s 4105) which means “to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way”. It can be drawn from His words that if you truly want to know YHVH, you’ve got to move beyond the Torah and study the rest of His word as well. That includes the writings or history of God’s people, the prophets, and the Testimony, which is the witness that what was prophesied has and is coming to pass.

Many, if not most misunderstanding of the New Testament scriptures that are used to claim that the Torah is no longer applicable to believers could be better understood in light of the prophecies in the Tnakh. For instance, in our last installment we showed that though the “curse of the law” is defined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, the prophets illustrate that it actually came to pass –

^{NKJ} **Daniel 9:11** "Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

In the beginning of the Colossians 2 “nailing it to his cross” passage, it says that our debt – the penalty of our sins - would be blotted out. This is precisely what it says in Isaiah’s prophecy –

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 44:21-22** " Remember these, O Jacob, And Israel, for you *are* My servant; I have formed you, you *are* My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me! ²²I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 43:25** " I, *even* I, *am* He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.

Though the prophecy in Isaiah showed what would happen to the sins of the repentant, Paul, in Colossians 2 shows how they were blotted out. Together we have the package that defines how YHVH will be able to bring Israel back and perform the covenant promised to Abraham –

^{NKJ} **Psalms 85:2** You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have covered all their sin. Selah

Those of us who believe that Yeshua is the promised Messiah and who see that the Torah is still applicable to us, sometimes wonder why we can see this but others cannot. The answer is really quite simple – it’s prophesied to be this way. The prophet Hosea acted out the exile and restoration of the Lost 10 Tribes of Israel. As part of his prophecy, he showed that while in exile the Torah would not be understood by the non-Jewish believers in the end time. He said –

^{NKJ} **Hosea 8:12** I have written for him the great things of My law, *But* they were considered a strange thing.

Today, the Torah is looked upon as being strange by those who profess faith in Yeshua. What’s more, those who cling to it are looked upon as strange as well – both by their Christian and their Jewish brothers. Never-the-less, we press on!

In this study we’re going to take a look at two more arguments that are used when trying to prove that the Law of God was “done away” and is no longer applicable. These are:

1. we are under the New Covenant
2. Christ is the “end” of the law (Romans 10:4)

Let’s get started!

New Covenant

Many, if not most Christians consider themselves to be under the prophesied “new” covenant of Jeremiah 31 –

^{NKJ} **Jeremiah 31:31-33** ³¹ " 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 -- ³² "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³ "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.

Because this covenant supposedly went into effect at the death of the Messiah, it's commonly understood that we are now under this “new” covenant – and the book of Hebrews lends credence to that understanding.

Hebrews 8 is a discussion of the Israel's priesthood –

^{NKJ} **Hebrews 8:1** Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens . . .

Notice that the main point the writer was trying to make was that we have a new High Priest . . .the covenants are not the main point. The writer contrasts the priesthood of Messiah with the Aaronic priesthood, which according to verse seven had a number of faults –

^{NKJ} **Hebrews 8:7-8** For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. ⁸ Because finding fault with them, He says: "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 --

You will notice that the translators added the word covenant to the passage, indicating that in their mind, the problem was with the covenant. But the covenant was not the problem, the problem was the priesthood . . . they would not do their job!

^{NKJ} **Malachi 2:1-2;7** "And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. ² If you will not hear, And if you will not take *it* to heart, To give glory to My name," Says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, Because you do not take *it* to heart . . . ⁷ "For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And *people* should seek the law ("torah" – Strong's 8451) from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

Obviously, we can't blame all of Israel's problems on the priests, but that does seem to be the context of Hebrews 8 . . . the priests were not teaching the Torah. More importantly, we know that the problem was not with the covenant, it was with the people. Therefore, God proposed to provide Israel with another covenant that could take affect after the terms of the previous covenant were satisfied.

^{ESV} **Hebrews 9:15** Therefore he (Yeshua) is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

In a nutshell, the writer is saying that the people of Israel turned away from God – in part because the priesthood failed to instruct the people in the law - and thus Israel received the curse. Yeshua has redeemed “those who are called” from that curse by offering Himself as an atonement sacrifice

to redeem them from the penalty of their sins. Now the people may be joined to a better covenant . . . and what are the terms of that covenant? Let's go back to the prophet -

^{NKJ} **Jeremiah 31:33** ³³ "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 ("torah" – Strong's 8451) in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The terms of the new covenant are the same as the previous covenant – the Torah must be kept! But there is a few differences.

- Whereas the previous covenant had the terms (the Torah) written on tablets of stone from which the people were to write them on their heart, the new covenant has them written on the people's heart from the beginning.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 7:2-3** ² Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye. ³ Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

- In the previous covenant, the mediator between God and the people was supposed to be the firstborn of Israel, but the people rebelled at the sin of the golden calf and the descendents of Aaron became the priests.

^{NKJ} **Numbers 3:11-12** ¹¹ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ¹² "Now behold, I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be Mine . . .

In the new covenant, the priesthood will return to the firstborn and Yeshua will be the High Priest.

- The first covenant contained the curse of separation from YHVH for disobedience to the terms of the covenant, but in the New Covenant YHVH promises that He will never cast them off again, but will firmly "plant" them in the land of Israel.

^{NKJ} **Jeremiah 32:40-41** ⁴⁰ 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. ⁴¹ 'Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'

So yes, there is a New covenant, and yes, those who are called are under that covenant. But the New Covenant has much the same terms as the old, that is – the Torah. Therefore, being under the New Covenant does not excuse you from Torah observance.

The End of the Law

^{NKJ} **Romans 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

This is a somewhat difficult passage to understand not only for those of us who are returning to the Hebrew walk, but for Christians themselves who have to reconcile it with Yeshua's own words –

Matthew 5:17-18 ¹⁷ " Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ "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.

This passage is set in the context of Paul explaining to the Jewish believers in Rome that the big influx of non-Jews, i.e. – Gentiles, coming into the synagogues is as a result of God fulfilling His promises to them as prophesied in the book of Hosea. He's using the drawing of the Gentiles to

illustrate to the Jews that right standing with God (righteousness) can only be obtained by faith coupled with works and not by works alone. Speaking of the Gentiles who had little knowledge of the Torah –

^{NKJ} **Romans 9:30** Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;

The returning non-Jewish “gentiles” had come to recognize who they were as well as the Messiah who was drawing them back to the God of Israel. On the other hand the Jews (Israel) were, and had been attempting to obtain a right standing with God without faith, but by works alone.

^{NKJ} **Romans 10:1-3** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

In other words, the Jews believed they could obtain right standing with God by Torah observance, and because Torah observance was so important, they began to build “fences” around the Torah in an attempt to avoid even the possibility of breaking the Torah. But that was not the purpose of the Torah. The Torah is not what puts you in right standing with God. What puts you in right standing with God is belief that He will do as He said . . . keep His covenant. The Jews were trying to use the Torah for the wrong purpose. The Torah was not given to provide Israel with a right standing before God. So if Torah was not the way to righteousness, what is the purpose of the Torah? According to Paul –

^{NKJ} **Galatians 3:24.** . . . the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The purpose of the Torah is to bring us to the understanding that we're doomed without a Messiah.

- Like slaves in a foreign land, we need a messiah.
- Like people trapped between mountains with an approaching enemy behind and an endless sea before, we need a messiah.
- Like a people whose written code does not provide a way for us to “work off” our transgressions but instead requires us to put our hands on the head of an innocent lamb, we need a messiah.

Without faith in Messiah, we're a doomed people – a people who cannot obtain a right standing with God.

With that said, Paul reminded the Jews in Rome about the purpose for the Torah –

^{NKJ} **Romans 10:4** For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Like many passages in the New Testament, the translators have done us a disservice. It's not their fault . . . HaSatan has simply done a good job convincing Christians that the Law was “done away”.

A key word in this passage is the word “end” which comes from the Greek word “telos” (Strong's 5056). Wikipedia gives this definition of “telos” ² –

“A **telos** (from the Greek τέλος for "end", "purpose", or "goal") is an end or purpose, in a fairly constrained sense used by philosophers such as [Aristotle](#). It is the root of the term "[teleology](#)," roughly the study of purposiveness, or the study of objects with a view to their aims, purposes, or intentions.”

² [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telos_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Telos_(philosophy))

Dictionary.com defines it as –

“the end term of a goal-dirrected process; especially, theAristotelian final cause.”

“Telos” is translated various ways in the New Testament. For instance in Luke it’s used to describe the extent of the Kingdom of God –

^{NKJ} **Luke 1:33** "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

In this passage, “telos” appears to be translated correctly. It clearly means “end”. But what about in this passage?

^{NKJ} **1 Corinthians 15:24** Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.

In Hebrew thought, is the conclusion of the Messianic Kingdom and the arrival of the New Jerusalem the “end” or is it the “beginning”? I believe a better understanding is that the “purpose” of the Messianic Kingdom is to prepare for the arrival of the New Jerusalem. Thus, “telos” would mean “purpose”.

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he makes this statement –

^{NKJ} **1 Timothy 1:5** Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith,

Here, the word “telos” is translated “purpose”. Obviously “end” does not fit the context of the passage.

Putting the more correct translation back into Paul’s statement in Romans, we get –

^{NKJ} **Romans 10:4** For Christ *is* the purpose of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Now Paul’s letter to the Romans matches his letter to the Galatians . . . the purpose or goal of the Torah is to bring a person to a proper understanding of the Messiah, and more importantly – the need for a Messiah. The examples of Israel’s great leaders, the stories of Israel’s desperation, the detailed description of God’s sacrificial system, and the continual references to God’s covenant are all given to show us that He is dedicated to His people and that He will provide us salvation.

Simply put – we can’t save ourselves . . . we need a Messiah.

Shalom Aleichem