

Encouraged by the Faithfulness of Our Father in Heaven

In this weeks reading from Parsahat Ekev (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25*), Moshe says | עֲקֹב תִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְיָשַׁר יְהוָה | וְהָיָה | עֲקֹב תִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְיָשַׁר יְהוָה | *7:12 ‘Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. (NASB)* Is this a statement that one must earn their right to be in the covenant? Note that when studying the Hebrew text, Moshe explains the Lord God will keep the covenant, the mercy and grace (הַחֶסֶד) that He swore to our fathers and that the Lord will bless the people in the land if they remain faithful to Him (*7:12-16*). These warnings are contrasted with the mighty works God did to preserve His people in the wilderness. The major concepts brought out in this week’s Torah portion is having a humble heart before God, and a hunger for Him, and God’s provision of Manna (“*bread from heaven*”). In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3*, Moshe writes “*man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does a man live.*” *Matthew 4* records Yeshua using these Scriptures to answer Satan during the temptation, drawing his words into the context of the Torah. Yeshua laid claim to the Torah as having authority over his life. Today, can we lay the claim that the Torah is for each and every person who places their faith and trust in Yeshua the Messiah for their salvation?

ספר דברים פרק ז

יב וְהָיָה | עֲקֹב תִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְיָשַׁר יְהוָה | וְהָיָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ לְךָ אֶת-הַבְּרִית וְאֶת-הַחֶסֶד אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם | יג וְאַהֲבָהּ וּבִרְכָהּ וְהִרְבָּהּ וּבִרְוָהּ פְּרִי-בִטְנֶךָ וּפְרִי-אֲדָמָתְךָ דִּגְגֶךָ וְחִי-רִשְׁךָ וּיְצִהֶךָ וְשִׂגְר-אֶלְפֶיךָ וַעֲשִׂיתֶם רַחַת צְאֻנְךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְתַתּ לָךְ | יד בָּרוּךְ תִּהְיֶה מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים לֹא-יִהְיֶה בְּךָ עֲקָר וְעֲקָרָה וּבִבְקָה מִתְּךָ | טו וְהִסִּיר יְהוָה מִמֶּךָ כָּל-חֲלִי וְכָל-מַדּוּי מִצְרַיִם הָרָעִים אֲשֶׁר יָדַעְתָּ לֹא יִשְׁיִמָּם בְּךָ וּנְתַנֶּם בְּכָל-שָׁנָאִיךָ |

Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:12-16

7:12 ‘Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. 7:13 ‘He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you. 7:14 ‘You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle. 7:15 ‘The Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you. (NASB)

Based upon the words from this week’s portion and from Yeshua in the Gospel of Matthew, are we faced with the question of how important are the words of the Torah for

us today? The Apostle Paul told us in *Romans 7:14* saying “*For we know that the Law is spiritual...*” The Torah is spiritual? If the Law is spiritual, how relevant is the Torah for our lives today? Throughout various locations within the text of the five books of Moshe, we find a statement like the one we read in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-3

8:1 ‘All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers. 8:2 ‘You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 8:3 ‘He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. (NASB)

א כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תִּחְיִין וְרַבִּית־
תֶּם וּבִאֲתֶם וּיְרִשְׁתֶּם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם: ב וְזָכַרְתָּ
אֶת-כָּל-הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הוֹלִיכָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ זֶה אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה בְּמִדְבָּר לְמַעַן
עֲנִתְךָ לְנִסְתָּךְ לְדַעַת אֶת-אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְךָ הִתְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתוֹ [מִצְוֹתָיו] אִם-לֹא:
ג וַיַּעֲנֶה וַיִּרְעַבְךָ וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת-הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן
הוֹדִיעֶךָ כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-יְהוָה יִחְיֶה
הָאָדָם:

God is telling His people that the commandments are meant to enable one to live and multiply in the land he/she will be living in (Israel), the land that He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is a very important statement. As a result of this statement and others, these questions come to mind: “*How is the Torah spiritual?*” “*Can the non-Jewish peoples lay claim to the Torah?*” and “*If gentile believers can not lay claim to the Torah, are the patriarchs consider our fathers?*” In light of the doctrine of Supersessionism (replacement theology), these Torah verses are not to be considered as applicable for us today, right? The Lord did all of these things and He continues to do these things because had sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and He continues doing for His name’s sake. According to both Yeshua and Paul we are the sons of Abraham. “*Do Paul’s words refer to a spiritualization of the Torah?*” “*Does literal physical lineage overrule spiritual fatherhood?*” and “*is there a connection between the physical and the spiritual in the context of the covenant of grace we have in Yeshua?*” These are important questions for us today with regard to the relevance of the commandments in our lives.

Studying the Hebrew Scriptures, the word Torah (תּוֹרָה) means “*instruction*” or “*teaching.*” The meaning of this word is a very important concept because the five books of Moshe were not designed to be used simply as a story or history book. This

is best understood by contextualizing the meaning of the Torah in our own lives. For example, are you able to say that God's Law is the primary source of "*instruction*" or "*teaching*" in your life? To bring this into greater context, here is a short (non-exhaustive) list of some areas in our lives that we have the most concern for.

Areas of Concern in our Lives

- Marriage and dating
- Career and money
- Happiness
- Health
- Children
- Recreation and fun
- Personal development
- Education
- Politics
- Friends, family, and relatives, etc...

Based upon this short list of topics, ask yourself "*Do I view the Torah as 'instructional' or as 'teachings' to personally apply in these areas of my life?*" If you are unable to associate the five books of Moshe to these real-time every day events listed above, then a major portion of the Scriptures has become irrelevant for your life. If God's Law becomes irrelevant, there is a significant gap between what is intended in our lives and what is actually taking place. Yeshua found the Torah to be very relevant for his life and similarly we should too. This is why we go through the Torah every year.

Based upon these Scriptures and Moshe's warning "*to keep and to do*" the commands, the rabbis wrote a parable of two gems referring to the commandments according to Midrash Rabbah Devarim, Parashat 3, Part 7 (מדרש רבה דברים פרשה ג סימן ז):

Midrash Rabbah Devarim, Parashat 3, Part 7

Another explanation, THAT THE LORD YOUR GOD WILL KEEP FOR YOU THE COVENANT AND THE MERCY. R. Simeon son of Halafta said, This may be compared to a king who married a noble lady, who brought with her into the house two gems, and the king too had two corresponding gems set for her. The lady lost her gems, whereupon the king took away his. After some time she arose and set herself right with him by bringing back the two gems. Thereupon the king too restored his. The king decreed that a crown should be made of both sets of gems and that it should be placed on the head of the noble lady. So you find that Abraham gave his children two gems (to guard), as it is said, For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him to do righteousness and justice (Bereshit / Genesis 18:19). God too set up corresponding to them two gems, namely, lovingkindness and mercy, as it is said, God

will keep for you the covenant and the mercy, and it further says, And He will give you mercy, and have compassion on you (Devarim / Deuteronomy 13:18). Israel lost theirs, as it is said, That you have turned justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood (Amos 6:12). God thereupon took away His, as it is said, For I have taken away My peace from this people says the Lord, even mercy and compassion (Jeremiah 16:5). Israel then arose and set themselves right with God and restored the two gems. Whence do we know this? For so it is written, Zion will be redeemed with justice, and they that return of her with righteousness (Isaiah 1:27). God too restored His. Whence this? For so it is written, For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness will not depart from you, neither will My covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord that has compassion on you (Isaiah 54:10). And after Israel had restored theirs and God had given back His, God will say, Let both pairs be made into a crown and be placed on the head of Israel, as it is said, And I will betroth you unto Me forever, yes, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness and in justice, and in lovingkindness, and in compassion. And I will betroth you unto Me in faithfulness; and you will know the Lord (Hosea 2:21).

The rabbis compare the commands of God to a king and his bride and two sets of gems. The wife lost her gems. This suggests a certain amount of carelessness with regard to the very precious gift of the king. These gems appear to be something that draws the king and queen together, notice how the gems of the queen are dependent for the gems of the king to be brought near. The wife then finds the gems, and the king decides to make a crown with both sets of gems set into the crown that may be placed upon his wife. The gems are known as “*righteousness and Justice.*” The parable is paralleled to Israel who lost her gems because she walked away from righteousness and justice. Because of God’s kindness, mercy, and grace, He is constantly working to restore His relationship with His bride. The Torah describes what pleases God, how we are to live in righteousness and justice. This is why the Apostle’s spoke so often about doing what is right, serving God and others (maasim tovim), being merciful to everyone and even our enemies. We need to merge the Torah into the context of our lives so that we can be a reflection of our Savior Yeshua the Messiah and this occurs only with the help of the Holy Spirit of God.

Considering the warnings that Moshe gives in the Torah portion, the warnings are contrasted with the mighty works God did to preserve His people which is illustrative of God’s faithfulness to His people. Considering the faithfulness of God who extends His mercy and grace to an unfaithful people, we are encouraged with the hope and trust in our Father in Heaven because of what our Lord Yeshua the Messiah has done on our behalf. Despite the fact that often we are unfaithful, we sin, and we let Him down, He will never go back on what He has promised. It is within this context of God’s continual faithfulness that we are able to lay claim to the Torah for our lives. We who are grafted into Israel, are partakers of both an earthly blessing as well as the coming heavenly

blessing because of what the Messiah has done for each one of us. These things God does are based upon the promises that are listed in the Torah which we are to continually keep in mind so that we are able to Praise His Name regardless of what happens in our lives. By God's mercy, grace, and faithfulness we are saved every day and this Salvation is built upon a solid foundation of the Torah, which describes the character of a loving God. What a wonderful God we serve and wonderful Salvation we have in Yeshua the Messiah! Can you say an AMEN to that!

