

Introduction

Part 5

Having a Second look at the Scriptures

The Apostle John wrote in his epistle saying sin is as practicing lawlessness. Reading through the first epistle of John chapter 3, he speaks of something much more connecting the Torah to our faith in Yeshua the Messiah.

1 John 3:1-12

3:1 See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3:3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 3:5 You

know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. 3:6 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. 3:7 Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; 3:8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. 3:11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 3:12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. (NASB)

John says, *3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. (NASB)* He speaks of who we are (God's Children) and of knowing and seeing Yeshua the Messiah for who he is. What does it mean to "*know*" and to "*see*" Yeshua as He is? We talked earlier about the only way we can get to know a person is by walking in his shoes, in his footsteps. The idea John is putting forward here is once you have seen Him, or truly know Him, you will never be the same. The Old way of life will no longer appeal to you. The major difference here is knowing what He has done for us, and seeing Yeshua as He truly is, the Messiah of God, the Savior of the World, the Righteous and Holy One, the bringer of justice and truth, etc. Yeshua stated if you have seen me you have seen the Father in heaven. (*John 14:9*) Seeing Yeshua is "*as seeing Him who is invisible*" (*Hebrews 11:27*). John's words are not just about seeing, but putting into practice God's Word. It is only then that we truly know our God and His Ways! Seeing the truth may be compared to the man who was

blind from birth did not know who Yeshua was until He appeared and revealed Himself to him (see *John 9*). When we see Yeshua for who He is, the bringer of peace, love, righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth, we see Him as the One who has come and has done something for us. The way John writes his epistle in *1 John 3*, he is revealing to us faith in the Messiah naturally connects us to knowing God by putting His words into action (practicing truth, righteousness, holiness, ethics, and justice -- His Torah).

John speaks of the great love the Father has for us in the sense that He gave us His son (Yeshua) and that He is making (conforming, shaping, molding) us to be like His son (in righteousness, holiness, and truth). He says that every person who loves the Lord will purify himself. This suggests how we will have a desire to walk in God's ways, to turn from sin and unrighteousness, both on the outside and on the inside (our thoughts, see *Isaiah 55:7*). He says those who practice sin practice lawlessness. Yeshua appeared to take away sins, and those who abide in him no longer practice sin. This is the nature of repentance that characterizes who we are, something the Lord laid out according to His Torah. If the Lord is living in our midst (in our hearts) we will repent and turn from our ways and to return to God's holy and righteous ways. John speaks of those who practice righteousness are of God, and those who do not are of the evil one. Yeshua came to destroy the works of the devil, and this distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness are what differentiates between the sons of God and those who are sons of the evil one. John uses the example from the Torah saying we were told from the beginning, from the Torah, that we are to love one another contrasting this with the example of Cain and Abel. The Torah lays down the foundation for our understanding of truth. The Apostle Paul wrote extensively on this topic of the close connectedness of the Torah to the Gospel Message. (See *Romans 7-8*)

The Apostle Paul wrote in *Romans 8* about how Yeshua gives us the power to overcome and to live according to the Torah.

Romans 8:1-17

8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of

sin and of death. 8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 8:4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 8:6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 8:10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 8:12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!' 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. (NASB)

Paul speaks of the law of sin and death, which is paralleled to the works of the flesh. He also speaks of the law of the Spirit of life in Yeshua who sets us free (8:1-3) and parallels that to the Torah. Paul states the reason Yeshua came was to make atonement for sin in the likeness of sinful flesh so that He can condemn sin in the body. In *Romans 8:4* he says this was done *8:4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (NASB)* Note how he states that the requirement of the Torah may be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. The power of God lives in us so that we are able to live according to His Word and so we have the desire to do so too. The spirit of God dwells in us, Paul speaks of this being synonymous to having the Spirit of Christ (8:9) and the spirit of our Father God in heaven (8:11). The presence of God and indwelling of His Spirit reveals to us how the Lord God is working in our hearts and in our lives to overcome sin. This means that He is giving us the power to obey His commandments. This is explained in *Romans 8:5-8*. Paul says the one who has his mind set on the flesh is dead, and he does not subject himself to the Torah (Law) of God. The one who sets his mind upon the flesh (sin) is not even able to subject himself to God's Law. Paul goes on to explain how the Lord God Almighty by His Spirit makes us alive and enables us to put to death the deeds of the body (8:13). The putting to death the deeds of the body means we are putting away sin, we are no longer practicing sin. The one who obeys God's Torah is being led by the Spirit of God, and he says "*these are the sons of God*" (8:16) and "*we are the children of God and fellow heirs with Christ.*" (8:17) Paul's Words here establish the idea that God is working in each one of us to live our lives according to His Word (the Torah).

Peter wrote in his epistles the following according to *1 Peter 4:11-19*.

1 Peter 4:11-19

4:11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever

and ever. Amen. 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 4:13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 4:14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 4:15 Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; 4:16 but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 4:18 And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? 4:19 Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (NASB)

Peter describes the child of God as the one who is transformed by faith, to live his life as if he is doing a service unto the Lord God Almighty. He says the Lord is the One who gives us the strength to do so, to be free from the dominion of sin in our lives. This reveals to us that the Torah is not a form of bondage. The power of God in our lives sets us free from sin and therefore God's instruction is a blessing and something to be joyful about. He says that we will be reviled because of the name of Yeshua, and this is because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us (4:14). He then warns us not to suffer by reason of sin (murder, theft, evil, wickedness, sin, etc). We are God's children and are to suffer as having faith and faithfulness before God, and this suffering is to glorify God our Father in heaven in the name of Yeshua (4:16). Peter then states that it is with difficulty that the righteous are saved. This difficulty is found within our living our lives in faith and faithfulness before God, to do what is right, in holiness, justice, and truth. This is not an easy life. Peter is speaking of walking according to God's com-

mands, something of which Paul describes (*Romans 6-7*) of doing so with much difficulty. The Spirit of God however empowers our lives from within, while the body desires sin we are overcomers, for those who rely upon the Lord to help. The truth of God's Word sets us free, and it is the power of God's Spirit that causes this to become a reality in our lives to overcome sin and death. This is what Yeshua was discussing in *John 8:31-32*.

ח:כד לכן אמרתי אליכם כי תמותו בחטאיכם כי אם לא תאמינו כי אני הוא בחטאיכם תמותו: ח:כה ויאמרו אליו מי זה אתה ויאמר אליהם ישוע מה שגם מראש דברתי אליי כם: ח:כו רבות עמי לדבר ולשפט עליכם אכן שלחי נאמן הוא ואשר שמעתי ממנו אתו אני מדבר אל העולם: ח:כז והם לא התבוננו כי על האב אמר אליהם: ח:כח אז אמר להם ישוע בעת תנשאו את בן האדם וידעתם כי אני הוא וכי אינני עשה דבר מנפשי כי אם כאשר למדני אבי אלה אדבר: ח:כט ואשר שלח אתי הוא עמדי האב לא עזבני לבד כי את הטוב בעיניו אני עשה תמיד: ח:ל ויהי בדברו זאת ויאמינו בו רבים: ח:לא ויאמר ישוע אל היהודים המאמינים בו אם תעמדו בדברי באמת תלמידי אתם: ח:לב וידעתם את האמת והאמת תשימכם לבני חורין: ח:לג ויענו אתו זרע אברהם נחנו ומעולם לא היינו לאיש לעבדים איכה תאמר בני חורין תהיו: ח:לד ויען אתם ישוע אמן אמן אני אמר לכם כל עשה חטא עבד החטא הוא: ח:לה והעבד לא ישכן בבית לעולם הבן ישכן לעולם: ח:לו לכן אם הבן יעשה אתכם בני חורין חפשים באמת תהיו:

John 8:24-36

8:24 'Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins.' 8:25 So they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning? 8:26 'I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me

is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.’ 8:27 They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. 8:28 So Jesus said, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 8:29 ‘And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.’ 8:30 As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. 8:31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 8:32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’ 8:33 They answered Him, ‘We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’’ 8:34 Jesus answered them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 8:35 ‘The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 8:36 ‘So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. (NASB)

What we are shown here in the text, Yeshua speaks of the truth setting us free in *John 8:31-32*. We then see the story of yeshua healing a man born blind. Then he speaks to the pharisees about this phrase they say אֲנַחְנוּ רֹאִים meaning “we see” (the truth). However, yeshua says their claim causes their sin to remain. This is an important point that is being made regarding being set free from sin. The truth sets us free. Is this simply about believing in yeshua or is there something more? Modern theologies have taught us “*faith alone.*” Based upon this theology, the church’s in the western United States claim one may practice sin (i.e. homosexuality) and go to heaven because all one has to do is believe in Jesus. This leads to serious theological problems in relation to our being set free from sin that is spoken so often of in the Scriptures. This concept is not simply limited to homosexuality. *Matthew 7:23* speaks of this concept of having faith but not the kind of faith that follows through by the way one lives. Yeshua calls those who do this

are workers of lawlessness and will not inherit the kingdom of God or go to heaven. We have to be careful that we do not get caught up in a theology/doctrine that causes us to neglect the ways of God in our lives. Yeshua did not say just believe in me and that is all you need to do. Yeshua taught that we are forgiven, now go and sin no more. (*John 8:11*) The type and shadow that we are given in the Torah, of God dwelling in the midst of His people, miracles and power over the enemy, atonement and forgiveness, etc, these are the things that God has given us in His Son, and by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit in our lives. God's Spirit causes us to have the desire to draw near, to obey His Word, to overcome sin and the evil one. What these things reveal to us is how the Lord wants to empower us to walk in the Spirit and to live our lives for Him. This is the victory God has given to us in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. This is the power of the Gospel Message and the Torah!

When we study the Scriptures from a fresh perspective, that the Torah was given to God's People, both past, present, and future, all of Scripture and the Gospel Message becomes clear. The History and theologies we are taught shape our presuppositions and philosophical beliefs and these things shape our perception of reality and most importantly, our interpretation of Scripture. This leads to the questions we ask about life and spiritual matters, and the questions we ask are shaped by the assumptions, the expectations of the hypothesis and theories we embrace and ultimately the theologies and doctrines we hold onto. The idea of coming to the truth is a universal principle and the reason there is so much variation in biblical interpretation. The difficulty however is to find a set of assumptions that we can all agree upon that leads to correct conclusions. The common ground is to establish our faith and trust in the Word of God, just as the Scriptures do, taking the foundation of the Torah as a way of Life. If we are taught a half truth, we may never come to the understanding of what God wants for us in our lives according to His Holy Word. Based upon our assessment from a biblical and historical perspective, the Torah is a fundamental part of the gospel message! This much is clear from the Writings of Paul and the Apostles John and Peter. Therefore it is important to hold onto a Torah centric hermeneutic when exercising biblical interpretation.