

פרשת
עקב
Parashat Ekev

*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25, Isaiah 49:14-51:3
John 13:31-15:27*

The Torah Defines being saved by grace!

In this week's Torah portion we read according to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:4-6* the following, ד אל-תאמר בלבבך בהדף יהוה אלהיך אתם | מלפניך לאמר בצדקתי הביאני יהוה לרשת את-הארץ הזאת וב-רשעת הגוים האלה יהוה מורישם מפניך: ה לא בצדקתך וכי ישר לבבך אתה בא לרשת את-ארצם כי ברשעת | הגוים האלה יהוה אלהיך מורישם מפניך ולמען הקים את-הדבר אשר נשבע יהוה לאבותיך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב: ו וידעת כי לא בצדקתך יהוה אלהיך נתן לך את-הארץ הטובה: 9:4 *“Do not say in your heart, after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you, ‘It is because of my righteousness (בצדקתי) that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land,’ whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out before you. 9:5 Not because of your righteousness (בצדקתך) or the uprightness of your heart (ובישר לבבך) are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 9:6 “Know, therefore, that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess*

because of your righteousness (בְּצִדְקָתְךָ), for you are a stubborn people. (ESV) Moshe writes four times saying that it is not because of the righteousness or uprightness of the hearts of the people the Lord God is delivering Israel into the Promised Land. This suggests that it was by the God's mercy that He brought the people out of bondage, through the Red Sea, up to the Mountain of Sinai, and into the Promised Land. What we are learning here is how God our Father fulfilled His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by bringing their children into the Land that was promised even though they are far from righteous. In addition, contained within the promise given to Abraham in Parashat Lech Lecha all of the world would be blessed, and so we see this future expectation of God also blessing the nations due to His righteousness. Moshe writes they are a stubborn people meaning they were stiff-necked, slow to turn from their sins. According to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:16* we read *“Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.”* The term stiff-necked is equivalent to not having faith and not living in faithfulness before God. The Lord God called this generation of people stiff-necked because they failed to trust having faith in Him. (See *Shemot / Exodus 32:9, 33:3-5, 34:9, Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:6, 9:13, 2 Chronicles 30:8 and Acts 7:51*) The author of the book of Hebrews in *3:7-4:2* wrote that these stiff-necked people in the wilderness received the Gospel Message, but failed to mix it with faith and their hearts went astray. What we read in Parashat Haazinu in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:6* *“And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live”* is equivalent to NT salvation described in the Torah. Here the word *“live”* is used as an equivalent to salvation, just as Paul wrote to both the Romans and Colossians how a circumcised heart is equivalent to being born new.

Romans 2:29

2:29 “But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart ...”

Colossians 2:11

2:11 “In whom also ye are circumcised with the cir-

cumcision made without hands ...”

The Torah lays the groundwork for this teaching speaking first of recognizing the authority of God, then trusting in Him by faith, coming to Him in repentance, which then leads to one obeying the command. Notice how this mechanism (faith leading to faithfulness) is true based upon the Torah, the prophets, and the Apostolic Writings.

Shemot / Exodus 20:2-3 & Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:6-7

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Habakkuk 2:4 & Romans 1:17
“The righteous live by faith.”

Paul quotes this verse from the Tanach in Romans to drive through His point that faithfulness follows through from having faith.

Hebrews 11:6

11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

The author of Hebrews goes on to list those who obeyed God’s Torah as examples for us, such as; Moshe, David and Samuel. This is the way in which the Lord instructs us to consider his Word. The Torah continues saying the following:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 11:18-25

11:18 “You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 11:19 You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 11:20 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, 11:21 that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land

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that the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth. 11:22 For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him, 11:23 then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 11:24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea. 11:25 No one shall be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you. (ESV)

The imperative to always have these words stored up in our hearts, so much so we are to bind them to our bodies, teach them to our children, and speak of them while walking and sitting, even writing them upon our door posts and gates (the entrance to our homes and property) so that our days may be multiplied, this is for the purpose so we will live longer. The reason the commandment is given was for our benefit because sin causes to shorten our lives (to destroy our bodies, relationships, households, and nations). Righteousness causes to lengthen our lives (being good to the body, relationships, households, and nations). Keeping all of God's Word in and upon our hearts, is why Yeshua continually directed our attention back to the Torah, as he did in *John 3:14* describing how the son of man must be lifted up just as the bronze serpent was lifted in the wilderness (*Bamidbar / Numbers 21*) such that all men might be drawn unto him as a matter of having faith. Or also how Yeshua talking to Nicodemus in *John 3* asked how being a teacher of Israel, knowing the Torah, why did he not know or understand the things he was speaking of? Torah based salvation is no different than Yeshua based salvation, this is why Yeshua said what he did in *John 8:56* "*Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad.*" Torah based salvation looked forward to the gift of God (repentance, mercy, grace, forgiveness) through His anointed one. Salvation was always through faith, Messiah, and Torah, as Yeshua is the lamb slain since the foundation of the world (*Hebrews 4:3, 9:26, Revelation 13:8*). Paul in *Romans 10:4* stated that Yeshua is

the aim / goal of the Torah making the Hebraic connection between the Torah and the Messiah of God. The reason these things are very difficult to understand today are due to the theological systems that have been established, by hundreds and thousands of years of interpretation of the Scriptures from a sense of replacement. Replacement theology was not the point or purpose of the teachings of Yeshua, the disciples, or even Paul. The Torah however goes on to describe having faith in the God of Israel and then being faithful which follows through from our faith. The Torah description of these things are as follows:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 11:8-17

11:8 “You shall therefore keep the whole commandment that I command you today, that you may be strong, and go in and take possession of the land that you are going over to possess, 11:9 and that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and to their offspring, a land flowing with milk and honey. 11:10 For the land that you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated it, like a garden of vegetables. 11:11 But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, 11:12 a land that the Lord your God cares for. The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. 11:13 “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, 11:14 he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil. 11:15 And he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you shall eat and be full. 11:16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; 11:17 then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you. (ESV)

Moshe is speaking here of having faith and being faithful as it is con-

nected to the rain (a blessing from God) from heaven that comes due to the nations faithfulness to God according to His Word. In addition, being faithful to God will follow through by the Lord increasing our grain and wine and livestock, etc. Notice how the command is to obey God's Words such that we will be prosperous in what we do. The whole idea of obeying the command as something to do for God to earn one's salvation under the "*Law of Moses*" is a foreign concept in light of the Scriptures! There is an interesting point here because we read in the Torah something at the end of the book of Devarim / Deuteronomy that is connected here to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 11:16* to take care of your heart to not be deceived by turning to other gods. The text states that the anger of the Lord will be stirred up against those who are unfaithful to the Lord. This is consistent with the Psalmists words saying "*Those who are far from you will perish; you destroy all who are unfaithful to you*" (*Tehillim / Psalms 73:27*) and "*The LORD preserves everyone who loves him, but he will destroy all of the wicked.*" (*Tehillim / Psalms 145:20*) Notice also something that Paul wrote to the Romans in *Romans 1:28* concerning those people who sought to go their own way, the Lord would give them over to a reprobate mind to do things that are shameful and not natural. This similar pattern is found in Moshe's interaction with Pharaoh. The Torah states, Pharaoh hardened his heart..., Pharaoh hardened his heart..., Pharaoh hardened his heart... Etc and then we read God hardened his heart! Notice how Pharaoh had opportunity over and over again until a point of no return until the time when God began to harden his heart for his own purposes. This is consistent with what Paul is writing, failure to acknowledge God as Lord (*Shemot / Exodus 20*) leads to the giving over to a reprobate mind one that is confused and lacks understanding. If one has trouble understanding the Bible, could this be the leading cause? The direction that Moshe is instructing the people here in Parashat Ekev is to always have these words stored up in our hearts, to bind them to our bodies, to teach them to our children, and to speak of them while walking and sitting, even writing them upon our door posts and gates (the entrance to our homes and property) so that our days may be multiplied. The reason is so we always live in repentance before God and never forget His mercy! For it is not because of our Righteousness that we are given

such a great Salvation! This is one of the core principles to the Gospel Message Moshe taught the people in the wilderness!

The Scriptures we are looking at for this week are from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-20*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:1-20

8:1 “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. 8:2 And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. 8:3 And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. 8:4 Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. 8:5 Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. 8:6 So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. 8:7 For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, 8:8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, 8:9 a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 8:10 And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. 8:11 “Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, 8:12 lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, 8:13 and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, 8:14 then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, 8:15 who

led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water; who brought you water out of the flinty rock, 8:16 who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. 8:17 Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 8:18 You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. 8:19 And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. 8:20 Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God. (ESV)

א כל-המצונה אשר אנכי מצוה היום תשמרו ון לעשות למען תחיון ורביתם ובאתם וירשתם את-הארץ אשר-נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם:
ב וזכרת את-כל-הדרך אשר הולכת יהוה אלהיך זה ארבעים שנה במדבר למען ענתה לנסתה לדעת את-אשר בלבכה התשמר מצותו [מצותיו] אם-לא: ג ויענה וירעבה ויאכלה את-המן אשר לא-ידעת ולא ידעון אבותיה למען הודיעה כי לא על-הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם כי על-כל-מוצא פי-יהוה יחיה האדם: ד שמלתה לא בלתה מעליה ורגלה לא בצקה זה ארבעים שנה: ה וידעת עם-לבכה כי כאשר ייסר איש את-בנו יהוה אלהיך מיסרה: ו ושמרת את-מצות יהוה אלהיך ללכת בדרךיו וליראה אתו: ז כי יהוה אלהיך מביאה אל-ארץ טובה ארץ נחלי מים עינת ותהמת יצאים בבקעה ובהר: ח ארץ חטה ושערה וגפן ותאנה ורמון ארץ-זית שמן ודבש: ט ארץ אשר לא במספנת תאכל-בה לחם לא-תחסר כל בה ארץ אשר אבניה ברזל ומהרריה תחצב נחשת: י ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את-יהוה אלהיך על-הארץ הטובה אשר נתן-לך: [שני] יא השמר לה פן-תשכח את-יהוה אלהיך לבלתי שמר מצותיו ומשפטיו וחקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום: יב פן-תאכל ושבעת ובתים טבים תבנה וישבת: יג ובקרה וצאנה ורגזו וכסף וזהב ירבה-לה וכל אשר-לה ירבה: יד ורם לבכה ושכחת את-יהוה אלהיך המוציאה מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים: טו המולכה במדבר | הגדל והנורא נחש | שרף ועקרב וצמאון אשר אין-מים המוציאה לה מים מצור החלמיש: טז המאכלה מן במדבר אשר לא-ידעון אבותיה למען ענתה ולמען

ב כי אם הדבר הנאמר על ידי המלאכים היה קים וכל פשע ומרי נשא את ענשו כמשפט: ג איך נמלט אנחנו אם לא נשים לב לתשועה גדולה אשר כזאת הנאמרה מתחלה בפני האדון ותקים לנו על ידי שמעיה: ד וגם אלהים העיד עליה באתות ובמופתים ובגבורות שנות ובהאציל מרוח קדשו כרצונו: ה כי לא תחת יד המלאכים שת את העולם הבא אשר אנחנו מדברים עליו: ו כי אם כאשר העיד האמר במקום אחד מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ובן אדם כי (תפקדנו:

In *Hebrews 2:2* the author of Hebrews speaks of Moshe upon the mountain of Sinai receiving the Torah, and of the people receiving punishment for disobedience because they neglected the great salvation of God illustrated through the wonders the Lord God worked through the hand of Moshe. How much more should one perish if (*Hebrews 2:3* “if” אם) one neglects such a great salvation. Note the quotation from *Tehillim / Psalms 8:5-7* speaking of man (אנוש) and of the son of man (בן אדם). A comparison may be made to an איש and the son of man. The word איש is rich with context, this describes a man as a husband, a man of the covenant, one who is faithful to God, and contrasting that to Enosh (אנוש, *Bereshit / Genesis 5:21-23*) who was disobedient. A similar contrast is made in the phrase ben-adam (בן אדם) to the son who has not had his bar-mitzvah (*not accountable to the covenant or publicly announced his/her faith in the Lord*) and to the one who is the Anointed One of God, savior of the world. The way the author of Hebrews quotes this text appears to strike a contrast between covenant faithfulness and unfaithfulness driving forward the point being made of the conditionality of believing in Yeshua the Messiah coupled to the promises of God. This follows through by what Moshe describes in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12-22*. Faith involves paying careful attention to what we have heard (*Hebrews 2:1*) so that we do not drift away, just as Moshe is saying in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12-22*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12-22

10:12 'Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 10:13 and to keep the Lord's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 10:14 'Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. 10:15 'Yet on your fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day. 10:16 'So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. 10:17 'For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. 10:18 'He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing. 10:19 'So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. 10:20 'You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him and cling to Him, and you shall swear by His name. 10:21 'He is your praise and He is your God, who has done these great and awesome things for you which your eyes have seen. 10:22 'Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven. (NASB)

Notice how Moshe states what God requires of us is to fear God, to walk in all his ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord with all of our heart and soul. He goes on to say the people are to circumcise their hearts. Circumcision was given to Abraham in *Bereshit / Genesis 12 and 15*. To be circumcised in the heart sounds strange, yet the Lord God through Moshe describes this necessary process that must take place in order to not cause our hearts to stray from the ways of the Lord. The Lord God Almighty made promises to Abraham and then was fulfilling those promises to Israel at the speaking of Moshe there before entering the Promised Land. The point is that circumcision was a sign of the covenant according to what we read in *Bereshit / Genesis*. Back in *Vayikra / Leviticus 12:3* (“*And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised*”) Moshe wrote the command

of God to circumcise children on the eighth day. Based upon the command we read of concerning Abraham and from Moshe, we see how the sign of the covenant goes beyond the surface but must go deeper to the heart and intention within. We are also told in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:6* “*Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.*” (NASB) Note again this is the definition of NT salvation, being born new is an act of God in our hearts such that we may life (have life). This is the definition of circumcision that is of a spiritual nature that goes deeper to effect one’s soul, essence, attitudes, and relationship with God. This is how Moshe is using the concept of circumcising the heart that is juxtaposed to fearing God, to walking in all his ways, loving Him, and serving the Lord with all of one’s heart and soul. (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:12-16*) We have this promise today in which He (God) continues to keep. He has promised that every person who places his trust in the Messiah, in the Anointed One of Israel, the Holy Spirit of God will dwell within him and circumcise his heart causing him to be faithful to God according to His Word. (*Romans 2:29*) Just as the word that Moshe spoke to the people states concerning life and living, loving God and serving Him, every man, woman, and child who believes in Yeshua the Messiah will be saved (will live). This is coupled to the idea of the Lord seeking to change a person from within making a priority of internal circumcision. This is illustrated in *Jeremiah 4:4* which states, “*Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done.*” (NASB) The thematic point from the beginning was on the need for repentance leading to that inward change in order to be right with God. We are told in the Apostolic Writings, this is achieved only with God’s help, believing in His Messiah Yeshua.

At the end of the book of Devarim / Deuteronomy, Moshe warns the children of Israel that straying from God’s Torah to worship idols made with human hands, the Lord God will cause them to be exiled from the Land and scatter them among the nations. Nevertheless, the Lord God would not abandon the people who were scattered, but would cause them to prosper and to come to their senses realizing

what they have done in repentance. This is what the Lord had taught the people through Moshe saying, *“You will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul”* (Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:29). Similarly, Yeshua teaches, *“He who seeks, finds”* (Luke 11:10). The point is if we earnestly seek God and reach out for Him, He will not hide Himself from us.

Luke 11:9-10

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. (NASB)

The one who seeks the Lord finds. The one who does not seek the Lord, what can be said about such a person? Is this the type of person who shows a disinterest in reading the Bible? Is this the type of person who just goes to a Shabbat service to hear a sermon once a week, and then does not think about the Lord until the next week? It is possible to go through life assuming one is ok with the Lord God in heaven, but remain in a state of numb self-contentment, as the prophet Isaiah said, *“They do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!”* (Isaiah 31:1)? The point of this week’s Torah portion is having the Lord God change our hearts, circumcising the heart, a change on the inside that causes us to have the desire to seek the Lord, to serve Him, and to read His Word. When these things happen, we begin to see the Lord God working in our lives every day! If you do not see the Lord working in your life every day, it would be a good idea to ask the question on whether what you have been taught concerning NT salvation is consistent with how the God of Israel defines salvation in the Torah? This is absolutely and important question for every one of us today! The Torah defines being saved by grace! This is why the Torah and the Gospel Message go hand in hand! This may also be why God is not actively, daily, working in your life, if what you believe is inconsistent with the Lord’s definition of salvation according to the Torah of faith being coupled to faithfulness before a holy God!