

# YHVH's Instructions in Righteousness

## A Messianic Believer's Introduction to the Torah

Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

*Waters in the Wilderness, A Teaching Ministry of Hoshana Rabbah Messianic Discipleship Resources*

### Two Parallel Worlds

**T**HE SCRIPTURES, THE WORD OF ELOHIM, TEACH US that there are two parallel planes of existence: an upper and a lower, a physical and a spiritual. Many aspects of the physical world mirror, at step-down level, the spiritual "world" of the Creator, YHVH Elohim, our Father in heaven. Paul in Romans 1:20 alludes to this: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

Pertaining to the beginning of YHVH's creative activities on earth we read, "So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen. 1:26-27). Man, a physical being, was created in the image of Elohim, a spiritual Being. There are other spiritual-physical parallels revealed in Scripture. They include the physical Tabernacle/Temple on this earth which according to the writer of the Book of Hebrews had a heavenly counterpart (Heb. 8:5; 9:23); the physical marriage of a man and a woman and the spiritual marriage between Yeshua and his Bride (Eph. 5:21-33) – the Body of Believers; the physical Jerusalem and the spiritual Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26); the physical heaven and the new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21:1); and the earthly high priest and Yeshua, the heavenly High Priest (Heb. 9:11). Likewise, there is physical light and spiritual light. For example, who is this "Sun of Righteousness" mentioned in Malachi 4:2? Or what does Revelation 21:4 mean when speaking of New Jerusalem, a city that had not need of the sun, for the glory of Elohim and the Lamb is the light thereof?

### Physical Light and Spiritual Light

What can we understand about physical light that may illuminate our understanding about the nature of spiritual light? *The Worldbook Encyclopedia* gives us some elementary concepts regarding the nature of physical light. "Light is a swift messenger that comes to us from tiny invisible worlds of atoms and from enormous worlds of distant stars. Through light we can tell the different atoms apart and discover many of the inner secrets of matter. Light also reveals the motions of planets, stars, and universes" (vol. 12, p. 248). It goes on to say, "The light given off by the sun rules our daily life.... Without sunlight every living thing would starve to death, because all living things are dependent upon the food that plants make or upon other living things that eat that food" (1969 edit., vol. 12, p. 248). As we study the subject of spiritual light from a Scriptural perspective, we will indeed see that the light from above is indeed a swift messenger bringing with it life and truth. It illuminates the invisible world of YHVH Elohim and reveals the inner workings and secrets of his spiritual kingdom. Without that spiritual light the physical creation would cease to exist. Light is a fascinating subject. For more enlightenment read on.

Here are some other properties of physical light worth noting: Nearly all light comes from the sun. Light eliminates darkness and is its antithesis. Light reveals the reality of physical objects and helps us find our way in the darkness. Light is the fastest thing known and travels only in straight lines. When light passes through a glass prism it is split into a spectrum of seven main colors. Light can bounce or reflect off of surfaces. The sun's light bounces off the moon giving earth a night light. People are attracted to light. Light pierces darkness. Darkness cannot pierce light. There is no flashlight that sends out a beam of darkness into a lighted area. The beautiful colors of various objects are caused by light's absorption of or reflection off the surfaces of those objects. Without light these objects and their colors would be invisible.

Now what about spiritual light? Can we find direct parallels between physical light and spiritual light? Most definitely! The prophet Malachi refers to the Messiah as “the Sun of Righteousness” who will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2; see also Ezek. 43:2 where the radiance of the sun upon the earth and the glory of Elohim are poetically juxtaposed). The Son of Man (another name for Messiah Yeshua) is described as having a countenance as bright as the sun in its strength (Rev. 1:16). Scripture tells that YHVH Elohim is clothed in a garment of light (Ps. 104:21) and his face radiates light (Ps. 89:15; 90:8). Yeshua not only is called, but refers to himself as, the Light of the world, shining in the darkness (John 1:1-14; 8:12; 9:5). Spiritual light is the antithesis of spiritual darkness (Prov. 4:18; Isa. 5:20). Spiritual light reveals spiritual truth; light and truth are synonymous and originate from YHVH, the source of light (Ps. 43:3). YHVH’s spiritual light illuminates man’s spiritual path (Ps. 119:105) and leads one to YHVH’s exalted and spiritual hill or dwelling place (Ps. 43:3). Yeshua, the Light of the world, is the way to the Father (John 14:6). The way of spiritual light and truth is straight (Isa. 42:16; 45:2; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-5; John 1:23; Matt. 7:13-14). Believers are to reflect the spiritual Light of Yeshua in their lives to the dark world around them (Acts 13:47; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 John 1:7). People are attracted to spiritual light (Isa. 49:6; 60:3). There is first spiritual darkness which is pierced when the spiritual light shines through (Gen. 1:2-3; 2 Cor. 4:6; 2 Pet. 1:19). Spiritual light produces a beautiful and full spectrum of spiritual fruitfulness in the Believer’s life (Eph. 5:8-14; Gal 5:22-23). Believers are to be lights shining the light of truth on their dark surroundings (Matt. 5:14-16).

### What Is the Origin of Spiritual Light?

Let us now focus on the source or origination of light. For the earth it is the sun. Though pagans have worshipped the sun from time immemorial, Scripture condemns this practice as idolatry. The sun, though not an object to be worshipped, is a visible reminder to humans of the Creator of the sun. As we have noted above, not only does Scripture describe YHVH symbolically as the “Sun of Righteousness” and likens his visage to the sun, but it declares that not only is he *the source* of spiritual light (Matt. 4:16; Luke. 1:79; Acts 26:23), but that he *is* light itself and that in him is no darkness (wickedness or unrighteousness) (1 John 1:5).

So YHVH is the source of light, he is clothed in light, he is light and he radiates that light toward men and instructs them to walk in that light and become reflectors of that light themselves. But what is that light? We have already observed that spiritual light is truth, that it is the Word of Elohim, the way and path of truth, and that it is Yeshua, the Light of the world. *What is the light?*

### The First Mention of Light In Scripture

To understand the Scriptural meaning of light we must go back to the very beginning where Scripture first mentions light in Genesis one. Here we read:

1 In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And Elohim said, Let there be light; and there was light. 4 And Elohim saw the light, that it was good; and Elohim divided the light from the darkness. 5 And Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

We see that at the beginning of Elohim’s creative activities the earth was in a state of darkness and chaos (verse 2). His first creative act was to introduce light into that system of darkness and confusion (verse 3). What can we learn about the nature of this light from these few, terse statements? The word for *light* is the Hebrew word אור (*owr*) (*Strong’s* H216; *TWOT* 52a) which is the generic term that the Tanakh uses for *light*. It can refer to light in a general sense as in opposition to darkness (Gen. 1:3), it can refer to figurative light as in opposition to figurative darkness (Isa. 5:20), it can refer to daylight (Gen. 1:3), the light given by the heavenly bodies (Isa. 30:26), man-made lights such as the menorah in the Tabernacle (Num. 4:9, 16; 8:2), literal eyesight (Ps. 38:10), the power of life over death (Ps. 56:13), the light of Elohim’s face indicating his approval (Ps. 89:15; Num. 6:25), to truth (Ps. 43:3), to the Word of Elohim (Ps. 119:105; Isa. 8:20), to YHVH’s Torah-law (Prov. 6:23).

### What Was the Nature of That First Light?

What was the nature of that first light that YHVH created in Genesis one? Before the reader jumps to any conclusions, consider this: The sun, moon and stars were not made until the fourth day (verse 14). So if the earth was

not bathed in the light of the sun for the first three days, what was the source and nature of the light that covered the earth from day one to day three? This has puzzled Jewish commentators from time immemorial. Some reconcile this seeming Scriptural discrepancy by stating that Elohim *created* the physical luminaries on the first day, but did not *hang* or *suspend* them in the sky until the fourth day (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, p. 39 quoting the *Talmud* [*Chagigah* 12a]). This explanation still fails to answer the question concerning what was the light of the first three days and why did Elohim wait to “hang” the sun and moon until the fourth day, and how could the sun be created, yet not shine until the fourth day? Either it shined from day one or it did not. If it was the source of the original light, then why the statement about the sun and moon being made on day four?

Other rabbis have other explanations, which they derive from the spelling of the Hebrew word אור (*owr*). First, it is important to note that there was some type of physical light, as we know it, during the first three days, for the word for *night* is the Hebrew word ליל (*layil*, *Strong's* H3915, *TWOT* 1111), which derives from the root word ליל (*luwl*, *Strong's* H3833, *TWOT* 1094), which, according to *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, refers to a winding staircase with the idea of *twisting, turning* or *winding* (p. 533a). What we see here is that *night* is described as a time when the earth *twists* on its axis *away* from the source of the light which from day one through three was not the sun, since the sun was not made until the fourth day of creation.

### Complete/Full Light Versus Incomplete/Defective Light

As we have already noted, the Hebrew word for *light* as used in Genesis spelled אור. Yet the first two times this same Hebrew word is used in verses 14 and 15 the word is spelled without the letter ו (i.e. או). This anomaly does not come through in our English texts, yet its abbreviated spelling is full of spiritual significance, according to the Jewish rabbis who have been studying these passages for thousands of years. What does this mean? What we see here is a case of the *complete* or *full spelling* of a Hebrew word versus *the incomplete* or *defective spelling*. Since every word of Scripture is the Word of Elohim that man shall live by (Matt. 4:4), since all Scripture is YHVH-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16) and since every jot (or ך *yud*, which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) and every tittle (flourish or crown on a Hebrew letter) is inspired of YHVH and will not pass away (Matt. 5:18) we would be wise to examine the spelling of these Hebrew words to see if we can learn anything about *the light* that shone on this earth before the creation of the sun and moon.

According to Rabbi Michael Munk, in his book, *The Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet*, “In many words, the presence or absence of a ו [*vav*] has no effect on pronunciation, but the Biblical exegesis often finds a special meaning implied by the *vav*’s presence or absence. Spelling a word in its complete or full form ... signifies totality and integrity; spelling it in its incomplete or defective form ... indicates deficiency or imperfection.

“When a word appears once in its complete form and once in its incomplete form in the same context, it indicates contrast.

“*Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heaven.... And they shall serve as luminaries* (Genesis 1:14-15). The first time it appears, the word for luminaries [מאורות] is spelled doubly defective (that is, with both the *vav* of the root and the *vav* of plurality omitted – מארת). The second time, however, the root ו [*vav*] is in its place, but the plural ו [*vav*] is not.

“This is expounded to imply that the original light – אור – was withdrawn and reserved for the righteous in the future. The missing light was replaced by the radiation of luminaries. In the first verse, the root of מאורת, luminaries – אור, *light* – is incomplete, without a ו [*vav*]. This teaches us that the light emanating from celestial bodies is not equal to the richness and purity of the primeval light; it has diminished power, reflecting our own imperfect state. In the second verse, which expresses the luminaries’ fulfillment of the calling to give light to the earth, the root אור, *light*, is complete for their mission to illuminate the earth is completely carried out. Although they no longer have their original light, they carry out their mission to the best of their ability” (p. 100).

With regard to the spelling of the Hebrew word for *light* in Genesis 1:14-16, ArtScroll’s *The Kestenbaum Edition Tikkun* confirming Rabbi Munk, states, “The word מאור [*ma-owr, lights*] is related to אור [*owr, light*]. It refers to something that gives light, such as a lamp or the sun. We would expect the plural form to be spelled מאורות, with the first ו coming from the basic word and the second ו as part of the plural suffix -ות. However when the vowel *cholem* (ו) appears twice in a row in the same word, the Torah usually omits one ו (*Masores HaMassorah, dibbur* 5). This explains the spelling למאורת of verse 15, without the second ו. The Midrash [rabbinic commentary on the Torah] explains why the first ו is also absent in מארת (verse 14) and המארת (verse 16). Of the two heavenly bodies, only the sun’s major purpose is to give light. Although the moon lights up the night sky, that is not

its primary function. ‘Why did God create the moon? So that the Jewish nation would have a sign when to begin each new month. To teach this lesson, the Torah spells מארת without a ם (indicating that אור, *light*, is not necessarily the moon’s main purpose) (*Pesikta Rabbasi* 15:1).

### What (or Who) Was That Complete and Supernal Light?

So, what was this light that shone on the earth for three days that was not derived from the sun? To answer this can we find any other examples in Scripture of a supernatural or supernal light that shines forth which is underived from any physical astral luminaries? Assuredly yes! From the first book of Scripture we now jump forward to the last book of YHVH’s Word—the Book of Revelation—where we read of Yeshua the Messiah in the New Jerusalem:

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. (Rev. 21:23)

Is it therefore possible that the light that will shine in Heavenly New Jerusalem, which will be the glorified Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, is the same light that shone on the earth during the first three days of creation? After all, Scripture tells us that, in his glorified state, Yeshua’s face shines like the sun in its full strength (Rev. 1:16) and we read in several passages in the Apostolic Writings that Yeshua is the Light of the world:

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Elohim.** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was **the light of men. And the light shines in darkness;** and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from Elohim, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, **to bear witness of the Light,** that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent **to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.** He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of Elohim, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of Elohim. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14) (emphasis added)

Then in John 8:12 Yeshua himself speaking declares (See also John. 9:5),

Then spoke Yeshua again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (emphasis added)

The apostolic writers recognized Yeshua as the spiritual Light of the world:

In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest **the light of the glorious gospel of Messiah,** who is the image of Elohim, should shine unto them. (2 Cor. 4:4, emphasis added)

For Elohim, who commanded **the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of Elohim in the face of Yeshua Messiah.** (2 Cor. 4:6, emphasis added)

Wherefore he says, Awake you that sleep and arise from the dead, and Messiah **shall give you light.** (Eph. 5:14, emphasis added)

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, **that Elohim is light, and in him is no darkness at all.** (1 John 1:5, emphasis added)

But if we walk in the light, **as he is in the light,** we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yeshua Messiah his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7, emphasis added)



Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and **the true light now shines**. (1 John 2:8, emphasis added)

Please note that in our last passage above (1 John 2:8) the Apostle John states that “the **true light** now shines.” The word *true* is the Greek word *alethinos* (*Strong’s H228*) meaning *true in the sense of real or genuine, the reality of a thing* as opposed to that which is merely a copy or an antetypical similitude (*The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* in its definition of this word compares the earthly wilderness Tabernacle as the weak and earthly antetype of the true or genuine heavenly Tabernacle). What John is speaking of here is the true, perfect and complete light in comparison to the incomplete and defective light of the sun and moon.

### **Yeshua the Messiah Is That Complete and Full Light of the World!**

Dear reader, let us at last connect the dots of all that we have been presenting to you above. Can you not see that as Yeshua was the full, perfect and complete Light that will shine in the New Jerusalem, he was likewise the full, perfect and complete light that shone on the earth prior to the creation of the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day (Gen. 1:14)? When he stated that he was the light of the world he meant just that! Think of the implications of this. Indeed Yeshua was more than a carpenter! He was literally the face of YHVH Elohim shining with a fuller and more complete light than the sun ever could, bathing this earth not only in physical light, but the spiritual light of truth and righteousness. In that spiritual glory-light there was not even the slightest hint of the darkness of a shadow. Every aspect of creation radiated and reverberated in living color under the golden rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Can you imagine that? That is what you as a Believer, if your name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, have as an eternal inheritance waiting for you in the New Heavenly Jerusalem.

### **Who Is the *Aleph* and the *Tav*?**

Again, we ask, where did that supernal, complete and full light go? The Jewish rabbis once again give us clues to answer this intriguing question. We must look deeply into the Hebrew words and letters themselves found in the first few verses of Genesis one. There in verse one we find something hidden in the Hebrew language which does not translate into English or any other foreign language. Rabbi Munk from his book, *The Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet*, teaches us that,

The definite article is expressed in Hebrew by prefixing the letter ה to a word. Often, for extra emphasis, the word אֵת (or אַת) is employed in addition to the prefix. Comprising the first and last letter of the Aleph Be[t], אֵת alludes to completion and perfection. Thus the Torah uses the emphatic article in describing the beginning of Creation: וְאֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ בְּרֵאשִׁית, *In the beginning of [Elohim’s] creating the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). This alludes to the fact that the universe was created in complete perfection, ‘from *aleph* to *tav*’ (p. 34).

This is very interesting from a Messianic perspective. Believers in Yeshua the Messiah know who is the *Aleph* and the *Tav*, or to use the Greek “New Testament” terms with which everyone is familiar: *the Alpha and the Omega*. It is, of course, a reference to Yeshua the Messiah. Speaking of himself Yeshua states:

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending said the Master, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. (Rev. 1:8, )

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven congregations which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. (Rev. 1:11)

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Rev. 21:6,)

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. (Rev. 22:13)

We know from Scripture that Yeshua in his preincarnate state created all things in the physical creation:

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.... He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. (John 1:3,10)

But to us there is but one Elohim, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one master Yeshua the Messiah, by whom are all things, and we by him. (1 Cor. 8:6)

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in Elohim, who created all things by Yeshua the Messiah. (Eph. 3:9)

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. (Col. 1:16-17)

Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.... And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands. (Heb. 1:2,10)

Additionally, the reader may not be aware of the fact that Hebrew is a pictographic language; that is, the individual letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*alephbet*) are pictorial in nature and represent picture/concepts. This concept is demonstrated by author Frank Seekins in his book, *Hebrew Word Pictures—How Does the Hebrew Alphabet Reveal Prophetic Truths?* In his book Seekins uses the Paleo Hebrew alphabet which is more pictographic in nature than the commonly used (modern) square script. The information contained in the book is verified and promoted by the well-known and eminent Hebrew scholar, Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi ([www.hebrewworld.com](http://www.hebrewworld.com)).

For example, Seekins shows that the Hebrew word for *father* is *av* which is comprised of the Hebrew letters aleph/ א and bet/ ב where *aleph* means *leader* or *first* and *bet* means *household* or *family*. Therefore, the word אב/*father* in Hebrew means *head of the household/family*. Using this method of prophetic interpretation of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, what does the word אב mean? *Aleph/ א* means *head* or *chief* while *tav/ ת* means *sign, seal* or *covenant*. So *aleph* and *tav* as the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet together as a reference to Yeshua the Messiah literally means *head/chief of the covenant* [between man and Elohim] or we could say that Yeshua is *the fullness of the covenant* which is exactly what he states in Matthew 5:17,

Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfill**. (emphasis added)

Or what Paul states in Romans 10:4,

For Messiah is the **aim, final goal, end result** of the Torah for righteousness to every one that believes. (emphasis added)

Another word of interest to our study is the Hebrew word for *truth* which is *emet/ אמת*. Scripture states that Yeshua is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), that his word is truth (John 17:17) and that Yeshua, the Word of Elohim, was full of grace and truth (John 1:14), and that the Torah-instructions of YHVH is truth (Ps. 119:142). The word *emet* is spelled using the first, last and middle letters of the Hebrew alphabet signifying the completeness or fullness of the Torah-truth of Elohim. What does the word *emet* prophetically mean in the paleo-Hebrew word pictures? We have already discussed the meanings of *aleph* and *tav*. The letter *mem/ מ* means *water*. So the word *emet/ אמת* means *the first, head, chief, strength of the covenant that flows like water*. In Hebraic thought, water is likened to Torah-truth or the Word of Elohim (Deut. 32:2; Eph. 5:26) and there is a river of life that flows from the throne of Elohim (Rev. 22:1) and from the Ezekiel's temple (Ezek. 47:1) out of which flows the Torah of Elohim to all nations (Isa. 2:3). So Yeshua, the *fullness of the covenant* who is the Living Torah-Word/Truth of Elohim *flows like a river of life* from the throne or temple of Elohim out to the earth.

What we see in the actual Hebrew letters themselves, and especially in the *aleph* and the *tav* in Genesis one is the spiritual thumbprint, if you will, of Yeshua the Messiah prior to his incarnation! Do you see this? Does this not strengthen you in your most precious and set-apart faith in your Messiah Yeshua?

### The Complete Light of Creation to Shine Again In the Future

But wait, there is more hidden in the Hebrew language of Genesis one which gives us an indication as to who that supernal, spiritual light was and where that light went when the light of the sun, moon and stars replaced it. Let's go on.

The Baal HaTurim, another noted Jewish rabbi of the middle ages, states in his Torah commentary regarding Genesis 1:3:

And [Elohim] said, 'Let there be light' (1:3), [וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי-אוֹר וַיְהִי-אוֹר] contains the letter **א** four times, corresponding to four thousand years, (two thousand years) of Torah and (two thousand) years of M[essiah], for they are the years of light." In the footnote to Baal HaTurim's commentary on this verse we read, "Rashi cites the Talmud (*Chagigah* 12a) and Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah* 3:6) which state: '[Elohim] determined that the primordial light did not deserve that the wicked should use it, so He set it aside, hidden away for the righteous in the future. The *Bnei Yissachar* teaches that He hid that light in the Torah' (*Maamarei Chadshai Kislev Teves* 2:1 et al.) (*ArtScroll Baal HaTurim Chumash*, Vol. 1, p. 9).

According to rabbinical thought, the seven days of creation correspond to the seven thousand years that man will be upon this earth. They break this seven thousand years into four subsections the first of which they call *The Age of Desolation* (from Adam to before Abraham) on account of the fall of man, the flood and the tower of Babel incidents. The second two thousand year period is called *The Age of Torah* on account of the fact of Abraham's calling, the establishment of the nation of Israel and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The third period is called *The Age of Messiah* roughly corresponding to the two thousand years lasting from the birth of Yeshua to the year A.D. 2000. After this comes the last or seventh day which corresponds to the Messianic Era/Age (i.e. Millennium) (See *ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, Vol. 1a, p. 359 and the above quote and *Soncino Talmud—Avodah Zarah* 9a and *Sanhedrin* 97a,b). In the above quote, the Baal HaTurim states that the primordial light will return at some time in the future when the righteous rule the world. Remember our earlier reference to the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:23? Could this be what he is referring to? I believe so!

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and **the Lamb is the light thereof**. (emphasis added)

Let us also not forget what 1 John 2:8 says,

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and **the true light now shines**. (emphasis added)

In his commentary on Genesis 1:4, Rashi adds some additional insights. On the phrase, "[Elohim] saw that the light was good, and [Elohim] divided/separated the light from the darkness," he writes:

He saw it, that it does not deserve the wicked use it, and He set it aside for the righteous to be used by them in the future. [Footnote:] "*Chagigah* 12a; *Bereishis Rabbah* 3:6. The verse juxtaposes '[Elohim] saw that the light was good' with 'and [Elohim] separated between the light and the darkness,' implying that the fact that [Elohim] saw that the light was good is the reason why He separated it from the darkness, but it is not clear why the goodness of the light was cause for its separation from the darkness. Rashi explains according to the aggadah that **it had to be stored away**, because it was too good to be used by the wicked (*Gur Aryeh*). **The setting aside of the light for the righteous did not take place on the first day, but rather at the end of the seven days of Creation**, as Rashi says in his comments to verse 14 (*ArtScroll Sapirstein Edition Rashi – the Torah, Bereishis*, p. 5). (emphasis added)

What is the end of the seven days of Creation? As we have noted above, this corresponds to the time setting of the arrival of New Jerusalem, after the completion of the Messianic Age/Era (Millennium). So here is another rabbinic Torah scholar affirming the truth of the Book of Revelation stating that Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim, the Light of the world, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh (incarnate) will be the Pure Light that will shine in place of the physical sun in New Jerusalem.

### What Became of the Original, Supernal Light of Creation?

Now that we know *what* that primordial Light was, or more correctly *Who* that Light was, let us now ask the question, *where* did that primordial Light of Genesis 1:1-5 go? The rabbis speak of it as being "hidden" or "stored away" as we have noted above. Messianic Jewish Torah scholar Avi Ben Mordechai gives some insights into where the primordial spiritual Light was "stored" or "hidden." In his book he writes,

Biblical truth reveals that all light is birthed through darkness and that true salvation comes when we are touched by Divine Light in the darkest recesses of our hearts. This is why the word

*light*—אור (*owr*)—appears five times on the first day of creation [Gen. 1:3-5], because it represents the five books of the Torah [Genesis to Deuteronomy] that bring us light and life... Additionally, this is also why in [Genesis] 1:4, *The Light* (אֵת-הָאֹר) has a gematria of 613 hinting at the number of the commandments in the Torah and why the last letters of the expression, ‘that the light was good’ (אֵת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב) intimates the word *Brit* (בְּרִית), which refers to the covenant of the Torah and circumcision (*Messiah Vol. 3*, p. 117).

The Baal HaTurim confirms one of Ben Mordechai’s statements above and adds an additional insight. On Genesis 1:4, he writes in his Torah commentary:

The gematria [the numerical values of the Hebrew letters] of this phrase [*the light*/אֵת הָאֹר] is equal to that of בְּתוֹרָה, *in the Torah*, and comes to a total of 613 (the number of *mitzvot* [commandments] in the Torah).” [On the phrase,] *That the light was good*, he writes, “The final letters of these words בִּרְת, [can be rearranged to spell] covenant ... (p. 11).

But why was the original supernal light of Genesis one hidden away and replaced by the sun, moon and stars?

Rashi, the preeminent Jewish Torah commentator of the last one thousand years states: “The Holy One, blessed be He, perceived that it was improper for [the wicked] to make use of the [primeval] light, so He hid it for the benefit of the righteous **in the time to come** (Rashi) [See Rashi’s commentary on Gen. 1:4]. (emphasis added)

Where did he hide the light? asked Rabbi Dov Ber. He answered: The great light of creation was the light of Torah. At first, the light was available to all, but God saw that few people are worthy of enjoying it, so **He clothed it in the Torah**, and there it remains hidden. (emphasis added)

We bemoan the lack of that primeval light that made the sun pale by its spiritual brilliance, and long for the promised day when it will glow for us again. But now it is gone. The light is there. It is available. It awaits the diligent, indefatigable efforts of the righteous to unearth it from between the lines and letters and wisdom of the Torah. The righteous of the future—all ages of man—**can find the light in Torah**, for the Torah is its embodiment (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, pp. xxxi-xxxii). (emphasis added)

It should hopefully be clear now that Elohim took the supernatural Light of creation and hid it away in the written Word, called the Torah. From John 1:1-14 Believers in Yeshua the Messiah recognize that he is the Word of Elohim in the flesh (incarnate) or personified. It is interesting to note that on the fourth day of creation the sun, moon and the lesser lights were created. It was also in approximately the year four thousand, after the creation of the earth, that Messiah Yeshua, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2) left his position of glory and of full and undiminished light and power in heaven and came to this earth, diminished himself (Phil. 2:5-8) to be born into frail human form to become the Torah-Word of Elohim in the flesh after which he would return to his full and undiminished form to the Father of lights in heaven (Jas. 1:17). There Yeshua is adorned in garments of pure light (Ps. 104:2) where he resides as an Everlasting Light (Isa. 60:19-20), where he dwells in the light and glory of heaven (1 Tim. 6:16), as the pure Light of truth (1 John 1:5), where his face radiates as the sun in its full strength (Rev. 1:16).

### The “Angel” of YHVH In the Pillar of Fire

In Exodus 13:21 we read,

And YHVH went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.

Then in Exodus 14:19 it is written:

And the angel of Elohim, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them.

*Who* is this “Angel” of Elohim (in other places: he is called “the Angel” of YHVH)? *Angel* is an unfortunate translation. The Hebrew word for *angel* is *malak* (מַלְאָךְ) and simply means *a heavenly* or *a human messenger*. Prophetically this word can refer to human messengers such as the one coming in the spirit of Elijah prior to Messiah’s



coming, as well as to the Messiah himself (“Messenger/*Malak* of the covenant” in Malachi 3:1). In Genesis 32:22–30 Jacob wrestles with a man Scripture identifies as the *Malak of YHVH* (Hosea 12:3–5) and whom Jacob called Elohim (verse 30). This same Individual redeemed Jacob (Gen. 48:18) and is identified with the *Malak of Elohim ... the Elohim of Bethel* (31:11 and 13) and appeared to Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3:2). Now he is leading Israel in the Wilderness. Again who is he? Stephen in Acts 7:37–39 identifies the Messiah (i.e. “that Prophet” Moses mentioned in Deut. 18:15) with the “Angel” or Heavenly Messenger which spoke to the Children of Israel from Mount Sinai and who gave them the “living oracles,” who the Israelites later rejected for pagan gods. Paul elsewhere said of that same Personage that the Israelites did “all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Messiah” (1 Cor. 10:4).

Of that pillar of fire that led them we see that it gave them light. As we have amply demonstrated above, light, in Scripture, is synonymous with Torah. We have seen that Yeshua the Messiah is the Light of the World – the Word of Elohim in living form (personified).

In Nehemiah 9:12 and 19 we read:

Moreover thou led them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, **to give them light in the way wherein they should go**.... Yet thou in your manifold mercies forsook them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, **to lead them in the way**; neither the pillar of fire by night, **to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go**. (emphasis added)

*Light* in Scripture allegorically refers to *Torah* while the term *the way* (Hebrew: *derek*, דֶּרֶךְ) means *the way of Torah righteousness*. Scripture uses the term *way(s)/ derek* as a reference to the Torah in the following passages (and many more, as well):

Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of YHVH your Elohim, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. (Deut. 8:6)

And now, Israel, what does YHVH your Elohim require of you, but to fear YHVH your Elohim, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 10:12)

For if you shall diligently keep all these [Torah] commandments which I command you, to do them, to love YHVH your Elohim, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him. (Deut. 11:22)

And a curse, if you will not obey the [Torah] commandments of YHVH your Elohim, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. (Deut. 11:28)

I have chosen the way of [Torah] truth: your judgments have I laid before me. (Ps. 119:30)

I will run the way of your [Torah] commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. (Ps. 119:32)

Teach me, YHVH, the way of your statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. (Ps. 119:33)

The Messenger of Elohim from within the pillar of fire not only directed the Israelites in the way (Exod. 13:21; Deut. 1:33) they should go, but the Messenger spoke to Moses from within the pillar, as well:

And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and YHVH talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And YHVH spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle. (Exod. 33:9–11)

And YHVH descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of YHVH. (Exod. 34:5)

And YHVH came down in a cloud, and spoke unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. (Num. 11:25)

And YHVH appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle. And YHVH said unto Moses... (Deut. 31:15-16a)

What can we gather from all the above texts pertaining to the Messenger of YHVH (improperly translated “Angel” of the LORD)? This Divine Messenger thundered out the words of the Written Torah from Mount Sinai, he gave divine revelation to Moses out of the pillar of fire, he lit the path of the Israelites through the wilderness with both physical and spiritual light. He led them in the physical and spiritual way they should go as they were trekking through the wilderness. This fiery Messenger who gave both physical and spiritual light to the Israelites is nothing else but another manifestation of the complete, supernal light which shone upon this earth during the first three days of creation – a light which will once again shine at the end of days in the New Jerusalem, replacing the physical sun. This supernal Torah-light was concealed after day three of creation, but was hidden in the Written Torah and in the Person of Yeshua the Messiah, the Living Torah, who was none other than this fiery Messenger who led the Israelites through the wilderness, and who became the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh and the spiritual Light of the world in the first-century. As the fiery Messenger led the Israelites out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage through the wilderness, is this same Torah light, concealed to most, but revealed to those who have eyes to see, leading and guiding you through the wilderness experience of your life as you are heading to the Promised Land of the New Jerusalem?

### **An Analysis of the Torah In Which the Original Light Was Concealed**

In the meantime, while humanity awaits the coming of Messiah to shine his pure Light of Torah-truth upon this earth, that light has been hidden in the Word or Torah of Elohim. We briefly defined the word *Torah* above, but let us define it more thoroughly at this point. What is the essence of the *Torah*?

Let us answer the question by posing a question. Why do you call yourself a Believer, Messianic, Christian or otherwise? Why do you Believe that the Scriptures are the Word of Elohim? Why are you currently reading this teaching article? Why were you created and what is your purpose in life? What is the meaning of life and what is your future destiny? Is there a Supreme Being in this universe and what does he expect from you, as a human, if anything at all? Does he care about you personally, and if he does, does he have anything to say to you about life – and about your life, in particular?

Very few humans alive, or who have ever lived, have answers to these questions. Most humans simply *exist*. Few actually *live* with *purpose* and *meaning* to their lives.

But you are privileged, for you are about to learn the answers for which philosophers, sages and religious luminaries have been seeking since man has existed. Tidal waves of religion, philosophy and politics have swept across this planet carrying away peoples and nations promising to answer the yearning heart of men to know the answer to life’s deepest and most perplexing questions. Though volumes have been written, though countless libraries are full of millions of books, scrolls, papyri, clay tablets, documents and computer files, the answer to it all is surprisingly simple. In fact one word: It is T-O-R-A-H! The Torah of YHVH-Elohim is the Light of Truth from the Originator of Light and Truth. And it has been miraculously transmitted from heaven to earth, from the infinite to the finite, from the spiritual, boundless, eternal, omniscient and all wise mind of Elohim to the limited confines of physical existence on earth. Like a beam of Light shot through space from the great beyond, penetrating the darkness of human existence that Light became the written Torah, the Word of Elohim in the form of a Torah scroll written in Hebrew script of the Set-apart Hebrew Tongue (*LaShon Kadosh*) thousands of years ago.

Torah is the very bedrock foundation of Scripture. The spiritual building of the Prophets, Writings and Apostolic Scriptures (i.e. “New” Testament) rests squarely and securely upon the foundation of the Torah without which the rest would instantly crumble into nonexistence. Elohim was so determined to make that foundation sure that he literally dictated it audibly letter-for-letter and word-for-word to the man Moses, who like a stenographer, wrote down exactly what he heard. This become the Books of the Law of Moses, or the *Torah* of YHVH Elohim. None of the Prophets or Writings in the Hebrew Scriptures, though the inspired and infallible Word of Elohim, were so transmitted. The only words in all of Scripture that approach this level of purity and perfection are those words of the Written Word or Torah made flesh; namely, the words of Yeshua as recorded in the Gospels of the Apostolic Scriptures.

One’s enlightenment in the written *Torah* is the key to having a deep and abiding understanding of Yeshua, the Living Torah, and ultimately of having a blessed, a right, eternal relationship with our Father in heaven.

Having a deep walking-it-out understanding of the Torah will also determine one's level of rewards in the Kingdom of Elohim—whether YHVH bestows the title of *The Least* or *The Greatest* upon one (Matt. 5:19).

Below are quoted some deeply held, age-old convictions that the Jewish rabbis have lived and died for regarding the Torah. As you read them, please keep in the forefront of your thoughts the concept of Yeshua, the Living Torah-Word of Elohim, who was made flesh who came to reveal the heart of his Father in heaven. He said that if one had seen him one had seen the Father (John 14:9); that he had been sent from heaven to do the will of his Father (John 5:30); that man should not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded from the mouth of Elohim (Matt. 4:4). Yeshua said that he was that spiritual bread of life (John 6:35, 48) that if eaten man would have eternal life (John 6:53-58). Yeshua is the Word of Elohim personified and the *complete* and *undiminished* Torah-Light of the world (John 1:1-14); the one who said in Matthew 5:17-19:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah-law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah-law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Torah-commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Here now are the unedited excerpts of the Jewish view of the Torah. To help you comprehend the unity of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Apostolic Scriptures regarding the Written Torah and Yeshua the Living Torah we have placed in brackets the spiritual implications of what the rabbis are saying:

Torah [Yeshua, the Word of Elohim made flesh] was the blueprint of creation. It is commonly thought that, following the failure of the human race and the emergence of Abraham and his descendants as people worthy of bearing the privilege of becoming [Elohim's] chosen people, [Elohim] decided upon the commandments which he transmitted to the Jews through Moses. Nothing could be more wrong. The Torah [Yeshua] and its [his] commandments were not designed in response to the demands and needs of earthly life. The Torah [Yeshua] preexisted earth; and the universe as we know it was designed to conform to the requirements of the Torah [Yeshua]. (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, xxix to xxx). (See Ps. 33:6; Heb. 11:3.)

We bemoan the lack of that primeval light that made the sun pale by its spiritual brilliance, and long for the promised day when it [Yeshua] will glow for us again. But now it is gone. The light is there. It is available. It awaits the diligent, indefatigable efforts of the righteous to unearth it from between the lines and letters and wisdom of the Torah. The righteous of the future – all ages of man – can find the light in Torah [Yeshua], for the Torah [Yeshua] is its embodiment.

Indeed, if it is true that Torah [Yeshua, the Word of Elohim] is the blueprint of creation, but that is only a small part of the total truth: Torah [Yeshua] remains the key to all the secrets and resources of creation" (*ibid.* pp. xxxi to xxxii).

The sum total of human knowledge, therefore, derives from the Torah [Yeshua, the Word of Elohim], for the very universe itself is a product of Torah [Yeshua, the Creator]. We cannot begin to fathom what Torah [Yeshua] was before the creation.... But somehow, in a manner beyond our grasp, Torah [Yeshua] did exist.

Then ... *through the words of [YHVH] were the heavens made* (Ps. 33:6). [Elohim's] ineffable word took physical form. Heaven and earth and all their fullness became the clothing of the word of [Elohim] which infuses creation, and without which creation could not continue its existence (*ibid.* p. xxxviii). (Rom. 7:14; 1:20).

The study of Torah is exalted above all other commandments. It is written..., *For a commandment is a lamp and Torah is light* (Prov. 6:23). The lamp is the bearer of light. Without a lamp, the light could not endure, but a lamp without any light is cold and useless ... [Elohim's] wisdom dictated that in our human existence, the way to ascend the spiritual ladder is through—and only through—the commandments of the Torah [Yeshua], just as a lamp is the means to attain light. But a lamp's greatest glory is in the flame it bears. Man's highest privilege and

loftiest attainment is in the study of Torah [Yeshua, the Word of Elohim] itself ... the study of Torah [Yeshua] enables man to unite with the thought and wisdom of [Elohim] (*ibid.* p. xlv).

## The Torah

### Defining the Word *Torah*

A comprehensive grasp of *Torah*, both with the head and heart, is essential if one is to not only understand the heart of YHVH Elohim, but to understand the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith, for a love and comprehension of Torah is to grasp with the heart and mind the very fabric, foundation and bedrock of the Apostolic Scriptures or Brit Chadashah, commonly referred to in Christian circles as the “New Testament.” But what does the word *Torah* actually mean? Hebrew is a rich language. A single word can have a multiplicity of connotations at all levels of human comprehension, experience. Spiritual implications beyond the ken of human understanding can be found therein.

For nearly 2000 years since the time the Christian church departed from its Hebrew roots (in the early to mid second-century of the Common Era) the Hebrew word *Torah* (*Strong's* H8451, *TWOT* 910b) has been translated in the writings of Christian theologians and in all of the most common English Bible's as *law*. Is this an accurate translation of the Hebrew word *Torah*? Does it capture the true essence, heart and meaning of the word? This is an important question to answer.

If I were to ask you to technically define any English word you could avail yourself of a dictionary which should give you the precise meaning of that word. In any college level dictionary a word will have a primary meaning, after which follows on average of three to five additional definitions for that word. Each subsequent definition typically is broader in scope and less literal than the first definition given. Should I, for example, ask you to define the word *circle*, would you give me dictionary definition number five (*a cycle*) or six (*a group of persons sharing a common interest*), or would you give me the dictionary's primary definition: *a ring* or *a halo*? Yet Christian theologians and Bible translators for nearly two thousand years having been defining *Torah* using *not* its primary, but its *fourth* or *fifth* Hebrew definition. This is either dishonest or ignorant scholarship or perhaps *translation bias*. Which one? You be the judge. But history bears out the fact that the “Christian church” has the blood of more Jews on its hands than any other religious group on the planet. The facts ought to speak for themselves. The church has had a perennial grudge against (putting it mildly), if not hatred for the Jews and their Hebrew Scriptures (whom the early church fathers derisively referred to as the “*Old Testament*” connoting that which is *worn out, no longer valid or applicable* and i.e. *passé*) since the second-century. A cursory glance at the writings of the earliest church fathers writing in the early to middle part of the second-century verifies what I have stated (see Ignatius [ca. A.D. 50-115] in his *Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, chap. 10; *Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*, chap. 4; *The Epistle of Barnabas* [of Alexandria, Egypt], chapters 2, 13 and 14 [ca. A.D. 100-120]; Irenaeus [ca. A.D. 120-202] *Against Heresies*, Book 4, chap. 16.5; Justin Martyr in *Dialogue of Justin Martyr With Trypho the Jew*, chap. 11 [ca. A.D. 160]).

The primary meaning of the word *Torah*, (תורה) (*Strong's* H8451, *TWOT* 910b) according to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* means *teaching* (and not *law*). *Strong's Concordance* lists the meaning of *Torah* in this order: *a precept, a statute*. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* defines *Torah* as *direction, instruction, law* (in that order). According to *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*,

*Torah* signifies primarily *direction, teaching, instruction* (Prov. 13:4). It is derived from the verb *yarah* [יָרָה] [meaning] ‘to project, point out’ (3384) and hence to point out or teach. The law of [Elohim] is that which points out or indicates His will to man ... Seen against its background of the verb *yarah*, it becomes clear that *Torah* is much more than law or a set of rules. *Torah* is not restriction or hindrance, but instead the means whereby one can reach a goal or ideal.

The *TWOT* similarly states,

The word *Torah* means basically *teaching* whether it is the wise man instructing his son or [Elohim] instructing Israel. The wise give insight into all aspects of life so that the young may know how to conduct themselves and to live a long blessed life (Prov. 3:1f). So too [Elohim], motivated by love, reveals to man basic insights into how to live with each other and how to approach [Elohim]. Through the law [Elohim] shows his interest in all aspects of man's life which is to be lived under his direction and care. Law of [Elohim] stands parallel to [the] word of [YHVH] to



signify that law is the revelation of [Elohim's] will (e.g. Isa. 1:10).

As already noted, the word *Torah* originates from the root word *yarah* יָרָה (*Strong's* H3384) which means: *to flow as water, to lay or throw as in shooting an arrow; to point out as if aiming the finger to make a point, to teach*. Another cognate (related word) of the word *Torah* is the Hebrew word *moreh* (*Strong's* H4175) which means *teacher or archer (as in one who shoots at a target)*. *Moreh* derives from the same Hebrew root word, *yarah*, as does *Torah*. Therefore, when one is walking according to the Torah of YHVH Elohim, one is walking in the light of YHVH's truth, which is hitting the mark of righteousness. Likewise, YHVH's teachings or instructions are a river of life flowing from his throne aimed at hitting the mark of truth and righteousness. By contrast, the Hebrew word for sin is *chata* (*Strong's* H2298) which means *to miss the mark, i.e., transgressing the Torah* as 1 John 3:4 states, "Sin is the transgression of the Torah."

Here is what Scripture says about the Torah of Elohim:

Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your Torah is the truth. (Ps. 119:142)

For the commandment is a lamp; and the Torah is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. (Prov. 6:23)

[Yeshua speaking], Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (Matt. 5:17)

[Yeshua speaking], For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one *yud* [the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet] or one tittle [the smallest flourish, overhang or crown on a Hebrew letter] shall in no wise pass from the Torah, till all be fulfilled [i.e. till heaven and earth pass away]. (Matt. 5:18)

Wherefore the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (Rom. 7:12)

For we know that the Torah is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom. 7:14)

He that said, I know him, and keeps not his [Torah] commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1 John 2:4)

We have just given you the technical meaning of the word *Torah*, But what is the general, colloquial or common meaning of the word? It connotes different meanings to different people. In its strictest sense the Torah refers to the first five books of YHVH's Scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy which are referred to as the books of Moses since he was YHVH's instrument for putting them into written form. Christians refer to these five books as *The Pentateuch* while Jews call them *The Chumash*.

In the Jewish religion, the term *Torah* can also refer to the entire Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) as well as the Jewish rabbinical commentaries (called the Oral Torah) on the Chumash (e.g. *Mishna*, *Gemara* and *Talmud*). While some aspects of these works may be enlightening from an historical perspective, we do not view the Oral Torah as inspired or indispensable for the understanding of Scripture.

When we use the term *Torah* we are referring to the Chumash or Pentateuch. We believe that it is the *Written Torah* while the Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) being the Word of Elohim in flesh-form is the *Living Torah* (John 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-3; Rev. 19:13).

### The Whole of the Torah Can Be Summed Up In One Sentence

The Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish writings contain a number of phrases which express the quintessential essence of the Torah. One of these best-known passages naming several of these phrases is in the Jewish Talmud:

"Rabbi Simlai said, '613 commandments were given to Moses—365 negative *mitzvot* (commandments), the same as the number of days in the year, and 248 positive *mitzvot*, the same as the number of parts in a man's body. David came and reduced them to eleven (Psalm 15), Isaiah to six (Isaiah 33:15), Micah to three (Micah 6:8), Isaiah again to two—"Observe and do righteousness" (Isaiah 56:1). Then Amos came and reduced them to one, "Seek me and live" (Amos 5:4)—as did Habakkuk, "The righteous one will live by his trusting [or by faith] (Habakkuk 2:4)" (*Makkot* 23b-24a, abridged) (*Jewish New Testament Commentary*, by David Stern, p. 565).

We see some of these same Torah summation type statements in the Apostolic Writings. For example, the phrase, "the just shall live by faith" is found in three passages of the Apostolic Writings (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38);

In Leviticus 19:18 we find the phrase, “thou shalt love your neighbor as thyself” which is the summation of the last five of the famous Ten Commandments which in itself is a summation of any of the 613 Torah commandments which relate to human relationships. We see both Yeshua in his famous “Golden Rule” passage of Matthew 7:12, “Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Paul echoes this concept in Romans 13:8, “Love does not do harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fullness of the Torah.” Love is the foundation and quintessential concept behind the Torah-law of Elohim. Yeshua states this in Mark 12:29-31,

And Yeshua answered him, The first of all the [Torah] commandments is, Hear, O Israel; YHVH our Elohim is one Master: And thou shalt love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love your neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Love must be the motive behind all our righteous deeds or else our actions count for nothing (1 Cor. 13:1-13). The concept of love and the keeping of YHVH’s Torah-law are codependent actions. One cannot exist without the other. John, in his epistle, discusses this idea at length in 1 John 2:7-11; 3:11-24; 4:7-2 where he states that “Elohim is love” (4:8, 16) and that one’s love of Elohim and man is linked to obedience to the Torah-commandments (2:7-9; 3:11-18). As YHVH first loved us, we should love our fellow man (4:7-11), in word, deed and in (Torah) truth (3:18). This relates to Yeshua’s admonition to his disciples in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my Torah-commandments.”

### YHVH Relates to Humans Through Covenantal Agreements

How would one describe YHVH Elohim? Which of his character traits are most noteworthy and are the most accentuated in the pages of Scripture? His love? His sovereignty? His power, grace, mercy, wisdom, greatness, faithfulness, glory, goodness, perfection (and the list could go on)? How about his righteousness? Righteousness involves ascribing to a high standard of virtue and moral straightness. Such a standard dictates that there be absolute standards determining what is right and wrong. For such standards to mean anything there must be law and order and a judicial system to enforce those laws, without which there would be chaos, anarchy and total rebellion rendering the laws all but meaningless.

YHVH Elohim, the Creator of the universe, is a Being of law and order. He runs his entire universe through laws. His entire universe is ordered by laws at all levels: physical and spiritual. Long ago the Supreme Lawgiver set the wheels of justice in motion; the laws of cause and effect; namely, one reaps what one sows. There are laws of physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics; laws which govern society and human relationships; and spiritual laws to determine whether a man will live or die eternally

Throughout all of Scripture, YHVH has chosen to relate to humans through a structure of law and order, since his righteous character cannot tolerate anarchy, rebellion, confusion or chaos. His kingdom is just and orderly at all levels. This structural framework is known as *covenantal agreement*. On the human plane, covenantal agreement likewise regulates all aspects of human interactions be it treaties between nations or contracts between groups of people or individuals.

Where did humans get the idea of covenant agreement? From the Creator of law and order, of course. In Scripture we see the Creator making covenantal agreements with humans. There is the Noatic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, Mosaic or Sinaitic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the Renewed Covenant to name a few of the main agreements YHVH has formulated with humans over the millennia.

### What Is a Biblical Covenant Anyway?

What do we mean by the term *covenant* in a biblical sense of the word? The Hebrew word for *covenant* is *b'rit* (Strong’s 1285) meaning *an agreement (which binds two parties together), league, alliance, pledge, constitution*.

YHVH desires to enter into covenantal agreement with men. He made man to be in a loving relationship with his Creator as well as with other humans. But man has free will. He must choose whether to enter into covenants with his Maker. If man chooses to abide by the terms of YHVH’s covenants, then man will be blessed. If not, man will suffer the consequences.

The Torah, the first five books of the Bible are the chronicle of YHVH giving man instructions to follow and of his entering into covenantal relationships with men and men either keeping those agreements or breaking them.

The word *Torah*, as we have seen, means *instructions, teaching or precepts*; specifically in biblical context: *the teachings or instructions of YHVH to lead men into a righteous relationship with him through covenantal agreement*. The Torah is a giant *b'rit* or covenant – a legally binding agreement between YHVH and his people Israel. The Torah in a number of places even refers to itself by the Hebrew word *b'rit* or *covenant*. We see this in the following passages:

And YHVH said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. (Exod. 34:27)

These are the words of the covenant, which YHVH commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb. (Deut. 29:1)

Within the first five books of the Torah-covenant are several smaller covenantal subdivisions such as the Abrahamic and the Sinaitic or Mosaic Covenants. The *TWOT* describes this as follows, “Deuteronomy 29:13-14 shows the Sinaitic Covenant was an extension of the Abrahamic Covenant.... The Sinai renewal merely stressed man’s responsibility where the Abrahamic Covenant emphasized [Elohim’s] promise.... The Priestly Covenant of Num 25:12-13, the Davidic Covenant of 2 Sam 7 and the [Re]New[ed] Covenant of Jer 31:31 are all administrative aspects of the same covenant, [Elohim’s] Covenant of grace. This covenant reaches its climax at the Incarnation where [Messiah] representing his people fulfilled all the stipulations of the covenant and bore the curse they deserved for breaking it” (p. 129).

The Torah is a covenant with various “administrative aspects” or subdivisions. Each succeeding covenant builds upon the previous covenant without cancelling out the requirements or provisions of the previous covenant. Such is consistent with the character and nature of YHVH Elohim. He is not a man that he should lie (Num. 23:19). When he gives his word he keeps it, even up to 1000 generations (that is 40-50,000 years!) (Ps. 105:6-11).

Not only is the Torah a covenant or contract between YHVH and his people, but it also a marriage covenant or agreement (Heb. *ketubah*). In a traditional Jewish wedding the *ketubah* is a formal document stipulating the terms of a marital contract. We see YHVH taking Israel to be his bride chronicled in the Torah. In Exodus 6:6-8 we see YHVH redeeming Israel (paying the bride’s price) and “taking” Israel to be his wife:

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am YHVH, and **I will bring you out** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and **I will redeem you** with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and **I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a Elohim**: and you shall know that I am YHVH your Elohim, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for an heritage: I am YHVH. (emphasis added)

Furthermore, in Exodus 19:5-7 Israel becomes YHVH’s *treasured possession* (Heb. *segulah*), which in the Hebrew is a term of endearment. After that, Israel says “I do” to YHVH three times agreeing to live up to the terms of her marriage agreement (Exod. 19:8; 24:3, 7). YHVH ends up giving his new bride the Sabbath as a sign or token of their marriage (Exod. 31:12-17) even as a ring is the outward sign of a marriage covenant now. Elsewhere in Scripture we see YHVH referring to Israel as his wife. (Hos. 2:2, 19, 20; Ezek. 16; Jer. 3; Isa. 54:1-6).

So far we have seen that the Torah is the light of truth originating from heaven for man’s blessing. We have demonstrated that the Torah is an expression of the very heart, mind, will and character of YHVH Elohim. Torah is his instructions, teachings or precepts in righteousness to lead us into a right and blessed relationship with him and our fellow man. Now we have seen that the Torah was a covenantal and even a marital agreement between YHVH and his people Israel that would last for 1000 generations, or as Yeshua put it “till heaven and earth pass away” (Matt. 5:18). Now allow us to show you that Torah was also the constitution of the nation of Israel as it will be the constitution of Yeshua Messiah’s Millennial kingdom (Mic. 4:2). Torah contains all the elements of a constitution (*Torah Rediscovered* by Ariel and D’vorah Berkowitz, pp. 9-10):

- ☞ **A Preamble:** a basic introductory paragraph of the covenant (Deu. 1:1-5)
- ☞ **An Historical Prologue** (Deut. 1:16–4:49)
- ☞ **Stipulations:** the main body of the covenant containing YHVH’s expectations of the nation (Deut. 5:1-26:19)
- ☞ **Penalty Clause:** rewards and penalties (blessings and cursings) for compliance or noncompliance to the

terms of the agreement (Deut. 27-30)

- ☞ **Witnesses:** the signatures or witnessing of certain prominent figures who are party to the enactment of the covenantal agreement (Deut. 30:19)
- ☞ **Means of Succession:** a provision in the covenant of how the government will continue (Deut. 31:1-8)
- ☞ **Provision for Depositing the Covenant for Future Reference** (Deut. 31:9-13)

### The Chumash or Written Torah Contains Several Parts

The Hebrew word *Torah*, as noted above, means *teachings* or *instructions* and only in its less literal definition does it mean *law*. Yet, as we have also noted, Christian Bible teachers down through the ages have perennially referred to the *Torah*, not by its true definition (*teachings* or *instructions* [of YHVH]), but by the term *law of Moses*—a term which to the casual Bible student denotes *legalism* and as having originated from Moses or the Jews (as opposed to being of divine origination). This tradition is rooted in early Christian history (q.v. Irenaeus, ca. A.D. 120-202, *Against Heresies*, Book 4, chap. 16.2, 4-5). Indeed, the Hebrew Scriptures use the term *law of Moses* some twelve times, but in the Jewish mind there is no question as to the fact that Moses was simply the vehicle through which the *law* was given; the Originator was YHVH! This understanding is not always clear in the minds of casual students of Scripture operating from a Christian paradigm.

Yes, the Written Torah, or Chumash does contain *laws* and *commandments*, BUT that is not all that it contains. Within its pages we find:

- ☞ **Narrative:** Contained in the Chumash are the life stories of early man, of the patriarchs, and of Moses and the Children of Israel. These narratives are literally “slices of life” accounts giving us a window into the lives of others. We can learn much from our forefathers. We can be encouraged and edified by their triumphs and be exhorted and warned not to follow their mistakes, some of which had devastating consequences.
- ☞ **Prophecy:** Torah contains much prophecy. Moses is called a prophet (Deuteronomy. 34:10) who prophesies the coming of Messiah (Deuteronomy. 18:15, 18, 19; Acts 3:22; 7:37) as well as the apostasy of Israel (Deut 31:27-29). YHVH gives prophetic utterances to the patriarchs relating to the fulfillment of his covenantal promises he made to them and their descendants (Gen. 12:3,7; 15:1,5,7,18; 17:1-8,19). Finally, the patriarchs themselves prophecy over their own children about events that would come to pass to them and their descendants (Gen. 48 and 49).
- ☞ **Covenantal Agreements:** Torah also includes legally binding covenantal agreements, a marriage contract (*ketubah*) as well as a national constitution for the nation of Israel, as we have already seen.
- ☞ **Terms of the Covenant/Laws:** Finally, Torah does include YHVH’s instructions, teachings, doctrines and precepts in righteousness which fall into various categories which we shall examine below. Included in this are 613 commandments (laws or *mitzvot*, *Strong’s* H4687) in the Torah, which as Angus Wootten delineates in his book, *Take Two Tablets Daily—the Ten Commandments and 613 Laws* cover the tabernacle and the priesthood, the sacrificial system, ritual purity, tithes and offerings, the appointed times (Sabbath and annual Festivals), diet, idolatry, family law, civil law and the like. The Jewish rabbis have determined that the 613 laws of the Torah can be broken down into 248 positive commands (one for each part on the human body) and 365 negative commands (prohibitions) corresponding to the days of the year.

### The Torah-Laws Fall Into Three Broad Categories

The “law” or *mitzvot* side of Torah contains three broad categories: testimonies, statutes and judgments. Let’s examine each of these three.

- ☞ **Testimonies:** The Hebrew word is *edyot* (*Strong’s* H5715) and means to testify or witness. They refer to YHVH’s Appointed Times (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Day of Trumpet, Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day). These “witnesses” express YHVH’s plan of salvation and stand as divine beacons of light ultimately steering us to the coming Messiah (both his first and second comings). The testimonies also include other precepts which help bring to our remembrance the requirements of Torah; such as, *tzitzit*, *tefillin* and *mezuzah*. All these things are living witnesses (*edyot*) of YHVH’s work among his people.
- ☞ **Statutes:** The Hebrew word is *chukim* (*Strong’s* H2760) and means decrees or YHVH’s body of decrees and



statutes that have no apparent explanations, or commandments which are difficult to understand. (For examples of this word in Scriptural use see Psalms 119:5,8,12,16,23,33,48,54,68,71,80,83,112,117,118,124, 135,145,155,171.)

☞ **Judgments:** The Hebrew word is *mishpatim* (*Strong's* H4941) meaning *a judicially pronounced verdict, a divine law, formal decrees* and are ordinances pertaining to YHVH's moral and ethical laws as embodied in the last five of the ten commandments which teach righteousness in one's business and personal relationships.

- [YHVH's] righteous judgments [*mishpatim*]... (Ps. 119:7)
- I have chosen the way [*derech*] of truth: your judgments [*mishpat*] have I laid before me. (Ps. 119:30)
- Your word is true from the beginning; and every one of they righteous judgments [*mishpat*] endures forever. (Ps. 119:160)

### Miscellaneous Words Defined Pertaining to the Torah

Let's now examine several other aspects of Torah which are embodied in various Hebrew words:

☞ **Commandments:** The Hebrew word *mitzvah* (pl. *mitzvot*) means *command, charge, order, law, precept* or *ordinance* and are good deeds or works done by fulfilling the commands of YHVH. According to *TWOT* (#1887) "the *commandments* are the particular conditions of the covenant." The concepts of *mitzvah* and *Torah* are closely related. The *mitzvot* showed the nation of Israel how to live up to the conditions of their Torah-covenant agreement (i.e. the practical application of Torah) with YHVH. We see that Scripture often uses the terms *Torah* and *mitzvot* (often translated *commandments*) almost interchangeably. Both terms express corollary concepts. For example, YHVH's commands are considered pure (Ps. 19:8), true (Ps. 119:151), and righteous (Ps. 119:172). YHVH's commandments provide insight into the meaning of life in order that it might be lived to its fullest significance (Ps. 19:8). Following YHVH's commandments gives one wisdom and the respect of one's neighbors (Deut. 4:5). The one who loves YHVH keeps his commandments (Deut. 11:1 cp. John 14:15) thereby showing his reverence and fear of YHVH as one develops one's spiritual walk with YHVH (Deut. 8:6; 13:4). YHVH extends his love to those who obey his commandments (Deut. 5:10) (*TWOT*, Vol. 2, p. 757). Below are two examples of the usage of this word in Scriptural context:

- Now these are the commandments [*mitzvot*], the statutes, and the judgments, which YHVH your Elohim commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land whither you go to possess it. (Deut. 6:1)
- And it [Torah] shall be your righteousness, if you observe to do all these commandments [*mitzvot*] before YHVH our Elohim, as he has commanded us. (Deut. 6:32; see also 7:11; Ps. 119:10, 21, 35, 47, 61, 115, 127, 143, 151, 172)

☞ **Ways:** The Hebrew word is *derech* (*Strong's* H1870) and means *a road, course of life, mode of action* and is used in the following places:

- Blessed are the undefiled in the way [*derech*], who walk in the law [Torah] of YHVH. (Ps. 119:1)
- I will run the way [*derech*] of the commandments ... (Ps. 119:32)
- Teach me, O YHVH, the way [*derech*] of your statutes ... (Ps. 119:33)

☞ **Word:** The Hebrew word is *debar* (*Strong's* 1697) and it has a broad range of meanings, but in its literal sense means *word, things, or a matter spoken of*. *Word* is synonymous with YHVH's commandments, law, and Torah. Here are a few places it is used in Scripture: Psalms 103:20; 119:172; Isaiah 2:3; 5:24.

### What Was the Purpose of the Torah?

The purpose of the Torah is to show man how to walk in right relationship (or righteousness) with his Creator. Love YHVH with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength [Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:30] and love one's neighbor as yourself [Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:30]. Once one is saved by grace through faith (See my teaching article on our web site entitled: *The Abrahamic Covenant: The Covenant of Salvation*), Torah helps show man how to walk in the straight and narrow path which leads to blessings and life and avoidance of curses (Deut. 30:15; 32:47). The Torah shows man how to avoid sin (which is the violation of YHVH's Torah-commandments, 1 John 3:4) which is walking contrary to YHVH's instructions in righteousness which are for our blessing and benefit.

The Torah *does not* set an impossible standard by which to live. We must ask ourselves, would a righteous and just Creator and a loving Heavenly Father give to his chosen people and children a set of standards that were humanly impossible to perform, then curse them for their inability to meet these standards? Of course not. Rather, the Torah sets a standard of faith, trusting in Elohim, and of following its system of repentance and sacrifice for obtaining forgiveness from Elohim and restoring a condition of being considered righteous in his sight. After all, Moses, the human instrument through which YHVH revealed the Torah to the Children of Israel, states in Deuteronomy 30:11-14:

For this [Torah] commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou should say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou should say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that thou may do it.

Paul quotes this very passage in Romans 10:6-8 where he relates the written Torah to Yeshua, the Living Torah or Word of Elohim incarnate (in the flesh) (See John 1:1,14). He shows that they are one in the same and that Messiah Yeshua came to live and reveal to us the righteousness of the Torah-law (verse 4) that is available to us if we will but have a heartfelt faith in him (verses 4,9-10) and allow him to live out his righteousness in us through the empowering work of the Spirit of Elohim. In verses 11 through 21, Paul goes on to relate this very truth to being the central message of the Gospel that Isaiah prophesied (Isa. 52:7) would be preached to redeem both houses of Israel to Yeshua their Messiah.

It might be said that in a sense the Torah itself is neutral; neither positive nor negative. It is like a mirror simply reflecting the image portrayed in it. Torah reacts according to human action. Those who obey it are blessed and those who disobey it are cursed. David Stern in his *New Jewish New Testament Commentary* lists both some of the “negative” and some of the positive functions of the Torah. On the “negative” side:

- ☞ The Torah “[H]as the capacity to stir up sin in an individual.... This capacity of the Torah to make us sin is not a fault in the Torah but a fault in ourselves. A healthy person thrives in an environment deadly to someone who is ill; likewise the Torah, beneficial to a believer living by faith, is an instrument of death to these controlled by their sinful nature” (p. 375).
- ☞ “The Torah can still produce guilt feelings in a believer—as it rightly should whenever he contemplates how his behavior falls short of the standard [Elohim] sets in the Torah. But these feelings are not irremediable. The remedy is once-and-for-all trust in Yeshua the Messiah’s final atonement for sin (Rom. 3:21-26), followed by ongoing confession of and repentance from sins (1 John 1:9-22) (*ibid.*).
- ☞ The Torah also provides a framework of justice by which Elohim, the Just Judge of the universe will judge the actions of men to determine both their level of punishment for its violation and their level of reward for obedience to it.
- ☞ Because of the righteous standards the Torah sets out, for the sinner it points out the fact that they have sinned and how far they have fallen short of the glory of YHVH (Rom. 3:23) and hence their need for a Savior or Redeemer. The Torah actually points the way to Yeshua as Paul points out in the book of Galatians (3:25).

On the positive side:

- ☞ The Torah provides a framework of grace in which one can live. As Stern points out, YHVH’s people are to live “within the framework of” Torah, but they are not to be “in subjection to” [or *under*] the Torah in a legalistic fashion. YHVH’s giving of the Torah was in itself an act of grace which the Renewed Covenant (NT) compares with his sending Yeshua (John 1:17) (*ibid.*, p. 374). Ariel Berkowitz, in his book, *Torah Rediscovered*, states it this way, “[Torah] function[s] as a protective border for the people of [Elohim].” He goes on to show that there are two opposing spiritual realities in the universe: the kingdom of light (YHVH’s kingdom) and the kingdom of darkness (Satan’s kingdom). Torah acts as a protective border to keep those wanting to abide in the kingdom of light/life/blessing/relationship with YHVH safe and secure. The Torah tells us what is truth as opposed to error, light as opposed to darkness, clean as opposed to unclean, holy (*kadosh* or set-apart) as opposed to profane or polluted, life as opposed to death (pp. 26-27)

- ☞ The Torah, as understood and applied through the Spirit, thereby gives life in union with Messiah (Stern, p. 381)
- ☞ Obeying the Torah brings us eternal rewards (not eternal life, which is by grace through faith alone, see Eph. 2:8) in the world to come (Matt. 5:19).
- ☞ Obeying the Torah helps deepen a loving and intimate relationship with YHVH-Yeshua and helps us to abide in Yeshua (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-6).
- ☞ Obeying the Torah helps us to stay spiritually pure (1 John 3:3-6).
- ☞ Obeying the Torah protects us from the influence of the devil (1 John 3:8).
- ☞ Obeying the Torah-Word of YHVH helps to perfect YHVH-Yeshua's love in us (1 John 3:6).

### Torah In the Apostolic Writings (New Testament)

The word *law* as used in the Apostolic Writings (New Testament) is the Greek word *nomos* which in the Septuagint (the third century B.C. Greek translation of the Tanakh ["Old Testament" Scriptures]) is used in place of the Hebrew word *Torah*. Therefore, we know that the Jewish scholars who translated the Tanakh ("Old" Testament) into the Greek language considered the words *Nomos* and *Torah* to be equivalent. Also, contextually, in the Apostolic Writings ("New" Testament), we can see that the word *law* means *Torah*. To the Messianic Jews who wrote the entire "New Testament" when the Greek word *nomos* is used this is not a reference to Roman, Greek or Babylonian law, but to the biblical Hebrew law or the Torah, or Torah-law of Moses.

Let us not forget that the Bible was written, for the most part, if not totally, in the Hebrew (or Aramaic) language by Hebrew people who spoke Hebrew, lived in a Hebrew culture, practiced the Hebrew religion and worshipped and served YHVH Elohim, the God of the Hebrews. What defined the Israelites' spiritual relationship to their God – YHVH Elohim? It was the Torah, which by definition and to the Hebrew mindset of the first-century referred specifically to the instructions in righteousness of Elohim as delivered through his servant and prophet Moses to his people, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), known as Israelites. As noted above, the Torah is recorded in what is commonly called the Books of the Law, the Books of Moses, the Pentateuch or the Chumash, or what we would call the first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These books contain YHVH's instructions in righteousness, which were delivered letter-for-letter and word-for-word from the very mouth of Elohim to Moses and the Hebrew Children of Israel and forms the foundation for the entire Bible: both sections which Christians commonly call the "Old Testament" or Hebrew Scriptures and the "New Testament" or Apostolic (Messianic) Writings (Scriptures).

For the people of Israel in Yeshua's day, including the Apostles who, under the inspiration of the Ruach HaKodesh (Spirit of Elohim) the Torah of Elohim, given through Elohim's servant Moses, formed the central teaching document that regulated and governed every aspect of life, culture, family relationship, marriage, society, religion and relationship with surrounding nations. Therefore, *law* for them was *Torah*. Nothing more nor less.

Keep in mind that the concept of Torah, to the Hebrew mind, did not have the pejorative connotation that the term *law* has to the traditional Christian mindset which tends to read a legalistic bias into the word *law* when reading the Apostolic Writings ("New" Testament).

### Conclusion

Yeshua the Messiah is the Word or Torah of Elohim sent from heaven – from the very bosom of the Father (John 1:18) — to this earth and humanly manifested in flesh-form. Yeshua was Elohim and was the Word of Elohim who came to this earth as the Light of life unto men. As the Light of men he shone in the spiritual darkness of this wicked and sin-filled world to show man the way of life and truth (John 1:1-14).

Though the majority of the world lying in darkness refuses to acknowledge that light (John 1:5, 10-11), those who have received him as the Light of Life and Truth sent from heaven, the Living Torah-Word of Elohim, are given power to become the sons of Elohim (John 1:12). Those same sons of Elohim are elsewhere called "children of light [or Torah-truth and righteousness]" (Luke 16:8). Yeshua referring to himself as the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5; 12:46) urged his disciples to believe in that Light and to become children of Light (John 12:35-36). Paul commissions Believers, who once dwelt in spiritual darkness, to walk as children of light and to become the light of YHVH to the world and to have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness (or Torahlessness)

(Eph. 5:8, II cp. I Thes. 5:4-5). Believers are not only called to emulate their Master and become light as he is light, but they are called to put on the “armor of light” which is likened to walking in righteousness (Rom. 12:12-13) after the similitude of their Father in heaven who is called the Father of lights (James 1:17) and who dwells in unapproachable light (I Tim. 6:16). This is the same light that caused Moses’ face to radiate with light upon descending Mount Sinai after having been in the presence of YHVH (Exod. 34:33, 35).

In Matthew five Yeshua urged his followers to be lights in this dark world and to be a candlestick on a hill (5:14-16). What is that candlestick? Revelation one contains the letters to the seven Messianic assemblies. Here we find the answer. The seven first-century congregations are likened to a seven-branched menorah (Rev. 1:12, 20; 2:5) (see *The Complete Jewish Bible* rendering of these verses). Did you know that you are a human menorah? When you raise your hands in worship, this is not only the universal sign of surrender, in this case surrender to Yeshua, your Savior and Master, but you are demonstrating through your body language who and what you are: a light to the world, a human menorah!

On the fourth day of creation YHVH created the sun and moon. These two heavenly luminaries cast their light onto a planet that without that light would otherwise be enshrouded in cold, thick and lifeless darkness. But thanks to the sun, there is light and heat which keeps this planet alive. The pagans recognized that without the sun life on earth would cease, so they paid homage to the sun as the source of physical life. Likewise, the moon gives light to the earth at night, but does not generate its own light, for it acts simply as a mirror reflecting the light of the sun. Scripture calls the sun and moon the greater and lesser lights (Gen. 1:16); the sun was given dominion over the day and the moon was to rule at night. What does this teach us? As noted above, the sun and moon were created on the fourth day while Yeshua the spiritual Light and Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2) came in the fourth millennium after creation to commence a spiritual work and creation on earth (the Body and Bride of Messiah). If he is the spiritual light to this world, the Greater Light, and the Originator of Spiritual Light, what does that make Believers? They are the lesser light, like the moon, reflecting the light of their Savior and Redeemer, Yeshua, the Torah-Word-Light-Truth of YHVH Elohim. If you call yourself a follower of Yeshua then you will be walking in the light of his truth and Word, the Torah, and you will be reflecting the very nature and character of your Father in heaven, the Father of lights to a dark and lost world. This is your divinely appointed commission and calling! **Let us not forget:**

- ☞ John 14:15, Yeshua said, If you love me, keep my Torah-commandments.
- ☞ 1 John 2: 3-6, And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Torah-commandments. He that said, I know him, and keeps not his Torah-commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keeps his word, in him verily is the love of Elohim perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that said he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
- ☞ Matthew 5:17-19, Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Torah, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Torah-commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
- ☞ Deuteronomy 4:1, Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which YHVH Elohim of your fathers gives you ... Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who has Elohim so nigh unto them, as YHVH our Elohim is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Torah, which I set before you this day?
- ☞ Revelation 21:23, And the city [New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.



## Bibliography:

- Baal Ha Turim, Rabbi Ya'acov, *Baal HaTurim Chumash*. Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, New York, 11232: 1999
- Bereishis/Genesis – A New Translation With a Commentary Anthologized From Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, New York, 11232: 1977
- Berkowitz, Ariel and D'vorah, *Torah Rediscovered*. First Fruits of Zion, Littleton, CO: 2000
- Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon* Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA:1979
- The Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers: 2001
- The Worldbook Encyclopedia* 1969 edit.
- Munk, Rabbi Michael L., *Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet*. Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, New York, 11232: 1983
- Kestenbaum Edition Tikkun – The Torah Reader's Compendium*. Mesorah Publications, Ltd., Brooklyn, New York, 11232: 2001
- Mordechai, Avi Ben, *Messiah Volume 3, Understanding His Identity and Teachings Through the Soul of the Torah*. Millennium 7000 Communications (www.M7000.com): 2001
- Seekins, Frank T., *Hebrew Word Pictures*, Living Word Pictures Inc., Phoenix, AZ: 1994
- Soncino Talmud*; Judaica Press Inc., Brooklyn, NY, 1973
- Stern, David H., *Complete Jewish Bible*. Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., Clarksville, MD: 1998
- Stern, David H., *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., Clarksville, MD: 1996
- Strong, James, *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN: 2001
- Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, Ill.: 1980
- Vine, W. E., *The Expanded Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN: 1984
- Wootten, Angus, *Take Two Tablets Daily – The Ten Commandments and 613 Laws*, Key of David Publishing, St. Cloud, FL: 2002
- Yitzhaki, Rabbi Solomon, *Rashi, the Torah – Saperstein Edition*. Mesorah Publications, Ltd. Brooklyn, New York, 11232: 2003

