

Torah

Instructions in The Way

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All my life antinomians taught me theology, but it never seemed to mesh with the Scriptures, and the story they fed me constantly seemed to alter according to the speaker. Some said the Law was abolished, others that it was still here but only for Jews and still others that it was brought to its natural conclusion. Sometimes they said that Jesus abolished the Law before His death. Other times they said he abolished the Law by His death. And still others claimed the Apostle, Saint Paul abolished it himself. But no matter what they say about the Torah, they all agree it was a bad thing that was condemning us and standing in the way of salvation by

grace through faith in the Messiah. Or alternatively that the Law was just a schoolmaster to lead us to the Messiah, but now it is insignificant, since we have the Messiah...and yet none of them ever bothered to learn about the law they hated or belittled so much. One and all began with the understanding that it was a negative and followed up all that logic with the idea that it should and must be removed.



“Christ is the end of the Law...” they say. And they said this meaning that the Messiah literally terminated the Torah He gave in ancient days, lived out all His days on earth, and will enforce on a global scale upon His return. They say, “the Law was just a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.” Implying that we no longer need the Teachings, Principles, and Instructions of that “schoolmaster” because we have the Messiah, Who they believe to be something other and distinct from the Living, Breathing Torah made flesh.

But Torah is nothing of the sort.

To quite the contrary, Torah is like a GPS.

Suppose you are traveling to 15 Perfect Street, but you’ve never been there before. What do you do? Naturally, you punch the address into the GPS on your phone and several possible routes will appear along with info like how many miles it is from your current location and how long it should take you to get there.

You select a route and the melodious voice will begin to instruct you in the way: “Go so many miles and turn left.” Stay on this highway for so long, and take exit such-and-such.” At the rotary take the second exit.” Go passed this light and the destination will be a quarter mile on your right.” Or something of that nature anyway.

The first time you take the trip, you need the gps. The next time you kind of recall the route and treat the gps as more of a guide rather than a director. And the following time or thereafter you will likely make the journey without turning on the navigation at all...

Does that mean that the navigation is now obsolete? Is it abolished, nullified, useless, or otherwise abrogated? Not in the slightest.

What this means is that we have internalized the gps so that it has in affect become a part of us. Thus it is so that we no longer need it, but only insomuch as we have become it.

When we say such things as, “Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness.” Or that the Torah was meant to lead us to the Messiah.” We indeed, mean this very thing but it

is in the manner of navigation not in abolition. Once we know the way, we no longer need the map, something to show us the way. The path is ingrained in us. And to say that the Messiah is the end of the Torah for righteousness is most absurd because the Torah is righteousness. Abolishing it or otherwise nullifying it for righteousness would be like saying we don't need to take roads to get to where we are trying to go.

This is also the explanation for such passages as "the law was made for law breakers." Truly, who needs the Torah more than those who lack instruction. And who needs navigation more than those who have no sense of direction.

The Torah is not some nursery rhyme we needed when we were children to aid our memorization but now have outgrown. And it is not a schoolmaster to be dismissed. It is the lessons that schoolmaster imparted that allowed us to leave the classroom and live... Live what exactly? Exactly what our schoolmaster taught us. We are too often expected to abandon the Instructions of the Messiah in favor of the Messiah Himself...as if that was such a thing. How can we escape the teachings and yet still retain the Teacher.

Or suppose that the education in question was not a matter of information or direction. But rather that of repetition. A matter of memorization. Any athlete will understand this idea. With the possible exception of a few legends, no one ever walked onto a field or a court and was automatically awesome at a given sport. It took countless hours of planning and precision and practice in order to play the game. Or perhaps we should ask the musician. Who ever looked at an instrument and instantly knew how to play it with mastery? Any sporting event we have observed or concert we have attended is the summation of countless hours of consistent commitment to an art form. What we witness is the sacrifice of pleasantries, events, friendships etc. all for the sake of betterment in a given skill set.

So it is also with the Torah. The instructions we received through the written word long ago did not evaporate with the arrival of the Messiah. Instead they were internalized. Just like a sport. Just like an instrument. In the same way that a ball player or a band member must spend the bulk of their lives practicing their craft not to then discard everything at the last, but so that they can in the end be the athlete and the musician that they had spent all that time training to be. Torah is training. It is planning. It is building, honing, shaping. And all for a glorious ending and outcome of mastering the Way.

How many hours does an artist put into paint and canvas? How much time does an apprentice invest in their career? Was it all for the end goal of painting a picture or becoming a lawyer and then throwing it all away? Negative. On the contrary it was for the very purpose of mastering the art form and making a profession.

So it is with a torah. It was our schoolmaster to lead us to the Messiah. But not to then, there after throw out all of our instruction in favor of our own imagination or the

adoption of the invention of others. We spent all that time being instructed by a schoolmaster so that we would know by intellect and experience the true, proper way of living in this world and bringing light into a dark place until the day dawns upon the Earth.

Many will say today, “The law was just a shadow but the reality is Christ.” Again this is both ignorant and dismissive.” This perspective fashions a false dichotomy between the Torah and the Messiah, as if the two were not one and the same. But it also wrongly treats the tense of this scenario as aorist. The Scriptures say that the Torah “is” the shadow of things yet to come and the body of the Messiah. It does not say that the Torah “was” a shadow but is now the Christ-reality.

In any book worth reading a trait called “foreshadowing” should and will be used to great affect by even a half decent writer. Foreshadowing is a technique that tells the audience what is coming without spoiling the plot until the moment the foreshadowed event happens, at which point the foreshadowing becomes apparent. It’s a type of suggestion or hint of what is to come to create a theme of sorts. It prepares the reader for what is to take place by working clues into the narrative beforehand.

So it is with the MOST HIGH when HE gave us the Torah. He is foreshadowing what will be in the giving of HIS Son.

Too often we are taught in nominative religion, that we are to regard the Torah as a passing shadow and insignificant now that we have the Body of Messiah. But this notion shows an extreme depth of ignorance on several fronts. Since we no longer have the actual Body of the Messiah here on earth in our midst, we know not the shape of His nature, except to look upon His shadow. Moreover, far from being a thing to dismiss, the shadow in fact proves the reality, as anything of substance casts a shadow. And if it looks, feels, and acts real but casts no shadow, then whatever the claim, it is not real. The Torah, therefore might very well be the Body of the Messiah, but why would we then not want it if it is His Body? And if we do not have His Body with us physically, why would we not want the best possible alternative, His Shadow?

Too often we have been taught to treat the Scriptures like a building the prophets and apostles were constructing for us to live in. Moses laid the foundation and the prophets built up the walls but the Messiah and His apostles set the roof in place. Seems a good metaphor...yet oddly we are expected to act as if now that we have the roof put on, we no longer have need of the house the Father built for us. As if the roof will suffice. How foolish a feeling to feign the Messiah is all we need but we don’t need the Messiah in all that He is. As if the Son is anything without the FATHER. And as if the Messiah is anything without the Message foreshadowed by the prophets and given Him by the FATHER.

Or let's suppose the Most High is a mapmaker. And by HIS sublime cartography, the Creator showed us the shape to the land. He drew in the oceans and rivers. The mountain ranges. The cities and towns. Painstakingly pathed out roads and railways. Pointed out bridges and important buildings. Everything beautifully illustrated, and outlined. And then HE gave us the map to memorize so that we would know how to navigate through the world in which we live. But there was a problem. Not with the map itself but with our own limitations. We had no idea where we were in the first place so we lacked the ability to begin.

The Torah is very much like this instance. The Most High handed us HIS Instructions for how this world works, but though we could spend copious amounts of time studying said Instruction, we had no idea how to properly use them. And we as a people soon became hopelessly lost. How could we find The Way without a guide? Therefore, the LORD on High sent the Messiah to add "you are here" to the map. Far from throwing out the Instructions, the FATHER sent HIS Son to show us how to follow them and to lead us back to the path we were meant to follow.

