



PARASHAT
VA'ETCHANAN
פרשת ואתחנן

Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

by
Ya'acov Natan Lawrence
& his kids

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

Great Discoveries in This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 3:23 Moses Pleads Again With YHVH to Enter the Promised Land
- 4:1 Moses Urges the People to Stay Faithful to YHVH's Torah Commands
- 4:11 The Events at Mount Sinai Remembered and a Warning to Keep from Sin
- 4:25 Moses Predicts Israel's Turning Away from YHVH, Exile and Return
- 4:41 The Cities of Refuge Are Designated
- 5:1 The Ten Commandments Restated
- 6:4 The Shema
- 6:10 Once in the Land a Warning Against Becoming Worldly; YHVH Is a Jealous Elohim
- 6:16 Trust and Obey YHVH
- 6:20 Teaching Torah to the Children

Exploring This Week's Parashah:

1 The Second Law

The name Deuteronomy means "Second Law." The word for "law" in the original Hebrew language of Scripture is "Torah," which literally means "instructions, teachings, or precepts." As used in the Bible, the word Torah means "YHVH's instructions in righteousness." This means that the Torah (the first five books of the Bible, or Genesis/B'reisheet, Exodus/Shemot, Leviticus/Vayikra, Numbers/B'midbar and Deuteronomy/ Devarim) are the ACTUAL teachings or instructions of YHVH Elohim to his people. Yeshua said that man should live by EVERY WORD that comes from the mouth of Elohim (Matthew 4:4), and this includes the Torah. He also said that no part of the Torah has been done away with and that those who follow the Torah in love will be the greatest in his spiritual kingdom



(Matthew 5:17-19 and John 14:15), while those who follow Yeshua but teach others not to follow the Torah will be called the least in his kingdom (Matthew 5:19). Those who refuse to follow it at all—even if they claim to follow Yeshua but show no fruits of righteousness — will not even be in his eternal kingdom (Matthew 7:21-23; Revelation 22:14-15).


2 The Importance of the Torah

The purpose of the Torah (YHVH's instructions in righteousness) needs to be stated again and again! The reason our Heavenly Creator gave man the Torah was to show man HOW TO WALK in right or righteous relationship with his Creator. The purpose of the Torah IS NOT to show man how to be saved. Man is saved by grace through faith in Yeshua, the Messiah (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, once we are saved—once we have been saved from the death penalty, which is the result of our sin (that is, the breaking of the Torah-laws of Elohim, 1John 3:4), and have been spiritually reborn by the Spirit of YHVH—the Torah shows us how to walk the straight and narrow path to stay in a right relationship with our Father in heaven, which will lead us to eternal life in his forever kingdom.




Sin leads to this!

Torah-obedience is the fruit, proof or the results of our being saved. In Ephesians 2:9, Paul says that faith in Yeshua and the power of his grace in our lives leads to GOOD WORKS. In the Bible, good works means not murdering, not hating, not lying, not stealing, honoring your parents, not worshipping anything before the one true Elohim of the Bible, not taking his name in vain, loving him with all your heart, keeping his Sabbaths, loving your neighbor as yourself and so on. All these things are in the Torah. All these things ARE the Torah. They are the instructions in righteousness of YHVH that help to keep us from sinning.


 (a) According to the Bible, what is sin? (Read 1John 3:4; also 5:17; Romans 4:15.)

In last week's Torah portion, we read that "Moses took it upon himself to explain this Torah ..." to the younger generation of Israelites about to go into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 1:5). In this week's Torah portion, Moses felt that the Torah was so important that he recalls to the younger generation the glorious story of YHVH giving their parents the Torah at Mount Sinai. He then recites to them the Ten Commandments the second time, which is a shortened form of the entire Torah.

 (b) When was the first time the Israelites received the Ten Commandments? (See Exodus 20.)

 (c) Read Deuteronomy 5:2-21. Who was the source of the Torah—Moses or YHVH? (Note verse 22.) Therefore, from whom did the Torah come—man or YHVH Elohim?

3 What Is the Purpose of the Torah? Exploring the Blessing of Torah

 (d) If you were to sum up the entire Torah in one or two sentences, how would you do it? Yeshua showed us how. (Look at Mark 12:29-31.) The Apostle Paul also described the Torah in one word. What is that word? (Read Romans 13:8-10.)

These statements of Yeshua and Paul come right out of the Torah itself.

 (e) Do you know what passages in the Torah Yeshua was quoting in Mark 12:29-31? (See Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:8.)


Let's now explore several points that explain why the Torah is so important in the life of a saint and how it's a blessing to even a young saint like you!




Sin causes us to have a guilty conscience.

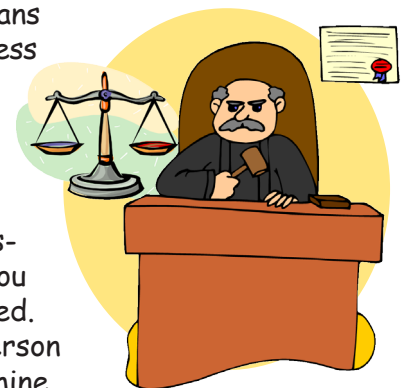
1. The Torah shows us what sin is and what sin is not. We then have the choice to sin or not to sin. It is up to us. The Torah neither causes us to sin, nor does it keep us from sinning. The Torah is like a sign that says, "No Trespassing" or "Stop for School Buses" or "Speed Limit 55 Miles Per Hour." If we break the law by disobeying the signs and then get caught, it is not the sign's fault, but our fault because WE CHOSE to break the law. The sign did not force us to break the law. The Torah is like that sign.

2. When we sin or break YHVH's Torah, we get feelings of guilt deep inside of us. We know that we have done something wrong and it bugs us, doesn't it?


 (f) Have you ever done something wrong and your conscience nagged at you? You may try to cover it up, but does that help? Have you ever lied and told your parents that you didn't do something bad when you really did? How did you feel when you lied to them?

 (g) How do we get rid of that guilty conscience? (Read Romans 3:19-26 and 1John 1:9-2:2.) It is important that we confess sin, ask for forgiveness and then turn away from sin.

3. The Torah also establishes a system 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. Justice is a fancy word that means that if you do what is right you will be blessed, and if you do what is wrong you will be punished. Judges use the laws of the land to judge or determine if a person is guilty of a crime or not. YHVH will use the Torah to determine if men are guilty of crimes against him or not.



Sin brings judgment!



 (h) Now if we have turned away from our sins, placed our faith in Yeshua and with his help stopped sinning, will we still receive the death penalty (see Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4) for our sins? (Let's Explore Romans 3:23-25; John 5:24; 1John 1:9.)



Torah is like a fence to keep you safe.

4. Because of the righteous standards or rules contained in the Torah, for the sinner it points out the fact that they have sinned and how far they have fallen short of the glory of YHVH (Romans 3:23) and therefore their need for a Savior or Redeemer. The Torah actually points out our need for Yeshua. We need his death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins (Galatians 3:25), and we also need him living in our hearts and minds by the power of his Spirit to help us to live in obedience to his Torah-instructions.

5. The Torah shows us how to love YHVH and to walk in his grace by showing us HOW NOT to sin. YHVH giving us his Torah was an act of his loving grace, since by the Torah he shows us how he wants us to walk so that we will not be judged and punished because of sin (which is disobeying the Torah). Not only that, the Torah is like a protective fence or guardrail to keep us from getting too close to sin.

-  (i) What does a farmer use to keep his cattle, sheep, chickens or other animals in? Is it for the purpose of enslaving the animals or for protecting them so that they don't get attacked by wild animals, or so they don't get out of the pasture and get lost, hurt or die?
-  (j) How is the Torah like a fence—or like a guardrail on a road? How does a guardrail protect you when you're on an especially steep or curvy mountain road? Is the guardrail a bad thing, or does it make you feel safe when you see it there? How do you feel when you're driving in a car on a narrow and winding road on the side of a steep mountain and there is no guardrail? Do you get a little scared—okay—a lot scared? This is the same idea as going down the road of life without YHVH's Torah! The Torah shows us what is right and what is wrong and helps us to stay on the right path.



The Torah is like a guardrail on the road of life that keeps you from driving off the road and falling over the edge of a cliff.

6. When we follow the Torah with the help of YHVH's Spirit it helps us to have a closer walk with Yeshua who is the Living Torah, or Word of Elohim incarnate (in human or flesh form). Obeying the Torah helps deepen a loving and intimate relationship with YHVH-Yeshua and helps us to abide in Yeshua (John 14:15; 1John 2:3-6).
7. Obeying the Torah brings us spiritual or eternal rewards in the world to come (Matthew 5:19).
8. Obeying the Torah helps us to stay spiritually pure (1John 3:3-6).
9. Obeying the Torah (i.e., not sinning, which is the violation the Torah, see 1John 3:4) protects us from the influence of the devil (1John 3:8).
10. Obeying the Torah-Word of YHVH helps to perfect YHVH-Yeshua's love in us (1John 2:5).

