

The Rest of the Story

Commonly Quoted Bible Passages That Unbeknownst to Most Christians Validate the Torah

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The Bible presented in sound bites, flash imagery, on bumperstickers, and in one-line statements. These are the tinted glasses through which too many people nowadays interpret the divine message of the Scriptures. "Bible-lite" is the term for this approach. Such a view of the Bible may tickle man's religious taste buds and placate man's penchant for spirituality, but it does little more than that. Sadly, too many folks are trying to swim in these shallow biblical waters.

Has this happened to you? While attempting to discuss the deeper truths of the Scriptures, someone will toss out one-line Bible verse zingers like grenades in hopes of blowing to bits any opposing viewpoints that threaten to contradict their sacred cow belief systems. They will grasp at a Bible verse, or even worse, only part of a verse plucked from here and there and out of context in hopes of proving their point.

In taking this approach to dealing with biblical issues, a person risks twisting the Word of Elohim and ignoring its full counsel and context; as a result, he is liable to be the purveyor of strange doctrine. It's like a person who has only a few bullets in his spiritual gun in the form of several quickly quoted cliché-type verses that he fires like a drive-by shooter.

You've heard the Bible verses used as clichés many times. An attempt to proffer a theological argument or in depth discussion on a scriptural concept is met by the supposed armor piercing shell of the one-line comeback of a Bible verse taken out of its context. Have you heard this one? "Judge not lest you be judged." Or this one? "Turn the other cheek." How about these? "Without vision, the people perish." "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." "We are dead to the law." "Christ is the end of the law." "You shall know the truth and it shall set you free." "Christ came to fulfill the law." "We are not under the law anymore." "The law was nailed to the cross." "The law was against us." "We are free from the works of the law." "We are under grace now." You could probably add your own favorites to this list.

Bible verses quoted out of context are as dangerous as a loose cannon, or a drunk driver behind the wheel of an auto; they can hurt people, but you never know when or how it will happen!

In this brief study, we will take a quick look at a number of often-quoted biblical passages that colloquially have one meaning, but in the context of their surrounding biblical verses have quite another meaning—sometimes one that is the opposite of the popular view that many people hold.

As you read on, you are about to learn *the rest of the story* about some of our favorite commonly quoted biblical passages!

Exodus 15:26

Some Christians cite the second half of this Bible verse while laying claim to its promise of divine protection from diseases. What many readers fail to note is that YHVH's promise to heal his people from diseases is predicated upon their obeying his commandments, laws or Torah. What YHVH is saying here is that if you obey his Torah (i.e., the instructions of righteousness that YHVH gave to Moses for the children of Israel), he will protect you from the diseases of Egypt. This verse out of context reads as follows:

I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am YHVH that heals you.

The rest of the verse reads,

And [YHVH] said, **“If you will diligently hearken to the voice of YHVH your Elohim, and will do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his [Torah] commandments, and keep all his statutes,** I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am YHVH that heals you.” (emphasis added)

Deuteronomy 6:10–11

Some Christian “prosperity preachers” quote this and other Torah passages in attempts to prove that believers are entitled to all the blessings of the “Old Covenant” with no strings attached. Sadly, these same teachers fail to quote the surrounding verses, which show the conditional nature of these blessings. YHVH is clear about it; these blessings are a reward for obedience to his Torah-commandments! The verses quoted out of context read as follows:

10 And it shall be, when YHVH your Elohim shall have brought you into the land which he swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities, which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and dug wells, which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant; when you shall have eaten and be full ...

Now let’s read the verses that surround the above-cited passage in order to understand the “rest of the story.”

4 **Hear**, O Israel: YHVH our Elohim is one YHVH. 5 And you shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. 6 And **these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart.** 7 And **you shall teach them diligently unto your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates. 17 **You shall diligently keep the commandments of YHVH your Elohim, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he has commanded you.** 18 And you shall do that which is right and good in the sight of YHVH that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land which YHVH swore unto your fathers, 19 to cast out all your enemies from before you, as YHVH has spoken. (emphasis added)

While in verses 10 and 11 YHVH promises extravagant blessings upon his people, the surrounding verses clearly teach that receipt of those blessings is predicated on obedience to the Torah-commandments of YHVH.

What’s more, prior to verses 10 and 11 in verses 6 through 9 we find a major portion of the famous *shema* passage. It is so named as it begins with the Hebrew word *shema*, which in most English Bibles is the word *hear* at the beginning of verse 4. *Shema* means “to hear and to do,” and the Jews have been reciting the *shema* each Sabbath in their synagogues for thousands of years as their pledge to YHVH *to hear* and *do* all his Torah commands.

It is dishonest to quote verses 10 and 11 and to lay claim to its promises without quoting the surrounding verses that teach what the conditions are for receiving those blessings.

Deuteronomy 28: 2

Deuteronomy 28 contains more “blessings” verses that Christian prosperity teachers quote as proof-texts that a “pot of gold” unconditionally awaits all Christians who lay claim to these promises. The verses quoted out of context read as follows:

2 And all these blessings shall come on you, and overtake you ... 3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your kine, and the flocks of your sheep. 5 Blessed shall be your basket and your store. 6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 7 YHVH shall cause your enemies that rise up against you to be smitten before your face: they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. 8 YHVH shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouses, and in all that you set your hand unto; and he shall bless you in the land which YHVH your Elohim gives you. 10 And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of YHVH; and they shall be afraid of you. 11 And YHVH shall make you plenteous in goods, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle, and in the fruit of your

ground, in the land which YHVH swore unto your fathers to give you. 12 YHVH shall open unto you his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto your land in his season, and to bless all the work of your hand: and you shall lend unto many nations, and you shall not borrow. 13 And YHVH shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath...

Now let's read what the conditions are for receiving these glorious blessings.

1 And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of YHVH your Elohim, **to observe and to do all his commandments** which I command you this day, that YHVH your Elohim will set you on high above all nations of the earth: 9 YHVH shall establish you an holy people unto himself, as he has sworn unto you, if **you shall keep the commandments** of YHVH your Elohim, and walk in his ways. 13 ... if that you **hearken unto the commandments** of YHVH your Elohim, which I command you this day, **to observe and to do them**: 14 And **you shall not go aside from any of the words which I command you** this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. (emphasis added)

Once again, we see that obedience to YHVH's Torah commandments is the prerequisite for receiving his divine blessings.

2 Chronicles 7:14

This famous passage has almost reached the status of a mantra among many Christians who believe—in accordance with this verse—that if our nation will repent of its sins, YHVH will heal all of our ills. While we believe this to be true, what our Christian friends fail to tell us is *what defines sin* (i.e., “their wicked ways”)? This verse quoted out of context reads as follows:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

What “wicked ways” is YHVH instructing his people to repent of in this passage? In verses 19 and 20, he tells us.

19 **But if you turn away, and forsake my statutes and my [Torah] commandments**, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; 20 then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations. (emphasis added)

Once again, YHVH is telling his people that if they will turn from their wicked or Torahless ways, and will obey his Torah, he will forgive them and heal their land. The commands of Torah include observing the seventh day Sabbath, keeping YHVH's annual feasts, following the biblical dietary laws and adherence to a host of other Torah commands that will help YHVH's people to walk in a holy (set-apart), righteous and blessed relationship with him.

Proverbs 29:18

This is another famous passage that many people know by heart—or at least, the first half of the verse. Here it is:

Where there is no vision, the people perish...

However, very few people know what the second half of the verse says.

...but he that **keeps the Torah**, happy is he. (emphasis added)

This proverb teaches us that prophetic or spiritual vision is a necessity, but that it needs to be regulated by the instructions or guidelines of the Torah. Prophetic revelation and direction are a blessing as long as it does not violate the truths of the Torah.

Hosea 4:6

Many people quote the first half of this verse as one would cite a popular adage, yet they have no understanding of its fuller context.

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...

However, the rest of the verse continues,

because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shall be no priest to me: **seeing you have forgotten the Torah of your Elohim**, I will also forget your children. (emphasis added)

Once again, we see that YHVH's people are destroyed or are cut off (from him) because they have rejected the knowledge of YHVH and forgotten his Torah. As a result of their Torahlessness, he promises to bring judgment upon them by rejecting and forgetting them! Perhaps if our nation in general and Christians specifically would take to heart the full implications of this verse, our nation could be saved from the divine judgment that is hanging over it because of its refusal to follow the Torah of YHVH.

Malachi 4:5-6

This is another well-known passage that prophesies of spiritual restoration among YHVH's people who live in the end times. Interestingly, this is the last verse in the Christian Bible's Old Testament. As such, Christians would do well to heed its admonition and warning. The part of the passage with which most people are familiar reads as follows:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YHVH, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

However, what is the rest of the story as pertaining to this end-time spiritual restoration? Let's read verse four of the same chapter.

Remember you the Torah/law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb [Sinai] for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. (emphasis added)

YHVH is pleading with his people to return to the Torah and to live according to all of its aspects so that his people may be spared from his end time judgments that will come upon the rest of the world. YHVH's people have forgotten his Torah, which is why YHVH tells them to "remember the Torah of Moses my servant..." Yeshua, the Sun of Righteousness, is coming with healing in his wings (verse 2) to judge the wicked (verse 3)—i.e., those who are Torahless. Let this prophecy be a warning to YHVH's saints that he is imploring them to return to the pro-Torah, spiritual and Hebraic roots of their faith in these last days!

Matthew 5:17

This verse is often quoted to mean that Yeshua fulfilled the law of Moses so that Christians no longer have to keep it, since Yeshua "did it for them." Does this mean that since Yeshua didn't commit adultery, murder, and steal it is now permissible for his people to do so? And since he ate kosher, kept the Sabbath and biblical feasts, Christians now don't have to? Many people seem to read Matthew 5:17 as if it read:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but *to destroy the Torah-law*.

In reality, the verse reads,

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Since Yeshua anticipated that Bible teachers would eventually come along teaching that the Torah had been done away with—even though he told his followers not to think that!—he went on to clarify his position that he didn't come to nullify the Torah, for in verses 18 and 19 we read:

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 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.

Heaven and earth have not passed away, which means that Torah must still be the standard or guideline by which YHVH's people are to live. Not only that, Yeshua states here that the Torah will be the criteria by which he will judge his people with regard to the level of rewards they will inherit in his eternal kingdom!

John 8:32

Have you ever heard this one?

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

When lifted out of its biblical context, this verse could apply to just about anything in life. But what did Yeshua really mean when he made this statement? We're given a clue if we will simply read the preceding verse.

Then said Yeshua to those Jews which believed on him, "If you continue in my word [i.e., the Torah], then are you my disciples indeed..."

How do we know that when Yeshua said "my word" he was referring to Torah? Simply this. John tells us that Yeshua was the Word of Elohim incarnate (John 1:1,14). The children of Israel heard the literal Word of YHVH when he audibly thundered his Torah from Mount Sinai in Exodus 20. Yeshua told his disciples (and you and me) that those who love him will keep his commandments (or his word). Yeshua in his pre-incarnate state as the Word of Elohim told the Israelites the same thing in Exodus 20:6 when giving them the Torah (his instructions in righteousness). Finally, in numerous other places in the Scriptures, the Word and Torah of YHVH are considered synonymous terms (Isa 1:10; 2:3; 5:24; Mic 4:2 and numerous places in Ps 119). So based on these truths, we know that Yeshua is telling us in John 8:31 and 32 that those who follow the Torah will know the truth, which will in turn set them free (from sin, judgment and eternal death, see verse 34).

Acts 10—Peter's Vision

Peter's vision in Acts 10 is often used to "prove" that New Testament Christians are now permitted to eat "foods," which the Torah tells us are unclean and an abomination to eat (numerous places in Lev 11).

11 And [Peter] saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat..." 15 And the voice spoke unto him again the second time, "What Elohim has cleansed, that call not you common."

If these verses were lifted out of context and presented as the complete picture, one might think that YHVH was telling Peter that it was now acceptable for him to eat unclean or unkosher foods, such as pork and shellfish, which the Torah forbids us to eat.

Please note what Peter's response was, while keeping in mind that he was Torah-keeping Jew:

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean..." 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean... 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, "Behold, three men seek you. 20 Arise therefore, and go down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them."

So while Peter doubted that Elohim was actually commanding him to eat unclean meats, Elohim made clear to Peter the interpretation of the vision. Peter understood that Elohim was telling him to take the gospel message to the Gentiles—whom the Jews considered to be unclean; YHVH was *not* telling him that eating unclean foods was now acceptable! That this is the correct interpretation of Peter's vision is made clear by Peter's own statement in verse 28,

28 And he said unto them, "You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but Elohim has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

This passage is *not* telling us that it is acceptable for New Testament believers to eat unkosher foods. Rather, when the sheet in Peter's vision came down three times, and subsequently three Gentile men came to Peter's door, he immediately understood the vision's interpretation. The meaning of this text is derived simply by reading the entire passage in context and thereby understanding the "rest of the story." Let's from now on determine to allow the Word of YHVH interpret itself!

Romans 3:28

Another verse that is often quoted as a proof text that the Torah is functionally irrelevant in the life of the believer

is Romans 3:28.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Torah-law.

It is reasoned that since New Testament believers are justified by faith and not by the works of the Torah, obedience to the Torah is now unnecessary. Is this what Paul is implying here? Definitely not, for when we read what Paul writes a few verses later, we realize that he in no way is saying this. In fact, he is validating the Torah.

31 Do we then make void the Torah through faith? Elohim forbid: yea, we establish the Torah.

Paul realizes that some reading his letter may come to the mistaken conclusion that he is advocating an anti-Torah position when he insists that man is justified by faith, not by the works of the law. When we read the rest of the story, we realized that *how one is saved* is one thing, and *obedience to the Torah* is another thing; these two concepts must not be confused or conflated!

Romans 7:4

We now cite another passage that many Christians use to attempt to disprove the need to follow the Torah as a guide to righteous living.

4 Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the Torah by the body of Messiah; that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto Elohim... 6 But now we are delivered from the Torah, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The anti-Torahists view Paul's statements in verses four and six about being dead to the Torah and being delivered from the Torah as meaning that Christians are basically free to ignore the Torah as having any relevance in one's life. Read out of context, one might come to the conclusion that Paul was indeed saying this. However, a few verses later Paul goes on to say the following:

12 **Wherefore the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.** 14 For we know that the Torah is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin... 22 For I delight in the Torah of Elohim after the inward man. (emphasis added)

How is it possible that Paul is teaching that it is no longer necessary to follow the Torah in verses four and six, but in verses 12, 14 and 22 he seems to be indicating the opposite? Is he confused? Does he hold contradictory viewpoints? Or is *our* understanding of what Paul is saying here confused? Frankly, to say that Paul was confused is to say that the Spirit of Elohim who inspired him to write this portion of the Scriptures was also confused. In our opinion, this borders on making a blasphemous accusation against the Spirit of Elohim, and we don't want to go there!

No, Paul is consistent in what he is teaching. In the first few verses of chapter seven, Paul is reminding us that Torah demands that a woman be faithful to her husband, and that if she is unfaithful to him she becomes an adulterous worthy of death. However, if her husband dies, she is no longer legally bound to him, but is free to remarry and in Torah's view, she will not be an adulterous, and hence subject to the penalty Torah imposes upon an adulterous woman. Paul then goes on to teach us that when we die to our old sinful man through identification with Yeshua's death, burial and resurrection, the death penalty Torah has imposed upon us for violating it has passed onto Yeshua. We are now free from the death penalty imposed on us for breaking the law, but we are not free to go and to break the law again!

Ephesians 2:8-9

This is another common biblical passage with which many Christians are familiar.

For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of Elohim: not of works, lest any man should boast.

For many who read this statement by Paul, this is a proof positive that obedience to the Torah—considered by many to be “works”—has no place in the believer's life. Is this what Paul is really saying here? Let's now read verse 10, the very next verse in this passage.

For we are his workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua unto good works, which Elohim has before ordained that we should walk in them [i.e. good works].

What Paul is saying here is that we are saved by grace through faith, but that once saved we become the spiritual creation or workmanship of Elohim, and our purpose is *now* to walk in or to accomplish good works. What are the good works that Elohim has before ordained in which his people should walk? Simply this. When the children of Israel were at Mount Sinai, Elohim audibly told the Israelites what he wanted them to do. He then wrote his words with his own finger in stone. He further dictated his instructions to Moses who recorded them in a book or scroll (see Exod 20 and 24). What YHVH gave to his people was the Torah—his instructions in righteousness.

1 Timothy 4:4

Another passage of Paul that is often quoted is this one:

For every creature of Elohim is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving...

This passage is often cited by believers to justify their eating of foods that the Torah calls unclean and abominable (e.g. pork, shell fish, etc.) and commands YHVH's people *not* to eat. Based on this verse, many Christians believe that the act of praying over and blessing unkosher food somehow and rather miraculously makes it acceptable to eat. Is this what Paul is really saying here? Let's read this verse in the context of the verse that precedes it and follows it.

3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which Elohim has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which **believe and know the truth**. 4 For every creature of Elohim is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, 5 for it is **sanctified by the Word of Elohim** and prayer. (emphasis added)

What is verse four really saying in light of its context? Verse three establishes these parameters. In this verse, what is "the truth" that Paul expects the saints to know, which will determine what they can and can't eat? The Torah gives us these guidelines in Leviticus 11. Not only that, Scripture defines Torah as truth (Ps 119:142 and 151), and Yeshua told us that the Word of Elohim is truth (John 17:17). As we have already seen, the Torah was the literal words of YHVH given to his people *forever!*

Finally, in verse five, Paul goes on to tell us that the food we eat is not only sanctified by our prayer over it, but by the Word of Elohim. Again, where in the Word of YHVH does he sanctify or set apart the meat that is permissible for his people to eat? This is found in the Torah-law that YHVH gave to his people through Moses (see Lev 11).

So once again, 1 Timothy 4:4—as well as all the other passages we have evaluated in this study—when read in the context of the verses that surround it, in no way invalidates one jot or tittle of the Torah. Rather, Torah is established and repeatedly validated as the standard for YHVH's people to follow as they walk in the narrow path of righteousness that leads to freedom from sin and everlasting life in an eternal relationship with YHVH Elohim.

And now you know the rest of the story!

