



PARASHAT MISHPATIM

פרשת משפטים

Exodus 21:1-24:18

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.

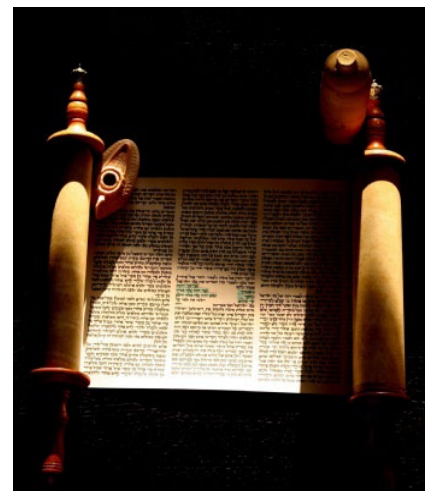
Great Discoveries In This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 21:1-23:9 The Civil Law/Mishpatim: YHVH's Laws That Help to Govern Human Relationships
- 23:10 The Sabbaths of the Land and the Week
- 23:14 The Three Pilgrimage Festivals: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks/Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles
- 23:20 YHVH Promises to Lead and to Protect the Israelites En Route to the Promised Land
- 24:1 Moses Makes Official the Sinaitic/Mosaic Covenant
- 24:7 Israel Vows to Do and to Obey
- 24:9 Prophecy at the Mountain; Moses Ascends Mount Sinai to Receive the Stone Tablets

Exploring This Week's Parashah:

1 Exploring the Meaning of the Word "Torah"

In last week's *Torah Explorers*, we learned about the famous Ten Commandments of Exodus 20, which came from YHVH and were spoken with his voice and written with his finger on two stone tablets. We learned that they are the cornerstone or foundation for all the rest of YHVH's 613 commandments, which are contained in the first five books of the Bible. Those 613 commandments are called the Torah. The first five books are also called the Torah. So the word Torah can refer to the biblical books of Genesis through Deuteronomy, and it can refer to YHVH's instructions or commandments contained in those five books. But what does the word Torah really mean? Let's explore this now.



Almost every place where you see the word "law" in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is the Hebrew word "Torah." This word is used 219 times in the Tanakh or Hebrew Scriptures, and in every case it is translated in the King James Version (KJV) and in most other English Bibles as "the

law." Is "law" Torah's main meaning?

- ▲ (a) When you think of the term "the law," what comes into your mind: good thoughts or bad thoughts? Do you think of a list of dos and don'ts—what you can do and what you cannot do? Do you think of red and blue lights flashing and a siren? Do you think of a man in a blue uniform with a star and a gun, or judge in a black robe with a gavel, or a prison? These can be scary thoughts! Write a list of other things that come to your mind when you think of the word law. When you think of the law in the Bible, what comes to your mind?

Let's see what the word "Torah" really means according to the Scriptures.

- ▲ (b) Let's start understanding the full scope of this word by first reading Proverbs 13:14 where the word "law" here is "Torah." What does this verse say about the Torah?
- ▲ (c) Next, start reading in Proverbs 1:7. In verse 8, to whom is Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, talking? The word translated as "law" in this verse is Torah. Continue reading what Solomon teaches us about the benefits of YHVH's instructions and wisdom found in the Torah. Start reading in verse 9 to the end of the chapter. Then start reading in chapter three and continue to the end of chapter four. Whenever you see the words "law," "instruction," "wisdom," "instructions," "commandments," "truth," "mercy," "knowledge" or "words" think of the Torah, for, in a general sense, that is what these words are referring to.
- ▲ (d) After reading these verses, write down five benefits of Torah. Write down five things that will happen to the foolish person who does not follow the Torah.

The word "Torah" literally means "direction, teaching, or instruction." It comes from another Hebrew word meaning "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, or to teach." In your mind, picture a teacher who is standing in front of a classroom pointing at a chalkboard teaching the class something. Or picture an archer aiming his arrow at a target hoping to hit the bull's eye. This is the idea behind the word "Torah."

Do you see what is really going on here? Think about this awesome thought for a minute. YHVH Elohim, the Creator of the universe and who is our Heavenly Father cares so much for you and me that like a teacher he is teaching us his ways. He personally spoke out his Torah—his instructions in righteousness, and then had Moses write them down for us to point us in the right direction spiritually.

For example, in his Torah, we learn about salvation by grace through faith from the example of Abraham who had faith in YHVH.

From the Torah, we learn that man can escape the penalty of sin (which is death) by killing a lamb and putting its blood on the door posts of one's house. This points to Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim, who spilled his blood on the cross to pay for our sins.

From the Torah, we learn that once we are saved by grace through faith in YHVH and have been saved from our sins we can live a righteous and sin-free life by following YHVH's commandments.

From the Torah we learn how to love YHVH Elohim and our neighbor.

Like an archer shooting an arrow at a target, Torah shows us how to hit the bull's eye of



YHVH's righteousness and love. Like a river that flows, Torah, which is the very Word of Elohim, is a river of life that brings blessings to us if we obey it. And like a teacher, YHVH is trying to teach us how to walk in his ways that will bring blessings, love, joy and peace.

Here is what the Scriptures says about the Torah of Elohim:

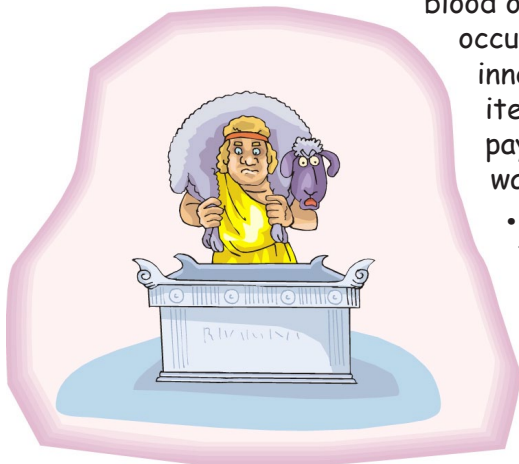
- Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your Torah is the truth. (Ps 119:142)
- For the commandment is a lamp; and the Torah is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. (Prov 6:23)
- [Yeshua speaking], Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to complete [it]. (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. (1John 2:4)



2 What Was the Purpose of the Torah

The Torah is an amazing thing. Because it comes from the mind of Elohim, it is very deep and broad. YHVH Elohim designed it to accomplish a lot of things. Here are some examples of what the Torah of YHVH can do in a person's life.

- The Torah tells us what sin is. When we study the Torah, we discover the sin that is in our lives because we see more clearly how we have not been obeying YHVH. The result is that we have feelings of guilt and shame because we have failed to follow the Torah—YHVH's instructions. This will hopefully lead us to repent of or turn away from our sin and turn back to obeying YHVH.
- The Torah also shows us how to get the sin out of our lives. This we can accomplish by following Torah's instructions in righteousness—by obeying the Torah.
- The Torah also points us to Yeshua by showing us that when we sin a price or penalty needs to be paid for that sin. The Torah shows us that through the shedding of the blood of an innocent animal, atonement for or covering over man's sins occurred (Leviticus 17:11). When a person sinned, the sacrifice of innocent animals like sheep, cattle and goats showed the Israelites that they needed a greater sacrifice than mere animals to pay for all of their sins once and for all. That greater sacrifice was made by Yeshua.
 - When we fail to live up to the high standards of YHVH's Torah, it shows us how much we have sinned, how much we need Yeshua's salvation and spiritual help to be righteous (Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:25).
 - Torah is like a protective boundary line or fence that protects us from straying off of the path of righteousness. Imagine driving down a steep mountain road that had



no guardrails, lines or signs—especially at night, or in the fog. It would be very easy to accidentally drive off of the road. Torah is like a guardrail or a marker sign that keep us on the road of righteousness and keeps us from sinning.

- Obeying the Torah helps us to draw closer to YHVH, for it shows us how to love him. (Read John 14:15; 1John 2:3-6). It also helps us to have a better relationship with our fellow man, since it shows us how to love him, too.
- Obeying the Torah helps us to stay spiritually pure (1John 3:3-6).
- Obeying the Torah protects us from the influence of the devil (1John 3:8).
- Obeying the Torah-Word of YHVH helps to perfect YHVH-Yeshua's love in us (1John 3:6).



Torah is like a protective fence.

3 Yeshua and the Torah

What did Yeshua have to say about the Torah? Did he believe in it and want us to follow it, as well?

- ▲ (e) Read Matthew 5:17-19 and write down the main points of these verses.

4 The Apostles and the Torah

▲ (f) What did the apostles of Yeshua teach about the Torah? After reading the following Scripture passages, write down the main point of each one.

- Acts 21:20; 24:14; 25:8
- Romans 3:31; 7:12,14,22
- 1Corinthians 7:19
- 1John 2:3-6; 3:3
- Revelation 12:17; 14:12

