

PARASHAH: Re'eh (See)
ADDRESS: D'varim (Deuteronomy) 11:26-16:17
READING DATE: Shabbat
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(Note: all quotations are taken from the Complete Jewish Bible, translation by David H. Stern, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., unless otherwise noted)

Let's begin with the opening blessing for the Torah:

***“Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-‘Olam,
asher bachar banu m’kol ha-amim,
v’natan lanu eht Torah-to.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn.”***

(Blessed are you, O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have selected us from among all the peoples,
and have given us your Torah.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

This is **Parashat Re'eh** (say "reh-eh"). The Hebrew word "re'eh" means to "see" or to "plainly behold". It is not an emphatic use of the word "behold", for if it were, another Hebrew word "hineh" הִנֵּה might have been used instead¹. No, this word has a very practical approach in mind. The opening dialogue is a practical, heart-felt plea (from the part of Moshe) to see plainly (or behold) that HaShem is setting before the people a choice: to obey and consequently enjoy the blessings, or to disobey and reap the consequences of disobedience. His opening word "re'eh" is a call to understand the choice which is set before you.

“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing, if you listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God that I am giving you today; and the curse, if you don’t listen to the mitzvot of ADONAI your God, but turn

¹ The Hebrew word הִנֵּה “hineh” is explained by Jewish authorities as “...untranslatable. It is often rendered as 'here' or 'behold,' but this is an approximation of an expression that has no equivalent in the Indo-European languages. For this reason, it is often left untranslated. In general, it serves to intensify a statement and to provide emphasis. Here, the intensity denotes that it was a sudden or intense experience.” (Navigating the Bible, online commentary to Genesis 15:4)

aside from the way I am ordering you today and follow other gods that you have not known.'” (D’varim 11:26-28)

I want to posit a similar challenge to those of you reading this teaching. I want to speak, not so much from a theological standpoint this time, but rather from a practical standpoint.

This week, like Moshe, I want to take a practical look at the Word of God. The Bible clearly offers a righteous standing with God, and it is this stance which draws all men towards the Light. For within the heart of every man there lies a "God-shaped" hole. An empty space. Only the Creator of all men can fill this void. And rightly so! For this is the nature and design of the Master Designer!

So how do we allow him to fill this gap?

Torah – Its Roles and Functions

Firstly the Torah teaches that we must recognize our need of repair. The Biblical examples give us ample opportunity to find ourselves within the matrix of a God-centric universe, a universe where we are either for God or (by default) opposed to God. This is the recognition of sin in our lives before we come to know who God is and what his plans are all about. The Word(s) of God, whether personally read, or heard (at the mouth of those who are his) cause our heart to begin to yield to the leading of the Ruach HaKodesh (the Holy Spirit). To be sure, the Torah teaches that all are sinners and that no one properly seeks after God (Romans 3:9-20). Only the call of the Ruach can lead a man to finding God; no man has found God of his own accord.

Allow me to illustrate this by first explaining the role of the Torah in a sinner's life. The fine folks over at [First Fruits of Zion](#) have written a wonderful set of books on the functions of the Torah in the lives of believers. 'Torah Rediscovered' and 'Take Hold' are some of the finest examples of explaining our relationship to the Word of God that I have ever researched. As such, I highly recommend both books (see FFOZ link above for details). Quoting a few paragraphs from those works, I want to share with you the practicality of the Word of God, as it applies to both believers and non-believers, in helping to bring them into the plans and purposes of HaShem.

Authors Ariel and D'vorah Berkowitz write:

*"Torah helps man recognize his own sinfulness (Romans 7:7-12). This function of the Torah primarily concerns those who are **not yet** redeemed. Torah helps to bring about HaShem's wrath (Romans 4:15). The teaching here in Romans stresses that if anyone tries to use Torah to achieve **justification** before HaShem, the attempt will backfire! He will only*

discover that he cannot obey it **perfectly**, thus achieving only condemnation!

"The Torah acts as a protector (Galatians 3:23-4:2). How?"

"For the unredeemed: *The Torah was intended to preserve the mental, moral and social safety of the environment into which an individual was born and raised. The person was protected "until the date set by the Father" (Galatians 4:2) when the Spirit of HaShem would lead them to the Teacher, the Messiah. The Torah does this by providing a safe environment in which they may live. The judgments, commandments, ordinances and other teachings of the Torah all help to create a safe community surrounded by the protective border of the Torah. Anyone who lives within the confines of that border will live in relative safety. This does not mean that the person living within the borders of the Torah is automatically safe spiritually, or "saved"; rather, living within the Torah community, his life is being preserved and protected as he awaits the time set by the Father, his moment of salvation."*

Now this helps us to understand the role of the Torah in the life of an unbeliever. But what of the believer? They continue to explain:

" For the redeemed: *Because the Torah tells us the truth—the difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, life and death—it is both a protection for us and a written revelation of the grace of HaShem. Every man, woman or child who chooses not to live within the teachings of HaShem, which produce life, is consigned to a place outside of the blessing and protection established by these teachings (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). We can also tie in the description of the Torah as the national covenant and constitution, in which the Great King promises to protect His subjects through the covenant. To protect them from what? From the kingdom outside of His kingdom: the kingdom of darkness. Remember that the chief characteristic of the kingdom of darkness is death, with all of its legal rights (Romans 6:23). The legal aspects of the Torah declare the truth that the kingdom of darkness has no jurisdiction inside the boundaries of HaShem's kingdom—the Torah Community."*

So now as we examine the words of Moshe in our current portion, we can see that he is exhorting a group of redeemed people to walk in the inheritance and blessing that has been prepared for them since HaShem began to make a covenant with their forefathers. The blessings are the result of an obedient heart that desires to conform to the ways and teachings of an all-loving Father. HaShem is indeed the Loving Abba! He desires to bless and prosper his children (the redeemed). But in order to experience the non-salvific blessings (those blessings with no immediate bearing on the salvation of an individual), the person needs to avail himself of God's instructions. Please don't misunderstand me

here. Genuine faith must precede genuine obedience. Moreover, genuine faith is the kind that naturally leads into genuine obedience (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; John 14:15-21; 15:9-17; James 1:21-25; 2:14-26)!

Law Versus Grace?

We in the organized Church have fallen for an age-old lie labeled “Law versus Grace”. In reality, after careful examination from the unified Word of God (Genesis through Revelation), there exists NO conflict between Law and Grace! Just before putting together this commentary I decided to do a Google™ search for the specific topics of either “Law Versus Grace” and/or “Not Under the Law”. As a Jewish man with a Scriptural understanding handed down to me from my Hebraic heritage (the one rooted in the Torah of Moshe) the resulting findings were saddening to me.

Quite typically the views I am about to share with you here below freely flow from many, many Christian pulpits the world over. The authors’ names have been withheld for purposes of anonymity:

“Galatians 3 is the Apostle Paul's most definitive statement as to the purpose of the Law and the distinction between the law and faith. Such a radical change has occurred in the coming of Christ that Paul can describe the time of the Mosaic Law in verse 23 as a time "before faith came." In verse 25 he says that now that faith has come we are no longer under a disciplinarian, which he has just described as the Law.

Of course you are also familiar with Paul's statement in Romans 6 that we are not under the law but under grace (verse 14). We must allow the full force of these statements to hit us, and not allow Paul's words to die the death of a thousand qualifications...”

“...Paul does not qualify his words by saying, "we are not under the ceremonial law," or, "we are not under the civil law." He clearly and simply states in verse 25 that we are not under the Law.”

“[Paul] says over and over, and the Galatians would be expected to understand, as you are, that the time of Moses has ended. Something new has come. Now in chapters 5 and 6 he will make the connections as to how the law is fulfilled in the life of the church, but at this point the Spirit is making it clear to you that the Law as was delivered to Moses is over.

“What then was wrong with the law that we cannot be under it anymore? Galatians 3:12, "the Law is not of faith." The principle of faith is opposed to the Mosaic Law...”

“You see the difficulty do you not? Adam as our covenant head was placed under a covenant of works. Upon his obedience he would merit for his people eternal life. Adam fell and brought all mankind under sin and condemnation. But God came down and made another covenant, the covenant of grace. In this covenant God promised a deliverer who would defeat Satan and do what Adam failed to do. Paul calls Him the second, or last Adam. Not only would this deliverer fulfill all righteousness for His people, but also because of our sin he would need to take on the punishment His people must pay.”

“Isaac and Jacob placed their faith in the covenant of grace promised to Abraham. So everything is going along rather swimmingly until we come to Moses. God makes a covenant with Israel. The law given on Sinai is called a covenant. Was this the covenant of grace? Why does Paul say that the Mosaic covenant was not of faith, unlike the covenant promised to Abraham”

“This Mosaic covenant was different than the covenant of grace. This Mosaic covenant sounded a lot like what we had seen with Adam before the fall. Israel must obey the law to receive life, and if they disobeyed they would be cursed. Sounds just like what Adam heard. This is Paul's point in verse 10. There appears a curse just like there was in the covenant with Adam, and the curse was promised to come on Israel if she did not continue in all the things written in the book of the Law, to do them.”

So, based on what we have just read is Law really opposed to Grace? Were God's commandments so impossibly constricting that we as frail humans desperately needed Jesus to come and set us free from such bondage? Is this what grace is really all about? Is the Law really too hard for anyone to keep?

What does the Torah proper say of itself in Deuteronomy 30:11-14?

“11. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it [is] not hidden from thee, neither [is] it far off. 12. It [is] not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 13. Neither [is] it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? 14. But the word [is] very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” (KJV)

Wow! That doesn't sound like bondage to me. To be sure, the last few words of verse 14 say that **“thou mayest do it”!** So far from teaching an impossible standard of obedience, the pasuk (verse) states that it CAN be done. But can I find contextual agreement within the pages of my New Testament?

What does the New Covenant teach us about God's commands? The book of 1 John (5:3) gives us a definitive answer:

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous (KJV).”

Why does this passage surprise us as "New Testament" believers in Yeshua? I believe it has much primarily to do with the fact that we have been trained over the last 2000 or so years to believe that grace is diametrically opposed to obedience. Nothing could be further from the truth! Grace (given through his generous Spirit) is what enables us to properly obey in the first place! Were it not for God's grace, many of the saints of the TaNaKH period (Old Testament) would have surely perished under the "letter of the Law", based on their moral failure to uphold the many details that the Law spells out. Moreover, many of us today would also perish. This important "Spirit-led" feature is the secret to properly understanding the passage quoted by Moshe in Deuteronomy chapter 30 above! Moshe could boldly state **"thou mayest do it"** because he knew that when the Spirit of the God who gives the Torah comes to live within an individual (viz, the "circumcised heart" of Deut. 30:6), then the very same Spirit also writes the Torah on their heart, enabling them to DO it! Again, without the person of the Spirit living within us, we will fail to uphold the Law.

So we step out and try to keep God's laws. What happens when we fail God? Well for one thing, grace steps in and allows us to try time and again to accomplish the good pleasure of our Father in Heaven. Grace says, "I know you've tried and you've failed. In fact, you will never reach perfection until my Son returns. But that is okay. I am not expecting perfection. You just do your best by giving me your whole heart, soul, and strength, and I will fill in the rest!" That is grace!

Moshe is giving 'Am Yisra'el a chance to experience the grace of God on an everyday level. They had already witnessed the supernatural hand of the Almighty as he delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, which by the way forms a picture of deliverance from sin for us today. That was surely a monumental event! Yet, now HaShem is teaching his people that since they were free, they no longer need follow their old passions and ways of life. To be sure, Moshe has told them on an earlier occasion to "circumcise their hearts" in order that they might genuinely be obedient to God!

Does this feature sound familiar? It should! For this is a "New Testament" feature as well! So we see that a circumcised heart is God's desire for his children. This heart is a heart which will say to the LORD, "All that you ask of me, I will do!" The passages that illustrate this throughout the unified Word of God are too numerous to point out in this study!

The message of the ages remains strikingly clear: "Love God with your whole heart, soul, and might, and he will cause you to walk in his ways!" His ways include salvation, healing, financial blessing, relationship building, promise of healthy and plentiful offspring, as well as numerous things that I can't name here! His blessings are reserved for those who would soften their heart to hear his voice! His blessings are reserved for those who will surrender their will into his hands and allow him to shape their lives into the pattern of that of his Only and Unique Son, Yeshua the Savior of the world!

Therefore, "see"! The choice is yours! Do you want blessing? Or do you want the curse?

I choose the former...

The closing blessing is as follows:

***"Baruch atah YHVH, Eloheynu, Melech ha-'Olam,
asher natan lanu Toraht-emet,
v'chay-yeh o'lam nata-b'tochenu.
Baruch atah YHVH, noteyn ha-Torah.
Ameyn."***

(Blessed are you O' LORD, our God, King of the Universe,
you have given us your Torah of truth,
and have planted everlasting life within our midst.
Blessed are you, LORD, giver of the Torah.
Ameyn.)

"Shabbat Shalom!"

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