

Why We Still Desperately Need the Old Testament

Recently, the internet has been filled with the discussion of the place and value of the Old Testament for believers in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). Who it was that started the discussion is not nearly as important as the fact that the discussion is taking place. Honestly, I have to say I am thrilled to see so many of my friends in the Christian World having this discussion. It is a discussion that has been going on among my Messianic Jewish friends ever since I became a believer in Yeshua as Messiah.

As I said above I am thrill that this conversation is taking place and I hope the dialogue continues as more and more believers take the time to open their Bibles and reinvestigate the Old Testament and its implications upon the modern New Testament believer.

While as an outside to this conversation I have enjoyed the position of being the proverbial fly on the wall, reading, listening and watching as well-known and well-studied Christian leaders allow iron to sharpen iron. I wanted to throw a thought out for those discussing to consider as you work through the sacred texts to find the place where you stand concerning the Old Testament.

I would like to submit a viewpoint of a well-known series of verses from Galatians 3 to see if it helps you place the pieces of the Bible Old and New Testaments in their proper places in the puzzle so the final result is the clear picture the designer intended.

In Galatians 3:23-29 (TLV), we find the famous “schoolmaster” verses. (As a side note, please look up the word that is translated “schoolmaster,” because a proper definition aids in

proper interpretation.)

Now before faith came, we were being guarded under Torah—bound together until the coming faith would be revealed. Therefore the Torah became our guardian to lead us to Messiah, so that we might be made right based on trusting. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. For you are all sons of God through trusting in Messiah Yeshua. For all of you who were immersed in Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female—for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham’s seed—heirs according to the promise.

These verses tell us the Torah was given to guard us until we were led to Messiah and were made “right” by trusting. Verse 25 tells us that now that we have come to faith, we are no longer under the guardian, which is absolutely correct. We as believers are redeemed completely and only through faith in the atonement of Yeshua. The problem with the understanding of these verses is that most people discussing them are viewing them through the lens of “Can one be saved by legalistically observing Torah?” The answer to that question is made clear in the text: absolutely not. However, Torah was never a matter of observance, it was a matter of covenant. Torah was a covenant promise made by G-D to Israel. It was never about how to be saved! Israel was already saved from Egypt when they arrived at Mount Sinai. Torah was a covenant made by G-D with Israel to that Israel would through it lead people to Yeshua. Every commandment, judgment and statute was designed to point all those who witnessed Israel walk out the covenant towards the one who died for all mankind Jewish and non-Jewish.

Once those early Jewish believers came to faith in Messiah, they had found what they were looking for: redemption through the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. But their

finding the eternal treasure didn't complete their mission. They were to fulfill the Great Commission.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20, TLV).

Notice that the commission is go into all the world and teach all that was commanded until the end of the age. These words are similar to

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass" (Matt. 5:17-18).

The laws were not abolished or done away with it was the curse of the Law that was removed or nailed to the cross. In other words, the believers had followed their guardian to Yeshua and were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. But because they had now found their way does the purpose for the guardian end. I submit to you the answer is no emphatically no. Why? Because those who do not yet believe in Yeshua still need the guardian (The Torah) to lead them to Messiah.

As we read in Galatians 3:17-18, once G-D makes a covenant a new covenant does not cancel the previous covenant or make it ineffective:

"What I am saying is this: Torah, which came 430 years later, does not cancel the covenant previously confirmed by God, so as to make the promise ineffective. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise. But God has graciously given it to Abraham by means of a promise."

The purpose of the Torah was always so that Israel would be a

light to the nations and that Torah would lead Israel and the nations to Yeshua. As long as there are still people in Israel and nations who have not been led to Messiah, the Old Testament is still necessary, and Torah is still guarding and guiding people to Yeshua.