

Did the Torah (“Law”) Exist Before Moses & Mount Sinai?

The Spiritual & Eternal Nature of Torah

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DID THE TORAH (the laws, statutes, judgments, ordinances, precepts, commandments or, in brief, YHVH's instructions in the ways of righteousness) originate at Mount Sinai with the giving of the “law” to Moses as many Christians have been led to believe? If so, the implication follows that YHVH instituted “the law” as part of the “Old Covenant” agreement with ancient Israel, and that since Christians are no longer “under” the “Old Covenant” but are in the “New Covenant” dispensation, the Torah-law is no longer applicable to us today. Is this a correct line of reasoning?

It is the intent of this brief study to show the reader that the Torah (a Hebrew word that is translated as “law” into most English Bibles, but more correctly means “teachings, instruction, precepts” [*Strong's* H8451/TWOT 910d]) preexisted Moses and even preexisted the creation of this earth and that it is spiritual in nature and therefore exists outside of all the physical creation as well as time itself. In fact, we believe that the Word of YHVH Elohim, over-arches everything and is the very character and nature of YHVH himself and is the pathway of truth, righteousness and light which, if followed (obeyed) will lead humans to an eternal (never-ending) and spiritual relationship with YHVH Elohim (their Heavenly Father).

The Written and Living Torah

As we shall show below from the Scriptures, another term for *Torah* is “the Word of Elohim” of whom Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was the living or incarnate manifestation or the Word of Elohim made flesh. In other words, when we use the term *Torah* we are referring equally to the written Word of Elohim as found in the first five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy), which Scriptures refers to as “the Torah” (*Torah* is the Hebrew word that is translated as “law” in most English Bibles) as well to the Living Torah, which was and is Yeshua the Messiah who is the Word of Elohim in human form (John 1:1-4,14). If we profess to love YHVH-Yeshua, then it follows we will obey his written instructions in righteousness (i.e. the Torah) as he states in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my [Torah] commandments.”

The Torah (“Law”) of Elohim Is Spiritual

The Apostle Paul said that the Torah/law is spiritual (Rom 7:14). That which is spiritual is not physical, for it is of the spiritual or eternal realm in which YHVH dwells. It follows, logically, therefore, that the Torah predates the physical creation itself.

Scripture reveals that in the spiritual realm there are two spiritual entities: YHVH Elohim and Satan; YHVH is the source of all good, and the devil is the source of all evil. Paul declared that the Torah is holy, just and good (Rom 7:12). Numerous other places in both the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) state this, as well. Therefore, YHVH himself, as the originator of all that is good, *is* himself good, holy, righteous, just, loving, etc. Scripture also reveals that the end results of Torah-obedience is the fructification of these very attributes of YHVH in the life of the faithful resulting in a blessed and prosperous life physically and spiritually. We also know that Yeshua the Messiah is revealed to be the spiritual right arm of YHVH Elohim (Isa 53:1), and was YHVH manifested in flesh form (John 1:1-3,14), and being the fullness of the godhead in bodily form (Col 2:9) is representative of the very character and nature of YHVH Elohim. As such, Yeshua declared that he is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6), that he is the spiritual Light of the world (John 8:12) and that he is the only way to the Father in heaven (John 14:6).

Scripture reveals, as we will see, that these attributes of Yeshua—light, truth, life and the way to the Father

in Heaven—are the same benefits derived from Torah-obedience. So on a spiritual plane, Yeshua and Torah are synonymous, even as John said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim ... and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ... [he] was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world” (John 1:1,14,9).

What is truth and light, and how does that relate to the Torah and to Yeshua who is the Torah-Word of Elohim revealed to man in flesh form? Understanding this will help us to answer the question before us as to whether the Torah (law) as given to the Israelites pre-existed Moses and Mount Sinai.

What Is Truth?

Pilate, at the trial of Yeshua, asked the age-old question, “What is truth?” (John 18:38). In the Gospels, Yeshua defines truth in several ways. The Word of Elohim is truth (John 17:17), and he defines himself as the “way, truth and the life” (John 14:6). David equated truth with the Torah-law of YHVH (Ps 119:142,151). Scripture then goes on to equate YHVH’s Torah-law with *light* (Prov 6:23; Isa 8:20; see also Ps 19:8). The Word of YHVH is likened to a light illuminating our path and lamp unto our feet (Ps 119:105).

What else does Scripture say about spiritual light? The prophet Malachi refers to the Messiah as “the Sun of Righteousness” who will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal 4:2; see also Ezek 43:2 where the radiance of the sun upon the earth and the glory of Elohim are poetically juxtaposed). The Son of Man (another name for Messiah Yeshua) is described as having a countenance as bright as the sun in its strength (Rev 1:16). Scripture tells that YHVH Elohim is clothed in a garment of light (Ps 104:21) and his face radiates light (Pss 89:15; 90:8). Yeshua not only is called, but refers to himself as, the Light of the world, shining in the darkness (John 1:1–14; 8:12; 9:5). Spiritual light is the antithesis of spiritual darkness (Prov 4:18; Isa 5:20). Spiritual light reveals spiritual truth; light and truth are synonymous and originate from YHVH, the source of light (Ps 43:3). YHVH’s spiritual light illuminates man’s spiritual path (Ps 119:105) and leads one to YHVH’s exalted and spiritual hill or dwelling place (Ps 43:3). Yeshua, the Light of the world, is the way to the Father (John 14:6). The way of spiritual light and truth is straight (Is 42:16; 45:2; Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4–5; John 1:23; Matt 7:13–14). In their lives, Believers are to reflect the spiritual Light of Yeshua to the dark world around them (Acts 13:47; 1 Pet 2:9; Eph 5:8; 1 Thes 5:5; 1 John 1:7). People are attracted to spiritual light (Isa 49:6; 60:3). There is first spiritual darkness, which is pierced when the spiritual light shines through (Gen 1:2–3; 2 Cor 4:6; 2 Pet 1:19). Spiritual light produces a beautiful and full spectrum of spiritual fruitfulness in the Believer’s life (Eph 5:8–14; Gal 5:22–23). Believers are to be lights shining the light of truth on their dark surroundings (Matt 5:14–16).

The First Mention of Light In Scripture

To understand the Scriptural meaning of light we must go back to the very beginning where Scripture first mentions light in Genesis one. Here we read,

1 In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of Elohim moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And Elohim said, Let there be light; and there was light. 4 And Elohim saw the light, that it was good; and Elohim divided the light from the darkness. 5 And Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

We see that at the beginning of Elohim’s creative activities the earth was in a state of darkness and chaos (verse 2). His first creative act was to introduce light into that system of darkness and confusion (verse 3). What can we learn about the nature of this light from these few, terse statements? The word for *light* is the Hebrew word אור (*owr*) (*Strong’s* H216; *TWOT* 52a) which is the generic term that the Tanakh uses for *light*. It can refer to light in a general sense as in opposition to darkness (Gen 1:3), it can refer to figurative light as in opposition to figurative darkness (Isa 5:20), it can refer to daylight (Gen 1:3), the light given by the heavenly bodies (Isa 30:26), man-made lights such as the menorah in the Tabernacle (Num 4:9,16; 8:2), literal eyesight (Ps 38:10), the power of life over death (Ps 56:13), the light of Elohim’s face indicating his approval (Ps 89:15; Num 6:25), to truth (Ps 43:3), to the Word of Elohim (Ps 119:105; Isa 8:20), to YHVH’s Torah-law (Prov 6:23).

What Was the Nature of That First Light?

What was the nature of that first light YHVH created in Genesis one? Before the reader jumps to any conclusions,

consider this: The sun, moon and stars were not made until the fourth day (verse 14). So if the earth was not bathed in the light of the sun for the first three days, what was the source and nature of the light that covered the earth from day one to day three? This has puzzled Jewish commentators from time immemorial. Some reconcile this seeming Scriptural discrepancy by stating that Elohim *created* the physical luminaries on the first day, but did not *hang* or *suspend* them in the sky until the fourth day (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, p. 39 quoting the *Talmud* [*Chagigah* 12a]). This explanation still fails to answer the question concerning what was the light of the first three days and why did Elohim wait to “hang” the sun and moon until the fourth day, and how could the sun be created, yet not shine until the fourth day? Either it shined from day one or it did not. If it was the source of the original light, then why the statement about the sun and moon being made on day four?

Other rabbis have other explanations, which they derive from the spelling of the Hebrew word אור (*owr*). First, it is important to note that there was some type of physical light, as we know it, during the first three days, for the word for *night* is the Hebrew word לַיִל (*layil*, *Strong's* H3915, *TWOT* 1111), which derives from the root word לָיַל (*luwl*, *Strong's* H3833, *TWOT* 1094), which, according to *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew Lexicon*, refers to “a winding staircase” with the idea of “twisting, turning or winding” (p. 533a). What we see here is that *night* is described as a time when the earth *twists* on its axis *away* from the source of the light which from day one through three was not the sun, since the sun was not made until the fourth day of creation.

Complete/Full Light Versus Incomplete/Defective Light

As we have already noted, the Hebrew word for *light* as used in Genesis is spelled אור. Yet the first two times this same Hebrew word is used in verses 14 and 15 the word is spelled without the letter ו (i.e. אר). This anomaly does not come through in our English texts, yet its abbreviated spelling is full of spiritual significance, according to the Jewish sages who have been studying these passages for thousands of years. What does this mean? What we see here is a case of the *complete* or *full spelling* of a Hebrew word versus *the incomplete* or *defective spelling*. Since every word of Scripture is the Word of Elohim that man shall live by (Matt 4:4), since all Scripture is YHVH-breathed (2 Tim 3:16) and since every jot (or ך *yud*, which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) and every tittle (flourish or crown on a Hebrew letter) is inspired of YHVH and will not pass away (Matt 5:18) we would be wise to examine the spelling of these Hebrew words to see if we can learn anything about *the light* that shone on this earth before the creation of the sun and moon.

According to Rabbi Michael Munk, in his book, *The Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet*, “In many words, the presence or absence of a ו [*vav*] has no effect on pronunciation, but the Biblical exegesis often finds a special meaning implied by the *vav*’s presence or absence. Spelling a word in its complete or full form ... signifies totality and integrity; spelling it in its incomplete or defective form ... indicates deficiency or imperfection.

“When a word appears once in its complete form and once in its incomplete form in the same context, it indicates contrast.

“יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם ... וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֹת, *Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heaven. ... And they shall serve as luminaries* (Gen 1:14-15). The first time it appears, the word for luminaries [מְאֹרֹת] is spelled doubly defective (that is, with both the *vav* of the root and the *vav* of plurality omitted – מְאֹרֹת). The second time, however, the root ו [*vav*] is in its place, but the plural ו [*vav*] is not.

“This is expounded to imply that the original light – אור – was withdrawn and reserved for the righteous in the future. The missing light was replaced by the radiation of luminaries. In the first verse, the root of מְאֹרֹת, luminaries – אור, *light* – is incomplete, without a ו [*vav*]. This teaches us that the light emanating from celestial bodies is not equal to the richness and purity of the primeval light; it has diminished power, reflecting our own imperfect state. In the second verse, which expresses the luminaries’ fulfillment of the calling to give light to the earth, the root אור, *light*, is complete for their mission to illuminate the earth is completely carried out. Although they no longer have their original light, they carry out their mission to the best of their ability” (p. 100).

With regard to the spelling of the Hebrew word for *light* in Genesis 1:14-16, ArtScroll’s *The Kestenbaum Edition Tikkun* confirming Rabbi Munk, states, “The word מְאֹרֹת [*ma-owr*, *lights*] is related to אור [*owr*], *light*. It refers to something that gives light, such as a lamp or the sun. We would expect the plural form to be spelled מְאֹרֹת, with the first ו coming from the basic word and the second ו as part of the plural suffix וֹת. However when the vowel *cholem* (ו) appears twice in a row in the same word, the Torah usually omits one ו (*Masores HaMassorah*, *dibbur* 5). This explains the spelling לְמְאֹרֹת of verse 15, without the second ו. The Midrash [rabbinic commentary on the Torah] explains why the first ו is also absent in מְאֹרֹת (verse 14) and הַמְאֹרֹת (verse 16). Of the two heavenly

bodies, only the sun's major purpose is to give light. Although the moon lights up the night sky, that is not its primary function. 'Why did God create the moon? So that the Jewish nation would have a sign when to begin each new month. To teach this lesson, the Torah spells מְאֹרֶת without a ם (indicating that אֹרֶךְ, *light*, is not necessarily the moon's main purpose) (*Pesikta Rabbasi* 15:1).

What (or Who) Was That Complete and Supernal Light?

So, what was this light that shone on the earth for three days that was not derived from the sun? To answer this can we find any other examples in Scripture of a supernatural or supernal light that shines forth which is un-derived from any physical astral luminaries? Assuredly yes! From the first book of Scripture we now jump forward to the last book of YHVH's Word—the Book of Revelation—where we read of Yeshua the Messiah in the New Jerusalem.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of Elohim did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. (Rev 21:23)

Is it therefore possible that the light that will shine in Heavenly New Jerusalem, which will be the glorified Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, is the same light that shone on the earth during the first three days of creation? After all, Scripture tells us that, in his glorified state, Yeshua's face shines like the sun in its full strength (Rev 1:16) and we read in several passages in the Apostolic Scriptures that Yeshua is the Light of the world.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Elohim. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was **the light of men. And the light shines in darkness;** and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from Elohim, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, **to bear witness of the Light,** that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent **to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.** He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of Elohim, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of Elohim. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14) (emphasis added)

Then in John 8:12, Yeshua himself speaking declares (See also John 9:5),

Then spoke Yeshua again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world:** he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (emphasis added)

The apostolic writers recognized Yeshua as the spiritual Light of the world.

In whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest **the light of the glorious gospel of Messiah,** who is the image of Elohim, should shine unto them. (2 Cor 4:4, emphasis added)

For Elohim, who commanded **the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of Elohim in the face of Yeshua Messiah.** (2 Cor 4:6, emphasis added)

Wherefore he says, Awake you that sleep and arise from the dead, and Messiah **shall give you light.** (Eph 5:14, emphasis added)

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, **that Elohim is light, and in him is no darkness at all.** (1 John 1:5, emphasis added)

But if we walk in the light, **as he is in the light,** we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Yeshua Messiah his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7, emphasis added)

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and **the true light now shines.** (1 John 2:8, emphasis added)

Please note that in our last passage above (1 John 2:8) the Apostle John states that “the **true light** now shines.” The word *true* is the Greek word *alethinos* (*Strong's* H228) meaning “true in the sense of real or genuine, the reality of a thing as opposed to that which is merely a copy or an antetypical similitude” (*The Expanded Vines Expository*

Dictionary of New Testament Words in its definition of this word compares the earthly wilderness Tabernacle as the weak and earthly antetype of the true or genuine heavenly Tabernacle). What John is speaking of here is the true, perfect and complete light in comparison to the incomplete and defective light of the sun and moon.

Yeshua the Messiah Is That Complete and Full Light of the World!

Dear reader, let us at last connect the dots of all that we have been presenting to you above. Can you not see that as Yeshua was the full, perfect and complete Light that will shine in the New Jerusalem, he was likewise the full, perfect and complete light that shone on the earth prior to the creation of the sun, moon and stars on the fourth day (Gen 1:14)? When he stated that he was the light of the world he meant just that! Think of the implications of this. Indeed Yeshua was more than a carpenter! He was literally the face of YHVH Elohim shining with a fuller and more complete light than the sun ever could, bathing this earth not only in physical light, but the spiritual light of truth and righteousness. In that spiritual glory-light there was not even the slightest hint of the darkness of a shadow. Every aspect of creation radiated and reverberated in living color under the golden rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Can you imagine that? That is what you as a Believer, if your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, have as an eternal inheritance waiting for you in the New Heavenly Jerusalem.

What Became of the Original, Supernal Light of Creation?

Now that we know *what* that primordial Light was, or more correctly *Who* that Light was, let us now ask the question, *where* did that primordial Light of Genesis 1:1-5 go? The rabbis speak of it as being “hidden” or “stored away” as we have noted above. Messianic Jewish Torah scholar Avi Ben Mordechai gives some insights into where the primordial spiritual Light was “stored” or “hidden.” In his book he writes,

Biblical truth reveals that all light is birthed through darkness and that true salvation comes when we are touched by Divine Light in the darkest recesses of our hearts. This is why the word *light*—אור (*owr*)—appears five times on the first day of creation [Gen. 1:3-5], because it represents the five books of the Torah [Genesis to Deuteronomy] that bring us light and life.... Additionally, this is also why in [Genesis] 1:4, *The Light* (את-האור) has a gematria of 613 hinting at the number of the commandments in the Torah and why the last letters of the expression, ‘that the light was good’ (כי-תוב) את-האור intimates the word *Brit* (ברית), which refers to the covenant of the Torah and circumcision (*Messiah Vol. 3*, p. 117).

The Baal HaTurim, the Medieval Jewish sage, confirms one of Ben Mordechai's statements above and adds an additional insight. On Genesis 1:4, he writes in his Torah commentary,

The gematria [the numerical values of the Hebrew letters] of this phrase [*the light*/את האור] is equal to that of בתורה, *in the Torah*, and comes to a total of 613 (the number of *mitzvot* [commandments] in the Torah).” [On the phrase,] *That the light was good*, he writes, “The final letters of these words בירת, [can be rearranged to spell] covenant ... (p. 11).

But why was the original supernal light of Genesis one hidden away and replaced by the sun, moon and stars?

Rashi, the preeminent Jewish Torah commentator of the last one thousand years states: “The Holy One, blessed be He, perceived that it was improper for [the wicked] to make use of the [primeval] light, so He hid it for the benefit of the righteous **in the time to come** (Rashi) [See Rashi's commentary on Gen 1:4]. (emphasis added)

Where did he hide the light? asked Rabbi Dov Ber. He answered: The great light of creation was the light of Torah. At first, the light was available to all, but God saw that few people are worthy of enjoying it, so **He clothed it in the Torah**, and there it remains hidden. (emphasis added)

We bemoan the lack of that primeval light that made the sun pale by its spiritual brilliance, and long for the promised day when it will glow for us again. But now it is gone. The light is there. It is available. It awaits the diligent, indefatigable efforts of the righteous to unearth it from between the lines and letters and wisdom of the Torah. The righteous of the future—all ages of man—**can find the light in Torah**, for the Torah is its embodiment (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Commentary*, pp. xxxi-xxxii). (emphasis added)

It should hopefully be clear now that Elohim took the supernatural Light of creation and hid it away in the written Word, called the Torah. From John 1:1-14 Believers in Yeshua the Messiah recognize that he is the Word of Elohim in the flesh (incarnate) or personified. It is interesting to note that on the fourth day of creation the sun,

moon and the lesser lights were created. It was also in approximately the year four thousand, after the creation of the earth, that Messiah Yeshua, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2) left his position of glory and of full and undiminished light and power in heaven and came to this earth, diminished himself (Phil 2:5-8) to be born into frail human form to become the Torah-Word of Elohim in the flesh after which he would return to his full and undiminished form to the Father of lights in heaven (Jas 1:17). There Yeshua is adorned in garments of pure light (Ps 104:2) where he resides as an Everlasting Light (Isa 60:19-20), where he dwells in the light and glory of heaven (1Tim 6:16), as the pure Light of truth (1John 1:5), where his face radiates as the sun in its full strength (Rev 1:16).

Defining the Word *Torah*

A comprehensive grasp of Torah, both with the head and heart, is essential if one is to not only understand the heart of YHVH Elohim, but to understand the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith, for a love and comprehension of Torah is to grasp with the heart and mind the very fabric, foundation and bedrock of the Apostolic Scriptures or B'rit Chadashah, commonly referred to in Christian circles as the "New Testament." But what does the word *Torah* actually mean? Hebrew is a rich language. A single word can have a multiplicity of connotations at all levels of human comprehension and experience. Spiritual implications beyond the ken of human understanding can be found therein.

For nearly 2000 years since the time the Christian church departed from its Hebrew roots (in the early to mid second century of the Common Era) the Hebrew word *Torah* (*Strong's* H8451, *TWOT* 910b) has been translated in the writings of Christian theologians and in all of the most common English Bible's as *law*. Is this an accurate translation of the Hebrew word *Torah*? Does it capture the true essence, heart and meaning of the word? This is an important question to answer.

If we were to ask you to technically define any English word, you could avail yourself of a dictionary that should give you the precise meaning of that word. In any college-level dictionary a word will have a primary meaning, after which follows on average of three to five additional definitions for that word. Each subsequent definition typically is broader in scope and less literal than the first definition given. Should we, for example, ask you to define the word *circle*, would you give me dictionary definition number five ("a cycle") or six ("a group of persons sharing a common interest"), or would you give me the dictionary's primary definition: "a ring or a halo"? Yet Christian theologians and Bible translators for nearly two thousand years having been defining Torah using *not* its primary, but its *fourth* or *fifth* Hebrew definition. This is either dishonest or ignorant scholarship or perhaps *translation bias*. Which one? You be the judge. But history bears out the fact that the "Christian church" has the blood of more Jews on its hands than any other religious group on the planet. The facts ought to speak for themselves. The church has had a perennial grudge against (putting it mildly), if not hatred for the Jews and their Hebrew Scriptures (whom the early church fathers derisively referred to as the "Old" Testament connoting that which is worn out, no longer valid or applicable and i.e. passé) since the second-century. A cursory glance at the writings of the earliest church fathers writing in the early to middle part of the second-century verifies what we have stated (see Ignatius [ca. A.D. 50-115] in his *Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, chap. 10; *Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians*, chap. 4; *The Epistle of Barnabas* [of Alexandria, Egypt], chapters 2, 13 and 14 [ca. A.D. 100-120]; Irenaeus [ca. A.D. 120-202] *Against Heresies*, Book 4, chap. 16.5; Justin Martyr in *Dialogue of Justin Martyr With Trypho the Jew*, chap. 11 [ca. A.D. 160]).

The primary meaning of the word *Torah* (תּוֹרָה) (*Strong's* H8451, *TWOT* 910b), according to the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* is "teaching" (and not "law"). *Strong's Concordance* lists the meaning of *Torah* in this order: "a precept, a statute." *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon* defines *Torah* as "direction, instruction, law" (in that order). According to *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*,

Torah signifies primarily *direction, teaching, instruction* (Prov 13:4). It is derived from the verb *yarah* [יָרָה] [meaning] 'to project, point out' (3384) and hence to point out or teach. The law of [Elohim] is that which points out or indicates His will to man ... Seen against its background of the verb *yarah*, it becomes clear that *Torah* is much more than law or a set of rules. Torah is not restriction or hindrance, but instead the means whereby one can reach a goal or ideal.

The *TWOT* similarly states,

The word *Torah* means basically *teaching* whether it is the wise man instructing his son or [Elohim] instructing Israel. The wise give insight into all aspects of life so that the young may know how to conduct themselves and to live a long blessed life (Prov 3:1f). So too [Elohim], motivated by love, re-

veals to man basic insights into how to live with each other and how to approach [Elohim]. Through the law [Elohim] shows his interest in all aspects of man's life which is to be lived under his direction and care. Law of [Elohim] stands parallel to [the] word of [YHVH] to signify that law is the revelation of [Elohim's] will (e.g. Isa 1:10).

As already noted, the word *Torah* originates from the root word *yarab* יָרָב (Strong's H3384) which means "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, to teach." Another cognate (related word) of the word *Torah* is the Hebrew word *moreh* (Strong's H4175) which means "teacher or archer (as in one who shoots at a target)." *Moreh* derives from the same Hebrew root word, *yarab*, as does *Torah*. Therefore, when one is walking according to the Torah of YHVH Elohim, one is walking in the light of YHVH's truth, which is hitting the mark of righteousness. Likewise, YHVH's teachings or instructions are a river of life flowing from his throne aimed at hitting the mark of truth and righteousness. By contrast, the Hebrew word for sin is *chata* (Strong's H2298) which means to *miss the mark*, i.e., transgressing the Torah as 1 John 3:4 states, "Sin is the transgression of the Torah."

Here is what Scripture 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 fulfill. (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. (1 John 2:4)

We have just given you the technical meaning of the word *Torah*. But what is the general, colloquial or common meaning of the word? It connotes different meanings to different people. In its strictest sense the Torah refers to the first five books of YHVH's Scripture: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, which are referred to as the books of Moses since he was YHVH's instrument for putting them into written form. Christians refer to these five books as *The Pentateuch* while Jews call them *The Chumash*.

In the Jewish religion, the term *Torah* can also refer to the entire Tanakh (Hebrew Scriptures) as well as the Jewish rabbinical commentaries (called the Oral Torah) on the Chumash (e.g. *Mishna*, *Gemara* and *Talmud*). While some aspects of these works may be enlightening from an historical perspective, we do not view the Oral Torah as inspired or indispensable for the understanding of Scripture.

When we use the term *Torah* we are referring to the Chumash or Pentateuch. We believe that this is the *Written Torah* while the Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) being the Word of Elohim in flesh-form is the *Living Torah* (John 1:1-4; 1 John 1:1-3; Rev 19:13).

The Whole of the Torah Can Be Summed Up In One Sentence

The Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish writings contain a number of phrases which express the quintessential essence of the Torah. One of these best-known passages naming several of these phrases is in the Jewish Talmud:

"Rabbi Simlai said, '613 commandments were given to Moses—365 negative *mitzvot* (commandments), the same as the number of days in the year, and 248 positive *mitzvot*, the same as the number of parts in a man's body. David came and reduced them to eleven (Ps 15), Isaiah to six (Isa 33:15), Micah to three (Micah 6:8), Isaiah again to two—"Observe and do righteousness" (Isa 56:1). Then Amos came and reduced them to one, "Seek me and live" (Amos 5:4)—as did Habakkuk, "The righteous one will live by his trusting [or by faith] (Habakkuk 2:4)" (*Makkot* 23b-24a, abridged) (*Jewish New Testament Commentary*, by David Stern, p. 565).

We see some of these same Torah summation-type statements in the Apostolic Scriptures. For example, the phrase, "the just shall live by faith" is found in three passages of the Apostolic Scriptures (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11;

Heb 10:38); In Leviticus 19:18 we find the phrase, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” which is the summation of the last five of the famous Ten Commandments, which in itself is a summation of any of the 613 Torah commandments that relate to human relationships. We see both Yeshua in his famous “Golden Rule” passage of Matthew 7:12, “Therefore all things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Paul echoes this concept in Romans 13:8, “Love does not do harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fullness of the Torah.” Love is the foundation and quintessential concept behind the Torah-law of Elohim. Yeshua states this in Mark 12:29-31,

And Yeshua answered him, The first of all the [Torah] commandments is, Hear, O Israel; YHVH our Elohim is one Master: And thou shalt love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love your neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Love must be the motive behind all our righteous deeds or else our actions count for nothing (1 Cor 13:1-13). The concept of love and the keeping of YHVH's Torah-law are codependent actions. One cannot exist without the other. John, in his epistle, discusses this idea at length in 1 John 2:7-11; 3:11-24; 4:7-2 where he states that “Elohim is love” (4:8, 16) and that one's love of Elohim and man is linked to obedience to the Torah-commandments (2:7-9; 3:11-18). As YHVH first loved us, we should love our fellow man (4:7-11), in word, deed and in (Torah) truth (3:18). This relates to Yeshua's admonition to his disciples in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my Torah-commandments.”

Specific Examples of the Torah-Law In the Pre-Mount Sinai World

Not only have we seen above that YHVH's Torah is spiritual and eternal in nature in that it pre-dates and will post-date man and the physical creation (Matt 5:18), but we now give specific examples from Scripture that show that prior to Exodus 20 when the Torah was given in codified form to the nation of Israel YHVH had revealed to men the knowledge of the Torah, expected them to obey it, and that righteous men indeed did obey it. Scripture defines sin as “the transgression of the Torah” (1 John 3:4). Men in the pre-Mosaic world knew what sin was and that YHVH expected them to follow his laws.

Noah Was A Preacher of Righteousness (2 Pet 2:2-5)

- Scripture defines righteousness as all the commandments of YHVH (Ps 119:172).
- Genesis 6:3-5 states that the inhabitants of the pre-flood world did evil continually. It is self evident from Scripture that what YHVH defines as evil is that which is contrary to his will which is equivalent to the truth of his commandments or the paths of righteousness as defined by Torah.

Abraham Kept the Torah

In Genesis 18:19 we read, “For I [YHVH] know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep **the way** of YHVH, to do **justice** and **judgment**; that YHVH may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken.”

Let's examine the three bold words above:

- ☞ **the way** is the Hebrew word *derech* (Strong's H1870) and is used in the following Scriptures:
 - Psalms 119:1, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way [derech], who walk in the law [Torah] of YHVH.
 - Psalms 119:32, “I will run the way [derech] of the commandments ...”
 - Psalms 119:33, “Teach me, O YHVH, the way [derech] of they statutes ...”
- ☞ **justice** is the Hebrew word *tsedaqah* (Strong's H6666) meaning “righteousness” and is used in the following Scriptures:
 - Psalms 119:172, “... for all they commandments are righteousness...”
- ☞ **judgments** is the Hebrew word *mishpatim* (Strong's H4941) meaning “ordinances” referring to YHVH's moral and ethical laws as embodied in the last six of the ten commandments which teach righteousness in one's business and personal relationships. Examples of its usage in Scripture are:
 - Psalms 119:7, “... [YHVH's] righteous judgments [*mishpat*].”

- Psalms 119:30, “I have chosen the way [derech] of truth: thy judgments [mishpat] have I laid before me.”
- Psalms 119:160, “Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments [mishpat] endures forever.”

Genesis 26:5 states that, “Because that Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my **commandments**, my **statutes**, and my **laws**.”

Again, let’s examine the three underlined words:

- ☞ **commandments** is the Hebrew word *mitzvot* (*Strong’s* H4687) meaning “law, ordinances, precepts, good deeds or works by fulfilling the commands of YHVH.” It is used in the following Scriptures:
 - Deuteronomy 6:1 “Now these are the commandments [mitzvot], the statutes, and the judgments, which YHVH your Elohim commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it.”
 - Deuteronomy 6:32 “And it [Torah] shall be your righteousness, if you observe to do all these commandments [mitzvot] before YHVH our Elohim, as he has commanded us.” (See also 7:11; Pss 119:10, 21, 35, 47, 61, 115, 127, 143, 151, 172)
- ☞ **statutes** is the Hebrew word *chuqah* (*Strong’s* H2708) meaning “decrees” and are YHVH’s body of decrees and statutes that have no apparent explanations or which are difficult to understand. (*Ordinances* is the Hebrew word *choq* [*Strong’s* 2706] and is the masculine version of *chaqah*.) This word is used in the following Scriptures:
 - Psalms 119:5, 8, 12, 16, 23, 33, 48, 54, 68, 71, 80, 83, 112, 117, 118, 124, 135, 145, 155, 171
- ☞ **laws** is the Hebrew word *Torah* (*Strong’s* H8451) meaning “instructions” and is from *yarah* (*Strong’s* H3384) which means “to project, issue; to point out, to show, to aim an arrow toward a target or to hit a target.”

Examples of Specific Torah Commands In Scripture Prior to Mount Sinai

- ☞ The Sabbath: Genesis 2:2–3; Exodus 16
- ☞ The annual appointed-time feasts of YHVH: Genesis 1:14 The word *seasons* in this verse is *moedim* meaning “appointed times,” which is a clear scriptural term referring to YHVH’s feasts.
- ☞ Passover (one of YHVH’s annual appointed times): Exodus 10
- ☞ Unleavened Bread (one of YHVH’s annual appointed times): Exodus 12:14–20; 13:3, 6–7, 10
- ☞ Murder was prohibited: Genesis 4:8–11, 15 (Cain’s mark enforces the law against murder); 9:5–6
- ☞ Sexual perversion and debauchery were prohibited: Genesis 6:2; 9:22
- ☞ YHVH revealed the dietary laws of clean and unclean meats: Genesis 7:2
- ☞ Eating of blood was forbidden: Genesis 9:4
- ☞ Offerings of the first fruits of our labors (tithing) to YHVH was known and observed: Genesis 4:3–4; 14:17–20; 28:22; Hebrews 7:2
- ☞ Sodomy (homosexuality) was sin: Genesis 13:13; 18:16–19:25
- ☞ Rape was a sin: Genesis 34 (Dinah by Shechem)
- ☞ Adultery was sin: Genesis 26:9–10; 20:6; 39:7–9; 39:7–9
- ☞ Theft was a sin: Genesis 44:8
- ☞ Incest was a sin: Genesis 35:22; 1 Chronicles 5:1
- ☞ Lying was a sin: Genesis 3:14; 20:9
- ☞ Coveting was a sin: Genesis 3:6, 16–19
- ☞ Consecration of the firstborn was required: Exodus 13:2, 12–15

Not only should it be now clear to the reader that the Torah predates Moses at Mount Sinai, but that it is spiritual, and as such, predates the physical creation, it is a reflection of the very heart, mind and will of YHVH. It is his will for man, it is the light of his spiritual truth shining into the spiritual darkness of a sin-filled world to show

man the way of truth, blessing, justice, righteousness, love and life. By following the Torah, both the Written Torah and by having faith in and following Yeshua, the Living Torah, man can know the way to the Father in heaven and be assured of spiritual or eternal life. Additionally, Yeshua stated in Matthew 5:18 that, "Till heaven and earth pass, one *yud* [the smallest letter in the Hebrew Alphabet] or one tittle [Hebrew: *tagin* meaning "the slightest pen stroke or crown on a Hebrew letter] shall in no wise pass from the Torah, till all be fulfilled." Have heaven and earth passed away? If so, then those who say that the Torah is no longer relevant to men perhaps have a valid argument when they say that the "law of Elohim has been done away."

