

Does Grace Exclude the Torah?

Are Grace and Torah Compatible?

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In recent generations Christianity has come to generally believe and teach that grace has replaced the Torah, or as they would call it, “the Law.” But is this idea accurate? Or, does this idea have any substance according to what we find in Scripture? As we examine Scripture in this teaching, we will see that one does not exclude the other. Grace does not exclude the Torah. And, Torah does not exclude grace. In fact, the two are not only compatible, but both are necessary for a victorious life!

First, let us define what each one of these is according to Scripture.

“Torah” is the Hebrew word תּוֹרָה – “torah” which means “instruction.” This comes from the Hebrew root word יָרָה – “yarah” which means “to hit the mark.” When a person aims at following the instructions of our heavenly Father, this is the essence of what Torah is and means.

“Grace” is the Hebrew word חֵן – “chen” which means “grace, favor or kindness.” This word comes from the Hebrew root word חָנַן – “chanan” which means “to bestow traits in the sense of increasing good qualities or goodness.” When a person receives חֵן he is receiving goodness that he does not really deserve from another.

As we examine Scripture in this study let us keep these definitions in mind so that our understanding of what Scripture is teaching us can be understood properly the way that YHWH desires for us to understand it; in this case to be able to see the importance of having both of these in one’s life.

Ya’aqov (James) 1:21-25

21 Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect Torah, the Torah of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

Please note that historically this letter that Ya'aqov wrote is reportedly the earliest writing of the Brit Chadasha (New Testament). There are several things of great importance to us contained in the above passage. We are admonished to stop all those things that are of a wicked nature. And according to Ya'aqov how do we do this? By being a doer of the word. What is the word? It is the Torah! Only in this way will such a person will be blessed.

If a person continues to live in his filthiness as defined by Torah which is YHWH's standard of measure, then he cannot be blessed, nor can he be saved. It is not the written Torah which saves a person, but rather it is the Torah made flesh, the Word made flesh which has made salvation available to us. But if a man is not a doer of that Torah, then does he love Mashiach Yeshua? No, he does not. Yeshua taught us that if we love Him, then we will obey His commandments. What are His commandments? Torah!

Luqa (Luke) 16:17

"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Torah to fail."

Of course there are those who teach that the Torah will not fail, but rather that Messiah will simply fulfill it all and thus release us from having to do it. The ridiculousness of such an idea can barely be expressed in words.

Matithyah (Matthew) 5:17

"Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to verify."

Notice that Yeshua taught us that He did not come to abolish the Torah. Yet the very idea that some attempt to put upon the idea that He fulfilled it is in effect abolishing it. The principle that Yeshua is teaching us in this passage is quite simple: He came to verify the one true Torah. Man had added so many things to YHWH's Torah that they had effectively abolished it in favor of their own rules, standards and traditions. But Yeshua came to elevate the Torah back to its rightful place so that we could see once again what the Torah really looked like. Why? We needed to be able to see, know, and hear the Torah in order to be able to obey it, in order to be able to hear and obey His Voice, without which we cannot have eternal life. We do not earn eternal life by obeying His Torah, His Voice, but we cannot have eternal life without obeying His Torah, His Voice either! It is exactly at this point that grace enters into the picture as we will see shortly.

Yochanan (John) 15:11

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

What needs to be in us? What needs to be in us is the love of Yeshua and our obedience to His commandments, the Torah. We need to be able to hear and obey His Voice. When we do, then His joy can fill us completely, it can be made full in us. This is not possible without obedience to His Voice.

2nd Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to Elohim as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

What is the most accurate way to handle the truth of YHWH our Elohim? By obeying it!

Romans 10:4

For Mashiach is the end of the Torah for righteousness to everyone who believes.

There are many who point to this verse and teach that Shaul taught that Yeshua brought the Torah of YHWH to an end. But is this handling the word of truth accurately? No! Why? Even in the Greek text this idea is not present. The Greek word for “end” is *telos* which means “to set out for a definite point or goal.” So, what Shaul was actually teaching us was that Yeshua is the whole point of the Torah. Furthermore, he was teaching us that Yeshua is the goal set before us. We are to become like Him! He kept the Torah perfectly. Are you keeping the Torah perfectly yet? Then keep striving towards that goal, to that end!

2nd Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is inspired by the Spirit and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 that the man of Elohim may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Please note that the phrase “all Scripture” can only refer to what is commonly referred to as the Old Testament (Tanak) as the New Testament did not yet exist. Notice that the Scripture, the Tanak, trains us to walk in righteousness. How? The Tanak, where the Torah is found, trains us by teaching us what is right and good in the eyes of YHWH and what is sin in His eyes. Only YHWH has the right as our Creator to define what is sin and what is righteousness. Righteousness is obeying His Voice and sin is disobeying His Voice.

Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Torah.

In most English Bibles instead of using the proper term “Torah,” we often find the word “Law” instead. This wrong use of words leads one to think wrongly about the loving instructions from our heavenly Father. Please note that one who obeys the law is not under the law, one who disobeys the law is under the law and subject to the law. Let us illustrate this idea.

When one is driving on the highway, and he sees a sign which has on it the speed limit, he is expected to stay within those posted bounds or limits. If he does not, he is subject to the law. His freedoms are in jeopardy. As long as he is within those bounds he is not subject to the law. In fact, it is against the law for an officer to stop him. He is free. So it is with the Law (Torah) of YHWH; if one walks in the Spirit (stays within the Law; obeys it) he is not under the Law.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Mashiach was raised from the dead through the glory of the Abba YHWH, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Before Mashiach Yeshua came and before one comes to Him through repentance, we lived in death and disobedience to His instructions. When we come to Him and He renews our life, then we can walk in that newness of life by and through obedience to Him, we hear and obey His Voice (Torah).

Romans 6:6

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

When one dies to the old life and the old ways, this means that he has died to sin. Therefore, he is no longer to live his life obeying the lusts of the sinful ways, but he is to walk in the newness of life that YHWH has given him through Mashiach Yeshua. He is no longer subject to the penalty of the law because he has been given a new life, a new beginning.

Romans 7:6

But now we have been released from the Torah, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

What are we released from? We have been released from the penalty of our Torah breaking. What bound us? It was our sin, our breaking of His Torah instructions. How do we walk in the newness of His Spirit? We do this by hearing and obeying His Voice, which is by faith.

Romans 7:7

What shall we say then? Is the Torah sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Torah; for I would not have known about coveting if the Torah had not said, "You shall not covet."

How can I know that I am within the speed limit law if it is not posted conspicuously? Once it is posted and I see it then I am either affirmed or condemned by my own actions. So it is with the Torah (Law) of YHWH. We are either under the penalty of the Torah because of one's Torah breaking life. Or, one is blessed by YHWH because he is living in loving obedience to His Voice, part of which is recorded in the Torah.

Notice what YHWH says through the prophet Yirmeyah will happen in the latter days, which seems to have clearly dawned upon us.

Ivrim (Hebrews) 10:16

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,” says YHWH; “I will put My Torah upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them,”

Notice that YHWH clearly states that He will one day write His Torah upon our hearts and minds. Also, it is important and instructive to note that the writer to the Ivrim is quoting this passage indicating to us that those days had begun to happen when he wrote this. It is still happening and it seems to be nearing a culmination of that process.

The point of this is that the Torah is important to us today as YHWH is writing it upon our hearts and minds. A person who rejects Torah is rejecting this work of YHWH, thus rejecting his own entrance into His kingdom and eternal life.

Romans 7:12-14

12 So then, the Torah is qodesh (holy), and the commandment is qodesh and righteous and good.

13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

14 For we know that the Torah is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

Notice that Shaul clearly teaches us that the Torah is good and holy and righteous. Did this Torah cause his death? Did this Torah cause our death? No! What caused his death and our deaths is the reality that we broke the Torah, we sinned. When a person sins, breaks Torah, then death follows. We see this in the sacrificial system because when there is sin, then something must die. Therefore, YHWH put in place instructions that we might substitute an animal for our sin. But this did not really do the task, but only further highlighted our own sin and our own inability to do anything about it. Thus, Mashiach came and paid the price for our sin. It is our sin, our breaking of His Torah, that resulted in and caused His death.

Romans 3:31

Do we then nullify the Torah through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Torah.

Faith and grace do not do away with, nor nullify His Torah! We need to listen to what Scripture says and reject the ideas of man which do not agree with His word!

Romans 2:13

for not the hearers of the Torah are just before YHWH, but the doers of the Torah will be justified.

So where does grace fit into this? We are born under the penalty of our Torah breaking, we are born sinners! As such we cannot keep the Torah, not until we are born from above, born of the Spirit. Then we are in and under grace. It is at that moment and not before, that we may freely choose to either obey or not to obey YHWH's Word, the Torah (Law). As with the speed limit we can choose to either obey or disobey. Until we disregard the speed limit enough times then we will lose the possibility of obedience for we will no longer have a license to drive and in extreme cases be put in prison unable to move freely about.

1st Timothy 1:8-9

8 But we know that the Torah is good, if one uses it lawfully,

9 realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the Shabbat breaker and sinners, for the irreverent and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers

A person who lives a righteous life does not need any laws to govern his actions or life. It is the person who does not live his life in a righteous manner that needs instructions on how to live a life that is righteous.

Once again note that the Torah is good!

Yochanan Aleph (1st John) 3:4

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness (Torahlessness).

These verses show us that we must be keepers of the Torah. Following YHWH's Divine instructions on the outside and not from the heart is not being under grace and is legalistic. This is what Yeshua chastised the Pharisees for doing. If one lives apart from the Torah, doing whatever one's heart desires, that is licentiousness, which is where we find the vast majority of those who claim to be Christians today.

Romans 10:4

For Mashiach is the goal of the Torah for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Is Mashiach your goal? If He is then this means that the Torah is also your goal!

Galatians 5:13-14

13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

***14 For the whole Torah is fulfilled in one word, in the statement,
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."***

What is an opportunity for the flesh? An opportunity for the flesh is anything that leads one into sin or Torah breaking. Our freedom in Mashiach is not to do this! Our freedom in Mashiach is to lead us into opportunities to serve one another.

Ya'akov (James) 2:10

Guilty of one point of the Torah, guilty of all.

This is something to do: ACTION!

Everything in the Torah (Law) points to Mashiach. When a person obeys the Torah they are obeying Mashiach! To disobey the Torah is to disobey Mashiach. You cannot have grace without the Torah and you cannot keep the Torah without grace.

Let us never be found practicing lawlessness or Torahlessness! Let us be found to be walking uprightly before YHWH our Elohim through the love of Mashiach in our lives, emulating His life and walk, who perfectly obeyed the Father in heaven in every aspect possible. Let us strive to do likewise, always!

ABBA YHWH, give us an extra measure of grace that we might walk in Your Spirit obeying Your Voice and keeping Your Torah; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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