

The Last Torah Portion before Yom Teruah:

Here is a very short summary of this Torah Portion from Chabad:

*"The Parshah of Nitzavim includes some of the most fundamental principles of **the Jewish faith**:*

*The **unity of Israel**: "You stand today, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d: your **heads**, your **tribes**, your **elders**, your **officers**, and **every Israelite man**; your **young ones**, your **wives**, the **stranger** in your gate; from your **wood-hewer** to your **water-drawer**."*

*The **future redemption**: Moses warns of the exile and **desolation** of the Land that will result if Israel abandons G-d's laws, but then he prophesies that in the end, "You will return to the L-rd your G-d . . . If your outcasts shall be at the ends of the heavens, from there will the L-rd your G-d gather you . . . and bring you into the Land which your fathers have possessed."*

*The **practicality of Torah**: "For the mitzvah which I command you this day, it is not beyond you, nor is it remote from you. It is **not in heaven** . . . It is not across the sea . . . Rather, it is **very close** to you, in your **mouth**, in your **heart**, that you may **do it**."*

***Freedom of choice**: "I have set before you life and goodness, and death and evil: in that I command you this day to love G-d, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments . . . Life and death I have set before you, blessing and curse. And you shall choose **life**." - http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3078/jewish/Nitzavim-in-a-Nutshell.htm*

Within this Torah Portion is the incredible statement from Adonai, that **He** will at some time circumcise the hearts of the Jewish people! I repeat He will do it, not them!

Deut 30:6 "Then ADONAI your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, so that you will love ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your being, and thus you will live."

How will God do this? I believe through teaching them; through their experiences – the blessings and the cursings; through both joy and tribulation and most crucially through the Tanakh!

Note also in this prophecy that Adonai states that: "Then ADONAI your God will give you more than enough in everything you set out to do - the fruit of your body, the fruit of your livestock, and the fruit of your land will all do well;..." (Deut 30:9)

Here we see, as always, the very practical nature of this great blessing – many good children; much livestock and fruit and vegetables, so that people may live abundantly and be blessed by their children and grandchildren, etc.

It also both intrigues and disappoints me to see many Christians who believe 'salvation' has nothing to do with such practical issues, but is just some 'pie in the sky' future escape to some 'out of this world' place!

It gets more interesting though as this prophecy goes on to state that it is dependent on obeying the commandments (mitzvot) that the Almighty has given them; and that this is NOT too hard for them!

Deut 30:10-14 "However, all this will happen only if you pay attention to what ADONAI your God says, so that you obey his commandments and regulations which are written in this book of the Torah, if you turn to ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your being. **11** For this commandment which I am giving you today **is not too hard for you**, it is **not beyond your reach**. **12** It isn't in the sky, so that you need to ask, 'Who will go up into the sky for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?' **13** Likewise, it isn't beyond the sea, so that you need to ask, 'Who will cross the sea for us, bring it to us and make us hear it, so that we can obey it?' **14** On the contrary, the word is very close to you - in your mouth, even in your heart; therefore, **you can do it!**"

Wait a minute; didn't Jesus/Yeshua die on the cross because it was all too hard for us and we can only find peace and joy with God through his blood sacrifice? Doesn't Christianity teach us that it is all too hard for us; that we are hopeless sinners and can only find eternal life with God through the 'entry fee' paid by God Himself on the cross; that we have no hope otherwise; no hope because we can't be righteous and obedient; that God's commands are too hard for us!!?

We may think that the NT teaches this very contradictory doctrine, but does it? Is it rather a result of some clever redacting (editing)? For an example, let us look at Romans 10:8-10:

"8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"¹ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."(NKJV)

Read this carefully! What was most emphatically a statement from Adonai in Deuteronomy 30:6-14 that if the Jewish people (and the stranger in their midst), would obey His commandments they would find salvation and great blessing; but now it appears that the Apostle Paul is using this very clear statement to imply that it is only through belief in Jesus (note also 'belief' not 'actions'²), that someone is 'saved'!

Let me instead propose what the Apostle Paul originally wrote here in Romans 10:

While the Apostle Paul was speaking primarily to God-fearers and Gentile followers of Yeshua in Rome, as they met in Synagogues where these letters would have been read out, any Gentile lack of understanding (read 'those with a Hellenistic mindset') of the quoted passages from the Tanakh would most likely have been clarified by the Jewish brethren present in the Jewish communities that these Gentile followers were now part of³.

Romans 10:

1. Brothers, my heart's deepest desire and my prayer to God for all Israel is for their salvation;

2 for I can testify to their zeal for God. But for some this zeal is not based on correct understanding;

3 but instead they seek to set up their own path to righteousness. They have not submitted themselves to God's way of making people righteous.

*4 For the **Messiah completes the Torah**⁴, which offers righteousness to everyone who trusts in it.*

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah, and states that the person who does these things, that is, is obedient to Torah, will attain life through doing them.

6 Further, the righteousness grounded in such trusting or faithfulness says:

"Then Adonai your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. ... (when) you obey Adonai your God (and) keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in the Torah, (when) you turn to the Adonai your God with all your heart and soul.

For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'

But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it."⁵ (from Deut 30:6-14)

10 For with the heart one goes on trusting, and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement, and thus continues toward deliverance.

11 For the passage quoted was repeated by Isaiah when he said:

"Therefore hear the word of Adonai, you scoffers ... "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, A tried stone, a costly corner-stone of sure foundation [i.e. the Torah]; He that believes shall remain steadfast. I will make justice the plumb-line, and righteousness the plumb-bob ..." (from Isaiah 28:14 - 17)

12 That means that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - ADONAI is the same for everyone, rich toward everyone who calls on Him,

13 since everyone who calls on the name of ADONAI will be delivered. As Joel states:

"Blow a trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, For the Day of Adonai is coming; Surely it is near, ... And it will come to pass that whoever calls on the name of Adonai will be delivered" (Joel 2:1, 3:5 Hebrew-English Tanakh - or Joel 2:32 in most English versions)

16 The problem is that they haven't all paid attention to the good news of the Kingdom of God and obeyed it. For Isaiah says, "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of Adonai been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1)

17 So trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word proclaimed about the Messiah.

¹ Note the reference to Deuteronomy 30:6-10 here

² Another example of how off-track we can become if we don't appreciate the Hebraic Mindset but view the Bible through the Hellenistic (Greek) mindset

³ For the best book on Romans, and the details on Paul's intended audience see 'The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letters' by Mark Nanos, 1996

⁴ This portion is often given as 'The goal of Torah is Messiah' – I discuss this in some depth in my article 'The Goal of Messiah' at www.circumcisedheart.info

⁵ Romans 10:9 just does not fit with the context and flow of the text. I believe it is an interpolation to the original text.

18 "But, I say, isn't it rather that they didn't hear?" No, they did hear:

"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. Their sound has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world." (Ps 19:1-4)

19 "But, I say, isn't it rather that Israel didn't understand?" But Adonai states through Moses: *"They have made Me jealous with what is not [of] God; They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities [i.e. the traditions of men]. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people [of God]; I will provoke them to anger with a nation lacking understanding [i.e. gentiles]."*

20 Also, Isaiah boldly speaks for the Almighty and states,

"I was found by those who were not looking for Me, I became known to those who did not ask for Me. I said: 'Behold Me, behold Me', to a nation that was not called by My Name (that is, to Gentiles);

21 and to some of Israel he says, "I have spread out My hands all day, to a rebellious people, That walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts."

But He also states: "... I will not destroy all, for I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of My mountains; And My elect shall inherit it." (Isaiah 65:1-2, 8-9)

Romans 11:1 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be!"

The New Testament has been seriously corrupted to present a doctrine of salvation; a doctrine of 'blood atonement' which is simply not of God and which contradicts the Tanakh. For more on this error I recommend 'Original Sin and the Fall of Adam' – download here

http://www.theolivetreconnection.com/index_htm_files/Original%20Sin%20and%20the%20Fall%20of%20Adam.pdf as well as Pastor Aubrey's great teaching in Part 3 of his 'New Covenant' series – listen here: http://pfherring.podomatic.com/entry/2012-08-23T05_17_58-07_00

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