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Do Not Think That I Have Come to Abolish the Torah or the Prophets **Matthew 5: 17-20**

New Covenant believers should also love **the Torah**. At Pentecost **about three thousand** were saved (**Acts 2:41**). But about thirty years later, **tens of thousands** of believers were **all zealous for the Torah** (**Acts 21:20**). Therefore, **the Torah** is not merely for the righteous of the TaNaKh. Even the Rabbi Sha'ul said: **The Torah is holy (Romans 7:12), perfect and gives freedom, provided one uses it in the way the Torah itself intends (First Timothy 1:8; James 1:25 CJB).**

Christ is the model disciple, the perfect **Son** who fulfilled all righteousness by completely obeying **the Father's** will (**Matthew 4:4** and **10**). That same obedience should characterize believers today. Obedience to **God** was to be a priority in the disciple's life (**Matthew 6:33**), and complete devotion to **God the Father** was the goal (**Matthew 5:48**). Thus, this same righteousness and faithfulness to **God the Father** and **His** commandments that is seen in the words of **Christ** here (**Matthew 5:17-20**), not only speaks to the true nature of **the Torah**, but also its relationship to **Christ**.



Do not think I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish, but to complete (Matthew 5:17 CJB). Christ completed **the Torah** in that **He** accomplished all that **the Torah or the Prophets** had said of **Him** and **His** coming.

Therefore, **Messiah** provided us with the fullest meaning of **the Torah** as demonstrated in **His** life and teachings. **Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah - not until everything that must happen has happened (Matthew 5:18 CJB).** The **yud** is the smallest letter in the Hebrew Alef-Bet, and the **stroke** refers to the tiny artistic marks on the tops of Hebrew letters. By saying this, **Jesus** reminded his listeners that neither the smallest letter nor even the tiniest part of a letter of **the Torah** would ever be done away with.

The rabbis teach that when ADONAI gave the Torah to Isra'el, He inserted both positive and negative commandments and gave commands, saying: The king must not acquire great number of horses for himself. . . neither shall he take many wives or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold (Deuteronomy 17:16-17). But Solomon arose and studied the reason for God's decree, and said, "Why did ADONAI command this? Well, I will acquire great number of horses, take many wives, and still my heart will not be led astray. Because God granted him a wise and discerning heart (First Kings 3:12), Solomon thought that he could marry as many wives as he wanted.

At that time the yud, the first letter of the Hebrew phrase yarbeh (that means the king must not take many wives), went up on high and prostrated itself before ADONAI and said, "Master of the Universe! Have you not said that no letter shall ever be abolished from the Torah? Behold, Solomon has now arisen and abolished one. Who knows? Today one, tomorrow another, until the whole Torah will be nullified." And God responded by saying, "Solomon and a thousand like him will pass away, but the smallest letter will not be cancelled from you."

Therefore, it is interesting to see that **Christ** agreed with this teaching, and as believers, we should strive to obey **God** and all of **His** commands. For as **Christ** said: **If you love Me, you will obey what I command (John 14:15).**

So whoever disobeys the least of the commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches others to do so will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:19 CJB). Actions speak louder than words. The teacher must apply the doctrine personally before being able to teach it to others. The scribes and **the Pharisees** did **not practice what they** preached (**Matthew 23:2-4**). **Christ** demands from us a much higher form of righteousness than the hypocrisy of false teachers.

For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-

teachers and Pharisees, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:20 CJB). Here the term **far greater** can best be translated as **far exceeds**. Like a river overflowing its banks, it is something that **far exceeds** the norm. In this context, **Jesus** is teaching us that the **righteousness** that **He** requires is one of genuine holiness, which far exceeds the hypocritical standards of the world.

In fact, not only does **ADONAI** require genuine holiness, **He** requires perfect **righteousness**. To be qualified for **God's** kingdom we must be as holy as **the King Himself**. But of course, this is a standard we can never obtain by our own efforts. We are spiritually dead in our sinfulness. **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)**. It is only through the grace of **God**, for **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)**. When we trust/have faith/believe in **Him**, all **His righteousness** is transferred to our account. We are justified and considered perfect in **His** sight. What **Christ** is saying here in this passage, is that **the Torah** is not abolished in this process - but completed. The true path of the true believer is demonstrated through obedience to **ADONAI** and **His** commands.

*During **the Torah** procession in messianic synagogues today, believers in **Messiah** kiss their bibles and then touch **the Torah** as it passes by. They believe that **the Torah** points us to **Yeshua**, and represents the holiness and purity of **God**. This custom is taken from the Psalms, where **the Ruach ha-Kodesh** instructs us to **kiss the Son (Psalm 2:12)**.*

Therefore, **Christ**, as the perfect expression of obedience to **God the Father**, did not come to **abolish the Torah or the Prophets**, but instead **He** completes our understanding of **the Torah** by calling us to live lives in obedience to **His commandments**. Solomon referred to **the Torah** when he wrote: **She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed (Proverbs 3:18)**. *Lord, bind our hearts to **Your commandments**.*