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Week 5: The Dispensation of the Torah Exodus 19:1 to Acts 1:26

The fifth dispensation is called the Dispensation of **Torah**. It was given through **Moses** and contained a total of **613 specific commandments** in **the Torah**, the first five books of the TaNaKh. This dispensation begins with **Exodus 19:1** and continues through **Acts 1:16**. It covers the period of time from the **Exodus** through the life of **Messiah** to the day of Pentecost, or festival of Shavu'ot.

There are seven dispensations described in the Bible: (1) the Dispensation of Innocence or Freedom **(Genesis 1:28** to **3:5)**; (2) the Dispensation of Conscience or Self-Determination **(Genesis 3:6** to **8:14)**, (3) the Dispensation of Civil Government **(Genesis 8:15** to **11:32)**, (4) the Dispensation of Promise or Patriarchal Rule **(Genesis 12:1** to **Exodus 18:27)**, (5) the Dispensation of **Torah (Exodus 19:1** to **Acts 1:26)**, (6) the Dispensation of Grace **(Acts 2:1** to **Revelation 19:21)**, and (7) the Dispensation of the messianic or millennial Kingdom **(Isaiah 4:2-6, 11:1** to **12:6, 54:11-17, 60:1-22).**

The key ***person*** in the fifth dispensation was **Moses**. **He** was **God's**, chosen mediator between **Himself** and **His people**.

Mankind's ***responsibility*** was to obey the Mosaic Covenant. This involved two major areas. First, they were responsible to obey the 613 commandments of **the Torah**. Secondly, they were to obey the prophets **God** would send that would further elaborate on **the Torah**, define the law, give meaning to **the Torah** and explain it. In other words, they were to obey the commandments of **the Torah** and the prophets.

The ***test*** during that dispensation involved two things. First, they were to obey **the** entire **Torah**. They were to obey all of its 613 commandments because to break only one of these meant that they were guilty of breaking them all **(James 2:10)**. The second part of the test was to believe and accept that **God** would raise up for them **a prophet like Moshe** from among the sons of Isra'el **(Deuteronomy 18:15-18)**. In other words, they were to accept **Christ** once **He** came, because **He**

was going to be **a prophet** to **the people like Moses.**

But then came the ***failure***. They failed in both aspects of the test. First, they failed to keep **the Torah (Romans 10:1-3)**. In fact, not only did they fail to keep the commandments of **the Torah**, but they tried to get around them. They created their own kind of righteousness by establishing what came to be known as the Oral Law, or **the traditions of men** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Ei – The Oral Law**). Secondly, they also failed to accept **Christ (Mark 3:22, Matthew 12:24, Luke 11:15-16)**. **Jesus** denounced the Scribes and Pharisees, the leadership of Isra'el of that day, because they first rejected **His** messianic claims, but worse, they were leading the nation to the rejection of **Him (John 7:19-20)**.

As a result of the failure, came ***judgment*** in 70 AD, and it involved two things. First, the Temple and Jerusalem itself were destroyed. Secondly, the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the world and they were exiled from the Land until 1948.

Grace was seen throughout the Dispensation of **Torah** in two ways. First, the sacrificial system was provided because the Jew was not able to keep all 613 commandments. Whenever the individual Jew failed, his or her sin could be covered (not forgiven) by the sacrificial system. It was **God's** system for restoring the sinner. However, these sacrifices during the Dispensation of the **Torah**, with the blood of bulls and goats, were like interest only payments. They could buy the individual Jew a little time, but not forgiveness. The animal sacrifices could not take away their sin. No Jew was ever saved because of any sacrifice brought to the Tabernacle or the Temple. *The righteous of the TaNaKh were saved by grace through faith.* But faith needs substance. So when individual Jews brought a sacrifice to the Tabernacle or Temple, faith was being demonstrated in the fact that he or she believed that by means of the shedding of blood his or her sins would be covered and fellowship with **ADONAI** would be restored. Secondly, grace was displayed during this dispensation by **God's** provision of judges, kings and prophets. Judges were given to deliver the Jews from the conquest of various peoples. Righteous kings were sent to give them a kingdom of righteousness and justice. Prophets were provided for them to expound on **the Torah**, call the people back from sin, remind them of where they had failed, and call for repentance.