

## Galations 3:2

From the book "Take Hold" by Ariel, and D'vorah Berkowitz

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by hearing with faith?"

There are some who use this verse to contrast life in the Spirit against a life of Torah. Their argument is that we did not receive the Spirit of God by following the Torah.

Our suggestion is that the Torah is not even mentioned in this verse. Once again, we encounter the phrase "works of the law". In the Greek it is the same grammatical construction that was in 2:16. Therefore, it should not read, "works of the law", as if it is the Torah that is being referred to, but "works of law". Hence, this verse is saying that it was not through legalism that we received the Spirit of God. We could not earn God's Spirit. Rather God gave us His Spirit by faith, at the moment of salvation. Thus, this verse is against legalism, not against the Torah.

### Galations 3:21-25

"Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could make alive, most certainly righteousness would have been of the law. But the Scriptures imprisoned all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Yeshua the Messiah might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law has become our tutor to bring us to Messiah, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Here is a case where the word nomos is probably being used to refer to the Torah. In the Greek, it has a definite article before it, "the Law" (the Torah). This series of verses concludes a passage where Sha'ul (Paul) is comparing the covenant with Abraham with the covenant of Sinai. His conclusion is that the Torah was not given to impart life; that was the purpose of the covenant with Abraham. We receive life by faith. He continues to argue that there are only two things the Torah can do for those who attempt to receive spiritual life from God by obeying the Torah. First, the Torah can point out their sinfulness (verse 22) and second, the Torah can then point the to the one who removes sin—the Messiah (verses 23-25).

Verses 23-24 represent only one of the many purposes for the Torah. In fact, the Torah has specific functions for both the righteous (the saved) and the unrighteous (the unsaved). As far as the righteous are concerned, 2 Timothy 3:16 states; "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Of course, "all Scripture" would most certainly have included the Torah.

As far as the unrighteous are concerned, our passage in Galatians indicates what the Torah can accomplish for them. It can serve to point out their sinfulness and point them to Messiah. In this capacity, we should not that 3:25 says, “But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” The “tutor” is, in context, the Torah. When a person comes to Messiah and receives Him by faith, that particular function of the Torah has ceased (i.e., there is no longer a need for the Torah to serve as a tutor to lead the person to the Messiah). At that point, the Torah begins to function in a totally different capacity—the capacity for which it was originally designed; it describes the lifestyle of the Redeemed.

## Galatians 3:28

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua."

This verse has often been cited to show that there is no place in the life of a believer in Yeshua for the Torah or anything pertaining to Israel. (In fact, this verse is twisted to justify many things contrary to the Word of GOD). It has often been said that in Messiah there is no room for Jewishness because we are new people in Messiah.

We would like to call on Messianic Leader Dr. Daniel Juster to comment on this verse for us. Juster remarks, “Paul is not saying that all distinctions between men and women have been obliterated...It is precisely the same with Jew and non-Jew in the Messiah. Both may be called to different styles of life and witness, to different fields of service, yet they are spiritually one in the Messiah...Note as well, non-Jews are called (in v.29) not spiritual Israel, but the offspring of Abraham by faith”

It is interesting how most believers have applied this verse over the years. Erroneously thinking that this verse teaches that there is to be no more Torah expression (“neither Jew...”), many believers have lived non-Torah oriented lifestyles. In doing so, however, they have not realized that they did not practice the second expression of the verse that says, “there is neither Jew nor Greek.” They did not realize that much of their lifestyle reflected that of gentile non-believers. For example, in their attempt to practice the “neither is there Jew” part, they replaced the explicit Torah teachings with man-made traditions propagated by some church leaders decades after the Brit Hadasha was written. In this process, they have failed to realize that such practices, would then, also violate the second phrase, “neither is there Greek (gentile).”

In so doing, they have espoused a decidedly culturally non-Jewish life style (and have pressured Jewish believers to do the same).

This verse actually speaks nothing about Torah observance or non-observance. Rather, it merely emphasizes the spiritual equality of Jewish believers with believers from among the Gentiles.