

## The Eternal Torah ~ Part 3

### Sitting at the Feet of Yeshua

We continue our quest to explore what I have been calling the Eternal Torah. In this post, will begin to take a closer look at what Yeshua himself says about six important topics contained in the Torah.

As stated in previous posts, God revealed His standards for holy living in the Torah. The P'rushim defended the Torah and sought to obey it. But over time, they had added their own interpretations and a minutia of rules and regulations. Their relationship with ADONAI had gone from one of worship and faith to a religion of works.

Yeshua said that He came to complete the Torah. That is, He came to bring us back to God's original intent of His instructions to Israel. The Torah has always pointed the way to the Messiah. But Yeshua also said that the true righteousness that pleases God must *exceed* that of the Torah-teachers and the P'rushim. The person who says that he "*lives by the Sermon on the Mount*" may not realize that the Sermon on the Mount is *far more difficult* to keep than the original Ten Commandments! We will find that out in more detail momentarily.

How can **we** complete the Torah? We complete the Torah by yielding to the Ruach HaKodesh and allowing Him to work in our lives. Sha'ul writes in Romans 8:1-3, "**Therefore, there is no longer any condemnation awaiting those who are in union with the Messiah Yeshua. Why? Because the Torah of the Spirit, which produces this life in union with Messiah Yeshua, has not set me free from the "Torah" of sin and death. For what the Torah could not do by itself, because it lacked the power to make the old nature cooperate, God did by sending his own Son as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one [but without sin]. God did this in order to deal with sin and in so doing he executed the punishment against sin in human nature...**". The Ruach HaKodesh enables us to experience the "*righteousness of the Torah*" in daily life.

In our next passage of scripture, we will be looking at six areas of righteous living that Yeshua used as an example of how we are to exceed the righteousness of the P'rushim (see discussion of Matthew 5:20 in Eternal Torah ~ Part 2) as we continue in our study of what I call the Eternal Torah.

Matthew 5:21–48 is considered by many as the Morality Code of Yeshua. It describes for us how righteousness should be worked out in our daily lives. Consequently, this section of the teaching is one of the most important in the whole Brit Hadassah. Before we deal with it in detail, there are some general things that we should note.

Yeshua gives six illustrations of the need for righteousness and the importance of the right heart attitude. Rather than external performance - He deals with the moral intent of the law as it relates to human depravity, and shows graphically why our righteousness must exceed that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim.

The phraseology "**you have heard that our fathers were told**'... '**But I tell you**" divides the passage into six topics:

- v. 21** - refers to the 6th commandment - "**Do not murder**" (Sh'mot 20:13)
- v. 27** - refers to the 7th commandment - "**Do not commit adultery**" (Sh'mot 20:14)
- v. 31** - refers to the divorce privilege mentioned in D'varim 24:1-4
- v. 33** - refers to the 3rd commandment - "**You are not to use lightly the name of Adonai your God, because Adonai will not leave unpunished someone who uses His name lightly.**" (Sh'mot 20:7)
- v. 38** - refers to the law of retribution – Sh'mot 21:24; Vayikra 24:19-20; and, D'varim 19:21
- v. 43** - refers to the command to love your neighbor - Vayikra 19:18 and the remarks of King David about hating our enemy - Psalm 139:19-22

Yeshua teaches with an authority, which no other man had ever dreamed of assuming. Right at the beginning of His ministry, after He had been teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum, it is said of His hearers: **"They were amazed at the way He taught, for he did not instruct them like the Torah-teachers but as one who had authority himself"** (Mark 1:22). Matthew concludes His account of the Sermon on the Mount with the words: **"When Yeshua had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at the way he taught, for he was not instructing them like their Torah-teachers but as one who had authority himself."** (Matthew 7:28-29)

No one had ever heard anything like this before. The great Jewish teachers had always had characteristic phrases in their teaching. The characteristic phrase of the prophet was: **"Thus says the Lord."** He claimed no personal authority at all; his only claim was that he spoke what God had told him to speak. The characteristic phrase of the Torah-teacher and the Rabbi was: **"There is a teaching that ..."** The Torah-teacher or the Rabbi never dared to express even an opinion of his own unless he could buttress it with supporting quotations from the great teachers of the past. Independence was the last quality that he would claim. But to Yeshua, a statement required no authority other than the fact that he made it. He was his own authority.

Yeshua's teaching was entirely new, something that many people still have not yet fully grasped. Yeshua taught that it was not enough *not to commit murder*; He taught that we couldn't even ponder committing murder. It was not enough *not to commit adultery*; He taught that we couldn't even ponder committing adultery.

We may have never actually hit a person, but who can say that they have never wished to punch somebody's lights out? It may be that we have never committed adultery, but who can say that they have never experienced the desire for the forbidden fruit? It was Yeshua's teaching that thoughts are just as important as deeds. It is not enough *not to commit a sin*; we can't even wish to commit it.

This means that every one of us is guilty. We are all sinners and fall short of the Glory of God. Even if we have lived a life of outward moral perfection, there is none who can say that he never experienced the forbidden desire to sin. This new standard kills all pride, and forces us on Yeshua who alone can enable us to rise to that standard which He himself has set before us.

From this point on, the rest of Matthew 5 has to be looked at in the light of Matthew 5:20. **"For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!"**

With this background, in my next post we will begin to look at each of the verses in Matthew 5:21-48.