

Law and Grace



**One claims authority to rewrite what God has spoken.
But the Hand that carved His Instructions on stone does
not write in erasable ink.**

The same Hand that carved the Torah into stone did not later retract it with ink. What we call “Law” was not a burden but a Covenant of life, a path of blessing. And what is called “Grace” is not its replacement, but its invitation — to return. The so-called “New” was never meant to erase the “Old,” but to renew the heart To walk in it. Beware of those who write decrees while dismissing the Hand that gave the first Instructions, and the Way of Life.

Walking the Ancient Path of Torah Obedience

**Written by Rex
For the Awakening Remnant**

YHWH, YHWH, El compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in kindness and truth, keeping kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... (Ex. 34:6-7)

Law and Grace

The concepts of Law and Grace represent two very different fundamental aspects of religious belief and practice, particularly within Judaism and Christianity. Understanding these concepts and their implications can provide profound insights into the theological differences and commonalities between these two faith traditions.

Torah: The Mosaic Law

Question:

One might be curious about the concept of Covenants in the relationship between God and humanity, particularly with figures like Israel and Abraham. In human relationships, such as between a man and a woman, love is often enough to sustain the bond, although marriage is formalized with a certificate. Why does the relationship between God and His people require a covenant or contract? Why wouldn't love alone be sufficient to define this divine relationship?

Answer:

The concept of a Covenant in the context of the relationship between God and humanity, particularly with Israel and figures like Abraham, serves several important purposes that go beyond the idea of love alone.

The Nature of Covenants

- **Formalizing the Relationship:** A Covenant formalizes the relationship between God and His people. It establishes clear terms and commitments, much like a marriage certificate formalizes the union between spouses. This formalization helps to define the expectations and responsibilities of both parties.
- **Commitment and Accountability:** Covenants provide a framework for commitment and accountability. They outline the promises and obligations of each party, ensuring that the relationship is based on mutual trust and fidelity. For example, in the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17), God promises to make Abraham the father of many nations, while Abraham and his descendants are expected to follow God's commandments.
- **Guidance and Structure:** The commandments and laws within the covenant offer guidance and structure for living a life that aligns with God's will. They provide a moral and ethical framework that helps individuals and communities navigate their relationship with God and with each other.
- **Symbol of Divine Love and Faithfulness:** Covenants are also a symbol of God's enduring love and faithfulness. They demonstrate God's commitment to His people and His desire for a deep, lasting relationship. The covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-24) is a testament to God's willingness to guide and protect His people, provided they remain faithful to His commandments.

Why Not Just Love?

While love is a fundamental aspect of the relationship between God and humanity, a covenant adds depth and dimension to that relationship:

- **Human Nature:** Human beings are prone to forgetfulness and inconsistency. A covenant serves as a constant reminder of the commitments made and the expectations set, helping to keep the relationship on track.
- **Community and Identity:** Covenants help to build a sense of community and identity. For the people of Israel, the covenant with God is a defining aspect of their identity as a chosen people. It unites them under a common purpose and set of values.
- **Historical and Cultural Context:** In the ancient Near East, covenants were a common way to formalize agreements and alliances. By using the concept of a covenant, God communicated His intentions in a way that was culturally relevant and understandable to the people of that time.

In summary, while love is essential, a covenant provides a formal, structured, and enduring framework for the relationship between God and humanity. It ensures commitment, accountability, and guidance, while also symbolizing God's unwavering love and faithfulness. This combination of love and covenant creates a robust and meaningful relationship that can withstand the challenges and complexities of life.

The Mosaic Law: A Covenant with God

The Torah, comprising Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, is the foundational text of Judaism. It is not merely a set of religious laws but a comprehensive guide to living a life in accordance with God's will. The 613 commandments, or mitzvot, cover a wide range of aspects, including moral conduct, religious rituals, social justice, and personal behavior. These commandments are seen as a covenant, a sacred agreement between God and the people of Israel, defining their unique relationship with the Divine.

Aspects of the Mitzvot (Commandments)

- **Moral and Ethical Conduct:** The Torah provides guidelines for ethical behavior, emphasizing justice, kindness, and integrity. For example, Lev. 19:18 commands, "*Love your neighbor as yourself*," highlighting the importance of compassion and empathy in human interactions.
- **Religious Observance:** The mitzvot include detailed instructions for religious rituals and practices, such as observing the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11), dietary laws (Lev. 11), and the festivals (Lev. 23). These practices are designed to foster a sense of community and spiritual connection.
- **Social Justice:** The Torah emphasizes the importance of social justice and caring for the vulnerable. Commandments such as leaving the corners of the field for the poor (Lev. 19:9-10) and ensuring fair treatment of workers (Deut. 24:14-15) reflect a commitment to equity and compassion.
- **Personal Behavior:** The mitzvot also address personal conduct, including honesty in business dealings (Lev. 19:35-36), respect for parents (Ex. 20:12), and maintaining purity (Lev. 15). These commandments guide individuals in leading a righteous and disciplined life. In observance and guarding of the Torah, this is a *Way of Life, a Code of Conduct*, not a religion.

The Covenant and Its Significance

The Covenant established at Mount Sinai, where God gave the Law to Moses, is a central theme in the Torah. This covenant signifies a binding agreement between God and the Jewish people, marked by mutual commitments. God promises to be their protector and guide, while the people of Israel commit to following His Commandments and living according to His will.

Holistic Approach to Life

The Torah's Commandments encompass every aspect of life, creating a holistic approach to spirituality and daily living. By observing the Mitzvot Commandments, Jews express their devotion to God and their commitment to upholding the values and principles outlined in the Torah. This comprehensive framework ensures that every action, whether mundane or sacred, is infused with spiritual significance.

The Torah and its 613 commandments form the bedrock of Jewish religious life and practice. They represent a covenantal relationship with God, guiding individuals and the community in living a life of righteousness, justice, and spiritual connection. The mitzvot cover a wide range of aspects, from moral conduct to religious observance, reflecting the holistic and multifaceted nature of the Torah's teachings.

Adherence to the Law:

The Torah emphasizes strict adherence to these Commandments as a way of living in accordance with God's will. Observing the mitzvot is considered an expression of steadfastness, devotion, and obedience to God and guarding His Covenant and Torah.

- **Covenantal Relationship:** The commandments are part of the covenant established at Mount Sinai, where God gave the Law to Moses. This Covenant is a binding agreement that signifies the special relationship between God and the Jewish people.
- **Holistic Approach:** The mitzvot cover a wide range of areas, including dietary laws, ritual purity, social justice, and ethical behavior. This holistic approach ensures that every aspect of life is infused with spiritual significance.

Christianity: Grace and Faith

In Christianity, the concept of grace is central to the understanding of salvation. Grace is seen as the unmerited favor of God, freely given to humanity through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This grace is believed to be the means by which individuals are saved, rather than through adherence to the Law.

- **Salvation through Grace:** Christianity teaches that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith in Jesus. This is encapsulated in Eph. 2:8-9:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.
(Eph. 2:8-9)

- **Faith in Jesus Christ:** Faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the son of God is the cornerstone of Christian belief. This faith is seen as the means by which individuals receive God's grace and are reconciled to Him.

- **Freedom from the Law:** While the Law is respected, Christianity teaches that believers are no longer bound by the Mosaic Law for their salvation. Instead, they are called to live by the Spirit, guided by the principles of love and grace.

Theological Implications

The differences between the emphasis on the Law in Judaism and the focus on grace in Christianity have significant theological implications:

- **Covenantal Identity:** For Jews, adherence to the Torah is a way of maintaining their Covenantal identity and relationship with God. It is a tangible expression of their faith and commitment to God's commandments.
- **Universal Salvation:** For Christians, grace represents the universal offer of salvation to all humanity, transcending the specific Commandments of the Mosaic Law. It emphasizes the inclusive nature of God's love and the transformative power of faith in Jesus.
- **Ethical and Moral Conduct:** Both traditions emphasize ethical and moral conduct, but the basis for this conduct differs. In Judaism, it is rooted in the commandments of the Torah, while in Christianity, it is guided by the principles of grace and love.

The concepts of Law and Grace highlight the distinct yet complementary aspects of Judaism and Christianity. While the Torah emphasizes adherence to the Mosaic Law as a Covenantal relationship with God, Christianity teaches that salvation is through grace and faith in Jesus Christ.

Terminology: Christian and Hebrew

In Judaism, "faith" ('emunah) is understood as trust and loyalty to God, rooted in the Covenantal relationship established through the Torah. It involves a commitment to live according to God's Commandments and to uphold the values and principles outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures. "Grace" (chen חֵן) in the Hebrew context refers to God's loving-kindness and mercy, often demonstrated through His Covenantal faithfulness and acts of compassion towards His people. The Hebrew word "chen" comes from the root word "chanan" which means to stoop in kindness to an inferior. The actual meaning of "chen" is to stoop in kindness to an inferior. Salvation in Judaism is seen as a collective experience, tied to the fulfillment of the Covenant and the coming of the Messiah, who will bring about a time of peace and restoration for Israel.

Faith: In Hebrew, "faith" ('emunah - אֱמוּנָה) is derived from the root 'aman (אָמַן), meaning "to support," "to be firm," or "to be steadfast." It signifies a deep trust and steadfastness in God, encompassing both belief and a commitment to live according to His will

And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith.
(Deut. 32:20)

And He said, I will hide My Face from them, I will see what their latter end shall be; because a generation of perversity they are, sons of which there is no stability in them. (My translation)

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (Hab. 2:4)

Behold his soul is puffed up and not righteous in him: but the righteous shall live in his stability. (My translation)

As one can see, using the correct word in the scriptures can significantly change the meaning. Instead of a "faith" that merely involves believing, it emphasizes the action of being firm, showing support, and demonstrating stability. This shift highlights the importance of concrete actions and steadfastness in one's faith, rather than just verbal claims. In the Hebrew context, faith is not an abstract concept but a lived experience, where actions speak louder than words. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the concept of "faith" is often expressed through the word 'emunah (אֱמוּנָה), which is derived from the root 'aman (אָמַן). Let's explore the meanings and implications of these terms:

- **'Emanah (Usually translated as Faith):** 'Emanah is typically translated as "faith" or "faithfulness" in modern translations. It encompasses a sense of trust, reliability, stability, and steadfastness. In the context of the Hebrew Scriptures, 'emunah is not merely intellectual assent but involves a deep, relational stability and trust in God. It implies a commitment to live according to God's will and to rely on His promises. This concept goes beyond the idea of verbally claiming to have "faith"; it requires actions that demonstrate the claim of one's faith. This includes obedience to God through one's daily walk with Him. Hebrew is a concrete language, meaning that abstract ideas and claims are not part of Hebrew or the lives of those who are steadfast in God. In other words, actions speak louder than words and merely confessing to have "faith" is unscriptural.
- **'Aman (Root of 'Emanah)**
The root 'emun is 'aman, which means *"to support," "to be firm, or stable."* It conveys the idea of something that is firm, stable, and trustworthy. This root is also the basis for the word "amen," which is used to affirm truth and reliability.

Examples in the Hebrew Scriptures

And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6)

And he was steadfast in YHWH; and He counted it to him for righteousness. (My translation)

In Hebrew, it signifies a deep trust and steadfastness in God, encompassing both belief and a commitment to live according to His will. *"Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness."* The word translated as "believed" is he'emin (הֵאֱמִין), which comes from the root 'aman. This verse highlights Abram's trust, steadfastness and reliance on God's promise. (Gen. 15:6)

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his Covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep His Commandments. (Deut. 7:9)

And know that He is YHWH your 'Elohiym; He is the Steadfast 'Elohiym, preserving the Covenant of loving-kindness and for His love and to those who guard His Commandments to a thousand generations. (My translation)

The word "faithful" here is ne'eman (נֶאֱמָן), derived from 'aman, emphasizing God's stability, reliability and steadfastness.

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (Hab. 2:4)

Behold, his soul is puffed up and not straight in him, but the righteous shall live in his steadfastness. (My translation)

"But the just shall live by his faith." The word "faith" is 'emunah (אֱמוּנָה), indicating that a righteous life is characterized by steadfast trust and commitment to God.

In summary, 'emunah (faith) in the Hebrew Scriptures is deeply rooted in the concept of 'aman (to support, to be firm). It signifies a firm and steadfast trust in God, characterized by reliability, commitment, and relational trust. This understanding of faith goes beyond mere belief to encompass a lived experience of trust and faithfulness in one's relationship with God.

Grace: The English word "grace" is often used to translate the Hebrew word chen (חֵן), which means favor or kindness. The idea of "patronage" as a translation captures the essence of chen well, as it involves a relationship where a superior shows favor or stoops in kindness to an inferior, metaphorically. This concept aligns with the root chanan (חָנַן), which means to show favor or be gracious, often implying an act of kindness from someone in a position of power to someone in need.

In this context, "patronage" reflects the nuanced relationship between God and individuals like Noah, where God's favor and kindness are extended as a form of divine support and benevolence. This term encapsulates the idea of a protective and nurturing relationship, much like a patron who supports and fosters the well-being of their beneficiary.

Noah obtained this patronage from God through his acts of obedience, steadfastness, and righteousness. God did not arbitrarily decide to show favor to Noah; it was Noah's consistent faithfulness and adherence to God's commandments that earned him this divine patronage. Why patronage? Patronage means:

Patronage refers to the support, encouragement, or financial aid that an individual or organization provides to another. This support is often given by someone in a position of power or influence to someone of lower status or in need. Patronage can take various forms, including sponsorship, mentorship, and the granting of favors or privileges. It is characterized by a reciprocal relationship where the patron offers assistance in exchange for loyalty, services, or support from the beneficiary.

In Christianity, "faith" is defined as belief and trust in Jesus as the son of God and the savior of humanity. It is through this faith that individuals receive "grace," which is understood as the unmerited favor of God. Eph. 2:8-9 states:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Eph. 2:8-9)

“Salvation” in Christianity is viewed as a personal and individual experience, achieved through faith in Jesus and His death on the cross, which offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

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The Impact of the Differences of Both Faiths

Now that we understand the differences, let's delve deeper into their meanings and determine which path to follow. Most Christians believe and are taught that one must "believe" and "accept Jesus as one's personal Lord and Savior." Others, like the Oneness Apostolic believers, hold that one must be baptized in Jesus' name and be filled with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the outward speaking in other tongues. We will cover this in more detail later.

Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) Perspective

- **Righteousness through Obedience:** The Hebrew Bible emphasizes righteousness through obedience to God's Commandments. For example, Deut. 6:25 states:

And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to do all this Commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us. (Deut. 6:25)

The concept of tzedakah (righteousness) is tied to living according to the Torah and God's laws.

- **Covenantal Relationship:** The relationship between God and Israel is based on a covenant, where obedience to the Torah is central. Ex. 19:5-6 highlights this Covenant:

Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine. (Ex. 19:5-6)

And now, if you will intensely give ear in My Voice and guard My Covenant, you shall be, to Me, a treasured possession, from all the peoples, for to Me is all the earth. (My translation)

In my translation of this verse, it shows that one who intensely listens and lives for God on His terms, and guards His covenant, shall be a treasured possession. This means obeying and guarding His commandments and covenant, and living according to His will. Then, one will be a treasured possession to Him from all the people on Earth, because the Earth is His.

New Testament Perspective

- **Salvation through Faith and Grace:** The New Testament, particularly the writings of Paul, emphasizes salvation through faith and grace. Eph. 2:8-9 states:

For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Romans 3:28 also emphasizes faith:

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Ro. 3:28)

- **Paul's Teachings:**

Paul's teachings often contrast with the emphasis on the law in the Hebrew Bible. For example, Gal. 2:16 states:

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal 2:16)

Here are some scriptures that prove righteousness comes by works of the Law or simply obeying the Commandments set down before us in the Scriptures. These verses from the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) emphasize the importance of living by the Law (Torah) to achieve righteousness or justification:

Deut. 6:25

And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us. (Deut. 6:25)

This verse highlights that righteousness is achieved through careful observance of God's commandments.

Deut. 30:16:

If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. (Deut 30:16)

This passage emphasizes the blessings and life that come from obeying God's Commandments.

Psalms 119:1-3:

*Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD!
Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! (Ps. 119:1-3)*

These verses highlight the blessedness and righteousness of those who walk in the law of the LORD.

Ezekiel 18:21-22:

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. (Eze. 18:21-22)

This passage emphasizes that turning away from sin and keeping God's statutes leads to life and righteousness.

Leviticus 18:5:

You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD. (Lev. 18:5)

This verse underscores the importance of keeping God's statutes and rules for life and righteousness. These verses illustrate the central role of obedience to God's commandments in achieving righteousness and justification in the Hebrew Bible.

Differences and Interpretations

- **Faith vs. Works:**

The Hebrew Bible emphasizes righteousness through obedience to God's commandments, while Paul emphasizes faith and grace as the means of salvation. This represents a significant theological shift from a works-based righteousness to a faith-based righteousness.

- **Covenantal vs. Universal Salvation:**

The Hebrew Bible focuses on the covenantal relationship between God and Israel, with an emphasis on individual and collective obedience and righteousness. The New Testament presents a more universal approach to salvation, accessible to all through faith in Jesus.

- **Repentance and Forgiveness:**

The Hebrew Bible emphasizes repentance and adherence to God's Commandments as the means of receiving forgiveness, while Paul emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ and God's grace as the means of salvation.

- **Obedience to God's Will:** Highlight that observing the commandments is a way of demonstrating obedience and loyalty to God. The Torah provides a comprehensive guide for living a life that aligns with God's will, covering moral, ethical, and religious aspects.

- **Faith and Grace:** Paul emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith and grace, rather than through works of the law. This represents a significant theological shift from the Hebrew Bible's emphasis on obedience to the commandments.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Ro. 3:28)

- **Justification by Faith:** Paul argues that justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not by adhering to the law. This contrasts with the Hebrew Bible's emphasis on righteousness through obedience to God's commandments.

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 2:16)

- **Contrast with the Law:** Paul often contrasts the law with faith, suggesting that the law cannot bring about righteousness. He views the law as revealing sin but not providing the means for justification; just as he says below:

For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (Ro. 3:20)

Key Differences

- **Obedience vs. Faith:** The Hebrew Bible emphasizes righteousness through obedience to God's Commandments, while Paul emphasizes faith and grace as the means of salvation. This represents a shift from a works-based righteousness to a faith-based righteousness.
- **Covenantal vs. Universal Salvation:** The Hebrew Bible focuses on the covenantal relationship between God and Israel, with an emphasis on collective obedience and righteousness. Paul's teachings present a more universal approach to salvation, accessible to all through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Role of the Law:** In the Hebrew Bible, the law is central to living a righteous life and maintaining a relationship with God. Paul, however, views the law as insufficient for justification and emphasizes faith in Jesus Christ as the means of achieving righteousness.

Conclusion

Paul's teachings in the New Testament represent a significant departure from the emphasis on obedience to the law found in the Hebrew Bible. While the Hebrew Bible focuses on righteousness through adherence to God's commandments, Paul emphasizes salvation through faith and grace, presenting a new theological framework that diverges from the traditional Jewish understanding.

Moral and Ethical Conduct

The Torah's commandments are designed to promote justice, compassion, and righteousness, creating a framework for a just and ethical society. By observing these laws, individuals and communities reflect God's character and values in their daily lives.

Promoting Justice

- **Fair Treatment:** The Torah emphasizes fair treatment of all individuals, including the vulnerable and marginalized. For example, Leviticus 19:15 states:

You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. (Lev. 19:15)

This commandment ensures that justice is administered impartially, promoting fairness and equality.

- **Protection of the Vulnerable:** The Torah includes specific commandments to protect the rights of the vulnerable, such as widows, orphans, and foreigners. Exodus 22:21-22 states, "

You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.
(Ex. 22:21-22)

These laws demonstrate God's concern for the well-being of all members of society.

Encouraging Compassion

- **Acts of Kindness:** The Torah encourages acts of kindness and generosity. Leviticus 19:18 instructs:

You shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:18)

This principle fosters a sense of community and mutual support, encouraging individuals to care for one another.

- **Charity and Support:** The Torah mandates charitable actions, such as providing for the poor and needy. Deuteronomy 15:7-8 states:

If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.
(Deut. 15:7-8)

These Commandments promote a culture of compassion and generosity.

Upholding Righteousness

- **Moral Integrity:** The Torah emphasizes the importance of moral integrity and ethical behavior. Deuteronomy 6:18 states:

And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may go well with you, and that you may go in and take possession of the good land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. (Deut. 6:18)

This commandment encourages individuals to live in a manner that is pleasing to God.

- **Holiness and Purity:** The Torah calls for holiness and purity in all aspects of life. Leviticus 19:2 states:

Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. (Lev. 19:2)

This commandment reflects the aspiration to live a life that mirrors God's Holiness.

Historical and Theological Context

- **Historical Continuity:** The Covenant and Torah is the historical continuity of the Jewish faith and the centrality of the Torah in Jewish life and practice. The observance of the commandments has been a defining aspect of Jewish identity for millennia.
- **Theological Integrity:** By maintaining the observance of the Torah and God's Laws it preserves the theological integrity of the Jewish faith. It ensures that the relationship with God remains rooted in the Covenant established at Sinai.

The Christian Concept of Faith and Grace

- **Faith (Emunah):** As we have already learned, the Hebrew Scriptures understand faith ('emunah) as being firm and stable in one's loyalty to God, rooted in the covenantal relationship. It involves a commitment to live according to God's Commandments, rather than a belief in salvation through faith alone. With this firmness and stability, we rest in knowing that God is there for whatever we may need Him for. In contrast, "faith" is an abstract term and for many Christians, it is often a saying and belief of just believe it and receive it.
- **Grace (Chesed):** Grace (chen) in the Hebrew context refers to God's kindness and mercy, often demonstrated through His Covenantal faithfulness. An example would be the metaphor of someone greater either bending or stooping in kindness to an inferior. It is not seen as a means of salvation but as an expression of God's enduring love and compassion.

The Distinction from Christian Theology

- **Salvation through Works:** In Judaism, salvation is seen as a collective experience tied to the fulfillment of the Covenant, and Obeying His Commandments, and the coming of the Messiah. It is achieved through adherence to the Commandments and living a righteous life. In Christianity, a person is taught the only requirements is to believe and accept Jesus.

Conclusion

By focusing on these points, there is a compelling argument that observance of the Torah and God's Laws is the only way to live for God. The concepts of faith and grace, as understood in Christian theology, are foreign to the Mosaic Law and the Covenantal relationship between God and Israel.

Contrasting Definitions of "Salvation" in Christianity and the Hebrew Scriptures

Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh)

Salvation as Deliverance and Restoration

In the Hebrew Scriptures, salvation often refers to deliverance from physical danger, oppression, or exile. It is closely tied to God's intervention in history to save His people.

Exodus 14:13-14

And Moses said to the people, Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. (Ex. 14:13-14)

Isaiah 45:17

But Israel is saved by the LORD with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. (Is. 45:17)

- **Righteousness through Obedience:** Salvation is also linked to righteousness, which is achieved through obedience to God's Commandments. Living according to the Torah is seen as the path to righteousness and, consequently, to salvation.

Deuteronomy 6:25

And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us. (Deut. 6:25)

Ezekiel 18:21-22

But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. (Eze. 18:21-22)

Christianity (New Testament)

Salvation through Faith and Grace

In Christianity, salvation is primarily understood as being saved from sin and its consequences through faith in Jesus. It is seen as a gift from God, received through grace and faith, rather than through works.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Romans 3:28

For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. (Ro. 3:8)

- **Justification by Faith:** Paul emphasizes that justification, or being made righteous before God, comes through faith in Jesus Christ. This contrasts with the Hebrew Scriptures' emphasis on righteousness through obedience to the law.

Galatians 2:16

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 2:16)

Key Differences

Nature of Salvation

- **Hebrew Scriptures:** Salvation is often seen as deliverance from physical danger or oppression and is closely tied to God's intervention in history. It also involves living a righteous life through obedience to God's Commandments.
- **Christianity:** Salvation is primarily understood as being saved from sin and its consequences through faith in Jesus Christ. It is seen as a gift of grace, not earned by works.

Path to Righteousness

- **Hebrew Scriptures:** Righteousness is achieved through obedience to God's Commandments and living according to the Torah.
- **Christianity:** Righteousness is achieved through faith in Jesus, with an emphasis on grace rather than works.

Role of the Law

- **Hebrew Scriptures:** The law (Torah) is central to achieving righteousness and maintaining a relationship with God.
- **Christianity:** Paul teaches that the law reveals sin but does not provide the means for justification. Instead, faith in Jesus is the means of achieving righteousness.

Conclusion

The Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament present contrasting views on salvation. The Hebrew Scriptures emphasize deliverance, obedience, and righteousness through the law, while the New Testament, particularly Paul's teachings, emphasize salvation through faith and grace. These differences reflect the distinct theological frameworks of Judaism and Christianity.

Where and When Did the Law Cease?

The question of whether and when the Law (Torah) ceased is a significant point of theological debate. Let's explore the scriptural evidence and perspectives on this topic.

Paul's Teachings on the Law

- **Abolishment of the Law:** Paul suggests that the Law is no longer the means to righteousness and that faith in Jesus Christ supersedes the Law.

By abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. (Eph. 2:15)

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
(Ro. 10:4)

- **Justification by Faith:** Paul emphasizes that justification comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not by adhering to the Law.

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal. 2:16)

The Torah's Endurance in the Hebrew Scriptures

- **The Torah is Forever:** The Hebrew Scriptures emphasize the eternal nature of the Torah and its commandments.

The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. (Ps. 119:160)

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deut. 29:29)

- **Covenantal Relationship:** The Covenant between God and Israel, which includes the Torah, is described as everlasting.

Therefore, the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. (Ex. 31:16-17)

Conclusion

The Hebrew Scriptures emphasize the eternal nature of the Torah and its commandments, while Paul's teachings in the New Testament suggest that the Law has been fulfilled and superseded by faith in Jesus Christ. This theological divergence highlights the distinct perspectives of Judaism and Christianity on the role and relevance of the Law.

What Did Jesus on How to Be Saved?

In the New Testament, there are a few instances where individuals come to Jesus asking about what they must do to be saved or to inherit eternal life. Here are two notable examples:

The Rich Young Ruler:

And behold, a man came up to him, saying, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'All these I have kept. What do I still

lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor; and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mt. 19:16-22)

Jesus' answer supported living according to the Torah. However, He also told the young ruler to go and sell all his belongings and give to the poor. While this would be a noble act, it was not a requirement in the Torah.

The Greatest Commandment:

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (Mt. 22:36-40)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan:

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How do you read it?' And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live. (Luke 10:25-28)

These passages highlight Jesus' emphasis on keeping the commandments, loving God, and loving one's neighbor as central to inheriting eternal life. This contrasts with Paul's emphasis on faith and grace as the means of salvation.

The Philippian Jailer:

Then he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' And they said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. (Acts 16:30-31)

These passages highlight different aspects of the question of salvation in the New Testament. The Rich Young Ruler is directed to keep the commandments and to follow Jesus, while the Philippian Jailer is told by Paul to believe in the Lord Jesus for salvation.

Who are We Going to Believe?

Who are you going to believe? God, who handed down instructions, directives, and laws to govern our lives, or a mere man? The Torah is not just a religion but a way of life, a code of conduct that pleases God and reflects how He wants His people to live. It governs all aspects of our lives, establishing a theocracy set up by God for those who seek to please Him. With all this evidence, who are you going to believe? Will you trust in the Almighty through His servant Moses, or follow the teachings of a mere man?

Finally, there are two scriptures I wish to share. Both are very compelling and can make even the greatest skeptic ponder these things. Christians claim to be the "new" Israel or the "bride of Christ." Yet, while

considering all these contrasting thoughts and scriptures, we must ask ourselves: “Who are we going to believe?” “Are we going to believe a mere man who claimed to be an apostle, or believe in the words of Jesus, who was a rabbi and a teacher?” As we have seen, the Torah offers a Covenant and instructions to live as a way of life or code of conduct. In contrast, the New Testament, particularly Paul's writings, emphasizes faith and grace. In conclusion, I want to leave you with two scriptures to ponder. Christians often say that their religion is right and that we must follow Jesus or go to hell. If this were so, then why do these two scriptures below say something quite different?

Why do these scriptures not say something like "our fathers have discovered truth through Jesus (Messiah)"? Why do they say that "we have inherited lies"? Why do they say that Gentiles are going to ask the Jews, "Can we go with you, for we heard that God is with you" and not the Christians? With all this evidence, who are you going to believe? Are you going to believe a mere man who contradicts the Law of Moses, or are you going to believe the Almighty through His servant Moses?

O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. (Jer. 16:19)

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. (Zech. 8:23)

Questions to Ponder

If the Torah was given by YHWH Himself at Mount Sinai, why would it later be declared unnecessary by men?

- Because the Torah came from the mouth of YHWH, it is eternal (Deut. 29:29; Ps. 119:160). No man, not even an apostle, has authority to annul what YHWH declared as forever. When doctrines contradict the Torah, the question is not which is easier—but which came from the fire on the mountain.

Can righteousness truly come by simply believing, without obedience or moral responsibility?

- According to Deut. 6:25, righteousness is defined as doing what YHWH commands. Belief without obedience is not righteousness—it's fantasy. Emunah (faith) in Hebrew means steadfastness, loyalty, and trust expressed through action—not passive belief.

If salvation is truly "not of works," why does YHWH repeatedly say, "If you obey My voice and keep My Covenant..."?

- Because salvation, in the Hebrew sense, is relational and covenantal—it requires both faithfulness and obedience. Grace (ḥen) is real, but it is shown to those who walk in righteousness (Noach, Moses, Daniel, etc.). Obedience is not legalism—it is loyalty.

How did Paul's teachings on grace override the Covenant YHWH made with Israel?

- No. A Covenant made by YHWH cannot be undone by a man. Paul's interpretation must be tested against the Torah and Prophets (Isa. 8:20). If his words oppose the Covenant, then they must be reexamined—not the Covenant rejected.

If Jesus himself told the rich young ruler to "keep the commandments" to have eternal life, why do most Christian doctrines teach the opposite?

- Because the Christian system later reinterpreted Jesus through the lens of Paul, instead of interpreting Paul through the voice of Jesus or the Torah. The teacher said "keep the Commandments." That's the voice we must listen to.

Why does Scripture say, "We have inherited lies"? What are those lies—and what are we to do with them?

- Jeremiah 16:19 tells us plainly: the nations will come and confess they were taught vanity and things without profit. The greatest lie inherited is that Torah was abolished, and faith alone saves. What we must do is return—to YHWH, to His Torah, and to the Covenant He never broke.

Truth That Confronts Tradition

Let these questions sit with you. Wrestle with them.

The Torah isn't afraid of questions—but tradition often is.