

7. The Torah's Eternal Significance

The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, contains foundational teachings that reveal God's character, His moral law, and His covenants. These principles, being eternal, provide a secure source of wisdom and guidance that continues to shape our understanding of God, sin, redemption, and righteousness.

This session emphasizes that while Christ fulfills the Torah, the Torah's principles remain eternally significant for us as believers. The Torah reveals God's will, serves as a moral compass, and is an essential part of "all Scripture" useful for teaching and growth, providing a secure foundation for our faith.

Jesus Affirms the Eternal Significance of the Torah's Principles

Matt 5:17-18 (NKJV) Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

Jesus affirms that He has come not to abolish the Torah, but to fulfill it. He fulfills the ceremonial and sacrificial aspects, yet He upholds the moral and ethical laws as essential to God's eternal plan. The principles of **love, justice, and mercy** found in the Torah endure beyond its ceremonial laws.

He teaches that the Torah's teachings on holiness and righteousness remain significant. We are encouraged to honor these principles, applying them in the light of Christ's teachings.

2 Ti 3:16 (NKJV) — 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Paul's statement that "all Scripture" is inspired includes the Torah. The Torah provides vital teachings about God's nature, human sinfulness, and the way of righteousness. Its laws, stories, and principles serve as a guide for understanding God's will and developing moral character.

Studying the Torah, we gain **wisdom and instruction**, understanding its principles in light of the New Testament. It offers guidance for righteous living, spiritual discipline, and love for God and others, forming the foundation of Christian ethics and empowering us to lead lives of moral character and righteousness.

The Torah is Eternal – Why?

Is 40:8 (NKJV) — 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

Ps 119:89 (NKJV) — 89 Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.

This emphasizes that God's Word is unchanging and eternally relevant. As God's revealed Word, the Torah carries timeless principles and truths. Although certain ceremonial aspects of the Torah were fulfilled in Christ, the moral and ethical teachings of the Torah remain foundational.

We must come to see the Torah as a living, active part of God's ongoing revelation. Its teachings on love, justice, holiness, and reverence for God continue to apply to our lives and spiritual growth.

1. The Torah is God's word, and God is his word.

Jn 1:1–5 (NKJV) — 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Ge 1:1–3 (NKJV) — 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

- In creation, God's Word is the means by which He brings everything into existence. This demonstrates that His Word is powerful and living, inseparable from His creative nature.
- In Jewish thought, the Torah is not simply a historical document given at Sinai, but an eternal word that transcends time. Its teachings and truths are timeless and thus have eternal power to sustain the cosmos.

2. *Is 55:10–11 (NKJV) — 10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

- This verse reveals that God's Word carries His power and purpose, accomplishing His will. His Word is inseparable from His nature, showing that He is actively present in His Word.
- ***Jn 1:12–14 (NKJV) — 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.***

- In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the **Word of God**, embodying God's presence and character. This affirms that God's Word is more than just spoken words; it is His divine expression, revealed fully in Christ.
- Now, if we are born of God and born of the word of God, what type of being does that make us?

The Torah is the Source of Moral and Ethical Guidance. Why?

1. The Moral Law as a Standard of Righteousness

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

- This establishes the foundation of ethical behavior. Jesus and the New Testament writers emphasize this commandment as central to righteous living (Matthew 22:39).
- We must continue to apply the moral teachings of the Torah, like love, honesty, and justice, as standards for personal and social ethics. These commands are eternal, providing a framework for living in harmony with God and others.

2. The Torah's Justice and Mercy

Mic 6:8 (NKJV) — 8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

- Although not directly from the Torah, Micah's words reflect the Torah's teachings on justice and mercy. These principles, rooted in the Torah, reveal God's heart for righteousness and compassion.
- We are called to live out the Torah's values of justice and mercy, both personally and socially. These timeless teachings challenge us to reflect God's love and fairness in our interactions.

The Torah's Role in Revealing God's Nature and Plan for Redemption

1. The Torah Reveals God's Holiness and Our Need for Holiness

Ga 3:24 (NKJV) — 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

- The Torah establishes God's standard of **holiness** and calls His people to live in a way that reflects His character. This command reflects God's desire for His people to be set apart, living lives that honor Him.
- The call to holiness remains relevant for us today, encouraging us to live in purity and integrity. The Torah's teachings on holiness help believers understand their identity as God's people, who are called to reflect His nature in a sinful world.

2. The Torah's Role in Pointing to the Need for a Savior

Ga 3:24 (NKJV) — 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

- Paul explains that the Torah serves as a tutor or guide, showing humanity its need for a Savior. The Torah reveals the impossibility of achieving righteousness through human effort, pointing to Jesus as the fulfillment of its promises.
- The Torah is the foundation that brings clarity to **God's redemptive plan**. By studying the Torah, Christians better understand their need for Christ and the grace that comes through faith in Him.

Concluding Words About Torah

1. What the Torah Reveals About God's Character

The Torah reveals God as a **loving Creator**, a **righteous judge**, and a **faithful covenant-keeper** who is both holy and merciful.

- **Creator and Sustainer:**

Ge 1:1 (NKJV) — 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The Torah begins by presenting God as the **Creator** of all things, who brings order out of chaos. His creative work reveals His power, wisdom, and intentionality in shaping the world and humanity.

- **Holy and Just:**

Le 11:44 (NKJV) — 44 For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

God's holiness is a defining aspect of His character in the Torah. He is set apart, righteous, and requires holiness from His people. His justice ensures that He upholds what is right, holding people accountable for their actions.

- **Compassionate and Merciful:**

Ex 34:6 (NKJV) — 6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

When God reveals Himself to Moses, He describes Himself as merciful, patient, and abounding in steadfast love, showing that mercy is integral to His character.

- **Faithful:**

Dt 7:9 (NKJV) — 9 "Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who God's faithfulness is evident in His unwavering commitment to His covenants with His people. He is trustworthy and keeps His promises, even when humanity fails.

2. What the Torah Reveals About God's Moral Law

The Torah provides the foundation of **God's moral law**, emphasizing righteousness, justice, and love.

- **The Ten Commandments:**

Ex 20:3 (NKJV) — 3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

The Ten Commandments establish the core of God's moral law, covering duties toward God and other people. They emphasize **worshiping God alone**, honoring parents, and avoiding actions that harm others (like murder, theft, and lying).

- **Justice and Fairness:**

Le 19:15 (NKJV) — 15 ‘You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor.

God's moral law includes instructions on treating others fairly and avoiding favoritism. Justice is central to God's expectations for His people, reflecting His own just nature.

- **Love for Others:**

Le 19:18 (NKJV) — 18 You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

This commandment emphasizes that love is at the heart of God's moral law. It teaches that a person's duty toward others should be motivated by love and compassion, values that are also present in the New Testament.

3. What the Torah Reveals About God's Covenants

The Torah reveals several covenants that God makes with humanity, emphasizing His faithfulness and desire for a relationship with His people.

- **The Abrahamic Covenant:**

Ge 12:2–3 (NKJV) — 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God's covenant with Abraham includes promises of land, descendants, and blessings for all nations through Abraham's line. This covenant reveals God's redemptive plan to bless the world through a chosen people.

- **The Mosaic Covenant:**

Ex 19:5 (NKJV) — 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

The Mosaic Covenant includes the giving of the Law, which defines Israel's relationship with God. It establishes Israel as a nation set apart to be a light to the nations, showing that obedience to God's commands is central to covenantal faithfulness.

4. What the Torah Reveals About God's Attitude Towards Sin

The Torah shows that God is **holy** and **righteous** and cannot tolerate sin, yet He is also merciful and provides a way for atonement.

- **Sin and Separation from God:**

Ge 18:20–22 (NKJV) — 20 And the Lord said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.” 22 Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.

God's response to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah illustrates that He takes sin seriously and judges it. Sin separates humanity from God, who is holy.

- **Atonement for Sin:**

Le 17:11 (NKJV) — 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'

The sacrificial system in the Torah reveals God's provision for atonement. The shedding of blood is required to cover sin, pointing forward to Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

- **Repentance and Forgiveness:**

Ex 34:6–7 (NKJV) — 6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation.”

God is merciful and willing to forgive sin for those who repent. This shows that while He is just, He desires to restore people to Himself.

5. What the Torah Reveals About God's Plan for the Redemption of Man and About Righteousness

The Torah points forward to **God's plan of redemption** through His promises, covenants, and the foreshadowing of a Savior.

- **Promise of a Redeemer:**

Ge 3:15 (NKJV) — 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Known as the Protoevangelium, this verse foreshadows a coming Redeemer who will ultimately defeat Satan. This promise hints at the coming of Christ as the one who will conquer sin and death.

- **Righteousness by Faith:**

Ge 15:6 (NKJV) — 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Abraham's faith is counted as righteousness, showing that righteousness comes not through works, but through **faith**. This concept of righteousness by faith is foundational in both the Old and New Testaments and is later expounded by Paul.

- **The Role of the Sacrificial System:**

Le 4:26 (NKJV) — 26 And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

The sacrificial system in the Torah provides a temporary covering for sin, pointing toward the need for a perfect sacrifice. This system foreshadows Christ's ultimate sacrifice, which offers eternal redemption.

Summary of Classes 1-4

Class 1: Introduction & The Foundation of God's Revelation

- The **Torah** is the beginning of God's revelation to man, providing insight into His nature as Creator and Redeemer. Genesis introduces God's covenant with Abraham, marking the beginning of His redemptive plan. The Torah is essential to understanding the entire Bible, as it lays the groundwork for all of God's interactions with humanity.

Class 2: Covenants and God's Promises

- God's **covenants** in the Torah with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses establish His relationship with His people and shape His redemptive plan. These covenants reveal God's faithfulness and His promises, setting the stage for the fulfillment of these promises in the New Testament. The Abrahamic covenant, in particular, foreshadows the coming of Christ as a blessing to all nations.

Class 3: The Moral and Legal Foundation & Understanding the Rest of the Old Testament

- The **moral and legal code** found in the Torah, including the Ten Commandments, forms the ethical foundation for God's people. These teachings are repeatedly referenced throughout the Old Testament, with prophets calling Israel back to the principles established in the Torah. The sacrificial system and laws also foreshadow Christ's role as the ultimate sacrifice, making the Torah essential for understanding the Bible's themes of atonement and redemption.

Class 4: Jesus and the Fulfillment of the Torah & The Torah as the Foundation for the New Testament

- Jesus fulfills the **moral, ceremonial, and sacrificial laws** of the Torah, bringing them to their intended completion. The Torah provides the foundational context for the New Testament, especially about salvation, grace, and covenant. Jesus affirms the Torah's enduring significance, teaching that its principles of love and justice are central to righteous living. Paul and other New Testament writers build upon the Torah to explain the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ.