

# IS OBEDIENCE A SALVATION ISSUE?

August 21, 2016 [Todd Bennett](#) Off [Articles](#),

I am repeatedly hearing the statement from the Torah community that obedience is not a salvation issue. This seems to be the new mantra that Hebrew Roots folks are using to make Torah observance more palatable to Christians.

I fear that this may be misleading to some and I feel compelled to point out that obedience, as taught by the Messiah, is central to our Covenant walk. Remember that disobedience is the reason why mankind was expelled from the Garden of Eden. The Garden represented the Kingdom of Elohim on Earth, and it was governed by His Torah. It was mankind's failure to follow the rules of the Kingdom that resulted in their being expelled, and it was the mercy of Elohim that led to His establishing a Covenant that would make a way for us to return through the Covenant Assembly of Yisrael. Central to that Covenant is the Torah.

As a result, obedience to the Torah is nothing to be ashamed of and certainly not to be diminished. Interestingly, but for the religion of Christianity, this would not even be a discussion. In the past, when a stranger joined with Yisrael they were not typically concerned with a guarantee of going to heaven. They wanted to follow the Elohim of Yisrael and therefore they would agree to obey Him and worship Him as instructed in the Torah. Their actions of obedience to the Torah revealed that they served Elohim and not some other pagan god. It was their actions that defined their status and their relationship with Elohim.

Sadly, Christianity has become so fixated on salvation that they often neglect the path that gets you there – which is the Covenant. It has become a religion so motivated on what a person can get for themselves (salvation) that the entire Covenant gets turned upside down and inside out. They want the desert before the meal, but salvation is the end of the journey not the beginning.

We are supposed to give first and receive later – that is the pattern of the Messiah. He gave His life and trusted the Father to resurrect Him from the dead. We give our lives and our service to Elohim and place our faith and trust in Him. We rely on His love and mercy to take care of us now, and after we die. In the meantime, we live our lives in accordance with His instructions. When we enter into the Covenant we place our faith and trust in Yahushua's blood, which was shed in fulfillment of that Covenant.

Many modern Christians evangelize by posing the standard question: "What must I do to be saved?" Again, the focus is not "What can I do for God" or "What does God want from me" but rather "What can I get from God." This is a symptom of our society and culture and it results in a predictable response from the modern Christian religion. The answer is a simple and fast multi-step formula and prayer for achieving salvation. Once the prayer is uttered, it is claimed that the person is instantly saved. Sometimes they only have to raise a hand or go to the front of the church.

This is simply not Scriptural and sadly it appears that this mentality has steeped into the Hebrew Roots community, which consists of many people who have left the Christian Church. They have been so beaten up by the doctrine of grace that they are almost afraid to speak about the absolute need to follow the Law – the Torah.

I would like to encourage my brethren that you do not need to make excuses or diminish your obedience by stating that it is not about salvation. If our Messiah had followed that belief and lived a life contrary to the Torah, He would have disqualified Himself from that position. He needed to be holy and live perfect according to the Torah in order to be the unblemished Lamb of Elohim, and He repeatedly told people to follow Him. In other words, walk the way that He walked and live the way that He lived.

We have all been tarnished by sin and thus we need the washing of His blood to cleanse us. Once clean we need to stay holy and live perfect. We are to follow that path blazed by the Messiah, which involves obedience. That is specifically why, when Yahushua was asked what a man must do to inherit eternal life, He responded “. . . if you want to enter into life, keep the Commandments.” (Matthew 19:17). He then went on to say: “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Matthew 19:21). He was always encouraging people to go beyond the letter of the Torah and find the heart of the Torah.

He tells us to enter by the narrow gate “because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:14. In fact, He went on to state: “24 Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ 26 then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.’ 27 But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’” Luke 13:24-27

This is a powerful word. He met with these people. He ate with them and taught them yet He proclaims: “I do not know you.” He does not know them because they are not in a Covenant relationship with Him. We know this because He calls them “workers of iniquity.” They are deemed wicked and lawless because they refuse to follow the Commandments.

The path to life is narrow, difficult and few will find it. So when we talk about obedience being about blessings and disobedience being about curses we need to follow these statements to their natural conclusion. While our actions certainly have immediate and tangible consequences in the flesh, they also have eternal consequences. Your actions reveal your heart, and if you want to obey then you are expressing your love for the Master. To the contrary, if you do not want to obey or refuse to obey, then you are expressing your lack of love.

That is why Yahushua said: “If you love me, keep my Commandments.” John 14:15 Obedience is how we express our love, and obedience to the Torah is how we live righteously. It is the righteous who inherit eternal life and the righteous are defined by the way they live their lives, not because of a simple confession of faith or act that they did in the past. In fact, it is the workers of iniquity – those who refuse to obey – who are the cursed, rejected and sent away to be punished. (Matthew 25:41-46)

This is pretty serious and that is why I am not being “religiously correct,” because Yahushua was not “religiously correct.” He offended many with the truth because the truth does not usually fit within people’s religious paradigms. Yahushua was trying to save people by getting them on the right path so that they could receive the forgiveness that He provides through the Covenant.

Ultimately, Yahushua will judge all because He has inherited the Earth. Thankfully, He has provided us with His standard of judgment in the Scriptures so there will be no surprises. He told us how He would judge the wicked and the righteous and it always came down to how they lived their lives.

Incredibly, in Matthew 7:21-23 it sounds as though He was specifically trying to warn the future Christians when He said: “21 Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

The word “lawless” specifically means: “without the Torah.” So you might want to rethink the notion that obedience is not a salvation issue. Salvation to me is whether I get back into the Kingdom, back into the Garden, where I can partake of the Tree of Life. That is where we have eternal life.

Once again, the Scriptures are clear on this point: “14 Blessed are those who do His Commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.” Revelation 22:14-15

Can it be that the new lie is that obedience to the Torah is not a salvation issue? Yahushua was the Torah in the flesh. He taught the true Torah. He lived, died and was resurrected because of the Torah. Therefore, if you reject the Torah then you are rejecting the Messiah and His message.

The Messiah was very clear about this and we also need to be clear about it so we don't mislead anyone. Our message must be honest and truthful. Yahushua had many people turn away because they found His message to be too hard. We must be prepared for the same response to our message. It will definitely not appeal to the masses.

It is by the shed blood of Yahushua, the prophesied Lamb of Elohim, that we can enter through the door that leads to life. We also receive forgiveness from that blood when we sin and repent, but it is all within the Context of the Covenant. We are sending a false and mixed message if we attract people to the Torah and tell them that it is only about being blessed in the here and now – essentially making it optional.

The Torah is the rule of the Kingdom and it needs to be practiced, rehearsed, lived and perfected by those who desire to receive salvation after they die (or if they happen to be alive when the Messiah sends out His messengers to gather the elect).

I would therefore suggest that if you are in the Covenant, that you delight in the Torah and boldly proclaim the need to obey the Torah for all those who follow Messiah. Anything less is a disservice to Yahushua, His Message and the Covenant. I wrote a book specifically addressing this issue that I highly recommend you read and pass along to others who struggle with the issue of **Salvation: The Covenant Journey**.