

Notes: October 31, 2015

Start: 10 AM

Order of service:

1. Meet and Greet
2. Introduction (if new people)
3. Ma Tov
4. Open in Prayer for service
5. Liturgy – Sh'ma +
6. Announcements
7. Praise and Worship Songs
8. Message
9. Aaronic Blessing
10. Kiddush
11. Oneg

Children's Blessing:

Transliteration: *Ye'simcha Elohim ke-Ephraim ve hee-Menashe*

English: *May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe*

Transliteration: *Ye'simech Elohim ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah.*

English: *May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.*

Introduction: The New Covenant – Church Centered vs. Israel Centered

Perspective is everything. It can be the difference between anything and everything.

It can be the difference between the narrow path and the wide path...

Mat 7:13 "Go in through the narrow gate; for the gate that leads to destruction is wide and the road broad, and many travel it;

Mat 7:14 but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

It can ultimately be the difference between life and death.

Listen to the words of Yeshua immediately following verses 13 and 14...

Mat 7:15 "Beware of the false prophets! They come to you wearing sheep's clothing, but underneath they are hungry wolves!

Mat 7:16 You will recognize them by their fruit. Can people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?

I would consider this passage to be a warning to believers...

When we look at the New Covenant, perspective is extremely important. Non-Messianic Jews offer an entirely different perspective than do Christians, while Messianic Jews offer an extremely different perspective than either.

For today's message, we are going to look not at the original reference but the quote...Hebrews 8:6 – 13

Heb 8:6 But now the work Yeshua has been given to do is far superior to theirs, just as the covenant he mediates is better. For this covenant has been given as Torah on the basis of better promises.

Heb 8:7 Indeed, if the first covenant had not given ground for faultfinding, there would have been no need for a second one.

Heb 8:8 For God does find fault with the people when he says, "See! The days are coming," says Adonai, 'when I will establish over the house of Isra'el and over the house of Y'hudah a new covenant.

Heb 8:9 " 'It will not be like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by their hand and led them forth out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, did not remain faithful to my covenant; so I, for my part, stopped concerning myself with them,' says Adonai.

Heb 8:10 " 'For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days,' says Adonai: 'I will put my Torah in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Heb 8:11 " 'None of them will teach his fellow-citizen or his brother, saying, "Know Adonai!" For all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest,

Heb 8:12 because I will be merciful toward their wickednesses and remember their sins no more.' "

Heb 8:13 By using the term, "new," he has made the first covenant "old"; and something being made old, something in the process of aging, is on its way to vanishing altogether.

What is the non-Messianic Jewish perspective? (traditional / rabbinic Judaism)

Non-Messianic Jews claim that God did not establish a New Covenant with Israel through Yeshua-and indeed they must say this, even though it undermines ecumenical tolerance by attacking the foundation of Christian faith.

Why is this?

Because otherwise they have no excuse for not adhering to its terms and accepting Yeshua as the Messiah.

When discussing the New Covenant in the context of these verses, they raise four objections, which I present with my answers. The first two are lightweight, but the third and fourth deserve careful rebuttal.

(1) Jewish *Objection*: "The covenant with Moses is eternal, so there is no ground for expecting a new one."

***Answer*:** The covenant with Moses is indeed eternal (see [Heb 8:13](#)), but the conclusion that there is no new one does not logically follow. The eternal covenant with Avraham did not prevent God from making an eternal covenant with Moses, nor did the latter cancel the former ([Gal 3:15-18](#)).

Moreover, it is patently false that there is no ground for expecting a new covenant. The basis for a new covenant is provided by Jeremiah ([Heb 8:8-12](#)) and written six centuries before the time of Yeshua.

Heb 8:9 " 'It will not be like the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by their hand and led them forth out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, did not remain faithful to my covenant; so I, for my part, stopped concerning myself with them,' says Adonai.

(2) Jewish *Objection*: "Who needs a new covenant? What you call the 'old' one is good enough for me."

***Answer*:** This is not an argument but an expression of emotion. The Mosaic covenant is excellent, but the decisions whether it is "good enough" and whether one should reject the New Covenant should not be based on feelings, not even feelings of loyalty to the Jewish people. If God decided to establish a new covenant with the Jewish people, which, as Jeremiah proves, he did promise to do, then one ought to agree that God did this for the benefit of Jews, not to hurt them, and one should welcome whatever God offers.

(3) Jewish Objection: "I welcome whatever God may offer, including a new covenant; and there is ground in the *Tanakh* for expecting one. But Jesus did not bring it, and the New Testament does not express it-as proved by the following four arguments, which are based on the very text you use to support your own view.

The primary issue here is Yeshua.

Argument 1: Jeremiah writes that the **new covenant** will be **over the house of Israel and over the House of Y'hudah**. It does not say that God will make his new covenant with Gentiles or with Christians."

Answer: Yeshua introduced the New Covenant not to a group of Gentiles (let alone to Christians-there weren't any), but to an exclusively Jewish company at a Passover Seder ([Luk 22:15-20](#)). More specifically, he announced this covenant to his twelve *talmidim*, who, Yeshua explained moments later, are in a special representative relationship with the twelve tribes of Israel as their judges ([Luk 22:30](#); compare [Mat 19:28](#), [Rev 21:12-14](#)).

It is the twelve tribes of Israel of whom Jeremiah speaks collectively when he writes, "**the house of Israel and the house of Y'hudah**." Gentiles enter this covenant only by being "grafted in" to Israel ([Rom 11:17-24](#); [Eph 2:11-16](#)).

Argument 2: "God says he will put his *Torah* in their minds and write it on their hearts. It is no secret that Christians have done cruel things to Jews in Christ's name throughout the centuries, things which are altogether alien to *Torah*, things which prove that *Torah* was far from their minds and hearts. I do not suppose it necessary to show how each one of the Ten Commandments has been violated by Christians in their dealings with Jews.

Granted that not all deeds done by Christians were necessarily authorized by Christ-some even used Christ's name to justify acts contrary to his teachings and to the Ten Commandments. Moreover, I know that there are Christians who love God and who desire to do good. But-and here is the point-this is not the same as having the *Torah* written on their hearts.

For the *Torah* is the body of laws and instruction given to Moses for the Jewish people. Therefore, someone with the *Torah* written on his heart should be *shomer-mitzvot* (*Keeper of the Law*), obedient to all the commandments of *Torah*; and this I do not see in Christians, not even in those whose character is exemplary."

We don't see the majority of Christians embracing *Torah*, but justifying why they are not required or responsible to follow it. The majority tend to run away from it rather than towards it. The majority have little understanding let alone experience regarding the first five books of Moshe. Sadly, this does not come as any surprise, given the means by which the majority of believers are led, as a result of the manner by which the majority of shepherds are taught.

In next week's Bible Study on Romans 2 we will be talking about a passage that will likely be an eye opener.

Answer: First, concerning Christians who act against *Torah* in their dealings with Jews: God is indeed putting his *Torah*, his teaching, in the minds and hearts of his true followers by means of the *Ruach HaKodesh*, the Holy Spirit, whom Yeshua sent to teach us all the truth ([Joh 16:13-15](#); on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the *Torah*, see [Act 2:1](#) on the Jewish holiday *Shavu'ot*, and compare [2Co 3:16-18](#), [Rom 8:1-4](#)). Having the *Torah* in one's mind and written on one's heart is Scriptural language for being holy.

To deny this truth is in essence denying Adonai and the promise of the New Covenant.

The path to holiness commences with trusting God and his son Yeshua, and following this path is a process, not an instantaneous event-believers do not suddenly become perfect. A genuine follower of Yeshua will have an inner desire to please God; so that as he understands more and more of what God wants and expects from him, he will be increasingly prepared and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do it.

On the other hand, a professed follower of Yeshua still has free will and can resist "the finger of God" writing on his heart. Some who have acted against Jews have called themselves Christians but in fact have been unbelievers; while others have been believers who resisted God's will. None of this negates God's action (compare [Rom 3:3-4](#)), which he has been accomplishing according to the terms of the New Covenant ever since Yeshua inaugurated it, of writing his *Torah* on the heart of any willing person, Jewish or Gentile, who puts his trust in Yeshua the Messiah.

Second, understanding of the term "*shomer-mitzvot*" (keeper of *Torah*) is usually expressed from a non-Messianic (and typically Orthodox) Judaism perspective. That perspective is that in being *shomer-mitzvot*, you are a keeper of the entire *Torah*, oral and written.

My response is that any form of Judaism which fails to recognize that the New Covenant itself **has been given as**

Torah ([Heb 8:6](#)) has a defective understanding of *Torah* and therefore of "*shomer-mitzvot*."

Someone with the *Torah* written in his heart puts his trust in Yeshua and should accept the New Covenant's understanding of what *Torah* really is. That understanding does not give the Oral Law the authority which Orthodox Judaism grants it. A person with the *Torah* in his mind and on their heart should indeed be *shomer-mitzvot*, but in a way consistent with the *p'rushei-Torah* (expositions of the Law) set forth by Yeshua and the other New Covenant writers.

This is important to remember - Christians and Messianic Jews should understand that everyone under the New Covenant has the *Torah* to observe. That is as it relates to them, whether male or female, Jew or Gentile.

This is the plain sense of the phrase:

[Heb 8:10](#) " 'For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days,' says Adonai: 'I will put my *Torah* in their minds and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

"I will put my *Torah* in their minds and write it on their hearts." It is not some new *Torah*, different from Old Testament *Torah*.

It is the one and only *Torah*, understood in the spirit of the Messiah, "as upheld by the Messiah" ([Gal 6:2](#); [1Co 9:21](#)).

Christian theology all too often tries to escape or water down the plain sense of what is said here, so that what is required is very little, usually a vague "sensitivity to God's will" that becomes impossible to pin down. Not infrequently the motivation for devising such theology has been to portray or create separation, spiritual distance and a contradictory comparison between the Church and the Jews.

However, there is hope as other Christians have had a correct understanding, for example, A. Lukyn Williams writes:

"God's words through Jeremiah do not announce the coming of a new Law, but of a new principle of keeping the Law, according to which God forgives the sinner, writes the Law on his heart, brings him into a new relation to Himself, and makes Himself known to him."

(*Manual of Christian Evidences for Jews*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919, I:184.)

"The text continues, '**None of them will teach his fellow-citizen or his brother, saying, "Know Adonai!"**' Jews ask..."If so, why do you proselytize us?"

Moreover, the condition that **all will know** God remains unfulfilled; therefore what you offer is not what Jeremiah prophesied." conveys non-Messianic Jews to which our response is...

Answer: Like the individual process of becoming holy, the social process whereby everyone comes to know God is a gradual one. In the centuries since Yeshua's time on earth, the number of believers has grown enormously. The day will come when there will be no need for a believer to **teach his fellow-citizen or his brother**; but until that day arrives, and so long as there is anyone who has not accepted God's offer of forgiveness through Yeshua, there is need not to proselytize, which means to convert someone to another religion, but to evangelize, which means to communicate the Good News that God has provided a means for salvation, here and now, and for the eventual certain salvation of the Jewish people too ([Rom 11:26](#)). Since Scripture says that there will be unbelievers right up until the time the Messiah returns, the consummation of the process, when **all will know** God, must not take place until the Messiah removes and punishes those who have made themselves resistant to God and the Gospel ([Rev 20:11-15](#)). Those who remain will all know God and will no longer need to teach others about him (Revelation 21-22).

(4) Jewish Objection: "The author's comments in [Heb 8:6-8](#) and [Heb 8:13](#) denigrate both the people of Israel and God's covenant at Sinai. God would not impugn his own chosen people or his own covenant; the true new covenant will not be antisemitic, as is this book. Here are four antisemitic statements by the author of *Messianic Jews*:

(a) "He says the new covenant contains **better promises** than those in the covenant at Sinai ([Heb 8:6](#)); this directly impugns God and the Mosaic covenant."

Answer: This charge is false because it is based on a misuse of what the author says, in essence taking his words out of the context for which he wrote.

(b) "The author says the first covenant was defective ([Heb 8:7](#))."

Answer: He does not say this, but the impression that he does is based on a mis-translation found in most versions. The first covenant is not itself faulty, but it has **given ground for faultfinding**.

If the first covenant, meaning the one with Moses at Sinai, **had not given ground for faultfinding**. Other translations render this as if something had been wrong with the first covenant itself, for example, the Revised Standard Version has, "if that first covenant had been faultless...." But [Heb 8:8-9](#) show that the **fault** was not with the covenant but **with the people** of Israel who "did not remain faithful" to it ([Heb 8:9](#)).

Thus the only "fault" in the **first covenant**, if one should even call it that, is that it does not contain in itself the power to keep the people faithful. In this regard, the **second** covenant is different, because its terms include God's putting his *Torah* in their minds and writing it on their hearts, providing power for obedience by the Holy Spirit within.

One example...

[Eze 36:21](#) But I am concerned about my holy name, which the house of Isra'el is profaning among the nations where they have gone.

[Eze 36:22](#) "Therefore tell the house of Isra'el that Adonai Elohim says this: 'I am not going to do this for your sake, house of Isra'el, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have been profaning among the nations where you went.'

These words spoken by Adonai to Ezekiel come just before these words...

[Eze 36:26](#) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

[Eze 36:27](#) I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them.

[Eze 36:28](#) You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

[Eze 36:29](#) I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will summon the grain and increase it, and not send famine against you.

[Eze 36:30](#) I will multiply the yield of fruit from the trees and increase production in the fields, so that you never again suffer the reproach of famine among the nations.

[Eze 36:31](#) Then you will remember your evil ways and your actions that were not good; as you look at yourselves, you will loathe yourselves for your guilt and disgusting practices.

[Eze 36:32](#) Understand,' says Adonai Elohim, 'that I am not doing this for your sake. Instead, be ashamed and dismayed for your ways, house of Isra'el.'

Consider the Covenants that Adonai has made. Are any of them exactly the same?

Are any of them replaced when a new one is revealed?

Hopefully you have answered no to both of these questions.

(c) "The author of Messianic Jews says that God found fault with his own chosen people, the Jews ([Heb 8:8](#))."

Answer: This is not a serious criticism. It was not the author of this book but Jeremiah, quoting God, who said that Israel **did not remain faithful to God's covenant** ([Heb 8:9](#)). In noting that **God does find fault with the people** the author is only reporting the obvious. One of the glories of the *Tanakh* is that even though no human being-neither the individual heroes nor the Jewish people as a whole-is perfect but is shown as sinful and errant, nevertheless God loves them all. In the New Testament God finds plenty of faults with the members of the Messianic Community, and, as in the *Tanakh*, lovingly sets out to correct them.

(d) "The author calls the first covenant **old,... aging, ... vanishing** ([Heb 8:13](#)). This statement not only

depreciates the Mosaic covenant and the God who made it, but, as we can see 2000 years later, it is false. The Mosaic covenant has not vanished. Rather, *'am-Israel chai* ("the people of Israel lives"); and we live by virtue of our covenant, the old-new one, fresh, not aging, not vanishing now or ever."

Answer: Good rhetoric, but see [Heb 8:13](#).

By using the term, "new," he has made the first Covenant "old."

The author is not criticizing the Mosaic Covenant but merely making explicit what Jeremiah implied. Sha'ul had already used the phrase, "Old Covenant," at [2Co 3:14](#).

Is one to infer that the Jewish holidays, *Shabbat*, *kashrut*, civil laws, and moral laws of the Mosaic Covenant are **on the verge of vanishing altogether**? No, for the author could hardly have been unaware that the Mosaic Covenant presents itself as eternal; also the context shows that he is speaking only of its system of priests and sacrifices, not its other aspects. Since the laws concerning the sacrificial system constitute the majority of the Mosaic prescriptions, it is not an inappropriate figure of speech to say that the Old Covenant itself is aging and about to disappear.

What is actually on the verge of vanishing is the old priesthood, not the old covenant-or, perhaps we may say, not God's unchangeable nature which stands behind the old covenant.

The priesthood is the subject of the whole section (indeed, the sacrificial system is the subject of the whole letter), and it is this which is about to disappear or, at the very least, take on a very much transformed role (see [Heb 7:12](#)).

[Heb 7:12](#) For if the system of *cohanim* is transformed, there must of necessity occur a transformation of *Torah*.

On this verse Paul Ellingworth, who has also written a commentary on Hebrews, says: "This refers to the replacement of the old cult by the new, not to a change in the ethical or civil requirements of the *Torah*!"

The "old" *Torah* continues, and continues to have its same purpose, but there is now a new system of *cohanim*.

The **better promises** of the New Covenant were not invented by the author of the book of Messianic Jews but were announced by God in the *Tanakh* through the prophet Jeremiah ([Heb 8:10-12](#)). Having the *Torah* internalized is better than having it written out ([Heb 8:10](#); compare [Rom 2:13-29](#)), and it is better to have sins forgiven permanently than temporarily ([Heb 8:12](#); how this can happen is explained in Heb. 9:1-Heb. 10:18).

We don't see these things in Adonai's covenant made with Noah.

We don't see these things in Adonai's covenant made with Avraham.

We don't see these things in Adonai's covenant made with Moshe.

We don't see these things in Adonai's covenant made with David.

We find that these objections to the New Covenant just do not hold up.

We find that perspective and context are extremely important to the point that both have resulted in a mass separation of believers.

Remember, the problem isn't Scripture, it is theology.

Instead of objecting, finding excuses or justifying our decisions / actions, we should explore the New Covenant in order to understand its promises and conditions, so that we can obey it properly-with those of us who are Jewish doing so in the framework of staying Jewish, and those of us who are Gentile doing so in the framework of staying Gentile (see [1Co 7:18](#)).

[1Co 7:18](#) Was someone already circumcised when he was called? Then he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was someone uncircumcised when he was called? He shouldn't undergo b'rit-milah.

I can tell you from experience that your path will lead you closer to Adonai.

The church centered view in understanding the New Covenant is entirely different, to where it will potentially lead you down a different path. I used the term *shomer-mitzvot*, meaning keeper of the commandments, to which we don't see coming from a church perspective.

As an interesting exercise, when you ask a Christian about God's laws and their obedience towards them, I believe you will get some very interesting answers to the point where I believe a vast majority will not consider *Torah* as that

foundational aspect in their lives as a believer in Yeshua. You may hear, the 10 commandments, you may even hear the 2 commandments (Love God and Love one another, yet there will likely be little else. The majority of believers and their understanding of Torah in general and how it relates to them as believers in Yeshua specifically, is an enormous deficiency.

As a believer in Yeshua, Adonai has taken His finger and written His Torah on our hearts. Based on this truth alone, in that it is a foundational truth of the New Covenant, believers should be shomer-mitzvot. Unfortunately, I can't say that with confidence.

When more believers become shomer-mitzvot, you will see a renewed body of believers who will strengthen the body of Messiah. Who will stand for Adonai and pursue His righteousness. Who will impact society rather than being tossed aside by society.

We have received this promise, yet are we doing anything with this promise?