
Subject: Session 8: Hebrew Roots: SA in Crisis.

Dear Saints

Once again, thank you for all your responses. I haven't had time to respond to most of them, but hope to do so soon.

This session is a lengthy, but crucial one. At first I intended to split it into two sessions, but later decided that it represents one concept which should be treated as one.

Enjoy!

Eben Swart

Previously in: **Hebrew Roots: SA in Crisis:**

1. We saw how the Father is moving hundreds of thousands of believers worldwide from Institutional Churches into House Churches. But we see how large percentages of these in SA get entrapped into related movements: Sabbatarianism, Messianism, Torah Groups, Hebrew Roots and Talmudism. We believe this phenomenon could have either a blessed, or dire effect on the spiritual future of the Kingdom in SA.
2. We saw how Reformed Theology has declared the Torah obsolete. We saw how Torah-truths were rediscovered in our time. And we mentioned that some of these study groups become deceived.
3. We saw how Torah groups often commit the same evil that they have originally set out to oppose. We see dishonesty amongst some Torah followers concerning their viewpoints towards the Greek mindset and language.
4. The Hebrew language is neither original, nor holy. If we've made it into an idol, we need to repent of sin. The pictograms of the Hebrew *alefbet*, as well as its associated concepts and numbers are, at best, speculative. Neither they, nor the *parshahs*, may ever be employed to explain scripture or to prophesy.
5. Hebrew Roots teachers teach that the Biblical feasts aren't JEWISH feasts, but THE FATHER's feasts – but then celebrate them in extra-Biblical, Jewish tradition. This is dishonest.
6. Torah and Hebrew Roots teachers reject pagan and extra-Biblical feasts, but at the same time, some teach their followers to celebrate the extra-Biblical feasts of Purim and Chanukah, and even the fulfilled Pesach. Why? Simply because these feasts are Jewish! This too, represents dishonest and irresponsible teaching.
7. In their effort to “restore” the “sacred names” of the Godhead, Torah groups have embraced and propagated half-truths, and spread the lie far and wide that the name “Jesus” is of pagan origin. Also, Torah groups have invented a myriad of “original Hebrew names” for the godhead, thereby causing gross confusion in the Body.

In this issue:

The Nature of the New Covenant

The New Covenant Announced

In Jer. 31 the Father via his prophet announces the nature of his New Covenant – one of the most brilliant moves by anyone in world history! It was not really a NEW covenant – it was more of an EXPANDED or EXTENDED covenant. But the clauses added were completely new to the covenant: “*I shall write my Torah onto your innermost flesh, and onto your mind.*” In the NT, this process of writing the Torah onto our innermost flesh and minds is called “*circumcision of the heart*”.

What's the Difference?

Why was this such a brilliant move?

We lack space in this article for a lengthy explanation.

Suffice to say: Instead of instructions on **tablets of stone** (stone Torah) – which, from the OUTside, commanded rebellious people to do, and not to do specific things – those instructions were now written on the **fleshy tables of our hearts** (flesh Torah) in much more detail! – on the INside – urging us from within to do whatever is right.

Instead of doggedly striving to live a set apart life, wrestling against one's own urges, the New Covenant makes us WANT to do the right thing – urging us on from INside!

And instead of a **human rabbi** interpreting the stone Torah and explaining such Torah to his followers, we now have an **Inner Rabbi** – the Spirit of the Living Father – interpreting our flesh Torah. He knows the Torah perfectly. He perfectly explains to us not only what the written letter says, but also the Spirit or intent of the inner Torah: what it actually hopes to accomplish in our hearts. **This deeper meaning is totally absent from the content of the original stone Torah!**

The Spirit of the Father knows and searches the heart of the Father – that heart which can NEVER be adequately expressed in human language on tablets of stone (or pages of paper!). **The Spirit of the Living Father relays to us the intent (or Spirit) of the flesh Torah, as opposed to the instruction (or letter) of the stone Torah.**

The content of the Stone Torah

and the content of the Flesh Torah are radically different!

The difference between the New and Old covenants is almost like speaking face to face to a real person, as opposed to merely reading his books or letters. Similarly, observance of the Stone Torah is like reading the Father's Book and following the instructions according to the letter, whereas observance of the Flesh Torah is like speaking to the Father face to face, asking Him what He would want me to do in a specific situation, and receiving His detailed answer.

The Stone Torah acts from **without**; the Flesh Torah acts from **within**.
 The Stone Torah speaks from pages of a **Book**; the Flesh Torah speaks from the **Spirit**.
 The Stone Torah says: "**Do as I say!**"; the Flesh Torah says: "**Hear my Heart.**"
 The Stone Torah changes **behaviour**; the Flesh Torah changes **attitude**.
 The Stone Torah is a **system**; the Flesh Torah is a **relationship**.
 The Stone Torah **gives no reasons**; the Flesh Torah **explains intent**.
 The Stone Torah requires a **Book**, a **rabbi** and **obedience**; the Flesh Torah requires the **Spirit** (no book!), **listening** and **surrender**.
 The Stone Torah requires **study**; the Flesh Torah requires **a life lived**.
 Study of the Stone Torah yields **some measure of intellectual revelation**; living from the Flesh Torah yields **intimate relationship**.
 The Stone Torah **kills**; the Flesh Torah **gives life!**

Study of the Stone Torah reveals letters – and yields idioms, pictures, numbers, patterns and shadows – beautifully interweaved into the pages of a Book – but dead.

Living the Flesh Torah reveals a Person and His mindset – and yields understanding, intimacy, love and power in an abundant life!

Jesus explains the Difference

On the mountain (Mat. 5) Jesus explained this concept to his disciples six times in succession:

"You have heard that it was said ..." and He would quote a law from the Stone Torah. And then he would proceed: **"But I tell you ..."** and He would reveal to them **the Father's heart behind that particular law** – an intent – which was never expressed, and entirely **absent from the words of the Stone Torah**. This He does six times in succession. As a carpenter by trade, He was really knocking this nail in hard, and driving his point home!

So if anyone would still stubbornly insist that he and everybody else should keep the letter of the **Stone Torah** (and only that!), he would not only brutalize the Father's heart behind the Stone Torah (represented by the **Flesh Torah** on the tablets of our hearts), but I sincerely wonder what would be needed to change such a person's mind – since he obviously doesn't grasp what Jesus tries to explain repeatedly! How hard should Jesus have to drive the nail home for such an individual?

He was explaining to his disciples that the contents of the Stone Torah could never ever encompass what the Father had in mind when he gave those instructions (to Moses). Jesus revealed the intent or **Spirit** of the Torah (Flesh Torah), as opposed to the **letter** or body of the Torah (Stone Torah).

2 Cor. 3:3: *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; **not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.***

Eze 11:19 *I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will **remove** from them **their heart of stone** and **give** them a **heart of flesh**.*

Col. 2:11 *In him **you were also circumcised**, in the putting off of the sinful nature, **not with a circumcision done by the hands of men** but with **the circumcision done by Christ ...***

This circumcision done by Christ is the writing of the **Spirit of the Torah** on the **fleshy tables of our hearts**.

The **letter kills**, whereas **the Spirit gives life**:

*"He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for **the letter kills**, but **the Spirit gives life.**"* – 2 Cor. 3:6.

If you would stubbornly insist to follow the mere letter, then please die alone. Don't take others with you. Please don't infect others with your gospel of death.

Literal obedience to the letter, as opposed to literal obedience to the Spirit

Please don't get me wrong on this:

Because we're opposing obedience to the letter, don't think that we're opposing literal obedience. There's a BIG difference!

And because we're promoting obedience to the Spirit, don't think that we're promoting 'spiritual' obedience. There's a BIG difference!

We're **opposing** literal obedience to the **letter**.

We're **preaching** literal obedience to the **Spirit**.

We're NOT preaching 'spiritual' obedience to anything. In other words, we're not preaching some airy-fairy, non-specific obedience, just because we're in a covenant of the Spirit. Obedience is literal. If the Spirit tells you, you obey. Literally.

Righteousness that does not exceed that of the Pharisees.

In the verse preceding his six-fold explanation in Mat. 5, Jesus urges his disciples:

*"... for I tell you that unless your **righteousness** surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of Torah, **you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven**"* (Mat. 5:20).

In our day, many observers of the Stone Torah don't deem this verse to apply to them. They simply soothe their own consciences by telling themselves that they are very different from "the Pharisees and teachers of Torah" of Jesus' time.

Why?

Because they have accepted Jesus! "The Pharisees and teachers of Torah" of Jesus' time didn't. "That makes me different", they reckon. "I love Jesus. So this verse does not apply to me."

Really?

Let's take a hard look at that long-time favourite verse of modern-day Gentile Torah teachers:

If you love me, keep my commandments. – John 14:15

In the past, this verse has been misused abundantly to preach observance of the **Stone** Torah. Is that really what it says?

1. Did or didn't Jesus explain the difference between the Stone and Flesh Torahs six times in succession in Mat. 5? Did Jesus urge his disciples to obey what "was said of old" or to obey what He said, following "*but I tell you ...*"? Stone Torah or Flesh Torah?
2. Did or didn't Jesus proclaim himself "Lord of the Sabbath?" Was he reinforcing observance of Stone Torah or Flesh Torah?
3. Did or didn't Jesus have several squabbles with the Pharisees concerning the Stone Torah interpretation of several Mosaic laws?
4. Did or didn't Jesus command his disciples in the upper room to observe the signs of the New Covenant - of the Flesh Torah?

I'm afraid, my dear Stone Torah observing friend, if you are sticking to the letter of the Torah, you are NOT keeping the commandments of Jesus. His covenant with you is a **Flesh Torah covenant**, and you are seriously violating its clauses! If you loved Him, you would have kept his Flesh Torah. If you'd accepted Him, you would have observed His Torah of Flesh!

So, dear Stone Torah observer, you are NOT different than "the Pharisees and teachers of Torah". You testify that you accept Jesus, but you blatantly reject His flesh covenant. You testify that you accept Jesus, but you don't accept the terms and conditions of His covenant. Your righteousness does NOT exceed those of the Pharisees and teachers of Torah.

Do you embrace a **stone**, or do you embrace **Spirit**?

Are you **having intellectual relations with a system of rules**, or are you **searching out the Father's heart** via his Son?

Are you like the prodigal son's older brother who **perfectly obeys** his Father's rules (system), but has **no relationship** with Him, and cluelessly questions His heart?

Which voice do you primarily follow: The voice of the **stone Torah**, or the **inner voice of the Spirit**?

Have you ever cared to ask the Ruach to explain to you **the intent of the Father's heart** behind the laws you so doggedly observe?

Have you ever cared to take time **to listen** to what He might answer you?

DO YOU HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH A **BOOK**, OR A **PERSON**?

What would be left of your daily walk if your Bible were taken from you? Would you know the voice of the Spirit well enough to live a set apart life? What would happen to the activities of your Torah group if you don't have a Torah to study any more? If you have nothing more to say "How wonderful!" about?

ARE YOU OBEYING A **SYSTEM** OR A **PERSON**?

Why is it that I almost NEVER see anything about the meaning of the Flesh Torah in any Hebrew Roots or Torah teaching literature?

Why have I NEVER heard a Hebrew Roots or Torah teaching on this concept?

I personally think the answer is rather simple:

Torah teachers who only teach Stone Torah, simply **don't understand the New Covenant!** In their minds, the Flesh Torah **is an exact replica** of the Stone Torah. They reckon the Flesh Torah is just the Stone Torah written anew on flesh. BIG MISTAKE!

Whenever I explain this concept to Torah and Hebrew Roots teachers, and then inquire how they would define the **Spirit** of certain Torah instructions, they are invariably at a complete loss for words. It is obvious that they have never even contemplated the concept - i.e. what the writing on our flesh actually means.

Most of these teachers erroneously regard this as a mere metaphor. And because none of us **have human access** to the writing on our own flesh, they simply revert to the stone version. They sincerely believe that the flesh Torah is simply a fleshy rendition and an exact copy of the stone Torah! BIG MISTAKE!

That, dear friends, is **undeniable evidence of bondage. Bondage of the mind**. Caused by **observance of the letter of the stone Torah**. Which equates a **mental prison**.

Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts [mind]. - 2 Cor. 3:15

An Explanation in the Style of a Torah Class

Let me try to meet you where you're at, and explain this to you Torah-class style:

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life" - the three curtains of the temple. When, at His death on Golgotha, the "Life"-veil tore - it did not only yield us that famous, glorious bold access to the Mercy Seat. It also rendered us bold **access via the Shekinah to the Torah** on Stone within the Ark of the **Covenant**.

As our new, eternal High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, when He sat down in the holiest of holies, Jesus took over Aaron's blossoming rod as He rose from the tomb as a sign of being his Father's favourite - His Chosen One. As Bread of Life He took the place of the manna of the Mosaic order. He took out the "heart of stone" (tablets) and replaced it with a "heart of flesh" within the New Covenantal Ark of believers!

GLORY!

If this is NOT the case for you, dear reader, then you are in bondage: The steel doors of the Old Testament prison have clanged shut behind you! Did you notice the creaking of the keys as they locked you away?

The Terms and Conditions of the Covenantal Meal

Do you realize that you are actually **denying Messiah** by embracing a stone covenant? Do you realize that it's irrational to accept the **Person** of the covenant, whilst at the same time rejecting the **terms** of this Person's covenant?

Do you celebrate **Communion** (the signs of the New Covenant) **on YOUR terms**? If you celebrate a covenant of stone, then you are on YOUR terms! **Messiah is not in that!** His covenant is a covenant on flesh!

The actual observance of the letter of the Old Covenant (as opposed to obedience to the Spirit of the same Covenant) constitutes DIS-obedience to the New Covenant! Mere **obedience** to the letter of the former constitutes **rebellion** to the Spirit of the latter!

Example:

Just as current-day **observance** of the **sacrifices for sin** (as required by the Torah) would deny the sin-conquering work of Messiah, similarly any mere observance of the letter of any other part of the Torah, without the Spirit behind it, would constitute **denial of Messiah** and of His (New) covenant.

Being Torah-observant, but clueless concerning the intent behind each carefully observed law, constitutes **denial of Messiah**. Yes, dear friend, **your very salvation is at stake!** Jesus said that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of Torah, "**YOU WILL CERTAINLY NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!**" (Mat. 5:20.) This is serious!

The Spirit of the Torah.

There is only ONE way of accessing the Torah on our flesh. That is via the One who wrote it - the Ruach. And we need no other rabbi:

"As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him." - 1 John 2:27

Literal, blind obedience to the letter of the Torah results in spiritual death. Jesus was saying that teachers of Torah were missing the point. They missed the point by a millimeter, but missed it 100%. If you miss the Spirit behind the letter, you miss everything 100%.

Moreover, **if you miss the voice of our Spirit teacher** (or Rabbi), expounding the Torah from inside, and you stubbornly **cling to the letter, then you embrace death**. If you teach the letter of the Torah whilst missing the Father's intent behind it, your righteousness does not surpass that of the Pharisees and teachers of Torah of the time of Jesus. *"You will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."* Neither will your followers. And you, as their teacher, will be held responsible for their deception. This is a fearsome thing.

*"... for I tell you that unless your **righteousness** surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of Torah, **you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven**"* - Mat. 5:20

The Torah without the Spirit is dead. And it leads to death. Its goal was to find a way to deal with sin until Jesus would come. It merely **foreshadows** the fullness which Jesus, and the era of the Spirit, have brought.

The Ruach knows and searches the heart of the Father. The Ruach is also the Spirit of Jesus. He knows the letter of the Torah, but even more so, **He knows the heart, the intent, the meaning behind the Torah**. And as our Rabbi, He interprets, teaches, reminds, reprimands and convicts us.

*"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, **your ears will hear a voice** behind you, saying, *This is the way; walk in it.*"* - Is. 30:21

*"Since **we live by the Spirit**, let us **keep in step with the Spirit**."* - Gal. 5:25

*"So I say, **live by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."* - Gal. 5:16.

The Spirit of the Father will never contradict the Spirit of the Torah, although it might seemingly violate the letter of the Torah.

Example:

I have two teenage sons. As their father, I have made a rule in my house that **my boys should be in at 10 o'clock** on weekdays. That's my rule - the LETTER of my rule.

Why?

Because as an adult I know that bad things happen to the children of good people after 10 at night. And my boys lack experience to understand that. **I love my boys - and want them to be safe**. That's the SPIRIT of my rule.

But, say one of my boys would phone me at 10 o'clock on a Wednesday night, telling me that, due to unforeseen circumstances, he would sleep over at a friend's house.

If I know the parents and trust their judgment, I would have absolutely no objection to my son not sleeping in my own home that night - although he would be violating my instruction.

Why?

Because my intent, my heart, my meaning behind the letter of my rule has been fulfilled. **My son is safe**. That was **the reason, the intent, my heart** behind my rule.

The letter of my rule got violated, but the intent behind it was fulfilled. And I, the rule-maker, am perfectly happy.

Moreover, my rule was never in the first place about ME. It was about THEM. THEIR safety. Obedience to my rule is not about MY ego. It's primarily about THEIR safety. Likewise with the Father's rules. It's not primarily in HIS interest that we obey Him - it's in OUR own interest. If we disobey, HE loses nothing. WE lose. It's simply stupid to disobey.

And even more so: Once my boys have **grown up**, and start to understand WHY I, their dad, had made such a rule, they would gladly look after their own safety at night. **Then they no longer need my instructions in this regard.**

What made the difference?

They've developed the same heart as me, their dad.

As their dad, I would actually have liked to replicate myself WITHIN them, so I could speak to them 24 hours per day. This is exactly what the Father has done by his Spirit.

Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. - Gal. 3:25.

The Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the Torah in the time of Jesus simply never grasped this. They just couldn't ever wrap their minds around this principle. After all: **It's simply much easier to doggedly follow a set of written rules than to search out the heart of the Father**. They were missing the point by a millimeter, but missing it wholly. That's why they came into so much conflict with Jesus - the One who really understood what the Torah was all about, and knew the Father's heart behind it!

Conclusion:

If I learn to obey the voice of the Spirit within me, I would walk in perfect obedience to the Torah, even though I might violate its letter. And as I would gradually grow up in this process, I would have almost no need of the letter any more - since I would have developed the heart of the Father.

*... **when we were children, we were in bondage** under the elements of the world [a system of law like the Stone Torah]. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law [Stone Torah], to **redeem** those who were under the law [Stone Torah], that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the **Spirit** of His Son **into your hearts**, crying, "Abba, Father." - Gal. 4:3 - 6.*

This, to most Torah teachers, constitutes utter heresy.

But this, dear fellow believers, is exactly what the Scriptures say:

But if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law [or Stone Torah]. - Gal. 5:18

Scripture even says that **we will not be teaching each other LETTER any more** (since the Spirit - our inner Rabbi - shall lead us in the SPIRIT of the Torah):

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And **they shall not teach every man his neighbour**, and every man his brother, saying, **Know the Lord**: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.* - Heb. 8:10 - 11 (quoting from Jer. 31)

Ultimately, Jesus summed up **the Spirit of the entire Torah** (and the prophets) in a nutshell (Mat 23:37 - 38):

1. Love the Father thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind.
2. Love thy neighbour as thyself.

Maintaining Responsibility.

We are no longer in bondage - but this does not mean that we can now do whatever we want:

*For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only **use not liberty for an occasion of the flesh**, but by love serve one another.* – Gal. 5:13.

*But take heed lest by any means this **liberty** of yours **become a stumbling block** to those who are weak.* – 1 Cor. 8:9.

Biblical Example: **The Sabbath Day.**

What is the letter of the Sabbath commandment?

Well:

Which day of the week it should be celebrated.

When it should start.

When it should end.

What one should do.

What one shouldn't do.

Which rituals should be performed.

How these rituals should be performed.

What is the Spirit of the Sabbath commandment?

Jesus himself was very clear about that:

“The Sabbath was made for man; not man for the Sabbath.” – Mark 2:27.

The Sabbath is in service of man – not man in service of the Sabbath.

If we would comply only with the letter of the Sabbath day, then we'd scorn what Jesus said. Sabbath would become a Spirit-less exercise, a burdensome load which would actually accomplish the exact opposite of what it was intended for – it would put man in service of the Sabbath.

Right from the start, Scripture was unambiguously clear: **The Spirit of the Sabbath day was simply that man should REST one in every seven days** – so man would be BLESSED.

If one chose to ignore this grace, one would pay the dire consequences – in health, in finance and relationships.

God doesn't lose anything. **We** lose.

God never intended to force Shabbat onto man – then man would be made for the Sabbath, and Jesus would be a liar.

[There are absolutely no historical grounds for the claim that this expression of Jesus is a so-called “Hebrewism” – an idiomatic expression in Hebrew which shouldn't be taken literally.

Since this verse overthrows the legalistic Shabbat apple cart of many Torah teachers, they have dashed for this dishonest escape route.

For this expression to be a true “Hebrewism”, somebody needs to come forward with an original Hebrew text from the pre-Christian era where this phrase is clearly used as an idiomatic expression.

Such examples, I'm afraid, don't exist.]

How about having your Sabbath on a Thursday if the Spirit might lead you such? Having family time or just chilling? Without any rituals? Focusing on the voice of the Spirit inside? Enjoying true rest? True SHALOM!

Now, I know a Thursday would be inconvenient for most people. Society is not geared that way. But for me personally, a Tuesday is just perfect, since I often have to minister over weekends. It suits my schedule and allows me to take my wife for coffee so we can communicate on levels not possible on workdays. And a Tuesday has become my delight. I look forward to it. I use it to ponder the things above. It allows me to really REST. Yes, I keep the Sabbath Day – the New Covenant (flesh Torah) way – on a Tuesday.

And contrary to almost all Torah teaching, my family and I aren't cursed. The proof of the pudding, dear friend, is in the eating. Despite our vulnerability and many weaknesses, we are exceedingly blessed. This exposes regular Hebrew Roots and Torah group teachings on the Sabbath as a lie.

By his Spirit, Jesus has taught my family and I over many years to live **in the Spirit by faith** – not according to the first principles of the world **by letter**. Praise His Name for setting us free from the death-blows of the letter!

[If you don't agree with this, please don't send me all your Sabbath scriptures and arguments to sell me a tablet of stone. I know all those verses almost by heart. Over the course of many years, I've heard those arguments over and over, and have sincerely and honestly considered them all. I doubt whether you could offer me a new one. Have you sincerely and honestly considered the above? I reserve the right to simply reply with “Peace” if your email would reveal the opposite.]

To be continued ...