

DEUTERONOMY

Lesson 49 - Chapters 33 and 34 (End of Book)

This week we complete our nearly 5- year long journey through the Torah. After we complete the Torah we will begin the book of Joshua. Part of the reason for proceeding this way is because Joshua is often called the sixth book of the Torah. Joshua tells of the fulfillment of the Torah in the sense that it completes the journey of the Israelites from Egypt into the Promised Land. If we stopped at end of Deuteronomy then we would have Israel prepared to enter, standing on the border waiting for the Lord's signal to come into the place of rest that He has readied for them but the goal of the Exodus wasn't the journey itself; the goal lay at the end of the journey, the actual possession of the land.

We left off last time with Deuteronomy 33:9, Moses' blessing upon the priestly tribe of Levi. I ended with something that I want to take a moment to review and comment upon. It is the words of verse 9 in light of its counterpart in the New Testament, Luke 14:25.

Deuteronomy 33:9 says this:

^{CJB} Deuteronomy 33:9 *Of his father and mother (the Levites) he said, 'I don't know them'; he didn't acknowledge his brothers or children. For he observed your word, and he kept your covenant.*

This was referring back to the tragedy of Exodus 32 when Moses was returning from the summit of Mt. Sinai with the 10 Commandments in his arms only to find all of Israel making merry and worshipping a Golden Calf that Aaron, the soon-to-be High Priest of Israel, had fashioned for the people because they pressured him into doing it. Moses pronounced that God would destroy all of those who stayed in allegiance to that false-god, and then said that all who stood with Yehoveh should come and stand with him. Aaron, Aaron's sons, and the bulk of the tribe of Levi rushed to Moses' side at least partially because Moses was a Levite (so this was but simple tribal loyalty). On the other hand those who ran to Moses believed Moses' words that this was the point of decision; this was the moment that the people would be separated into those who were for God versus those who united themselves with another and different god.

It then became the unpleasant task of those loyal to the Lord Almighty to put to the sword the thousands of rebellious Hebrews who refused to turn from their idolatry; and among those who

would refuse and thus become targets were the very mothers, fathers, and children of some of those Levites who gathered together with Moses. Can you imagine the torment of those who thrust their swords and daggers into the hearts of their own parents, and in some cases their own sons and daughters? Yet despite this pitiful and awful duty of those in allegiance to Yehoveh, it was not of their own minds but at Yehoveh's order that they do it. They did not, of themselves, want to do it nor did they feel any animosity let alone hate towards their families and friends. It was a matter of obedience. And it was God's typical way, really, of meting out justice upon human beings; He regularly uses human beings to bring His justice to fruition.

It is in this backdrop that we have Yeshua's disturbing words from Luke 14 that have been so often misconstrued by Messiah's own disciples. There in verse 25 Yeshua says this to some Jews who were considering following Him:

^{CJB} Luke 14:25 *Large crowds were traveling along with Yeshua. Turning, he said to them,²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, his mother, his wife, his children, his brothers and his sisters, yes, and his own life besides, he cannot be my talmid.*

Although Yeshua was not suggesting that new disciples kill their relatives, or "hate" them in the common sense of the word "hate" today, it does mean that these potential disciples should "disregard" these relatives if they stand in the way of turning their lives over to Messiah. The message is that if your family makes you choose between a relationship with Christ and one with them, you must accept Him and reject them.

The Hebrew sense of what is commonly translated in English, as "hate" is to reject or to have no regard for, as opposed to our modern sense of the word "hate", which is to have the most intense level of dislike and disdain possible for somebody. So Jesus is not telling His would-be disciples that they are to develop an almost sociopathic animosity for their relatives, He's telling them that they must show no regard for the wishes of these close family members if they insist that the potential disciple is **not** to give loyalty to Yeshua as Lord and Savior.

Often this verse in Luke is held up (wrongly) against the commandment to "honor your mother and father". That is that Yeshua spoke a new command that abolished the former one. I know personally of cases, and others have spoken to me of cases, where a young man or woman has decided that he or she wanted to enter into Christian ministry and the parents have forbidden it. He or she goes ahead and does it anyway and this is considered as a tension between the Torah command of "honoring your mother and father" and Christ's command to "hate your mother and father" if necessary in order to do the work of Our Savior. While this does not necessarily answer the question of just what that young person ought to do in this circumstance, the point is that Jesus' statement in Luke is not in contrast to the Torah commandment to "honor our father and mother", it is in comparison to what happened at the

Golden Calf incident at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

By the way; don't ever think that what was required of God's loyalists out in the Wilderness is a thing of the past that you and I may not be confronted with because at the battle of Armageddon the line will be again drawn with those allied to Yehoveh on one side and those against on the other with no middle ground possible. And just as at one point it was all the Israelites who joined together in the idolatry of the Golden Calf, but at the Mediator's call some realized what they were doing and repented and stood again with God, so it is with every human being who is a Believer. Every one of us was born opposed to God, putting us in a similar position to those Israelites who worshipped the Golden Calf; and we had to at some point make a conscious decision to accept God's call to leave the old way with its loyalties and instead to come and stand with Him. As the Book of Revelation makes brutally clear, it will be our tragic duty (as those who choose to stand with Messiah Yeshua) to follow His orders to join Him in a Holy War, and as Holy Warriors to go against and kill all those who are still opposed to God; and that will in some cases include our own family members just as it did for the Levites. So if you have never found an urgency within yourself to bring the Good News to your family members, you might want to consider that in the not-too-distant future you may be standing before them, sword in hand, with no choice but to be the one who acts as God's agent to end their existence and send their dark souls into the everlasting fire. This is the human condition from which God is in the process of saving us; this is the devastating consequence of sin.

Therefore as a result of what the Levites did in verse 9 they have been rewarded with the privileges of verse 10; they will be the instructors of the people of Israel in righteousness and holiness, and they will serve the Lord directly by the various rituals set down in the Law.

Let's re-read part of Deuteronomy 33:

RE-READ DEUTERONOMY CHAPTER 33: 9 - end

The next tribe to receive Moses' blessing was Benjamin. Benjamin would occupy a small territory as a sort of buffer region between the two most powerful tribes: Ephraim and Judah. In fact Jerusalem and the Holy Temple would be built at the southern border of Benjamin's allotted territory. I see in the Apostle Paul a kind of prophetic spiritual illustration of Benjamin's geographical and political position; for St. Paul was a Benjamite, and he was assigned to interface with gentiles (he was to be a buffer between the Jews of Judah and gentiles).

Verse 12 says that Benjamin is "Adonai's beloved"; in other words Benjamin was looked upon with special favor and that the Lord would rest beside Benjamin. I think this is a direct reference to the Wilderness Tabernacle that would rest for a long time in Benjamin's territory

and then later the Temple would be built in Benjamite Jerusalem.

Verse 13 deals with Joseph or better put, **the Joseph tribes**. And the primary attributes of the Joseph tribes (who are represented by Ephraim and Manasseh) are fruitfulness and increase. This fruitfulness is even expressed within the meanings of the names of Yosef (may he increase) and Ephraim (God has made me fertile). And in that era the number one requirement for fruitfulness was rain and water; no rain meant no crops and no pastureland, which the meaning of the statement about dew from the sky.

In the CJB we see the 6-fold use of the word “best” for what will come to the Joseph tribes. The Hebrew word, though, is **meqed** and probably a better word to translate it is bounty or abundance. The bounty from the deep is referring to springs and fountains from underground water sources. The abundance of sun is needed for crops, and in Israel there is so much sun that they can generally produce four crops per year. Since months and seasons were measured by the moons and their phases this mention of the bounty of the moon is (as are all previous references) agricultural. The bounty of the mountains and hills were trees, wood, limestone, precious metals, and various kind of food. And then it is said that all this fruitfulness is to be on the head of Joseph who is the prince among his brothers.

Let me remind you because unless and until we understand the position of Joseph and his representative tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and the position of Judah, then we can misunderstand much prophecy and many New Testament passages. Joseph received HALF of the firstborn blessing of his father Jacob. The other half of that firstborn blessing went to Judah. The traditional Hebrew firstborn blessing consisted of two parts: one part was the transference of power and authority over the tribe or nation to the firstborn son, and the other part was the giving of more material wealth to the firstborn than to the rest of the inheritors. This latter part was called the “double-portion” blessing because, in general, the firstborn received twice as much as any of his siblings. In a very unusual act that violated Middle Eastern custom, Jacob DIVIDED the firstborn blessing and gave the authority over the nation to Judah, and the double-portion of wealth to Joseph. Or better yet the double-portion blessing was assigned to Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who had been elevated into a status on par with Jacob’s sons instead of their natural position as Jacob’s grandchildren.

But then we get this strange epithet about the Joseph tribes in verse 17 that says that he is like a firstling bull in majesty and that he has horns like a Wild Ox. A firstling Bull is one of the highest sacrifices that can be offered at the Tabernacle, 2nd only to the mature 3-year old bull and it denotes great strength. A Wild Ox goring its enemies is symbolic of a strong warrior that is mighty in battle. So we go from the Joseph tribes being fruitful to they’re also being great in numbers, possessing a great army, and being good warriors. Then the relative proportions of the Joseph tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, are spoken of in prophetic terms: Ephraim will consist of myriads (tens of thousands), Manasseh will consist of thousands. This has proven to be accurate; Ephraim eventually dominated the northern regions of Israel with 9 other northern

tribes (including his brother tribe Manasseh) coming under its dominance. They also eventually extended their reach to the ends of the earth but it came in an ironic way; they were conquered by the Assyrians and forcibly scattered throughout the vast Asian continent. The bulk of the people of the 10 tribes that were scattered quickly became gentiles as they mixed so thoroughly with the many gentile races of Asia that they lost their Hebrew identity (this was prophesied by Hosea and Isaiah, and in the Book of Hosea God said that those 10 tribes would become a *lo-ammi*, a non-people, to Him). However as we have only recently discovered, a representative remnant of each and every one of those supposedly 10 lost and extinct tribes has been found, intact, and each with a strong identity to its ancient Israelite tribal name and heritage. Not surprisingly one of the largest of those discovered “lost” tribes is Manasseh, and many of them are now making aliyah (immigration) to Israel.

Zebulun is the next tribe discussed. Verse 18 tells the people of Zebulun to rejoice in their journeys; Zebulun has always been associated with being trade merchants. Issachar is likewise told to rejoice in their tents; tents were the permanent homes for herders because they were mobile. Issachar has always been associated with herding and ranching. A strong tradition about Issachar and Zebulun is also echoed in verse 19; they formed a solid partnership and allegiance with one another that brought prosperity to them both.

Gad receives his blessing in verse 20. Enlarging Gad means to increase the population. Gad was one of the 3 tribes that, all or in part, decided to accept territory OUTSIDE of the Promised Land as their portion. Gad received perhaps the most outstanding pasture and crop lands of any of the tribes. Gad was also known for having highly trained troops, although not necessarily the largest army, therefore the symbolism of fierce warriors is used as the verse says Gad lies there as a Lion ready to attack. Verse 21 brings up this matter of Gad choosing to stay outside the Promised Land when it says he chose for himself the best. “The best” means prime, excellent; land.

Dan, like Gad, is said to have lion-like strength and battle ability. The tribe of Dan was originally assigned lowlands that abutted the infamous Philistines’ territory, and later (mainly as a result of being harassed by those Philistines) migrated to the farthest northern reaches of Canaan. There they conquered the cult city of Laish, changed its name to Dan, and fell away from God and into terrible idolatry.

Naphtali was blessed with very fertile territory that was located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was beautifully watered; the land was rich and the climate temperate. Having the advantage of the bounty of the Sea plus the fertile land gave Naphtali an almost idyllic location as anyone who has traveled to that area knows. They were also given the privilege of being the territory where the Messiah would be raised in the town of Nazareth.

Asher is also blessed with fertility for he settled in the upper Galilee between Naphtali and the

Mediterranean Sea. The phrase that says that Asher was the “favorite of the brothers” is poorly translated; it means the “the most favored” among the brothers in the sense that Asher was greatly blessed. Saying that Asher would “dip his foot in oil” is not referring to petroleum; it means olive oil. And indeed that region was known for the high quality olive oil it produced. Dipping his foot in the oil is thought to mean that there was a great abundance of olive oil in his territory.

Since Asher occupied the area that a major trade route and military highway crossed they had both the benefit and danger that came because of it. Therefore Moses blesses Asher with the wisdom and strength to take advantage of the economic situation and to guard against foreign armies by building stout defenses for security.

Beginning in verse 26, having blessed each tribe individually, Moses concludes by celebrating the good fortune of Israel as a whole congregation to be under the watchful eye of Yehoveh. But before we go there, I wonder if anyone has noticed that not every tribe has been mentioned in this blessing? One has been skipped: Simeon. Let’s talk about that for a moment.

Simeon and Levi were the two sons of Jacob who received what essentially amounted to curses instead of blessings at Jacob’s deathbed blessing of his children. Some years later Levi showed great merit at the Golden Calf incident and so wound up being selected as the Lord’s designated priests despite Jacob’s curse on them that would manifest itself in other ways. But what of Simeon? Simeon was cursed along with Levi because together the two conspired to attack the helpless residents of Shechem in ages past, for family revenge. History proves that Simeon wound up as a very small, non-influential tribe and found itself completely surrounded by Judah’s territory so it was pretty well doomed from the get-go. Not terribly long after the tribes of Israel settled in Canaan the tribe of Simeon was absorbed by Judah and they vanished as a separate territory and generally speaking as a separate self-governing tribe. However as was usual for tribal societies the memory of the family of Simeon continued on and so many Hebrews identified themselves as having that tribal heritage even though it no longer functioned as a tribe.

Here is what I find interesting: we have Moses’ last words in Deuteronomy 33 as spoken to the 12 tribes but one of the tribes (Simeon) had been cursed and so is left out, leaving just 11 tribes. It has always been noticed that just as there were 12 original tribes of Israel, there were also 12 original disciples of Jesus. One of these disciples was an infamous man named Judas Iscariot. There is some argument over what “Iscariot” means; some say it is referring to a geographical region called K’riot. Others say it is a play on the word “Sicari”. Recall that Judas was a fundamentalist militant who was trying to foment another Jewish rebellion against the Jews’ oppressor, Rome. Judas’ actions show just how radical he was in turning Yeshua over to the authorities when he decided that Yeshua was not going to be the Deliverer of Israel that Judas had hoped for, because Jesus simply was not a military leader with insurrection on

His mind.

Judas was a Zealot; Zealot was the name of a Jewish political party. They might be compared with Zionists today; people who feel that only Jews should occupy and/or govern the Holy Lands. One faction of the Zealot party was called the Sicarri; these men were out and out assassins who tried to enforce their brand of Judaism and patriotism on everyone else by intimidation. Everything considered I tend to come down on the side of Iscariot indeed being a word play of the term Sicarri, and Judas likely being a known Sicarri radical, because it simply fits the circumstances like a glove.

Where did Judas come from and who was his family? The other disciples were Galileans but not much is known about Judas; yet we do find a very tantalizing piece of information in ^{CJB} **John 13:26 Yeshua answered, "It's the one to whom I give this piece of matzah after I dip it in the dish." So he dipped the piece of matzah and gave it to Y'hudah Ben-Shim'on (Judas son of Simeon) from K'riot.**

What makes this tantalizing is that here we find that Judas is called the son of Simon, or as here in the CJB, Shim'on. Here's the thing: Simon, Shim'on, and Simeon (as in the tribe of Simeon) are all the same Hebrew name, just transliterated into variant English spellings. It was the norm in the Bible era to identify a person by his tribe, so a Hebrew with the family name of Shim'on would usually be expected to be attached by heritage to the tribe of Shim'on, Simeon. You wouldn't, for example, name a person Levi if they were of the tribe of Ephraim, or Manessah if they were from Dan.

So almost certainly Judas was from the tribe of Simeon, long ago absorbed into the Judah tribe, but still remembering its family heritage by retaining the family name Simeon.

OK with that background, watch this: Moses was giving his final words to the 12 tribes only hours before his death. And in his final words (words that amount to a series of individual prophetic blessings over the tribes) Moses mysteriously leaves out Simeon who had been given a cursed prophetic future by Jacob. So the blessing of Moses was only upon 11 of the 12 tribes. We fast-forward 13 centuries to the time of Yeshua. The night before He is to die Jesus is giving His final words to His disciples by means of offering blessings at the Passover table. All 12 disciples are there but one, Judas, disappears and fetches the Temple Guard who arrests Yeshua and turns him over to the Romans to be tried and executed. Judas who is from the tribe of Simeon (as his family name implies) is cursed by his act and then commits suicide, and now there are only 11 disciples.

Knowing the power of God-patterns it is difficult for me not to see the prophetic pattern established in the Blessing of Moses over the 12 tribes carried forward into the blessings by

Messiah Yeshua over the 12 disciples. The circumstances are eerily familiar, the fact that Moses and Jesus were both blessing 12 is the same, that it was immediately before their deaths that is the same, that one of the 12 was removed is the same, and that the one who was removed is associated with the Simeon tribe, the cursed tribe, is the same.

Back to the blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy 33; Moses is now addressing all the tribes as a group and as he began his final words by acknowledging the greatness of the God of Israel, he ends those words with the same message as at the beginning. He pleads with Israel (once again referred to as Yeshurun, upright one) to understand that it is pointless to ever fall into worshipping other gods because none measures up to Yehoveh. Among the things that Yehoveh does for Israel from His heavenly throne is to help them in time of need, to be a refuge for them, and to support Israel.....to be a foundation and underpinning for Israel. And since God is from everlasting to everlasting, He will always be there for them.

Moses reminds Israel that it was the Lord who drives out the enemy before them.

It is the Lord who causes Israel to dwell in safety and security.

It is the Lord who gives Israel abundant rain that brings about plentiful grain and wine.

It is the Lord who has delivered Israel from Egypt.

It is the Lord who constantly watches over Israel and protects them against the known and unknown dangers.

And if they will be faithful to the Lord, the Lord will make Israel's enemies cringe, fall on their faces before Israel, and Israel will put their foot on their enemy's back. This is a rather standard image for that time; a victor pushes the vanquished to the ground and places his foot on his upper back by his neck as an indication that the former enemy is now fully under the victor's control.

Let's move on to Deuteronomy 34.

READ DEUTERONOMY 34 all

Grandfather Moses, after blessing those he has cared for day and night for the past 40 years as God's right hand man; and after having a few hours or perhaps a day or two to bask in the glow of how far Israel had come and the tremendous opportunity that lay ahead of them, now ascends Mt. Nebo to die. Verse 1 says that Nebo is in the Pisgah mountain range and opposite

Jericho (Nebo is on the east bank and Jericho on the west bank of the Jordan River). Jericho, by the way, is widely acknowledged even by secular archeologists as the world's oldest known city.

From Mt. Nebo Moses was shown, by God, the Promised Land that Moses' people would inherit. The order of the tribes' territories called out here in Deuteronomy 34 is as if Moses turned his head to the right and then slowly swiveled it towards the left in a panorama. It's as though his eyes were sweeping from the northernmost part of the land back towards the west, and then to the south. And says the Lord, THIS is the land I have sworn to your ancestors.

I have made this point before but let me make it again as emphatically as I know how; the land of Canaan was the Promised Land for Israel, and no other. There is no alternative place that the Lord has prepared for Israel, and there is no alternative people who have a right to occupy that land. There is no option A or B. Over the centuries, and even within the last 100 years, there have been serious efforts by powerful men and national leaders to establish a NEW Jewish homeland in Europe, in Africa, anywhere but in the place that the Lord set apart for the Hebrews. From the very day a little over 60 years ago that the UN voted to allow the Jewish people to have a Jewish nation in their ancient homeland, the world's leaders have openly regretted it and never cease to try to reverse that reality.

I have no intention of making a political statement but it is obvious that the current Obama Administration, the Bush Administration it replaced, and the Clinton Administration before it, had and continue to have no interest in honoring the Biblical holy lands for what they are; a holy place (like no other place on earth) that belongs only to God, and is set aside for a specific people. It doesn't matter how many photos there are of these presidents bowing their heads praying, or calling on the name of Jesus in public, or standing up and speaking of defending Israel and Israel's right to exist; the Israel they wish to defend is an Israel they wish to invent and define on their own terms. This is greatly offensive to the Lord and we will all pay an enormous price, sooner than later, for such arrogance by our elected leaders as to push for a Palestinian State in the Promised Land, to declare that Islam should have the legitimate right to maintain a pagan shrine to a false god on the Temple Mount, and for our indifference to their decisions. Nations and empires have arisen and fallen for underestimating or ignoring the Lord and trying to take from His hand what belongs to Him alone.

Could Moses have seen with his human eyes all the way from Dan in the north to Zebulun in the west and Judah in the south? Of course not. No mountain peak was of sufficient height to allow that. But since the scriptures say that "**the Lord** showed him the whole land" I suspect that Yehoveh enabled Moses to "see" in a supernatural way a land that could not otherwise be viewed except from outer space or an orbiting satellite.

Tradition is that Moses died 6 months to the day after his brother Aaron, the High Priest, died.

It was in the month that would later be called Adar, which corresponds to late February or early March. The Lord Himself buried Moses and his actual burial place was therefore kept secret. What could be the Lord's purpose for doing this? Undoubtedly so that a shrine would not be built aggrandizing Moses and so that the place would not become one where armies fought in the name of one religion or another (as men have been wont to do ever since there were armies) over what religious authorities would declare to be a holy place. I think it is significant that despite the amazing record of Jesus' ministry and passion on the cross that there is no definitive map of where His body was buried (entombed, actually) even for that short 3 day period of time.

The Garden Tomb that one visits today in Jerusalem is but a guess, and there is absolutely NO evidence that this was Yeshua's tomb, although it is very much like the tomb he actually was laid to rest in. How is it that such a widely witnessed and attested event would not have the precise location of that tomb identified? Because if it were certain, there would be a shrine made there and people would worship the place instead of God. All one has to do is visit the Via Delarosa, the traditional path that Jesus walked as he headed towards Calvary, to see the gaudy, overdone, gold encrusted churches and shrines with their statues, and their marble floors with locations marked where Jesus supposedly stood, or knelt, or bled.

Verse 7 tells us that Moses was 120 years old when he died and that he was in good health and his eyesight intact. When we go back to Genesis we find that the Lord pronounced that 120 years was given as a life span for men; yet we also find that many lived lives well beyond that age, and others much shorter. 120 years is some type of idealized life span in the Lord's mind, so it is no coincidence that Moses lived precisely that long.

Moses would be mourned for the standard mourning period, 30 days. For that 30 days Israel stayed at their camp in Moab, preparing to enter the Promised Land, to be led by their new military and civil leader Joshua. We are told that Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom "because Moses had laid hands upon him". This is a widely misconstrued verse. It sounds in plain English as though Moses somehow, supernaturally, put the spirit of wisdom into Joshua by means of ritually laying his hands on him. In fact this is an idiomatic expression that describes a common act involving the new and former leaders of a nation.

The outgoing leader would lay his hands upon the incoming leader in a public ceremony as a gesture and physical confirmation of transferring authority over the nation. Nothing supernatural is hinted at in that process. Rather it is made clear in the scriptures that God gives the spirit of wisdom to all the leaders of Israel. So BECAUSE Joshua became the leader of Israel (as indicated by Moses laying hands on Joshua) **then** GOD gave Joshua a spirit of wisdom in order to properly lead His people.

Moses was never equaled by another prophet.....until Yeshua of Nazareth 1300 years later.

Jews, other than for Messianics, would vehemently disagree with that statement of course. And the reason for this statement of verse 10 is to make it clear that as great and venerated and valid would the coming prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and others be they were not like Moses in status. Nothing they would say could **ever** override what Moses said. Nothing would be added to Scripture in the future by means of those words that God's prophets would utter that could override the principles and laws contained in Moses' words. And let me tell you church, if the prophets of God couldn't override Moses neither can a Pastor, or a priest, or a Pope a Bishop or a Rabbi, or even a popular televangelist. Let me also tell you in complete confidence that neither did Yeshua's words override Moses' words. I don't have to speculate on this because that's exactly what Messiah said. I refer you (this one last time before we complete our study of the Torah) to Yeshua's own undisputed words of Matthew 5:17 –19.

^{CJB} Matthew 5:17 "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete."¹⁸ Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yod or a stroke will pass from the Torah- not until everything that must happen has happened.¹⁹ So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus brackets the subject of whether He came to do something or anything to the books of Torah and the Prophets in this way: He says in these verses of Matthew that on the one hand He did not come to do away with them in their entirety, and on the other that He didn't come to change even one tiny letter of it. That's about as thorough and sweeping of a statement that a Jew could make on the subject.

Now Christ was indeed a greater prophet and a greater Mediator than Moses. Yeshua was and remains and always shall be the ultimate prophet and Mediator because He is also our Redeemer. But even He, with such absolute authority from Yehoveh that He said if you've seen me you've seen the Father, said outright that He did **not** come to abolish, change, subtract from, add to or even challenge the words of Moses.

So in the coming weeks, months and perhaps years (as the Lord wills it), as we study together more of the Old Testament and incorporate into our study the words of the New Testament, keep what I just told you as a touchstone. For to stick to the Torah is life, to deviate from it is death.

This ends our study of the 5 books of Moses, the Torah.