

“INFUSION OF THE HEART”

A devotional study by Pat Adamson

5-14-11

When Sha’ul (Paul) wrote his 2nd letter to the Messianic community in Corinth, he wrote intending to provide additional assurance of his ministry and calling as an apostle. He wrote on a very personal level both commending and assuring the Corinthian believers that to him, they were a living “letter written on his heart” (3:2-3). He assured the Corinthians that his own confidence and competence came from HaShem (3:4-5). But then continuing in verse 6, Sha’ul launches into some rather difficult statements about the believer’s New Covenant relationship to Torah.

Let’s first read the text and then attempt to cut through some of the confusion. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 in verses 2 through 18 Sha’ul writes,

*(2) “You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, **written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.** (3) “You make it clear that you are a letter from the Messiah placed in our care, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living G-d, **not on stone tablets but on human hearts.** (4) Such is the confidence we have through the Messiah toward G-d. (5) It is not that we are competent in ourselves to count anything as having come from us; on the contrary, our competence is from G-d. (6) **He has even made us competent to be workers serving a New Covenant, the essence of which is not a written text but the Spirit. For the written text brings death, but the Spirit gives life.** (7) Now if that which worked death, by means of a written text engraved on stone tablets, came with glory – such glory that the people of Isra’el could not stand to look at Moshe’s face because of its brightness, even though that brightness was already fading away – (8) won’t the working of the Spirit be accompanied by even greater glory? (9) For if there was glory in what worked to declare people guilty, how much more must the glory abound in what works to declare people innocent! (10) In fact, by comparison with this greater glory, what was made glorious before has no glory now.*

(11) For if there was glory in what faded away, how much more glory must there be in what lasts. (12) Therefore, with a hope like this, we are very open – (13) unlike Moshe, who put a veil over his face, so that the people of Isra'el would not see the fading brightness come to an end. (14) What is more, their minds were made stone-like; for to this day the same veil remains over them when they read the Old Covenant; it has not been unveiled, because only by the Messiah is the veil taken away. (15) Yes, till today, whenever Moshe is read, a veil lies over their heart. (16) "But," says the Torah, "whenever someone turns to ADONAI, the veil is taken away." (17) Now, "ADONAI" in this text means the Spirit. And where the Spirit of ADONAI is, there is freedom. (18) So all of us, with faces unveiled, see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord; and we are being changed into his very image, from one degree of glory to the next, by ADONAI the Spirit."
(CJB: 2 Corinthians 3:2-18 – my **bold**)

Let's take a moment to unpack this a little bit. I think we all agree that in reading this passage there is a lot being said about New Covenant realities and how to walk as a child of the King. With this in mind, we will briefly investigate three things:

1. What is the tablet of the heart? (verses 2-6)
2. What is fading away? (verse 11) and,
3. What is the veil? (verse 14)

1. Tablet of the heart

First, let's take a look at the expression, "tablet of the heart."

"Tablet of the heart" is a Hebrew metaphor that expresses spiritual orientation. This orientation can either be negative (Jer. 17:1) or said in a positive way as communicated here with Sha'ul's letter (v. 2-6). So the expression, "tablet of the heart" is a Hebrew idiom for spiritual orientation and speaks of commitment, purpose and passion – it's the center of one's being and that which motivates the will.

In this passage of Scripture, Rav Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) is comparing the written text of G-d's Word against the much greater, much more important influence of the

Spirit on the human heart (*“the letter kills but the Spirit gives life”*). At first blush it would appear that one option is the polar opposite of the other, i.e.: “the letter/text” vs. “the Spirit.” I think we would all agree that without the Spirit it is impossible to know G-d. Unfortunately, this where traditional streams of Christian teaching often end and very often the antinomian (anti-Law) conclusion is:

Torah = BAD . . . Spirit = GOOD

What is very important to understand in this passage (and elsewhere) is that Sha’ul is NOT calling the Torah bad, nor is he calling the Torah a source of death! We must question: *How could he possibly be saying this? And, does Scripture really support this conclusion?* If this truly is what Sha’ul is communicating here then he would be hopelessly contradictory to Yeshua’s instructions (Matt. 5:17-20) and to his own (Sha’ul’s) teaching and life example. In Acts 21 long after being called as an Apostle, he followed Torah as an example to other students. And in the 7th chapter of his letter to the Romans, in verse 12 Sha’ul says that the Torah is *“holy, righteous and good!”* Now this may seem to be an apparent contradiction, but here’s the key:

The Torah cannot be fully apprehended apart from the infusion of G-d’s Spirit and the Spirit does not communicate Truth in violation of the Torah.

This Biblical axiom is absolutely essential in understanding our text in 2 Corinthians.

So why then does Sha’ul call the Torah a source of death (v.6)?

Torah is merely a source of conviction, condemnation and death apart from the life-giving infusion of G-d’s Spirit. But in concert with the Holy Spirit the Torah comes alive in a believer’s heart.¹ In other words, it is not an “either/or”

¹ This is why Yeshua said, *“Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah – not until everything that must happen, has happened.”* Matthew 5:17-18 CJB

proposition, i.e.: the Torah or the Spirit. Rather than working in opposition to each other – they both flow together in perfect harmony.

And mark my word, even religious leaders whether they are pastors, rabbis, teachers (or whatever) are not immune to this axiomatic Scriptural principle. I am NOT saying that all people in the Tanakh (the “Older” Covenant) only functioned in the flesh and apart from G-d’s Spirit. There were and there are to this day, Jewish people who are walking the ancient paths of Torah with New Covenant realities filling their hearts!

2. Fading away

OK, what was in the process of fading away (v.11)? Let’s read it once more.

*(7) “Now if that which worked death, by means of a written text engraved on stone tablets, came with glory – such glory that the people of Isra’el could not stand to look at Moshe’s face because of its brightness, even though that brightness was already fading away – (8) won’t the working of the Spirit be accompanied by even greater glory? (9) For if there was glory in what worked to declare people guilty, how much more must the glory abound in what works to declare people innocent! (10) In fact, by comparison with this greater glory, what was made glorious before has no glory now. (11) **For if there was glory in what faded away, how much more glory must there be in what lasts.**” (2 Corinthians 3:7-11)*

In this passage, Sha’ul takes a “kal v’chomer” approach by using comparison. “Kal v’chomer” was a very common technique used by ancient rabbis to argue a point – it was the use of rational discourse to support a conclusion. Kal v’chomer argues from light to heavy or from less to more. In other words, if something is true in a lesser sense, then how much more so is it true in a greater sense (or application)! Yeshua used this form of argumentation often against His antagonists (i.e.: Matt. 12:11-12a, etc.). In 2 Corinthians 3:11, Sha’ul uses a kal v’chomer argument by comparing the veiled glory of Moshe at Sinai with the unveiled glory manifested in those who believe.

Both the Mishkan (the Tabernacle) and the Temple anticipated the future reality when G-d would open the floodgates of His grace and pour out His Spirit upon the

faithful. Today, in light of Yeshua's sacrifice and resurrection, we celebrate G-d's Spirit infused within us which ratifies the Living Torah written on our hearts!

The Book of Hebrews also takes a kal v'chomer approach when it identifies those things of the Old Covenant that are "ready to disappear": the Temple Priesthood; the sacrificial system; and the blood of livestock which served in a limited fashion as a temporary covering for sin. By using the kal v'chomer comparison (lesser to greater), the writer of Hebrews declares how much greater Yeshua is as Prophet, Priest, and King! He is the Mediator of a new and a better Covenant. But again, it's important for the reader to understand that New Covenant reality does not diminish Torah but rather affirms its beauty and Truth!

Apart from Yeshua's Spirit the Old Covenant is powerless and fading away (Heb. 8:13). But today, the reality of what Yeshua accomplished is at the heart – it is the warp and woof of our Messianic belief. The Scriptures have not changed – WE have. Our spiritual orientation to G-d; to life; and to Torah is changed.

A simple illustration may help. As a teenager, if your father texted you to mow the lawn, you may look at his request begrudgingly as an unpleasant task – a chore. It may be the very last thing you would want to do because it would interfere with your day. But, nevertheless, you roll up your sleeves and bear down because you know there are other benefits you will derive from obedience.

Now consider this . . . what if your relationship with your father was so important to you – your love for him was so great, that any request from him was never viewed as obligatory but rather as an opportunity to honor and bless him? This is the believer's New Covenant orientation. The old orientation motivated by obligation is now replaced with a heart of love for our Savior who first loved us. Whatever our Heavenly Father asks in His Word should be viewed as an opportunity to glorify Him in our actions.

True belief throughout the centuries has desired to honor G-d in Spirit and in Truth. Even so, as a result of anti-Jewish/anti-Torah traditions, apparent contradictions have crept into the Christian understanding of Paul's epistles.

Sha'ul (Paul) validated his L-rd's instructions through Torah observance (Acts 21)², and he never wavered in this because his new motivation was *not through obligation*, it was through love for his Savior who spiritually opened his eyes on the road to Damascus.

Most of us have not had a conversion like Paul, but our hearts are no less transformed. And we should learn from him that Bible-study is empty without the Spirit to fuel it properly. Like having a car but failing to put fuel into it, our Bible study is merely an exercise of the mind until the Spirit of G-d fills it (INFUSION!). You see, the Scriptures are not intended merely to be understood, they are intended to be acted upon and this can only happen if the words are written on the tablets of a person's heart (Jer. 31:31-33). Eternal Salvation written on the tablets of our hearts! Eternal Redemption written on the tablets of our hearts! Grace, love, hope and shalom written on the tablets of our hearts! Freedom to live a Torah-centered lifestyle written on the tablets of our hearts! Such a deal!

Torah therefore, is no longer external and veiled –

It's now INTERNAL and revealed!

We no longer keep the Torah in an obligatory sense – we keep it out of love for Yeshua who first loved us. Amen?

In Jeremiah 31, the only place in Scripture that prophesies the New Covenant, the Prophet says that this New Covenant will not be like the Old. Why? What makes it different? INFUSION – G-d's Spirit indwelling each believer as a direct result of Yeshua's sacrifice!

² Acts 21:20 CJB “On hearing it, they praised God; but they also said to him, “You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah.”

3. The Veil

Finally, what about the “veil?” What is veiled? Let’s look at our text once more. Beginning in verse 14 it reads,

*(14) What is more, their minds were made stone-like; for to this day the same veil remains over them when they read the Old Covenant; it has not been unveiled, because **only by the Messiah is the veil taken away.** (15) Yes, till today, whenever Moshe is read, a veil lies over their heart. (16) "But," says the Torah, "whenever someone turns to ADONAI, the veil is taken away." (17) Now, "ADONAI" in this text means the Spirit. And where the Spirit of ADONAI is, there is freedom. (18) So all of us, with faces unveiled, see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord; and we are being changed into his very image, from one degree of glory to the next, by ADONAI the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:14 CJB)*

At this time in HaShem’s prophetic plan the Jewish people are veiled from seeing their Messiah – their spiritual understanding is occluded. Why? So that the plans and purposes of G-d will also be manifest among the nations until the time of the Gentiles is complete (Luke 21:24). The Jewish people today are veiled from appreciating how universally relevant Torah is for the world – perhaps especially for Messianic believers who see Yeshua as the living expression of Torah. And on the flip side, traditional expressions of Christianity are also veiled because very often Christian theology dismisses the Torah as irrelevant.

To me and to others, Torah is universal in much the same way Yeshua’s sacrifice is for everyone. Both Yeshua and the Torah are eternal and both express the very heart of G-d to the world. And in these Scriptures we learn that eventually all nations (all people) will be called to repentance (Luke 24:27). May I ask . . . repentance from what? Think about it for a moment. If Torah only applies to the Jewish people, then the nations have no reason at all to repent . . . right?³ In truth, all nations and people are connected to Torah in some way, but this message (the universality of Torah) is barely trickling out from mainstream synagogues and churches. Thus, there remains a spiritual veil covering this truth from the minds of

³ 1 John 3:4 CJB “Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah – indeed, sin is violation of Torah.”

the Jewish people. And in the church, people are veiled from seeing the value Torah-living brings into relationship with Yeshua (Matt. 5:19).

But the most notable “veil” that still covers the eyes of the Jewish people is the Messiahship of Yeshua. Is He or is He not, The Messiah? We all have met people – Jewish people, either friends or relatives that, the minute the Name Jesus (or even Yeshua) is discussed, immediately the defense walls go up! It’s not easy discussing Yeshua’s Messianic qualifications with folks that equate Christianity with Hitler.

Now to some, this “veil” might sound pretty thin because the Biblical qualifications for Yeshua are so strong. But since this covering is a spiritual veil, it remains incredibly strong and cannot be penetrated by human means. It’s ONLY by the Spirit of the Living G-d that this veil can be lifted revealing the Truth of Messiah to the Jewish people. That’s why prayer is so absolutely essential in reaching out to the lost – perhaps especially to our Jewish friends and relatives.

All true-blue believers today have been infused by the Spirit of G-d. And with the grace we have been given, we are now enabled to walk out the righteous requirements of Torah – *not to gain anything*, but only to honor HaShem in obedience, out of love for Him. With believers today the spiritual veil occluding our understanding has been (or is in the process of being . . .) removed. We still see in a mirror dimly (1 Cor. 13:12) but an awakening is happening among the Jewish people and in the churches because our hearts are being infused with His Spirit allowing the true light of Messiah to shine and His eternal Word to be honored.

*“I am writing you a new command, and its reality is seen both in Him and in you,
Because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.”*

1 John 2:8 (CJB)

Amein v’amein!

Eternal Torah Truths:

“How blessed are those who reject the advice of the wicked, don't stand on the way of sinners or sit where scoffers sit! Their delight is in ADONAI's Torah; on his Torah they meditate day and night.”

Psalms 1:1-2 CJB

“The Torah of ADONAI is perfect, restoring the inner person. The instruction of ADONAI is sure, making wise the thoughtless.”

Psalms 19:7 CJB

“Open my eyes, so that I will see wonders from your Torah.”

Psalms 119:18 CJB

“How I love your Torah! I meditate on it all day.”

Psalms 119:97 CJB

“Your righteousness is eternal righteousness, and your Torah is truth.”

Psalms 119:142 CJB

“I long for Your salvation [Yeshua], O L-RD, And Your law is my delight.”

Psalms 119:174 NASB

“If a person will not listen to Torah, even his prayer is an abomination.”

Proverbs 28:9 CJB

“Many peoples will go and say, “Come, let's go up to the mountain of ADONAI, to the house of the God of Ya'akov! He will teach us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.” For out of Tziyon will go forth Torah, the word of ADONAI from Yerushalayim.”

Isaiah 2:3 CJB

“Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the Torah -- not until everything that must happen has happened.

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.”

Matthew 5:17-19 CJB

“ . . . many people's love will grow cold because of increased distance from Torah.”

Matthew 24:12 CJB

“But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the Torah to become void.”

Luke 16:17 CJB

“for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.”

Romans 2:13 NASB

*“Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be!
On the contrary, we establish the Law.”*

Romans 3:31 NASB

“So the Torah is holy; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good.”

Romans 7:12 CJB

“For in my inner self I completely agree with God's Torah;”

Romans 7:22 CJB

*“For what the Torah could not do by itself,
because it lacked the power to make the old nature cooperate,
G-d did by sending his own Son
as a human being with a nature like our own sinful one [but without sin].”*

Romans 8:3 CJB

*“But if a person looks closely into the perfect Torah, which gives freedom, and continues,
becoming not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work it requires,
then he will be blessed in what he does.”*

James 1:25 CJB

“Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah – indeed, sin is violation of Torah.”

1 John 3:4 CJB

Fusion with the Spirit:

“What is born from the flesh is flesh, and what is born from the Spirit is spirit.”

John 3:6 CJB

“G-d is spirit; and worshippers must worship him spiritually and truly.”

John 4:24 CJB

*“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of
Truth, to be with you forever.”*

John 14:16 CJB

Baruch HaShem!