

5779 - Deuteronomy 26-29 – Ki Tavo (When you come [in])

^{26:1}When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, ²**take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce** from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name ³and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." ⁴The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God.

⁵Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "**My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. ⁶But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. ⁷Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. ⁸So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; ¹⁰and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me.**" Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. ¹¹**Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.**

1. ²*take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce ...*

a. **Not the first of every kind of fruit**, but only of the seven kinds mentioned in Deuteronomy 8:8 as typical of the fruitfulness of the land. They are: **wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.**

b. Bikkurim 3:1

HOW WERE THE BIKKURIM SET ASIDE? A MAN GOES DOWN INTO HIS FIELD, HE SEES A FIG THAT RIPENED,⁽¹⁾ OR A CLUSTER OF GRAPES THAT RIPENED, OR A POMEGRANATE THAT RIPENED, HE TIES A REED-ROPE (i.e., a cord or blade of grass) AROUND IT AND SAYS: LET THESE BE BIKKURIM.⁽²⁾ R. SIMEON SAYS: NOTWITHSTANDING THIS HE MUST AGAIN DESIGNATE THEM AS BIKKURIM AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN PLUCKED FROM THE SOIL

(1) Though the vine is enumerated first in Deut. VIII, 8, yet the fig is the first to ripen; cf. Cant. II, 13. The fruits had to be fully ripe when they were brought (Deut. XXVI, 10) but not necessarily at the time of their designation.

(2) This exempts him from further specification at the time of cutting.

c. Deuteronomy 18:1-5

¹The Levitical priests—indeed, the whole tribe of Levi—are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. **They shall live on the food offerings presented to the LORD**, for that is their inheritance.

d. Romans 11:13-16

¹⁶**If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.**

e. 1Corinthians 15:20-23

²³**But each in turn: Messiah, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.**

f. James 1:18

¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, **that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.**

2. ³**and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our forefathers to give us."**

a. ^{3a}*and say ...*

- 1) Apparently it was important to say **these specific words.**
- 2) The "Form – Substance" debate.

b. ^{3b}*I have come ...*

- 1) The thank-offering would be **visible proof** that the land was now in the possession of the Israelites, and that the Divine Promise had been faithfully fulfilled.
- 2) Perhaps that is **one of the reasons why the offering and its accompanying profession** was so important.

3) **It forced people to acknowledge** (recognize, affirm, accept) **God's integrity** (truthfulness, reliability, faithfulness).

a) Deuteronomy 4:39-40

Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

b) 1Chronicles 28:9

"And you, my son Solomon, **acknowledge** the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind ...

c) Proverbs 3:5-7

⁶in all your ways **acknowledge** him, and he will make your paths straight.

d) Exodus 23:9

e) Psalms 38:18

1] 1John 1:9

⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

f) Matthew 10:32

³²"Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

3. ⁵*My father was a wandering Aramean ...*

a. Or, 'a nomad Aramean.' Ibn Ezra,¹ Rashbam,² and Sforno³ believe this refers to Jacob, because of his straying and unsettled life; cf. 'Jacob fled into the field of Aram' (Hos 12:13 [12]). The Hebrew for *wandering* often means 'astray', 'ready to perish'; cf. Ps. 119 (Hertz).

b. אָרָמִי אָבִי אֶפֶק⁵ ('arami 'oved 'avi) is alliterative (each word of the phrase begins with the same letter, e.g., Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers).

1) This would keep the memory of Israel's landless beginnings fresh in the farmer's memory (JPS).

2) **This clause is very ancient—it is unlikely that Israelite tradition would have chosen to describe Israel's ancestors as "Arameans" once the Arameans of Damascus became aggressive toward Israel in the 9th century BCE (JPS).**

c. ¹⁰*and now I bring the firstfruits ...*

1) This declaration contains two features that are characteristic of all Jewish prayer; 1) **recognition of Israel's historic relationship to God**, 2) **recognition that God is the Source of all blessings**.

2) Again and again—the emphasis that God is faithful to his promises.

a) *Mizmor Shir* ("A psalm, a song")—Psalm 92, *Ma'ariv*, p. 7.

¹A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day. **It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, ²proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night ...** ⁴For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD; I sing for joy at what your hands have done. ⁵How great are your works, LORD, how profound your thoughts!

1 Abraham ben Meir Ibn Ezra (1089–c.1167) was one of the most distinguished biblical commentators and philosophers of the Middle Ages.

2 Samuel ben Meir (1085–1158) after his death known as "Rashbam," a Hebrew acronym for: **R**Abbi **S**Hmuel **B**en **M**eir, was a leading French Tosafist and grandson of Shlomo Yitzhaki, "Rashi."

3 Obadiah ben Jacob Sforno (c. 1470–c. 1550), Italian biblical commentator and physician.

... ⁶Senseless people do not know, fools do not understand ... ⁸But you, LORD, are forever exalted ... ¹²The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; ¹ planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, ¹⁵proclaiming, "The LORD is upright; he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

b) *Modeh ani* ("I thank You"), Upon Arising, p. 33.

I gratefully thank You O living and eternal king for you have returned my soul within me with compassion. **Your faithfulness is great.**

c) *Ashrei* ("Blessed")—Psalm 145, *Shacharit*, pp. 68–71.

¹A psalm of praise. Of David. I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. **²Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.**

³Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. ⁴One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. ⁵They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. ⁶They tell of the power of your awesome works—and **I will proclaim your great deeds.** ⁷They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. **⁸The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.** ⁹The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. ¹⁰All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. ¹¹They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, ¹²so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. ¹³Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. ¹⁴The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

¹⁵The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. **¹⁶You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. ¹⁷The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.** ¹⁸The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. **²⁰The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.** ²¹My mouth will

speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

- d) *Halleluyah* ("Praise the LORD")—Psalm 146, *Shacharit*, p. 72.

¹Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, my soul. ²**I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.** ³Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. ⁴When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. ⁵**Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.** ⁶He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—he remains faithful forever. ⁷**He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets prisoners free, ⁸the LORD gives sight to the blind, the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down, the LORD loves the righteous.** ⁹**The LORD watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the widow**, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. ¹⁰The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the LORD.

1) Isaiah 61:1-2

2) Luke 4:16-19

- e) *V'ya-tziv* ("And certain" [or "stable"], *Shacharit*, p. 103.
... And certain, established and enduring, fair and faithful, beloved and cherished, delightful and pleasant, awesome and powerful, correct and accepted, good and beautiful is this affirmation to us forever and ever. True—the God of the universe is our King; the Rock of Jacob is the Shield of our salvation (*magen yish-ei-nu*). From generation to generation He endures and His Name endures and His throne is well established; His sovereignty and faithfulness endure forever (*kiss the tzitzit and release them*) and to all eternity; For our forefathers, and for us, for our children, and for our generations, and for all the generations of Your servant Israel's offspring.

- f) *Al Ha-rishonim* ("Upon the earlier"), *Shacharit*, p. 104.

Upon the earlier and upon later generations, this affirmation is good and enduring forever. True and faithful, it is an unbreachable decree. It is true that You are the LORD, our God and the God of our forefathers, our King and the King of our forefathers, our Redeemer, the Redeemer of our forefathers, our Molder, the Rock of our salvation (*y'shua-*

teinu); our Liberator and our Rescuer—this has ever been Your Name. There is no God but you. *Selah*.

- g) *Gevurot* ("[God's] Might"), *Amidah*, pp. 109-111.

You are eternally mighty, my Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead; abundantly able to save (*I'ho-shiah*). He sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy, supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined and maintains His faith to those who sleep in the dust, Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds, and Who is comparable to You, O King Who causes death and restores life and makes salvation (*y'shuah*) sprout!

- h) *Refuah* (Health and Healing), Weekday *Amidah*, p. 116.

Heal us, O LORD—then we will be healed; save us—then we will be saved, for you are our praise (Jer 17:14). Bring complete recovery for all our ailments, for you are God, King, the faithful and compassionate Healer. Blessed are You, o LORD, Who heals the sick of His people Israel.

- i) Luke 1:67-73

⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰**(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago)**, ⁷¹salvation from our enemies ... ⁷²to show mercy to our ancestors and **to remember his holy covenant**, ⁷³**the oath he swore to our father Abraham ...**

- j) 2Thessalonians 3:3

The Lord is faithful ... he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

- k) 2Timothy 2:11-16

¹¹Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him ... ¹³**if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.**

3) *Kavanah*

When you say the same prayers day after day, you might expect that the prayers would become routine and would begin to lose meaning. While this may be true for some people, this is not the intention of Jewish prayer ... **the most important part of prayer is the introspection it provides. Accordingly, the proper frame of mind is vital to prayer.**

The mindset for prayer is referred to as *kavanah*, which is generally translated as "**concentration**" or "**intent**." The minimum level of *kavanah* is an awareness that one is speaking to G-d and an intention to fulfill the obligation to pray. **If you do not have this minimal level of *kavanah*, then you are not**

praying; you are merely reading. In addition, it is preferred that you have a mind free from other thoughts, that you know and understand what you are praying about and that you think about the meaning of the prayer.

Liturgical melodies are often used as an aid to forming the proper mindset. Many prayers and prayer services have traditional melodies associated with them. These can increase your focus on what you are doing and block out extraneous thoughts.

I also find it useful to move while praying. Traditional Jews routinely sway back and forth during prayer, apparently a reference to Psalm 35, which says "All my limbs shall declare, 'O L-rd, who is like You?'" Such movement is not required, and many people find it distracting, but I personally find that it helps me concentrate and focus.⁴

^{27:11}On the same day Moses commanded the people: ¹²When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali. ¹⁴The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

¹⁵"**Cursed is** the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman's hands—and sets it up in secret." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁶"**Cursed is** the man who dishonors his father or his mother." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁷"**Cursed is** the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁸"**Cursed is** the man who leads the blind astray on the road." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁹"**Cursed is** the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁰"**Cursed is** the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²¹"**Cursed is** the man who has sexual relations with any animal." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²²"**Cursed is** the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²³"**Cursed is** the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁴"**Cursed is** the man who kills his neighbor secretly." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁵"**Cursed is** the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁶"**Cursed is** the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

1. It is man's option to choose—good or evil, life or death. This concept was strikingly symbolized for the people by the two mountains: **Gerizim, in full bloom, the image of life, and Ebal, a sharp barren peak, the symbol of desolation and death.** The tribes were then split into two groups, each taking its position on one of the mountains. In the valley between was placed the Holy Ark together with the *Kohanim* and the elders of the Levites. The choices and their consequences were then publicly enumerated and accepted. The acceptance by the people was, in effect, a renewal of their acceptance of the Torah that originally took place at Sinai.⁵

2. ¹⁵*Cursed is* ...

a. אָרֵר —f. אָרַר —*a curse.*

b. There are six words in Hebrew which have been translated "to curse."

c. The verb אָרַר occurs 63 times in the OT, most of which are in the Qal stem (54).

1) In this particular stem the most popular form by far is the passive participle (אָרֵר and related forms).

2) It is used 40 times, Deut 27:15ff., and Deut 28:16ff., accounting for 18 of those.

3) **The verb is also used twelve times as an antonym of בָּרַךְ "to bless" (Gen 9:25-26; Gen 12:3; Gen 27:29; etc.).**

d. On the basis of Akkadian *arâru* "**to snare, bind**" and the noun *irritu* "**noose, sling**" (there are those who advance the interpretation that the Hebrew אָרַר means "**to bind (i.e., with a spell), hem in with obstacles, RENDER POWERLESS TO RESIST**"—**LIKE AN ANIMAL CAUGHT IN A TRAP!**)

1) Genesis 3:14, 17

¹⁴So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "**Cursed are you above all the livestock** ...

—"You are banned/anathematized from all the other animals"

—"The fertility of the ground is banned"

- 2) Similarly, God's word to Cain, "you are cursed from the earth" means Cain is banned from the soil, or more specifically, he is banned from enjoying its productivity.

3) Joshua 9:23

4) 2Kings 9:31-37

—Jezebel was cursed, i.e., barred from a proper burial.

- 5) King Balak of Moab hired Balaam to "curse" the Israelites (Num 22:6ff). The king wanted the magician to say some word or recite some incantation that would "immobilize" the Israelites, giving the Moabite king the necessary opportunity to defeat his numerically superior foe.

e. The majority of "curse" sayings with אָרַר fall into one of three general categories:

- 1) The declaration of punishments (See Gen 3:14,17 above).

- 2) The utterance of threats.

a) Jeremiah 11:3 (cf., 17:5; Mal 1:14)

- 3) The proclamation of laws (Deu 27:15-26; Deu 28:16-19).

a) It is interesting that all these "curse-sayings" are the result of someone violating their relationship with God;

Idolatry: ¹⁵"Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman's hands—and sets it up in secret" (v. 15)

Disrespect for parents: ¹⁶"Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother."

Deceiving one's neighbor: ¹⁷"Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone."

Manipulating the disadvantaged: ¹⁸"Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road ... ¹⁹Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow."

Sexual aberrations: ²⁰"Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed ... ²¹Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal" ...

²²Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister ... ²³Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law."

Murder: ²⁴"Cursed is the man who kills his neighbor secretly."

Bribery: ²⁵"Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person."

Not observing God's law: ²⁶"Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out."

—They all bring the condemnation of the curse.

- b) The result of engaging in these activities is a self-imposed imprisonment!

—Like when an animal follows the scent of the bait—and is trapped before it knows what happened to it.

—When we follow the "lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes and the pride of life" (1Jn 2:16 KJV) we are trapped in the same way—only God can release us.

—Isaiah 42:7

... to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

f. The Septuagint translates אָרַר by ἐπικατάρατος (*epi-ka-tá-ra-tos*) ... by which it comes into the New (Covenant).

- 1) "Curse" in the (Hebrew Bible) is summed up in the statement: "Cursed be the man that obeys not the words of this covenant ..." (Jer 11:3).

2) The New (Covenant) responds; "Messiah has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree ...'" (Gal 3:13).

3) **The curse is not the Law—it is the "curse of the Law"—death, the result of disobedience.**

4) I am cursed because I disobeyed God's word! (Jer 11:3)—because I am a "sinner" (Rom 3:23; 5:12).

5) What does Yeshua do by "hanging on the tree" for me?—that is, by dying on the cross?

—He liberates (releases, frees) me from the curse, i.e., he delivers me from the snare—from the noose!

—He does something for me that I am not able to do myself!

—He delivers me from death—and re-connects me to God!

6) Yeshua does not free me from the Law (or Torah)—but from the curse that comes from turning away from the Torah (Jer 11:3).

—Turning away from the Torah = turning away from God!

—Romans 5:6

... when we were still powerless, Messiah died for the ungodly.

^{28:1}If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ²All these blessings will come on you and accompa-

ny you if you obey the LORD your God: ³You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. ⁴The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. ⁵Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed. ⁶You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

1. John 1:1-12 (KJV)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... ³All things were made by him ... ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John ... ⁸He was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

⁹That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. ¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹²**But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God ...**

—Darkness ≠ Light

—Powerlessness ≠ Power

—Curse ≠ Blessing

—Death ≠ Life

—Disobedience ≠ Obedience

—Bondage ≠ Freedom

—Lawlessness ≠ Torah observance

—Walking in the flesh ≠ Walking in the Spirit

—Is Torah the opposite of Grace? Or is it Judgment ≠ Grace?

2. Deuteronomy Rabbah VII. 1

Another comment: R. Judan said: Whoever listens to the voice of the Torah in this world will be privileged to listen to the voice of which it is written, *The voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride*, etc (Jer. xvi, 9). Moses said to Israel: ‘Since whosoever listens to the words of the Torah is so exalted in both worlds, be diligent to listen to the words of the Torah.’ Whence [can this be inferred]? From what is written in the context, AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS, IF **THOUGH SHALT HEARKEN DILIGENTLY**⁽¹⁾ UNTO THE VOICE OF THE LORD THY GOD (xxviii, 1).

(1) The exposition is based on the repetition of the words שְׂמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמָע (*sha-moah tish-ma*), the verse being rendered: **If thou wilt listen (now), thou wilt listen (in the Hereafter).**

a. Matthew 19:16-22

¹⁶Just then a man came up to Yeshua and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" ¹⁷"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Yeshua replied. "There is only one ~~who is~~ good. **If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.**"

1) **The one good of which Yeshua spoke is the Torah.** This seems clear from his continuation, "You know the commandments," and from the structural similarity of Yeshua's saying, "There is no good except one," and a well-known saying of the sages, "There is no good except Torah."⁶ The rabbinic saying is an interpretation, or midrash, of Prov 4:2, a verse that associates good and Torah—"For I give you good teaching; do not forsake my Torah."

2) Yeshua not only connected "good" and "Torah," he also connected "eternal life" and "Torah": when the rich man expressed a desire to obtain eternal life, Yeshua directed him to the commandments. Yeshua indicated that by observing the commandments of the Torah, the man could obtain eternal life. As Flusser has pointed out:⁷

The connection between the Torah and eternal life had long been taken for granted. It is expressed in the ancient benediction which is recited after reading from the Torah: "Thanks be to Him who gave us the Torah of truth, and so implanted eternal life within us"⁸.... The phrase "Torah of life" appears in Ben Sira 17:11, where we read: "He bestowed knowledge upon them, and allotted to them the Law [Torah] of life".... The Hebrew original of that sentence is not among those [i.e., the Hebrew fragments of Ben Sira] that have been discovered. However, we do have the Hebrew for another passage (Ben Sira 45:5) that uses the phrase: "He placed in his [Moses'] hand the commandment, the Torah of life and understanding."

1) Avot 6:7

"Great is the Torah for it gives life to them that do it in this world and in the world to come."

2) Romans 7:9-12

6 *ein tov eleh torah [there is no good except Torah]*. Cf. Avot 3:14;

Avot de-Rabbi Natan, Version A, chpt. 39 (ed. Schechter, 118); Ber 5a.

7 David N. Biven, *The Life of Yeshua*—www.jerusalem perspective.com/712/, p. 14.

8 See Robert R. Gorelik, *Siddur Tefilot, Prayer Book* (Eshav Books), p. 141.

¹⁰I found that **the very commandment THAT WAS INTENDED TO BRING LIFE actually brought death.**

c. The doing of good deeds to obtain a reward was opposed not just by Yeshua, but ... by most sages of his day.⁹

1) Midrash Psalms 141 (ed. Buber, 530-31)

David said, "Some trust in their fair and upright deeds, and some in the works of their fathers, but I trust in you. Although I have no good works, yet because I call upon you, you answer me."

2) The Pharisees criticized those of their number who continually asked, "What good deed may I do?"—they caricatured themselves by speaking of 7 types of Pharisees. The 5th type was the "Calculating Pharisee" who was always saying, "Tell me what good deed I can do to offset a bad deed" (Y. Ber IX, 14b; Sot 22b; Avot de-Rabbi Natan, Version A, chpt. 37 [ed. Schechter, 109]; Version B, chpt. 45 [124]).

a) Avodah Zarah 19a

"Blessed is the man that delights greatly in His commandments" [Ps 112:1]—in His commandments, **not in the reward of His commandments.**

b) Avot 1:3

³Antigonus of Socho, who received it from Simeon the just, was in the habit of saying: "**Be not like slaves who serve their master for the sake of the compensation;** be like such servants as labor for their master without reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you."

c) **In other words, one should serve God out of love.**

^{28:58}**If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law**, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name—the LORD your God—⁵⁹the LORD will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, **harsh and prolonged disasters**, and severe and lingering illnesses.

1. Romans 11:22 (KJV)

²²Behold therefore **the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness:** otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.