



וְאֶתְחָנָן [Va'etchanan](#) / And I Pleading
Deuteronomy 3.23—7.11 / Isaiah 40.1—26 / Acts 3—5

טו בָּאָב *tu b'av* 15th of Av usually falls during this week. In

Temple days unmarried girls would dress in simple white clothing, so that rich and poor were indistinguishable, and go dancing in the vineyards together. In 2009, **טו בָּאָב** fell on August 5th/6th. August 6th was the most intense lunar eclipse since 580 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar set up his image in the Temple after conquering Jerusalem in 586 BC.



Moses' Last Sermons **מֹשֶׁה** [Mosheh](#) Moses gives three sermons in the area of Mount Nebo, just before he dies and **יִשְׂרָאֵל** [Yisra'el](#) Israel crosses into the Land to take Jericho, their first battle.

Shema [Deuteronomy 6.4](#) is probably the most important prayer in the Tenach, what Christians call the Old Testament: "שְׁמַע יְהוָה: יִשְׂרָאֵל YHVH The LORD our God, **יְהוָה**, is one." Since each Hebrew letter is a word picture, **שְׁמַע** has another meaning, made up of **שֵׁם** [shem](#) name, as in **הָשֵׁם** *HaShem* the Name, a title for God, and **עַיִן** *ayin* eye/see. So **שְׁמַע** can mean "See the Name." Unlike the Greek mindset, in which we can say we are listening but not bothering to obey, in the Hebrew mind the two are connected. When we listen to God's Word and obey it, we see the One who is the Word.

The Answer is "NO!" This portion starts in [3.23-26](#) with **מֹשֶׁה** recounting **וְאֶתְחָנָן** with God to cross over the Jordan. God answered not only no, but don't even talk about it anymore. God always answers prayer. Sometimes "Yes," sometimes "Wait," and sometimes "No."

Live and Possess **מֹשֶׁה** [Mosheh](#) gives two reasons in [4.1-2](#) for Israel to obey the Law. 1) so they will live 2) so that they will possess the Land. A gift of a home is generous, a home plus land or a town more so. Here God is giving **יִשְׂרָאֵל** [Yisra'el](#) an entire country! *IF* they **שְׁמַע**.



In My Heart First, then in My Child's

After the שם, Moses goes on to say:

"Love יְהוָה your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

Impress them on your children. *Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*"

1. Worship the One true God
 2. Love Him with all your heart
 3. Keep His Law
 4. Teach His Law to your children
 5. Do this *in times of non-conflict*

Don't wait until you have a problem with your child to deal with an issue. That's *reactive* parenting and usually involves anger on your part and frustration on your child's part. Instead, *proactively* spend time discussing God's law with your child ***in times of non-conflict***, times when there is no problem—sitting by the fire, going for a ride together, or putting them to bed at night. Watch especially for "open window" times. These are special moments when your child invites you into his or her private world. You can get tipped off by a question from your son such as, "Do you think I should become...?" Or if your daughter asks, "Do you think I'm pretty?" At these times, don't go in like a bull in a china shop—walk carefully. These talks can be lifelong treasures.

mezuzah Traditionally, Jerusalem and the Temple are considered the doorposts to heaven. **ישוע** *Yeshua* Jesus/salvation, the Word of God, [John 1.1,14](#), was nailed to a post outside Jerusalem, and entered the Most Holy Place in heaven from there, just as [Deuteronomy 6.6-9](#) says to write God's **דברים** *devarim* words on the doorposts and gates of our homes. Jews make it a habit to kiss the **mezuzah** *mezuzah*, the case containing a tiny scroll of Deuteronomy 6.4-9 and [11.13-21](#), when going in or out of a doorway. [Psalm 2.12](#) says, "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry...blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."



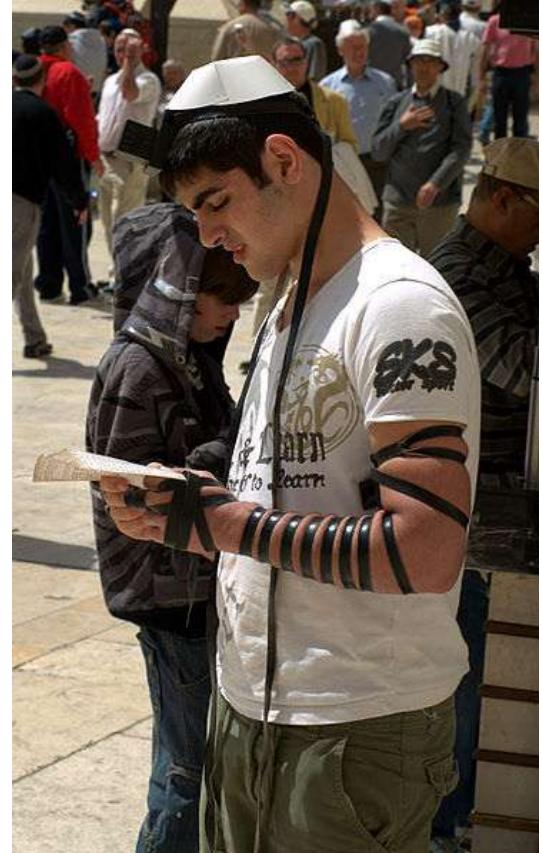
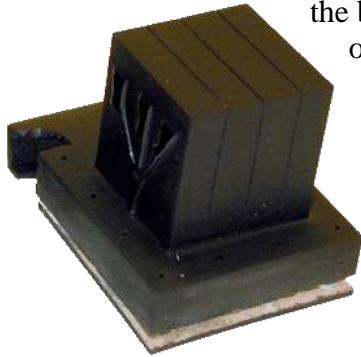
דברים **תפילה** [Deuteronomy 6.8](#) says to bind the **תפילה** on our hands and to keep it between our eyes. This is literally done with **טוטפות** [totafot](#) bands/phylacteries/frontlets, [Exodus 13.16](#), [Deuteronomy 6.4-9](#), and [Deuteronomy 11.13-21](#). Jews wear **תפילה** [tefillin](#) phylacteries, worn on the left arm (closer to the heart) and the forehead. In [Revelation 13.16-18](#),

the beast forces everyone to wear his name/number on his or her right hand or forehead to buy and sell. Compare God's more generous offer in

[Isaiah 55.1](#). Many Christians think **ישוע** considers the Jews hypocrites for wearing

תפילה. But in [Matthew 23.5](#), **ישוע** criticizes the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees not for wearing them, which

תפילה himself almost certainly did, but for making their large and the tassels on their prayer shawls long. Like the **מזוזה**, the **תפילה** have a **ש sheen** which, when combined with strap knots tied in the shape of **ד dalet** and **י yod**, spell **שדי shaddai** Almighty (God).



Keeping Commandments In the context of Deuteronomy and especially while discussing something which seems as odd to Christians as the **מזוזה** and the **תפילה**, now is a good time to take another look at keeping the commandments. The Church often considers keeping the commandments legalistic (or "judaizing," a crime developed about the time of Constantine and often punishable by death) at worst and unnecessary at best. Commandments are often considered chores. But God intends them as a way to bless us.

Believers may follow this growth of faith:

1. **Fire Insurance**—staying out of hell
2. In maturing, begin to see **Rewards**
3. The ultimate goal is
God's Law Written in My Heart

[Hebrews 8.8-12](#), quoting [Jeremiah 31.30-33](#), says the **תורה** [Torah](#) Law/Instruction written in our hearts is the New Covenant.

Judges All Over Again The Church tends to dismisses תורתן as if, since יושע fulfilled it, we don't need it anymore, even though יeshua says in [Matthew 5.17](#) that He did not abolish the Law or the Prophets. "That's Old Testament" and "We're not under Law, we're under Grace," are common sound bites. According to this reasoning, "We don't have to keep the Law. Except the Ten Commandments, of course. But not the 4th, about Sabbath. That one doesn't apply anymore. And we shouldn't have sexual relations with animals, either. I'm not sure where that is, but we need to keep that one, too. And there are a few others that *I think are important.*" Someone who tries to keep the Law is called a "legalist." Unless he or she is trying to keep pure in marriage, for example. That's called "faithful." Wearing a wedding ring to remember the 7th commandment is OK. Wearing a prayer shawl to remember all 613 commandments is not OK. Just like in the book of Judges, everyone does that which is right in his own eyes.



David asks and answers in [Psalm 119.9](#), "How can a young man keep his way pure? By שמר *shamar* keep/guard/observe/give heed according to your Word." In fact, David talks about the need to שמר the Law twenty-one times in Psalm 119 alone. David even says in verse [136](#) that he cries because of those who *don't* keep תורתה! When we שמר God's Law, the nations will recognize wisdom and understanding. The opposite is also true: when a nation is full of scoffers of God's Law, other nations recognize corruption.

Trying to keep תורתה is almost always confused in the Church with trying to earn righteousness through obeying תורתה. But יושע makes an interesting point in [Luke 17.7-10](#). In that story, a servant must take care of his Master's needs before his own. When he has done everything he is supposed to do, *he does not get any thanks, because he is just a servant!* We who are פָּדוֹת *padah* redeemed from sin by God's mercy are like that servant. Even if we keep the whole Law and never sin, all we would ever be able to say is, "*We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty.*"



New Testament Support for Keeping the Law

- [Matthew 5.16](#) Let men see you perform good works.
- [Matthew 6.1](#) Perform good works, but don't let men see them.
- [Matthew 5.18-19](#) The smallest stroke of the pen of the Law will last longer than heaven and earth. Keep and teach even the least commandment.
- [Matthew 15.7-9, Mark 7.9](#) **עֲשֵׂה** rebukes the Pharisees and teachers of the Law for setting aside God's commandments in order to keep their own traditions.
- [Acts 10.34-35](#) Peter learns that God does not show favoritism but accepts everyone who fears Him and does what is right.
- [Romans 6.1-2](#) Stop sinning. We died to sin—how can we live in it any longer?
- [Hebrews 8.10](#) The New Covenant is God's Law in our minds and written on our hearts.
- [James 1.22-27](#) The one who continues in the perfect Law will be blessed. James then refers to [Deuteronomy 24.17,19,20](#) about caring for widows and orphans.
- [1 Peter 2.11-12](#) Abstain from sinful desires and live such good lives that God gets the glory.
- [Revelation 12.17](#) The dragon (Satan) makes war against those who 1) obey God's commands and 2) hold to the testimony of **עֲשֵׂה**—not just believing the Gospel, but building obedience on that faith.
- [Revelation 14.12](#) Describes the patience of the saints who keep:
 - 1) the commandments of God
 - 2) the faith of **עֲשֵׂה**.



The God Stalker A stalker is one who is infatuated with another and shows up unexpectedly. The one who is stalked doesn't feel loved because the attention is according to the stalker's wishes, not his or her own. If we make our own rules about how to approach God and ignore His commands, we become a God stalker.

In [Deuteronomy 7.7-12](#), מֹשֶׁה says that יְהוָה chooses יִשְׂרָאֵל not because they are great in number, but because He loves them. In His love, He redeems them from Egypt. Those who love יְהוָה in return and keep His commandments, יְהוָה will love for a thousand generations. Those who hate יְהוָה He will destroy.



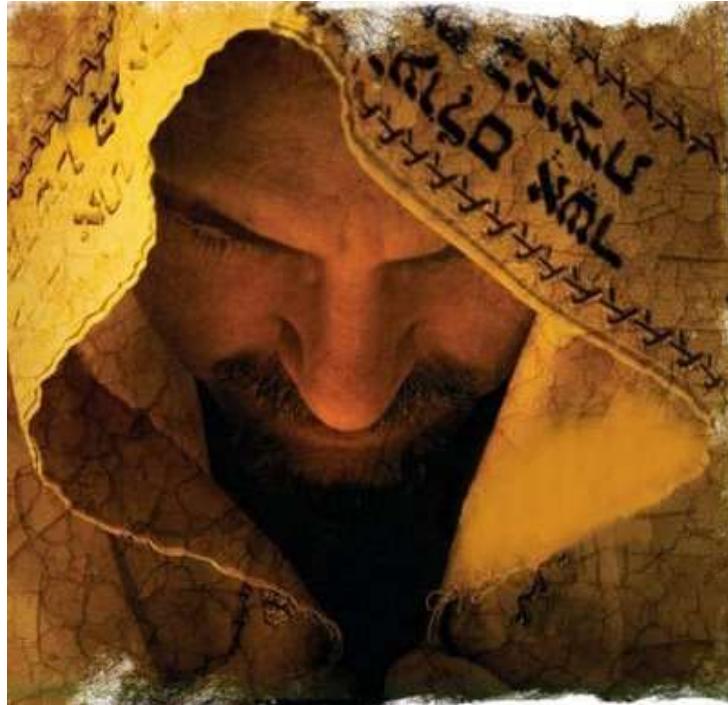
Were You There? In [Deuteronomy 4.9-13](#), מֹשֶׁה reminds יִשְׂרָאֵל how they stood before God at Horeb/Sinai and saw the darkness, cloud, and fire. Most listening to מֹשֶׁה at this point were children under 20 at Sinai, since everyone over their age died in the last 39 years, except Joshua and Caleb. Still, מֹשֶׁה addresses them all as being at Sinai, listening to God. Since then, each generation of יִשְׂרָאֵל sees themselves as slaves in Egypt, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and receiving תּוֹרָה at Sinai. Were you there too?

Idol Worship מֹשֶׁה warns יִשְׂרָאֵל in [Deuteronomy 4.23-31](#) that after he dies and they enter the Land, they will turn to idols and God will scatter them among the nations. But if they repent, God will forgive. God is merciful and doesn't forget the covenant.

In [Revelation 9.20](#), even after six plagues, the survivors refuse to give up their idols and their sin. In America, we tend to shun idols of wood or stone, opting instead for idols of money, success, or pleasure. Anything of these can be an idol that keeps us from God.

Comfort, Comfort The Haphtaroth portion for this Shabbat is [Isaiah 40.1-26](#), which begins, נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עֲמִי—יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהִיכֶם, Comfort, Comfort, My people, says your God. The root of the first word is נַחַם [nacham](#) comfort (also the root for the prophet נַחּוּם [Nachum](#) Nahum). So this day, the first Shabbat after בָּאַב tisha b'av the 9th of Av, is called שַׁבָּת נַחֲמוּ, *Shabbat Nachamu*, Sabbath of Comfort. This Haphtaroth portion begins a series of seven Shabbat Haphtaroth portions of comfort for יִשְׂרָאֵל in their sufferings.

Eternal מָה נִזְהָב [Isaiah 40.3](#), a voice of one crying in the wilderness, is quoted in [Matthew 3.1-3](#) at the arrival of John the Baptist. John says later in Matthew 3 that his mission is to prepare the way for the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire—**עֶשֶׂר**, the One who gives eternal מָה. [Isaiah 40.6-8](#) is quoted in [1 Peter 1.22-25](#). All men perish, but the Word of God stands forever.



Here is Your God! Compare these excerpts:

[Isaiah 40.9-11](#)

You who bring good tidings to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

See, the Sovereign **יְהוָה** comes with power,
and His arm rules for Him.
See, His reward is with Him,
and His recompense accompanies Him.

He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

[Revelation 22.11-20](#)

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

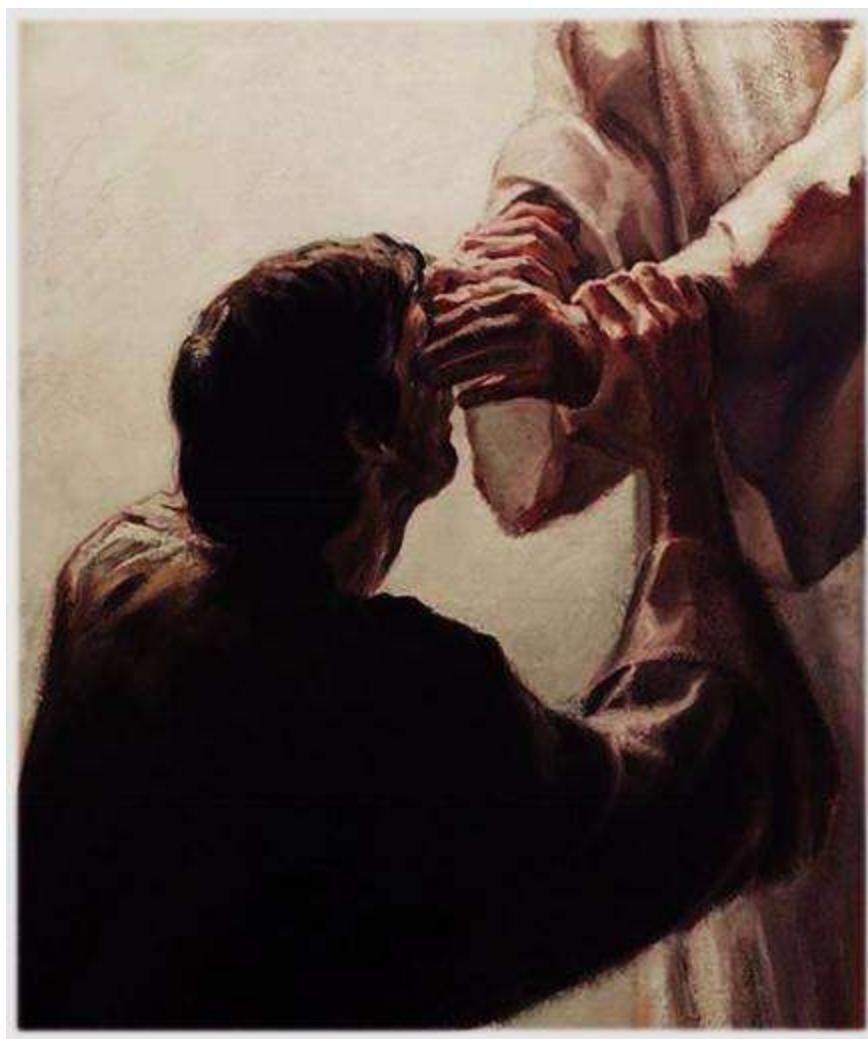
The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"
And let him who hears say, "Come!"

He who testifies to these things says,
"Yes, I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

God's Hope for Us In [Deuteronomy 5.25](#), God tells Moses, "Oh that they had such a heart as this alway, to fear Me, and keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!"

God's promise is that if we keep His commandments, we and our children will be blessed. Even if we were to keep the whole Law, however, all we could say would be, "We are unworthy servants. We have only done our duty."

The goal of the New Covenant is to have this Law placed in our minds and written on our hearts. But since we always fail in keeping it, God sends His Son to keep the Law for us, so that we can be righteous in Him, [2 Corinthians 5.21](#).



Glossary, in order of appearance:

וְאַתָּה נָנָן	<i>va'etchanan</i>	and I pleaded
טו בָּאָב	<i>tu b'av</i>	15 th of Av
מֹשֶׁה	<i>Mosheh</i>	Moses
יִשְׂרָאֵל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
שְׁמֻעָה	<i>shema</i>	hear/listen/obey “See the Name”
יְהוָה	<i>YHVH</i>	The LORD/God’s Holy Name
שֵׁם	<i>shem</i>	name
הַשֵּׁם	<i>HaShem</i>	the Name
עֵין	<i>ayin</i>	eye/see
יְשׁוּעָה	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
דְּבָרִים	<i>devarim</i>	words
מְזוֹזָה	<i>mezuzah</i>	scroll in case posted on doorways
טוֹטְפּוֹת	<i>totafot</i>	bands/phylacteries/frontlets
תְּפִילִין	<i>tefillin</i>	phylacteries
שֵׁן	<i>sheen</i>	
daleth	<i>dalet</i>	
יָם	<i>yod</i>	
שָׁדַי	<i>shaddai</i>	Almighty (God)
תוֹרָה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
שְׁמַר	<i>shamar</i>	keep/guard/observe/give heed
פָּدָה	<i>padah</i>	redeemed
נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ, עַמִּי—יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהִיכֶם		
Comfort, Comfort, My people, says your God		
נַחַם	<i>nacham</i>	comfort
נָחוּם	<i>Nachum</i>	Nahum
תשׁועָה בָּאָב	<i>tisha b'av</i>	9 th of Av
שַׁבָּת נַחֲמוּ	<i>Shabbat Nachamu</i>	Sabbath of Comfort