

## The Words of Life<sup>1</sup>

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The teaching of God, the “**words of eternal life**”, has been recorded in the Bible so that True Worshipers of God can be prepared for the gift of eternal life (Jh6:61,63b,66-68). **Jesus Christ is the Word of God**, his sacrifice makes eternal life possible (Jh1:1,4, 10:10b). As YHWH, he revealed to humanity the “**words of life**” that we have recorded in the Bible (Dt4:12-14). **The greatest outpouring of revelation from God is recorded in the *torah* as recorded in the Pentateuch.**

**The Covenant of Knowledge:** God had revealed his **universal love** for humanity in the **Covenant of Justness** (Gn8:20-22, 9:1-17). In the **Covenant of Promise** (Gn12:1-4a,7, 13:14-7, 15:1-10,18a 17:1-8), God outlined his **Plan of Salvation** by indicating he would **work through human beings** (the promise of the great nation), and that a **means of salvation** would be provided (the promise of universal blessing through a Descendant). With the extraction of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex12:7-8, 11-13), God began to execute his plan by **creating the Nation of Israel through the Sinai Covenant** (Ex19:1-8). The stipulations of the covenant are simple: **obey my voice, keep my covenant, be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation**<sup>2</sup>. The **covenantal benefit** is also simple but far reaching: since all the earth belongs to YHWH, he can make the nation of Israel a “**treasured possession among all peoples**”.

**God's Greatest Outpouring of Revelation: What does it mean “to obey my voice”? How does one “keep the covenant”?** The *torah* reveals God's mind, his character, and his nature – it is **the basis of all other material in the Bible**: these are the “Words of Life”. It reveals to “we human beings” what God requires us to become: this revelation is the basis of knowledge – the rest of the Bible, **especially the New Testament**, is an elaboration of this material. The word תּוֹרָה - *torah*, means “teaching”, “direction”, “instruction”. The word “*torah*” has almost no overlap of meaning with the English word “law”. The **New Testament covenant of Baptism** has the same stipulations as the Sinai Covenant (Mt28:19-20, 1Cr11:25, Hb8:13a, 9:15a, 1Pt2:9, 2Pt1:10, Jh14:15); the benefit is eternal life.

**The Meaning of torah:** The “*torah*” comprises the **words spoken by Moses** – the **instruction** given to him from God. The *torah* is **elaborated throughout the whole bible**. The words are NOT empty – they require action. **The Israelites were “to do” the “torah”** so that **by doing the words they would live – the words of life** (Dt32:45-47, Jsh22:5a). In the **wisdom literature** it is very clear that “*torah*” means teaching or instruction (Job22:21-22, Ps78:1, 37:30-31, 40:6-8, Pr1:8, 4:1-2, 13:14, 31:26). **Hosea is explicit that “torah” comprises “knowledge”** (Hs4:6). **Zechariah summarizes** the meaning of “*torah*” (Zc7:8-12a). The **Ten Commandments** are the basis of all other *torah*: they are part of the *torah*, but they are NOT equivalent to the *torah*.

**The Book of the Covenant:** Immediately after the ten commandments, the Book of Exodus contains a section of detailed instructions called **the Book of the Covenant** (Ex20:22 through 23:19, and 24:4,7). These instructions are called “**statutes**”, חֹק - *hoq* (masculine), or חֻקִּים - *huqqah* (feminine). They are specific **prescriptions** and **proscriptions**, things to do and things NOT to do. They are meant as **examples from which general principles can be deduced**: God requires understanding, not just memorization and legalistic adherence to rules. The term *mishpatim* is also frequently applied to the material in these sections indicating that they reflect the “**justness**” God requires in human dealings.

**Statutes in Ancient Israel:** The statutes contained in the Covenant Code and elsewhere in the Pentateuch were intended by God to be **explicitly kept by Ancient Israel**, but they are **generally not applicable to modern society** (Ex21:28-29). **Even in Ancient Israel some statutes had to be taken as exemplary** – killing an unborn child is murder: anyone who participates in an abortion should be executed (Ex21:22-23). Statutes which relate to **worship and social justice** have spiritual implications (Ex23:12a, 13-14, 22:20-24a).

**How Did the Pharisees Go Wrong?** The Pharisees whole methodology was to **derive “spiritual” principals from the “words” of the Old Testament**. The Pharisee erected an elaborate structure of prescriptions and proscriptions, but **they were devoid of spiritual understanding** – they were hypocrites (Lk11:52, 12:1b, 2Tm2:14). The “**key of knowledge**” is to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit (1Cr2:14, 2Tm2:15, Jh14:26).

**God's covenants are a perfect and complete expression of God's love for human beings:** God's love is most clearly expressed by the **grace** he holds out to each and every human being (Jh3:16). The **Covenant of Knowledge** is the Creator's revelation of himself to his creation: **the “Words of Life”**. The **destiny of human beings** is to become members of the God Family – to attain this destiny, to be given the gift of eternal life, **we must understand the mind of God**, the Nature of God, and the Plan of God. **The largest and most fundamental revelation** of these things is in **the Covenant of Knowledge** – it is critical for True Christians to **inculcate this understanding**.

<sup>1</sup> This material is based on the paper “Covenants of Grace”, located on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)

<sup>2</sup> For the implications of the third stipulation, see the paper “To Be a Priest”, on [www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca](http://www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca)