

# Re-Eh/See – Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17

Year One Torah Commentary – D’varim 11:26-12:28

The Blessing and The Curse

Rabbin D’vorah Eliana Brandt



	ה	א	ך
letter:	hay	alef	reish
sound:	H	(silent)-'ei	R'

*see!* = R'EH = ראה

## Year One Parasha Overview

- Blessings and Curses (11:23–11:32)
- Proper worship (12:1–32)
- Threats of idolatry (13:1–18)
- Clean and unclean foods (14:1–21)
- Tithes (14:22–29)
- The sabbatical year (15:1–18)
- Firstborn animals (15:19–23)
- Feasts (16:1–17)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Crossway Bibles. (2008). *The ESV Study Bible* (329). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

## Related Words

and He appeared ( <a href="#">Gen. 18:1</a> )	<i>va-yeira</i>	וַיֵּרָא
and I appeared ( <a href="#">Ex. 6:3</a> )	<i>va-eira</i>	וַאֲרָא
seer, prophetic vision	<i>roeh</i>	רֹאֶה
mirror ( <a href="#">Job 37:18</a> )	<i>r'ee</i>	רְאִי
vision	<i>ma'rah</i>	מַאֲרָה
it seems to me	<i>nireh li</i>	נִרְאָה לִי
see you again! (to our seeing each other)	<i>l'hitraot!</i>	לְהִתְרַאוֹת!

Feinberg, J. E., Ph.D., & Moudy, K. A. (2003). *Walk Deuteronomy!: Words*. Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers.

## Key Words

See **H7200**

ראה

râ'âh

### **BDB Definition:**

1) to see, look at, inspect, perceive, consider

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to see

1a2) to see, perceive

1a3) to see, have vision

1a4) to look at, see, regard, look after, see after, learn about, observe, watch, look upon, look out, find out

1a5) to see, observe, consider, look at, give attention to, discern, distinguish

1a6) to look at, gaze at

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to appear, present oneself

1b2) to be seen

1b3) to be visible

1c) (Pual) to be seen

1d) (Hiphil)

1d1) to cause to see, show

1d2) to cause to look intently at, behold, cause to gaze at

1e) (Hophal)

1e1) to be caused to see, be shown

1e2) to be exhibited to

1f) (Hithpael) to look at each other, face

**Part of Speech:** verb

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** a primitive root

**Same Word by TWOT Number:** 2095

Mt. Gerizim **H1630**

גרזים

gerizîym

### **BDB Definition:**

Gerizim = “cuttings off”

1) a mountain in northern Israel in Ephraim near Shechem from which the blessings were read to the Israelites on entering Canaan; site of the Samaritan temple built after the captivity

**Part of Speech:** noun proper locative

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** plural of an unused noun from [H1629](#)

עֵבַל

ʿêybâl

**BDB Definition:**

Ebal = “stone” or “bare mountain”

- 1) a son of Shobal (noun proper masculine)
- 2) mountain of cursing, north of Shechem and opposite Mount Gerizim (noun proper locative)

**Part of Speech:** see above in Definition

Set before you **H5414**

נָתַן

nâthan

**BDB Definition:**

- 1) to give, put, set
  - 1a) (Qal)
    - 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend
    - 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate
    - 1a3) to make, constitute
  - 1b) (Niphal)
    - 1b1) to be given, be bestowed, be provided, be entrusted to, be granted to, be permitted, be issued, be published, be uttered, be assigned
    - 1b2) to be set, be put, be made, be inflicted
  - 1c) (Hophal)
    - 1c1) to be given, be bestowed, be given up, be delivered up
    - 1c2) to be put upon

**Part of Speech:** verb

**A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number:** a primitive root

**Same Word by TWOT Number:** 1443

# Re'eh in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 11:26–16:17

“See,” says Moses to the people of Israel, “I place before you today a blessing and a curse”—the blessing that will come when they fulfill G-d’s commandments, and the curse if they abandon them. These should be proclaimed on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal when the people cross over into the Holy Land.

A Temple should be established in “the place that G-d will choose to make dwell His name there,” where the people should bring their sacrifices to Him; it is forbidden to make offerings to G-d in any other place. It is permitted to slaughter animals elsewhere, not as a sacrifice but to eat their meat; the blood (which in the Temple is poured upon the altar), however, may not be eaten.

A false prophet, or one who entices others to worship idols, should be put to death; an idolatrous city must be destroyed. The identifying signs for kosher animals and fish, and the list of non-kosher birds (first given in Leviticus 11), are repeated.

A tenth of all produce is to be eaten in Jerusalem, or else exchanged for money with which food is purchased and eaten there. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor instead. Firstborn cattle and sheep are to be offered in the Temple, and their meat eaten by the kohanim (priests).

The mitzvah of charity obligates a Jew to aid a needy fellow with a gift or loan. On the Sabbatical year (occurring every seventh year), all loans are to be forgiven. All indentured servants are to be set free after six years of service.

Our Parshah concludes with the laws of the three pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot—when all should go to “see and be seen” before G-d in the Holy Temple.

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## Introduction:

God makes His will very clear and gives us a choice of what path we want to follow and what the results of that choice will be.

**Path #1 – Path of Obedience = Blessings**

**Path #2 – Path of Disobedience = Curses**

He has plainly shown that our choices have consequences. He does not lead us blindly, but tells us exactly what will happen if we choose the wrong path. The choice is clear if you want to be blessed and the Word is clear that it is through obedience that the blessings come.

His land was to be sanctified and holy, His people were to be sanctified and holy and defilement of the land or of the person would result in judgement and expulsion from the land.

God has shown that He expects obedience to His commands and in return will bless His people. Yet we see from History that the majority chooses to take path #2. However, those who choose path #1, will see His blessings in their life, because that is what He promised.

*Alternatives: Blessings and Curses (Deut. 27:1–30:20).* Moses set before the Israelites the alternatives of blessings or curses. Under Joshua they were to renew the covenant publicly. At Mt Ebal a stone was to be erected for inscribing the Law and an altar constructed for offering sacrifice. The curses were to be read from Mt Ebal and the blessings from Mt Gerizim. Conditional self-curses were read regarding offenses against God and other human beings (27:15–26). Thus they acknowledged their accountability to God. Though their sins might be hidden from people, it was God to whom they were primarily and ultimately accountable. Blessings as a way of life and curses as a way of death were clearly set before the Israelites (28:1–68). Setting them in the perspective of history, Moses appealed to the new generation to take advantage of their present opportunity (29:1–29). Warning that should they fail to love God they would ultimately be subjected to dispersion, Moses admonished them to choose the way of life and good rather than the way of death and evil (30:1–20).<sup>2</sup>

It was common to conclude vassal treaties in the ancient Near East with a section on blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (see Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 29–31, 327). Other passages relating the blessings and curses of the Mosaic Law include Exodus 23:22–33; Deuteronomy 28; Joshua 24:20.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (621). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.

<sup>3</sup> Lindsey, F. D. (1985). Leviticus. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Le 26). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

**Deu 11:22 For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him,**

Deu 11:23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

Deu 11:24 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours. Your territory shall be from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River, the river Euphrates, to the western sea.

Deu 11:25 No one shall be able to stand against you. The LORD your God will lay the fear of you and the dread of you on all the land that you shall tread, as he promised you.

Deu 11:26 "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse:

Deu 11:27 **the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today,**

**Deu 11:28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.**

Deu 11:29 And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, you shall set the **blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.**

Deu 11:30 Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh?

Deu 11:31 For you are to cross over the Jordan to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God is giving you. And when you possess it and live in it,

Deu 11:32 you shall be careful to do all the statutes and the rules that I am setting before you today. (ESV)

“See, I set before you today a blessing and a curse.”

Thus opens our Parshah, the Torah reading of Re'eh (“[See](#)”). The blessing, Moses proceeds to explain, shall come about “because you will heed the commandments of the L-rd your G-d that I command you today. And the curse, if you will not heed the commandments of the L-rd your G-d, but turn away from the way I command you this day, to follow other gods that you did not know.”

Upon their entry into the Holy Land, the people of Israel are instructed to [proclaim the blessing](#) on Mount Gerizim, and the [curse](#) on the nearby Mount Ebal. This [pair of mountains](#), Moses directs, are “on the other side of the Jordan, way beyond in the direction of the sunset, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain, opposite Gilgal, near the plains of Moreh.”

**Mt Ebal**



**Mt. Gerizim**



*Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse... And it will be, when the L-rd, your G-d, will bring you to the land to which you come, to possess it, that you shall place those blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and those cursing upon Mount Ebal. ([Deuteronomy 11:26, 29](#))*

In this mysterious ritual, Moses instructs the people that when they finally enter the Land, they are to pronounce blessings at Mount Gerizim, and curses at neighboring Mount Ebal. The Priests and Levites were to stand in the valley between the mountains. Six tribes were to stand on Mt. Gerizim and the six remaining tribes on Mt. Ebal. As the Levites called out a series of blessings and curses, the tribes on the mountains answered "amen" after each statement. We are told that Gerizim was fertile and lush with greenery and Ebal was a barren, bleak rock.

In the painting, too, there is a striking contrast between the mountains. Mount Gerizim is covered with fruitful terraces, blessed with life, celebration and joy. Vertical rays of light flow down, bringing blessings and peace. On the other side, Mount Ebal is arid, dark brown and barren. It looks dead. The strokes are horizontal, with no descending blessings.

It is taught that when we are aligned with goodness, goodness flows down on the mount of blessing, while the other mountain, the mount of curses, absorbs the murky blight of our misdeeds. By [Yoram Raanan](#)

**AUXILIARY COVENANT PRINCIPLES ([DEUT 7:1–11:32](#))<sup>4</sup>**

The basic requirement of complete and exclusive love for God ([6:5](#); [10:12](#)) is worked out in various ways in [7:1–11:32](#).

<b>LAW CODES AND COVENANTS (2nd Millennium B.C.)</b>		
<b>LAW CODE</b>		<b>COVENANT*</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Identifies superior partner.</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Prologue</b>	Shows how the superior partner has cared for the subordinate one in the past, thereby inspiring gratitude and obedience within the subordinate partner.	<b>Prologue</b>
<b>Laws</b>	<b>Lists the laws given by the superior partner which are to be obeyed by the subordinate partner</b>	<b>Stipulations/Laws</b>
<b>Blessings and Curses</b>	Provides for the preservation of the text in the temple of the subordinate partner.	<b>Depositions Reading</b>
	Witnessed and guaranteed by the gods of both partners.	<b>Witnesses</b>
	<b>Pronounces curses on those who disobey and blessings on those who obey.</b>	<b>Blessings and Curses</b>
	Ratified by an oath and a ceremony, and sanctions are pronounced against any person who breaks the covenantal relationship.	<b>Oath Ceremony Sanctions</b>

<sup>4</sup>

Dockery, D. S., Butler, T. C., Church, C. L., Scott, L. L., Ellis Smith, M. A., White, J. E., & Holman Bible Publishers (Nashville, T. (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

## BLESSING AND CURSE

**Blessings and curses are formal pronouncements by someone in authority;** in the case of blessing, bestowing God’s positive empowerment. This may be from God directly, or from an authorized mediator: usually a king, a priest, or a clan patriarch. Pedersen summarized the fundamental content of blessing as: numerous descendants; fertility of flocks, herds, and fields; and dominance over enemies (Pedersen, 1:204–11). Not only are they formal proclamations, but they are understood as words of power; the words bring the desired result to fruition. Balak, the Moabite king, says to Balaam: “... for I know that the one whom you bless is blessed, and the one whom you curse is cursed” ([Num 22:6](#); all translations are my own unless otherwise noted). In hymnic texts, blessing becomes part of the vocabulary of praise (e.g., [Ps 145:2](#)).

In [Gen 1:28](#), God directly pronounces a blessing on the primal man and woman: And God blessed them, and said to them: “Be fruitful and reproduce, and fill the land and subjugate it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the land.” This speech identifies God as the source of blessing. But as a text, it derives from the priestly writers (P), who in all likelihood drew this form from Israelite liturgy.

In [2 Sam 6:18](#), David is described as pronouncing a blessing at the ritual accompanying the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem for the first time: When David completed the sacrifice of the whole burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of the Armies. David functions here as the mediator of Yahweh’s blessing to the congregation at the conclusion of the ritual.

The clearest example of a priestly blessing is the so-called “Aaronic Blessing” in [Num 6:22–27](#):

And Yahweh spoke to Moses saying: “Speak to Aaron and to his sons saying: ‘Thus you shall pronounce the blessing on the community of Israel, saying to them:

“May Yahweh bless you and guard you.

May Yahweh cause his face to shine on you and be gracious to you.

May Yahweh raise his face to you, and establish peace for you.”

And they will place my name on the community of Israel, and I will bless them.

This clarifies that the authorized cultic representative (the priest) calls down divine favor on the community so that they may enjoy the benefits of Yahweh’s patronage. It also makes explicit that it is Yahweh who bestows these powers of life and protection, not the priest. The priest acts as the mediator of grace; and this takes place in a liturgical setting.

In the Community Rule from Qumran, the priestly blessing of the faithful is coupled with the levitical curse of the wicked:

And the priests shall pronounce a blessing on all the men who have cast their lot with God—those who walk in integrity in all their ways—and say:

“May he bless you with all goodness,

and protect you from all evil,

and illuminate your heart with the insight of life,

and bestow on you knowledge of eternal matters;

and may he raise his loyal face toward you for eternal peace.”

And the Levites shall pronounce a curse on all the men who have cast their lot with Belial and respond and say:

“Cursed are you in all your wickedly evil deeds.  
May God make you accursed in the hand of all who take vengeance,  
and assign your descendants to destruction  
at the hand of all who exact reprisals.  
Cursed are you! Hopeless!  
Like the darkness are your deeds.  
Denounced are you into the gloom of perpetual fire.  
May God neither be gracious to you when you cry out,  
nor forgive for the purification of your sins.  
May he raise his face to wreak vengeance on you.  
And may none of those who possess their patrimony say to you:  
‘Peace’.”

And all that enter into the covenant shall respond after the pronouncements of the blessing and curse: “Amen, Amen.” ([1QS 2:1–10](#))

This parallels the juxtaposition of blessing and curse in [Deut 28:1–24](#). They are both liturgical, words of power, and pronounced by a cultic leader.

The story of Jacob tricking his father Isaac into blessing him (instead of Esau) provides an example of a patriarchal blessing:

So [Jacob] came near and kissed [Isaac]; and [Isaac] smelled the odor of his garments, and blessed him, and said: “See, the aroma of my son is like the aroma of a field which Yahweh has blessed! And may God provide for you from the dew of heaven, and from the fatness of the earth, and plenteous grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be a lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. The one who curses you be accursed, and the one who blesses you be blessed.” ([Gen 27:27–29](#))

And in this ancient context, the blessing is not merely a promise, but a formal conferring of favor and an empowerment which cannot be taken back or transferred (see [Gen 27:30–40](#)). Like the example from Qumran, this text clarifies that cursing is the reciprocal of blessing.

*Semeia*, 68. Honor and Shame in The World of the Bible

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**The test of obedience, the “if you” clauses- In other words, we have the responsibility to respond to God via obedience, which will bring the blessings. If we ignore His ways, we will be cursed, this will later be discussed in more detail in Deuteronomy 28.**

**Here are a few as a reminders**

Gen 4:7 **If you** do well, will you not be accepted? And **if you** do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

Exo 15:26 saying, "**If you** will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, your healer."

Exo 18:23 **If you** do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace."

Exo 19:5 Now therefore, **if you** will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Exo 23:22 "But **if you** carefully obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

Lev 26:3 "**If you** walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them,

Lev 26:14 "But **if you** will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments,

Lev 26:15 **if you** spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant,

Lev 26:21 "Then **if you** walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins.

Deu 11:13 "And **if you** will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deu 11:22 For **if you** will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him,

Deu 11:27 the blessing, **if you** obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today,

Deu 11:28 and the curse, **if you** do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.

Deu 13:18 **if you** obey the voice of the LORD your God, keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Deu 28:1 "And **if you** faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, **if you** obey the voice of the LORD your God.

Deu 28:9 The LORD will establish you as a people holy to himself, as he has sworn to you, **if you** keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in his ways.

Deu 28:13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you shall only go up and not down, **if you** obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, being careful to do them,

Deu 28:14 and **if you** do not turn aside from any of the words that I command you today, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deu 28:15 "But **if you** will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.

Deu 28:58 "If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God,

Deu 30:16 If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

Jos 23:16 if you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them. Then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and you shall perish quickly from off the good land that he has given to you."

Jos 24:20 If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm and consume you, after having done you good."

1Sa 7:3 And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashteroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

1Sa 12:14 If you will fear the LORD and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God, it will be well.

1Sa 12:15 But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you and your king.

1Sa 12:25 But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king."

er 17:24 "But if you listen to me, declares the LORD, and bring in no burden by the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the Sabbath day holy and do no work on it,

Jer 17:27 But if you do not listen to me, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and not to bear a burden and enter by the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and shall not be quenched."

Zec 3:7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.

Zec 6:15 "And those who are far off shall come and help to build the temple of the LORD. And you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. And this shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

Mal 2:2 If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the LORD of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart.

Joh 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

Joh 5:47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Joh 8:31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

Joh 15:7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

Joh 15:10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

Joh 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command you.

# Re'eh Haftorah in a Nutshell

*Isaiah 54:11-55:5*

This week's *haftorah* is the third of a series of seven "*haftarot* of Consolation." These seven *haftarot* commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

G-d addresses the "afflicted and storm-tossed" Jerusalem "who has not been comforted," assuring her that she, and her people, will be restored to full glory. The foundation, walls and ground of Jerusalem will be laid with precious stones. Her children will be "disciples of the L-rd," and will enjoy abundant peace. Any weapon engineered against her will fail.

The prophet then invites the thirsty to acquire "water," namely those who are thirsty for spirituality should study the quenching words of Torah. He promises the nation an everlasting covenant similar to that made with King David. This is also an allusion to the Messiah, David's descendant, who will be revered by all of the nations of the world.

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## **HafTorah – From Shame to Honor and Restoration**

Isa 54:11 "O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires.

Isa 54:12 I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones.

Isa 54:13 All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children.

Isa 54:14 In righteousness you shall be established; you shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

Isa 54:15 If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you.

Isa 54:16 Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy;

Isa 54:17 no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD."

**Isa 55:1** "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isa 55:2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Isa 55:3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

Isa 55:4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

Isa 55:5 Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

**Yeshua announcing blessings upon those who walk in Torah and woes upon certain people who think they are self-sufficient and have no need of God or Torah in their lives.**

Matthew 5:3-11

- <sup>3</sup> “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,  
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- <sup>4</sup> Blessed *are* the ones who mourn,  
because they will be comforted.
- <sup>5</sup> Blessed *are* the meek,  
because they will inherit the earth.
- <sup>6</sup> Blessed *are* the ones who hunger and thirst *for* righteousness,  
because they will be satisfied.
- <sup>7</sup> Blessed *are* the merciful,  
because they will be shown mercy.
- <sup>8</sup> Blessed *are* the pure in heart,  
because they will see God.
- <sup>9</sup> Blessed *are* the peacemakers,  
because they will be called sons of God.
- <sup>10</sup> Blessed *are* those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- <sup>11</sup> Blessed are you  
when they insult you and persecute *you* and say all kinds of evil things against you, lying on account of  
me.
- <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because your reward *is* great in heaven, for in the *same* way they persecuted the  
prophets before you. <sup>5</sup>

**The Sermon on the Plain: Woes- Luke 6:24-26**

- <sup>24</sup> “But woe to you who are rich,  
because you have received your comfort.
- <sup>25</sup> Woe to you who are satisfied now,  
because you will be hungry.  
Woe, you who laugh now,  
because you will mourn and weep.
- <sup>26</sup> Woe whenever all people speak well of you,  
for their fathers used to do the same *things* to the false prophets. <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *The Lexham English Bible*. 2012 (W. H. Harris, III, E. Ritzema, R. Brannan, D. Mangum, J. Dunham, J. A. Reimer & M. Wierenga, Ed.) (Mt 5:3–12). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> *The Lexham English Bible*. 2012 (W. H. Harris, III, E. Ritzema, R. Brannan, D. Mangum, J. Dunham, J. A. Reimer & M. Wierenga, Ed.) (Lk 6:24–26). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

## The Sermon on the Mount<sup>7</sup>

According to noted Messianic Jewish scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum: ‘In its context – the Jewish frame of reference in which it was spoken- The Sermon on the Mount is the Messiah’s interpretation of the standard of righteousness which the Torah demanded, put in contrast with some of the Pharisaic interpretations. A better title for this “sermon” would be ‘The Messiah’s Interpretation of the Righteousness of the Torah’ Simplistically stated, the difference is between mere external conformity in contrast to internal conformity that naturally lend itself to external conformity to Torah.

**How blessed.** Greek *makarios* corresponds to Hebrew *asher* and means “blessed,” “happy,” and “fortunate” all at once, so that no one English word is adequate. For a Hebrew example, compare Psalm 144:15: “How blessed/happy/fortunate the people whose God is *Adonai!*” Verses 3–12 are known as the Beatitudes because the word “*beatus*” was used in the best-known Latin version, Jerome’s “Vulgate” (c. 410 C.E.), to translate “*makarios*.”

According to Elazar (Larry) Brandt, a Messianic Jewish friend, the Beatitudes are actually *Tanakh* phrases in the form of blessings representing the messianic age. At the end of them, Yeshua says, “How blessed *you* are when people insult *you* and persecute *you* and tell all kinds of vicious lies about *you* because *you* follow *me*” (v. 11; italics added). By pronouncing this blessing in the context of messianic blessings, he is saying, in code, that he is the Messiah—which must have surprised and shocked his hearers.

This understanding supports my interpretation of v. 17 as the theme sentence for the Messiah’s interpretation of *Torah*. Previously I did not have ground for assuming that Yeshua’s premise in his Sermon on the Mount was “I am the Messiah,” so that my understanding of v. 17 “came from nowhere.” Now I see that it is the logical implication of the “I am the Messiah” premise, communicated in code by the Beatitudes.<sup>8</sup>

**Don’t think that I have come to abolish the *Torah* or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete,** to make their meaning full. The Hebrew word “*Torah*,” literally “teaching, doctrine,” is rendered in both the Septuagint and the New Testament by the Greek word “*nomos*,” which means “law.” Greek has had a more direct and pervasive influence on English and other modern languages than Hebrew has, and this is why in most languages one speaks of the “Law” of Moses rather than the “Teaching” of Moses. It is also part of the reason why the *Torah* has mistakenly come to be thought of by Christians as legalistic in character (see Ro 3:20bN, Ga 3:23bN).

In Judaism the word “*Torah*” may mean:

- (1) *Chumash* (the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses); or
- (2) That plus the Prophets and the Writings, i.e., the *Tanakh* (known by Christians as the Old Testament; see 4:4–10N); or
- (3) That plus the Oral *Torah*, which includes the Talmud and other legal materials; or
- (4) That plus all religious instruction from the rabbis, including ethical and aggadic (homiletical) materials.

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<sup>7</sup> Complete Jewish Study Bible

<sup>8</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 5:3). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.

Here it means the first of these, since “the Prophets” are mentioned separately.

**The Prophets.** The word “Prophets,” capitalized (as here, 7:12, 22:40; Lk 16:16, 28, 31; 24:44; Yn 1:45, 6:45; Ac 13:15, 27, 40; 15:15; 24:14; 28:23; Ro 3:21), refers to the second of the three main parts of the *Tanakh*. When the *Tanakh* prophets as persons are referred to, the word is not capitalized; “prophet” in the singular is never capitalized. By mentioning both the *Torah* and the Prophets Yeshua is saying that he has not come to modify or replace God’s Word, the *Tanakh*. Compare Lk 24:44–45.

**To complete.** The Greek word for “to complete” is “*plêrôsai*,” literally, “to fill”; the usual rendering here, however, is “to fulfill.” Replacement theology, which wrongly teaches that the Church has replaced the Jews as God’s people (v. 5N), understands this verse wrongly in two ways.

First, Yeshua’s “fulfilling” **the *Torah*** is thought to mean that it is unnecessary for people to fulfill it now. But there is no logic to the proposition that Yeshua’s obeying the *Torah* does away with our need to obey it. In fact, Sha’ul (Paul), whose object in his letter to the Romans is to foster “the obedience that comes from trusting” in Yeshua, teaches that such trusting does not abolish *Torah* but confirms it (Ro 1:5, 3:31).

Second, with identical lack of logic, Yeshua’s “fulfilling” **the Prophets** is thought to imply that no prophecies from the *Tanakh* remain for the Jews. But the Hebrew Bible’s promises to the Jews are not abolished in the name of being “fulfilled in Yeshua.” Rather, fulfillment in Yeshua is an added assurance that everything God has promised the Jews will yet come to pass (see 2C 1:20&N).

It is true that Yeshua kept the *Torah* perfectly and fulfilled predictions of the Prophets, but that is not the point here. Yeshua did not come to abolish but “to make full” (*plêrôsai*) the meaning of what the *Torah* and the ethical demands of the Prophets require. Thus he came **to complete** our understanding of **the *Torah* and the Prophets**, so that we can try more effectively to be and do what they say to be and do. Verses 18–20 enunciate three ways in which the *Torah* and the Prophets remain necessary, applicable and in force. The remainder of chapter 5 gives six specific cases in which Yeshua explains the fuller spiritual meaning of points in the Jewish Law. In fact, this verse states the theme and agenda of the entire Sermon on the Mount, in which Yeshua completes, makes fuller, the understanding of his *talmidim* concerning the *Torah* and the Prophets, so that they can more fully express what being God’s people is all about.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Stern, D. H. (1996). *Jewish New Testament Commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Mt 5:17). Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications.