

Rabbinic vs Messianic Judaism
April 22, 2023

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[from Ted Alongi]



Torah in Messiah

Intro and summary:
We love the heritage of the rabbinic writings, but recognize that they are a different spiritual stream.

Yn 5.39-40 You keep examining the Tanakh because you think that in it you have eternal life.

Q: Is this a bad thing to do?

A: Yeshua's surprising comment.

Yn 5.39-40 You keep examining the Tanakh because you think that in it you have eternal life. Those very Scriptures **bear witness to me**. Yet you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life! [*Who could talk like that, except G-d come to earth?*]

Yn 5.39-40 You keep examining the Tanakh because you think that in it you have eternal life. Those very Scriptures bear witness to me. Yet you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life!

TWO SYSTEMS

1. Eternal life through the scriptures.

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TWO SYSTEMS

1. Eternal life through the scriptures.
2. Eternal life through Yeshua.

1. TWO SYSTEMS

There are **two fundamentally different spiritual systems** of salvation, of righteousness, and of life, as taught in Torah and pointed out by Rav Shaul. This is MUCH more than just acknowledging that eternal salvation is by Yeshua and earned **not** by obedience. We are examining a spirit, an energy of living.

For those who might say, well Paul undermined the faith of Yeshua; made a new religion ...

Torah in Messiah

Shaul's / Paul's credentials

Shaul certainly understood Rabbinics, and never renounced Torah. He grew up in the warp and woof of it, he made a Temple sacrifice at the end of the Book of Acts, and referred to Israel as his people. So Shaul understood Rabbinics and Torah in a profound way.

Paul is arguing that there is a wrong interpretation of the Torah, two approaches to Torah.

Acts 28.19-20 But when the Judean leaders protested, I was forced to appeal to Caesar—not that I had any charge to bring against my own nation. For this reason, therefore, I have requested to see you and to speak with you—since it is for the hope of Israel that I am bearing this chain.”

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Two systems in Romans 10

Ro. 10.2-4 I can testify to their [the P'rushim] zeal for God. But it is not based on correct understanding; for, since they are unaware of **God's way of making people righteous** and instead seek to set up their own, they have not submitted themselves to **God's way of making people righteous**. [*P'rushim, Pharisees, proto Rabbis*]

way of making people righteous. [*P'rushim, Pharisees, proto Rabbis*]

God's way of making people righteous is in keeping with Shaul's intro in Ro 10.4 "For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts."

Why we need to do Ingathering.

[We used to call it outreach. Ingathering is a MUCH better term, noted by Mike Boatright.]

Here are the two systems as defined by Shaul/Paul, quoting Torah with comments:

FIRST SYSTEM ^{Ro 10.5} For Moshe writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah that **the person who does these things will attain life through them.** (Vayikra Lev. 18:5.)

[Does these things → life. Sounds good. Is good. Mostly, but there is a subtle nuance.]

SECOND SYSTEM ^{Ro 10.6-8} Moreover, the righteousness grounded in trusting says: **"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend to heaven?'"** — (D'varim 30:11-14) that is, to bring the Messiah down — or, **"Who will descend into Sh'ol?"** —that is, to bring the Messiah up from the dead. What, then, does it say? **"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart."**

Then Shaul's spiritual exposition —

^{Ro 10.8-9} that is, the word about trust which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered.

[based on D'varim/Dt. 30:11-14]

The second of the systems is in keeping with Shaul's intro in Ro 10.4 "For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts."

- Righteousness by effort.
- Righteousness by supernatural power, then effort.

A similar, and perhaps more emphatic, exposition of scripture is found in Galatians 3.1-14

FIRST SYSTEM O unthinking Galatians, who cast a spell on you? Before your eyes Yeshua the Messiah was clearly portrayed as having been put to death as a criminal! I want to find out just one thing from you: did you receive the Ruach by **deeds based on Torah**, or by hearing based on trust? Are you so unthinking? After beginning with the Ruach, will you now reach the goal in the flesh? Did you endure so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? So then, the One who gives you the Ruach and works miracles among you—does He do it because of your **deeds based on Torah** or your hearing based on trust and faithfulness?

SECOND SYSTEM ^{Galatians 3.6-8} Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," [Genesis 15:6] know then that those who have faith are children of Abraham. The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News ^{Galatians 3.8-9} to Abraham in advance, saying, ^{Genesis 12:3} "All the nations shall be blessed through you." So then, the faithful are blessed along with Abraham, the faithful one.

Galatians 3.10-11 For all who rely on the deeds of Torah are under a curse—for the Scriptures say, **“Cursed [in practical terms, an angry or frustrated spirit] is everyone who does not keep doing everything written in the scroll of the Torah.”** [Dvarim Dt. 27:26] ¹¹ It is clear that no one is set right before God by Torah, for **“the righteous shall live by emunah.”** [Habakkuk 2:4]

However, Torah is not based on trust and faithfulness; on the contrary, **“the one who does these things shall live by them”** Vayikra Lev. 18:513 Messiah liberated us from Torah’s curse, having become a curse for us (for it is written, [The curse is of the frustration of imperfect obedience. Liberated to joyful receiving.]

“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree” Dvarim/Dt 21:22-23 in order that through Messiah Yeshua the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so we might receive the promise of the Ruach through trusting faith.

So, this is not just about salvation, but about the flow of spiritual life.

By the way, I realize that the two systems overlap and interrelate a lot, which make the presentation of the starkly different streams very subtle at times.

Application: So, is your eternal confidence based in what you do? Or based on who you ARE in Messiah’s loving atonement?

- That should motivate what we do!
- Human being or human doing.
- Work FROM rest, or work TO rest.

Torah in Messiah

Two systems the Talmud

2. ILLUSTRATION FROM THE TALMUD

Very illustrative of this is the story of *The Oven of Akhnai*, a Talmudic story found in Bava Metzia 59a-b which is set around the early 2nd century CE. This story is so clearly depicts the two streams that it almost seems that Shaul used some language from the story, a century in advance, prophetically.

In this story, the R. Eliezer, possibly a Messianic believer, is condemned.

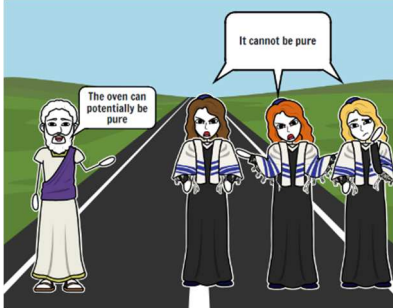
[<https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboards/e1b1a174/ari-and-rachel-oven-of-akhnai-comic2/copy>]



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And this is known as the oven of *akhnai*. The Gemara asks: What is the relevance of *akhnai*, a snake, in this context? Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: It is characterized in that manner due to the fact that the Rabbis surrounded it with their statements like this snake, which



often forms a coil when at rest, and deemed it impure. The Sages taught: On that day, when they discussed this matter, Rabbi Eliezer answered all possible answers in the world to support his opinion, but the Rabbis did not accept his explanations from him. [https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboards/e1b1a174/ari-and-rachel-oven-of-akhnai-comic2/copy]

After failing to convince the Rabbis logically, Rabbi Eliezer said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, this carob tree will prove it. The carob tree was uprooted from its place one hundred cubits, and some say four hundred cubits. The Rabbis said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from the carob tree.

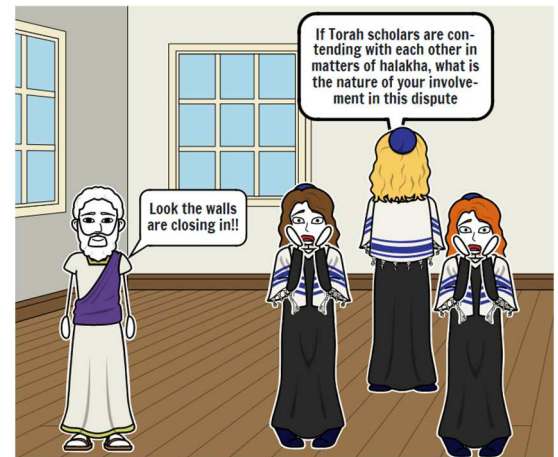


Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, the stream will prove it. The water in the stream turned backward and began flowing in the opposite direction. They said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from a stream.

Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, the walls of the study hall will prove it. The walls of the study hall leaned inward and began to fall. Rabbi Yehoshua scolded the walls and said to them:

If Torah scholars are contending with each other in matters of *halakha*, what is the nature of your involvement in this dispute? The *Gemara* relates: The walls did not fall because of the deference due Rabbi Yehoshua, but they did not straighten because of the deference due Rabbi Eliezer, and they still remain leaning.

[Bava Metzia 59b
https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Metzia.59b.1?lang=bi]



Summary of the story thus far: R. Eliezer made and got divine approval of his case by

- Logic
- Supernatural intervention in moving a tree
- Supernatural intervention in reversal of a stream
- Supernatural intervention in collapse of walls

None of these were acceptable to the other sages.

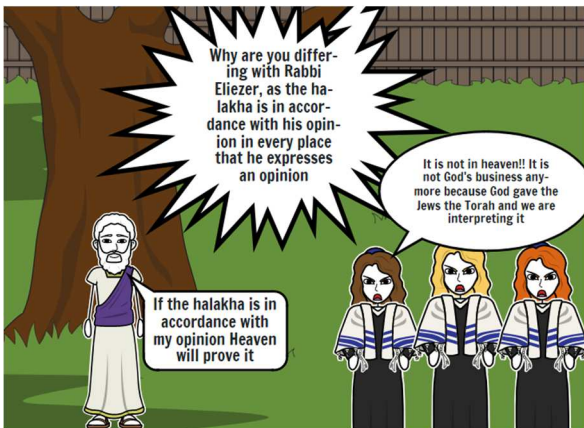
Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, Heaven will prove it. A Divine Voice emerged from Heaven and said: Why are you differing with Rabbi

Eliezer, as the *halakha* is in accordance with his opinion in every place that he expresses an opinion?

Rabbi **Yehoshua** stood on his feet and said: It is written: “It is not in heaven” ([Deuteronomy 30:12](#)). The Gemara asks: What is the relevance of the phrase “It is not in heaven” in this context? Rabbi Yirmeya says: Since the **Torah** was already given at Mount Sinai, we do not regard a Divine Voice, as You already wrote at Mount Sinai, in the Torah: “After a majority to incline” ([Exodus 23:2](#)). Since the majority of Rabbis disagreed with Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion, the *halakha* is not ruled in accordance with his opinion.

The **Gemara** relates: Years after, Rabbi Natan encountered Elijah the prophet and said to him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do at that time, when Rabbi Yehoshua issued his declaration? Elijah said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, smiled and said: My children have triumphed over Me; My children have triumphed over Me.

[This last is a view of G-d that is cringeworthy.]



Then he said to them, ‘If the Halacha is as I say, then from Heaven it should be confirmed.’ A heavenly voice was heard that said, ‘why do you contend with Rabbi Eliezer the halacha is always according to his view.’ Rabbi Yehoshua stood up and said, ‘It is not in Heaven.’

(*lo ba-shamayim hi*). **לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הִיא** Deut 30:12

[<https://www.storyboardthat.com/storyboards/e1b1a174/ari-and-rachel-oven-of-akhnai-comic2/copy>]

What does it mean that ‘it is not in Heaven’? Rabbi Yirmiya said ‘The Torah has already been given on Mount Sinai and we do not consider heavenly voices since it has already been written in the Torah “You shall follow after the Majority.”’

[Where does it say that?]

[Shaul quotes this line with the understanding that we humans don’t have to ascend to heaven to get heavenly revelation. Rabbi Yehoshua is using it in the opposite sense: that NO heavenly revelation is more authoritative than the rabbis!]

Then R. Yirmiya cites the source/grid of Rabbinic authority, more than heavenly voices and miracles. He says. it has already been written in the Torah “You shall follow after the Majority.”

[Where does it say that?]

Shmot/Ex 23:2. This verse is used as an *asmakhtah* **אַסְמַכְתָּא** [(Aramaic) written proof, reference support] that in Biblical matters we follow the majority, whether in making legal decisions, or with mixtures of kosher and non-kosher food items etc.

[Here is the key]

Shmot/Ex 23:2

לֹא-תִהְיֶה אַחֲרֵי-רַבִּים לָרֶעַת ; וְלֹא-תִעָנֶה עַל-רַב , לְנִטּוֹת אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהַטּוֹת.

Do not follow the crowd when it does what is wrong; and don't allow the popular view to sway you into offering testimony for any cause if the effect will be to pervert justice.

[How does this verse prove Rabbinic authority???!]

The interpretation]

[Here is the key]

Shmot/Ex 23:2

לא-תהיה אחר-י-רבים לרעת; ולא-תענה על-רב, לנטת אחר-י רבים להטת

Do not **follow the crowd** when it does what is wrong; and don't allow the popular view to sway you into offering testimony for any cause if the effect will be to pervert justice.

[The phrase was taken out of context to reverse the meaning!! The word "NOT" was deleted and it reversed the plain sense.

Summary of the whole story: R. Eliezer made and got divine approval of his case by

- Logic
- Supernatural intervention in moving a tree
- Supernatural intervention in reversal of a stream
- Supernatural intervention in collapse of walls
- G-d spoke from heaven.
- Genuine Heavenly voice was rejected.
- Majority opinion of rabbis deemed supreme.
- Basis of majority opinion is violation and reversal of Ex 23.2
- G-d is construed to like the idea that His Word and will is overcome

Torah in Messiah

Not just Jewish, many religious groups have a works based lifestyle. It's generally very lovely.

Two systems: all works based

So, is your eternal confidence based in what you do?

Or based on who you ARE in Messiah's loving power and atonement?

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[<http://wolkenraum.quickconnect.to/d/s/tGdOtODp2QtVlrbLoBZE7xQmKWsuOgD0/Zxbxu-Lm13Ubr34ha6vfla8q2YnBnCh-aLCg8D4OYgo>]
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