

## **Mennonite Brethren: The Gift of the Torah**

Much has changed since that time recorded in Acts chapter fifteen. Certain men of the Jews were telling the new converts that they needed to be circumcised immediately in order to be saved. That began a long dispute that later ended in Yerushalayim with the conclusion that it was through the favor of Yeshua the Moshiach that the new converts had come to believe. Effectively the elders of that assembly were saying that some of the Jews were getting the "cart before the horse" and that those who had just begun to believe in Yeshua should be accepted into their fellowship because of that faith.

The circumstances for first century believers was very different from today. Nearly all who first believed in Yeshua Moshiach then were Jews who had been faithfully keeping the Torah for many generations. It was inconceivable to them that the non-Jews who were believing in Yeshua just as they were would not immediately also begin to be Torah obedient. This was a very natural conclusion by the Jewish believers of that time and their inference found a responsive audience in the newly converted non-Jews. The wisdom of apostles and elders prevailed, however, and the new converts were told not to rush into Torah obedience because they had believed in the Moshiach and that it was their faith in Yeshua that would bring them salvation. Today the circumstances are the exact converse. Those who have believed in Yeshua Moshiach have for many generations been told that they do not need to be Torah obedient. Over and over they have been told in one way or another that the Torah (Law) has been done away with. So ingrained is this doctrine that it is now even wrong for believers in Yeshua to keep any part of the Torah. Torah obedience has become tantamount to "earning salvation" and an equivalent to unbelief. The difference between then and now cannot be more obvious. In the first century, non-Jewish believers in the Moshiach were surrounded by Torah keepers while in this generation believers are surrounded by non-Jewish Torah breakers.

Brethren, I can tell you with complete certainty that we should be making every effort to be Torah obedient, and that our disobedience is sin. That admonition would not have been suitable for those first century believers in Yeshua. But it is for us. Those who first believed did not have rebellion in their hearts towards the Torah as we do now. Our generation cannot comprehend that we are Israelites and that the Torah was given to us for all our generations. Neither can we grasp it that the Torah was an eternal gift from YHWH; a gift that came with enormous spiritual promise. Even more, we cannot capture it that the veil that was over the Torah is removed when we turn to Yeshua Moshiach. This admonition will be very hard for you to accept and for the most part will fall on deaf ears. But, I can give you my full assurance through Yeshua and by the Spirit of Elohim that YHWH's Torah can fill your life with joy and make the path for you into Yeshua's kingdom.

He that has ears to hear let him hear:

"The Torah of YHWH is perfect, bringing back the being;  
The witness of YHWH is trustworthy, making wise the simple;  
The orders of YHWH are straight, rejoicing the heart;  
The command of YHWH is clear, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of YHWH is clean; standing forever;  
The right-rulings of YHWH are true,  
They are righteous altogether,  
More desirable than gold, than much fine gold;  
And sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.  
Also, Your servant is warned by them,  
In guarding them there is great reward." (Tehillim 19:7-11)

Fellow Mennonites and Companions, be very sure that in this day a witness has come to you from Yeshua Moshiach. Turn back from your ways because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Our father Avraham was circumcised after he believed).

Shalom