



## **Parasha Naso**

June 11, 2022

*Torah:* Numbers 4:21-7:89

*Haftarah:* Judges 13:2-25

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Galatians 3:10-14

*Shabbat Shalom Mishpacha!* Our *parasha*, this week is *Naso*, meaning “take.” It begins: 21 Again Adonai spoke to Moses saying, 22 “Take a census also of the sons of Gershon, by their ancestral households and by their families” (Numbers 4:21-22 TLV. The census was to determine how many of the Levite family Gershon were available to perform the task that ADONAI would assign them, the task of disassembling, carrying and reassembling the fabrics and coverings of the Tabernacle. The family of Merari was then counted and given the task of disassembling, carrying and reassembling the structural components of the Tabernacle. The duties of the third family, Kehat, were described last week in *Parasha Bemidbar*.

*Parasha Naso* also discusses the law of the *sotah*, the married woman who is suspected and accused of having committed adultery and the law of the *nazir*, the Nazirite, a person who takes a vow to serve ADONAI for a period of time while abstaining from grape juice or wine, from getting their hair cut and from defilement by a human corpse. Our *haftarah* today is from Judges and is about Sampson a Nazirite. *Naso* also contains *Birkat haKohanim*, the Priestly Blessing, which ADONAI instructed Aaron and his sons to recite in blessing the people of Israel. The *parasha* ends with a description of the gifts brought by the tribes for the dedication of the Tabernacle and telling how ADONAI would speak to Moses inside the Tabernacle from between the two cherubim on the atonement cover of the Ark. There is a more detailed coverage of *Parasha Naso* in the May 22, 2021 message which you can find on our website. Today, we are again focusing our study on *Sha’ul*.

Our goal is to understand what *Sha’ul* actually said in his letters. The majority of the misunderstanding contributing to the antinomian doctrine in Yeshua’s body today comes from a misunderstanding of *Sha’ul*’s writings. Antinomian, meaning “against law,” is the theology relating to the view that Christians are released by grace from the obligation of observing the Mosaic law. This theology had its origin in the early centuries after Yeshua died when Gentiles began to outnumber Jewish followers of Yeshua. *HaSatan* implanted a hatred of Jews in those who are called “the early Church fathers” and their anti-Jewish attitudes led to their anti-nomian theology. This is documented in their own writings for those who care to read them. The *Beit Shalom* “little red book,” *The Relationship of Messianic Judaism and Christianity*, gives some of the details. One instance is in chapter 3, entitled “G-d’s Plan of Redemption I, The Early Centuries and describes one instance of anti-Semitism. Here is a quote from it: 350 CE- A decree from the Apostolic Canons: “If any clergyman shall enter into a synagogue of Jews or heretics (Nazarenes) to pray, let him be deposed. If a layman do so, let him be excommunicated... If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any one of the list of clergy keeps fast or festival with the Jews, or receives from them any of the gifts of their festivals, let him be excommunicated... If any Christian brings oil into a temple of the heathen, or into a synagogue of the Jews, or lights lamps, let him be excommunicated.” The term heretic is synonymous with the term Nazarene. They were those Jews who were disciples of Yeshua who followed *Torah*. The Christians considered them heretics. In this

we see that in the year 350 CE, antinomian doctrine was fully developed and the love that Yeshua commanded between His followers was completely absent.

Those who follow an antinomian doctrine today generally have no idea how or why it is what it is or how it started and just continue to follow it because that is what they have been taught. Many, many followers of Yeshua who follow this doctrine do so conscientiously and in good faith. We do not criticize them. That is their prerogative. Even if we differ in belief, we wish to be in love and unity of faith with those who disagree with us. We are called to love our brothers and sisters in Yeshua even more than we love our neighbor. Yeshua said that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39), but we are to love our fellow believers as He has loved us (John 15:12). That's very difficult for even the most faithful follower of Yeshua, but we must try. We do have unity of faith with regard to the *Besorah*, the Gospel. We believe exactly as they believe, that salvation is by faith through ADONAI's grace alone. It is after salvation that we differ in our understanding of Scripture.

In our *Torah* service today we read from *Sha'ul's* letter to the Galatian congregation: *10 For all who rely on the deeds of Torah are under a curse—for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not keep doing everything written in the scroll of the Torah."* *11 It is clear that no one is set right before God by Torah, for "the righteous shall live by emunah."* (Galatians 3:10-11 TLV). We understand verse 11 very well and do not attempt to be set right before G-d by keeping *Torah*. We only rely on *emunah*, faith in Yeshua, for salvation.

Here is an example which will make it easier to understand this concept. It's very similar to being a citizen of a nation. Each nation has requirements for becoming a citizen. A person must first make application for citizenship and then follow all of the requirements for becoming a citizen. Once he or she is a citizen, they must follow all the laws and regulations of the nation as well as of the states, counties and cities. There are laws for becoming a citizen and laws to follow once you become a citizen.

Yeshua is a king and He has a kingdom. Before knowing Yeshua, we were outside His kingdom, non-citizens. When we repented of our sins and trusted in Him by faith, we became citizens of His kingdom, a citizenship which is in heaven. That's what *Sha'ul* was referring to in verse 11. We do not keep *Torah* for salvation. Even if it could be kept perfectly, *Torah* has no power to bring us to right standing before Yeshua. But, once we became citizens, there are rules and laws which we must follow as citizens of Yeshua's kingdom. It's our job to understand what they are. Just as in the United States, ignorance of the law is no excuse. The manufacturer's handbook, Scripture, clearly describes all these laws for us. ADONAI's law for salvation is that we must trust in Yeshua using our faith. Once we have done that, we are citizens of His kingdom, but also covenant members of the New Covenant which ADONAI made with Israel. ADONAI's second set of rules and regulations then come into play after we have trusted Yeshua. It is then that we are required to obey ADONAI's *mitzvot*, His commandments that are currently in effect. It's just that simple. The rules for getting saved are one set of rules and the rules for life in Messiah after being saved are a separate set of rules.

That is what the "curse of the Law" is about. It's about entry into the covenant. In describing this process, *Sha'ul* was writing about what was happening during his day and time. The Complete Jewish Study Bible makes it clearer. *10 For everyone who depends on legalistic observance of Torah commands lives under a curse, since it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the Scroll of the Torah."* *11 Now it is evident that no one comes to be declared righteous by God through*

legalism, since **“The person who is righteous will attain life by trusting and being faithful.”** (Galatians 3:10-11 CJB). The first bold statement, **Cursed is everyone**, is a reference to Deuteronomy 27:3. Israel under the Mosaic Covenant was required to continue to be faithful to the commands of *Torah*. But, that was after trusting. Abraham trusted and ADONAI credited it to him as righteousness. The Israelites coming out of Egypt had a form of trust by first, believing that “G-d is” and second, by submitting to His will. They could not have committed to His covenant if they didn’t believe that He was ADONAI. The second bold statement, **“The person who is righteous will attain life by trusting and being faithful,”** is a quote from Habakkuk 2:4, which shows that under the Mosaic Covenant, that the same way that Abraham became righteous was the way that Israel attained life.

*Sha’ul* was writing these things to the Galatians, a group of Gentiles, who began following Yeshua after giving them his own testimony and teaching. He made the way of salvation clear to them by saying: *16 Yet we know that a person is set right not by deeds based on Torah, but rather through putting trust in Messiah Yeshua. So even we have put our trust in Messiah Yeshua, in order that we might be set right based on trust in Messiah and not by deeds based on Torah—because no human will be justified by deeds based on Torah.* (Galatians 2:16 TLV). But now, a group of Jews had gone to Galatia to try and convince the people that they must convert to Judaism. We know that is what they were doing because they were trying to get the Galatian men to be circumcised. “Circumcised” is a code word meaning “convert to Judaism.” Becoming a Jewish proselyte, in addition to circumcision, required a male to be immersed, and to observe not only the whole written *Torah*, but also the whole oral *torah* which was supposedly passed down from Moses. In Acts 15, the Jerusalem Council decided that this was not required of new Gentile followers of Yeshua. *Sha’ul* continued: *12 Furthermore, legalism is not based on trusting and being faithful, but on [a misuse of] the text that says, “Anyone who does these things will attain life through them.”* (Galatians 3:12 CJB). The bold statement is from Leviticus 18:5. The life described was the limited atonement offered by the *Yom Kippur* sacrifices from year to year. Nowhere in Galatians do we find that *Sha’ul* said that *Torah* is not to be obeyed. It is, but not to obtain righteousness. Righteousness can only be obtained by trust, faith, in Messiah Yeshua’s death on the tree, which is the focus of *Sha’ul’s* message to the Galatians.

<sup>13</sup> *The Messiah redeemed us from the curse pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf; for the Tanakh says, “Everyone who hangs from a stake comes under a curse.”* (Galatians 3:13 CJB). Yeshua became a curse for us by hanging on a cross, a stake, symbolically a tree. The bold statement is from Deuteronomy: *22 “Suppose a man is guilty of a sin with a death sentence and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree. 23 His body is not to remain all night on the tree—instead you must certainly bury him the same day, for anyone hanged is a curse of God. You must not defile your land that Adonai your God is giving you as an inheritance”* (Deuteronomy 21:22-23 TLV). This is why the Jewish authorities wanted Yeshua’s body to be taken down before sundown. Usually, the Romans left the bodies of those crucified on the stake until they were rotting, a warning which kept the population in fear of Roman law. Yeshua became cursed by G-d for us by hanging on a tree. He took the curse for us, otherwise our sins would have convicted us.

When Yeshua died on the “tree” by becoming a curse for us, He freed us from the curse of *Torah*. When He died on the stake, the cross, ADONAI changed the system by cutting a New Covenant with Yeshua’s blood. He changed the way of having Israel and individual Israelites maintain covenant relationship with Him. From Yeshua’s death forward, it was no longer a year to year group salvation and a covering of sins based upon the Levitical High

Priest's sacrifice on *Yom Kippur*. It was now an individual and personal responsibility of each Israelite to maintain his own covenant relationship and also the Gentile who entered the covenant. <sup>13</sup> *"Messiah liberated us from Torah's curse, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')—* <sup>14</sup> *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"* (Galatians 3:13-14 TLV). The individual covenant relationship with ADONAI also became available to Gentiles through Yeshua's sacrifice, "the blessing of Abraham." The blessing of Abraham for the Gentiles is that they would receive the same blessing which Abraham received, the Good News of Messiah through faith. <sup>8</sup> *The Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the Good News to Abraham in advance, saying, "All the nations shall be blessed through you."* <sup>9</sup> *So then, the faithful are blessed along with Abraham, the faithful one* (Galatians 3:8-9 TLV). As a result of this, all Gentiles who have trusted Yeshua are spiritual descendants of Abraham. What *Sha'ul* didn't say to the Galatians, because his message was specifically to them and to other Gentiles, is that trusting faith, the blessing of Abraham, also came to the Jews through Yeshua's sacrifice on the tree.

<sup>15</sup> *Brothers, let me make an analogy from everyday life: when someone swears an oath, no one else can set it aside or add to it.* <sup>16</sup> *Now the promises were made to Avraham and to his seed. It doesn't say, "and to seeds," as if to many; on the contrary, it speaks of one — **"and to your seed"** — and this "one" is the Messiah.* (Galatians 3:15-16 CJB). "And to your seed" is a quote from Genesis (12:7, 13:15, 17:7, 24:7). In the next verses *Sha'ul* goes on to explain that the legal part of the *Torah* which came into existence 430 years later, does not nullify the promise made to Abraham. This is a reference to what was said earlier: <sup>8</sup> *Also the Tanakh, foreseeing that God would consider the Gentiles righteous when they live by trusting and being faithful, told the Good News to Avraham in advance by saying, **"In connection with you, all the Goyim will be blessed."*** <sup>9</sup> *So then, those who rely on trusting and being faithful are blessed along with Avraham, who trusted and was faithful.* (Galatians 3:8-9 CJB). In saying **"In connection with you, all the Goyim will be blessed,"** *Sha'ul* was quoting Genesis 12:3. Another promise ADONAI made to Abraham was that his descendants would inherit the Land of Canaan, but the promise to the Gentiles was that through Abraham's seed Yeshua, they would be blessed. He explained that if *the promise of the blessing of the Gentiles* came from the legal part of the *Torah*, it would no longer be a promise, but G-d gave it to Abraham as a promise. (Galatians 3:18). From this, it is confirmed that the promise comes through righteousness obtained through faith and not by legalistically following *Torah* commands. *Sha'ul* further explained by saying: <sup>23</sup> *Now before the time for this trusting faithfulness came, we were imprisoned in subjection to the system which results from perverting the Torah into legalism, kept under guard until this yet-to-come trusting faithfulness would be revealed.* (Galatians 3:23 CJB). Before Yeshua died as a sin sacrifice, it was the misuse of *Torah* by Pharisees which perverted ADONAI's righteous *Torah* into legalism. And, that is what *Sha'ul* is combatting with the Galatians. He is trying to convince them to turn away from the legalistic system brought to them by a group of Pharisees.

The *Torah* functioned as a custodian, a guardian according to the TLV, until Messiah came: <sup>24</sup> *Accordingly, the Torah functioned as a custodian until the Messiah came, so that we might be declared righteous on the ground of trusting and being faithful.* <sup>25</sup> *But now that the time for this trusting faithfulness has come, we are no longer under a custodian.* (Galatians 3:24 CJB). *Sha'ul* says "we" twice, emphasizing that he was formerly under the perverted system. The *Torah* was a custodian for the Jews until Messiah came, but now no longer.

Now that Messiah has come, the New Covenant which is entered by faith in Yeshua, is the active covenant for both Jews and Gentiles. Only Jews and Gentiles who have trusted Yeshua are a part of the New Covenant and have the promise of eternal life. While all Jews have ADONAI's promise of the Land, those outside the promise of Abraham's "seed" have a false hope. *11 For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives—for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.* (Leviticus 17:11 TLV). They have based their atonement on manmade rules which they have substituted for blood sacrifice. If there was currently a Temple and a Levitical priesthood and they were obediently following *Torah*, they would still be under the custodian which granted a limited form of atonement, year to year atonement. But, there is no Temple and no Levitical priesthood. Those today who have rejected Yeshua's blood sacrifice and trust in their own manmade rules of salvation, *Torah*, *Tefillah* and *Tzedakah*, the study of *Torah*, prayer and giving alms, as substitutes for the daily Temple sacrifices are trusting in a false hope. Yeshua and His New Covenant is the only way!

*Sha'ul* then presents the analogy of an heir to an estate. He explains that as long as the heir is a minor, even though he will eventually own the estate, until he inherits, he is no different than a slave. Just as a slave can be told everything he is to do, so is the minor until he comes of age. Until then, he is subject to his guardian's directions. (Galatians 4:1-2). Then he wrote: *3 So it is with us — when we were "children" we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe; 4 but when the appointed time arrived, God sent forth his Son. He was born from a woman, born into a culture in which legalistic perversion of the Torah was the norm, 5 so that he might redeem those in subjection to this legalism and thus enable us to be made God's sons.* (Galatians 4:3-5 CJB). Even though they were sons and daughters and heirs, they made themselves slaves by perverting *Torah*. By again saying we, *Sha'ul* pointed out that he was formerly a part of the system of legalistic perversion of *Torah* as a Pharisee before knowing Yeshua. His testimony is that he is still a Pharisee, but after knowing Yeshua, a very enlightened one. Being slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe was what resulted from the legalistic perversion of the *Torah*. Yeshua was born into a culture in which the Pharisees had been perverting the *Torah* into their own legalistic system, the system devised in their own minds from the elemental spirits of nature, not from ADONAI. *10 You observe special days, months, seasons and years! 11 I fear for you that my work among you has been wasted!* (Galatians 4:10-11 CJB). This is not about what the Galatians formerly believed and observed as pagans. They had not gone back to that. They were still trusting in Yeshua. This is about what was introduced to them by the Judean influencers, possibly, elements from oral *torah* or a perversion of written *Torah*.

*Sha'ul* continued with his theme of perversion of legalism by saying: *21 Tell me, you who want to be in subjection to the system that results from perverting the Torah into legalism, don't you hear what the Torah itself says? 22 It says that Avraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. 23 The one by the slave woman was born according to the limited capabilities of human beings, but the one by the free woman was born through the miracle-working power of God fulfilling his promise.* (Galatians 4:21-23 CJB). Abraham through Sara's prompting did not wait upon ADONAI's promise, but took matters into his own hands in a manner similar to the Pharisees. He sought an heir through the slave woman through his own power. But, even though he did that, when the time came the promised son was born through ADONAI's miracle working power. Also, when the time came, Yeshua became ADONAI's promised Son whose blood brought life. *24 Now, to make a midrash on these things: the two women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai and bears children for slavery — this is Hagar. 25 Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present*

*Yerushalayim, for she serves as a slave along with her children. 26 But the Yerushalayim above is free, and she is our mother;..* (Galatians 4:24-26 CJB). A *midrash* is a commentary on Biblical text which serves to explain a concept. It is in effect, an allegory, a story which reveals a hidden meaning. In this case, *Sha'ul* used Hagar and Sara to explain the two covenants. Hagar is the Covenant at Mount Sinai and symbolizes the legalistic perversion of *Torah* by the Pharisees, an act done in human power rather than G-d's. That perversion brings forth slavery, allegorically meaning human effort resulting in the legalistic misuse of *Torah*. This is not a negative reflection on the actual Covenant at Sinai. It simply means that the Covenant at Sinai bears "children to be enslaved to the weak and miserable elements when the *Torah* is perverted into legalism." Heavenly Jerusalem represents the free woman, *Sara*, and symbolizes the promise to those who approach ADONAI through faith in Messiah *Yeshua*. *Sara's* children are those who are in proper relationship with *Yeshua*. They are the free children of the free woman who are not slaves trying to maintain a relationship with G-d through works. This is the spiritual meaning of the allegory which teaches us that we are not to try and keep *Torah* in order to obtain righteousness. The only way is through trusting faith in *Yeshua* as Messiah.

There is no question about it! We are no longer under "the Curse of the Law!!" We are now under grace; the graceful gift of salvation which ADONAI gives us when we have trusting faith in His Son *Yeshua's* sacrificial death. But, because we are no longer under "the Curse of the Law," does that mean that *Torah* is no longer applicable? You know that is not so. *Sha'ul* wrote: 20 "For no human, on the basis of *Torah* observance, will be set right in His sight—for through the *Torah* comes awareness of sin" (Romans 3:20 TLV). A few verses later he confirms this by saying: 28 "For we consider a person to be set right apart from *Torah* observance" (Romans 3:28 TLV). He makes it clear that no one can achieve righteousness before ADONAI by *Torah* observance. After saying these things, he presents his conclusion: 31 "Do we then nullify the *Torah* through faithfulness? May it never be! On the contrary, we uphold the *Torah*" (Romans 3:28 TLV). What *Sha'ul* has shown us, is that even though we are no longer under "the Curse of the Law," which was the result of the Pharisee's way of dealing with sin, the following of *Torah*, the teaching and instruction of ADONAI in the Scriptures, has not been done away with. It is through *Torah*, teaching and instruction, that we learn what G-d requires of us.

We are citizens of *Yeshua's* kingdom who gained our citizenship through certain rules, certain laws, for citizenship. Habakkuk said: 4 ..., *But the righteous will live by his trust.* (Habakkuk 2:4b TLV). *Sha'ul* wrote: 8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves—it is the gift of God.* 9 *It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast.* (Ephesians 2:8 TLV). We are now citizens because of our faith, our trust, in *Yeshua*. *Sha'ul* also wrote: 12 *So then, the *Torah* is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* (Romans 7:12 TLV). After we have trusted *Yeshua*, we are to follow the holy, righteous and good commandments. *Yochanan*, John, tells us that violating them is sin: 4 *Everyone who keeps sinning is violating *Torah* — indeed, sin is violation of *Torah*.* (1John 3:4 CJB). The King James Bible agrees: 4 *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.* (1John 3:4 KJV). "The law" is "the *Torah*." After we have trusted *Yeshua* and have become citizens of His kingdom, we are expected to follow the laws of His kingdom. He told us that not one jot or tittle of the *Torah* would pass away before heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:18). *Shabbat shalom!*