

Torah, only focused on

I have spent some time around “Messianic Believers,” and all they seem to be focused on is the Law of Moses—yet they tell me that they are trying to live “fully Biblical” lives. Is it true you just focus on the Torah in your Bible studies?

Like any religious group, the persons you are describing must be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is absolutely true that there are Messianic congregations, fellowships, and individuals that *only* focus on the Torah in their Bible studies and exposition. When all one focuses on is the Torah—and sometimes the Written Torah in a vacuum devoid of its historical context in the Ancient Near East—one can become anemic in his or her understanding of God’s Word. This is no different than the many Christians who only focus on the “New Testament” in their reading of the Bible, **and today’s emerging Messianic movement needs to avoid making the same mistake in reverse by only focusing on the Torah.**

As a ministry, we fully encourage Believers to make use of the revelation God has given us in the Biblical Books of Genesis-Deuteronomy. They form the foundation that the rest of Scripture progressively builds upon; but they by no means make up all of Scripture. When we read the Torah on a regular basis, we are reminded that God has called us out as His people, and has great plans for us if we obey Him. The constant problem is that for many centuries God’s people have not obeyed Him, and we have all fallen into the traps of sin. This is why Yeshua had to come and die for us at Golgotha (Calvary). The Torah itself is not enough without Yeshua. The Torah shows us the high standard of God that He wants us to live up to, but as fallen human beings we are totally incapable of living up to that standard. The Torah shows us our inherent need for a Divine Savior because we fall short of keeping God’s commandments.

For us as Believers in Yeshua, the Torah reveals for us the character and holiness of our Heavenly Father, that we should diligently strive to integrate into our daily lives. It gives us foundational instruction on human interaction, and how we should be concerned about social justice and righteous behavior in our communities. It teaches us important things about the human condition that have remained true ever since Creation. Hopefully, these are the things that Messianic Torah studies focus on, as God empowers us to be about His work in today’s world that desperately needs the gospel message of salvation.

Our challenge during the next few years will be how we can balance Torah study with a study of other parts of the Bible. A Messianic fellowship or congregation that only focuses on the Torah will be just as incapable to address the challenges of today’s society as a church that only focuses on the Apostolic Scriptures. Furthermore, there are many issues in the Torah itself—primarily in terms of ancient history—that today’s Messianic movement is largely unprepared to address. We would encourage every one of you to regularly survey the Scriptures: reading the weekly Torah portions, being engaged in a mid-week study of another Biblical text, and then regularly reading yet another Biblical text for your own study and reflection.

Our ministry efforts to produce Biblical commentaries under the “for the Practical Messianic” banner will hopefully produce more studies that you can use, but these take a great deal of time and research—and it admittedly will be a *lifelong process* in order to complete the entire Bible. In the meantime, please do read through *all of the Scriptures* on a regular basis, so you can gauge where your life presently is in the Lord, and where you need to improve both in your understanding of the Word and in your relationship with Him and other people.