

Peter and James Taught Torah and the Old Testament

FTAP Study Guide

<https://youtu.be/2jBal8HslzY>

Teaching Summary

This Teaching completes the series examining whether Yeshua's apostles taught against Torah. It first identifies Peter and James, noting that the James in view is Yeshua's brother rather than either of the two men named James among the Twelve. It then examines the audiences of 1 Peter and James, with particular attention to the dispersed tribes of Israel. The central section works through Acts 15. The Teaching presents the council's question as whether Gentiles had to be circumcised and meet requirements of the Law before coming to faith, rather than whether obedience had any continuing place after faith. James's four immediate instructions - abstaining from idolatry, sexual immorality, things strangled, and blood - are traced to Torah, followed by James's statement that Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath. The Teaching then turns to James's letter: the 'implanted word,' the 'perfect law of liberty,' and the relationship between faith and works/obedience. Abraham and Rahab are used to show faith expressed through action. The final major section examines Peter's letters and their use of the Hebrew Scriptures. Peter's language about sprinkling of blood is connected with Exodus 24; his call to holiness is connected with Leviticus; and his descriptions of a chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, and special people are traced to Torah and the Prophets. Throughout, the Teaching argues for continuity between the apostolic writings and the Torah, Prophets, and Psalms and emphasizes reading New Testament passages in their Scriptural context.

Key Scriptures

Mark 1:16-18; Mark 3:13-19 - Peter's calling and appointment among the Twelve; distinguishes the Jameses named among the Twelve from James, Yeshua's brother.

Matthew 16:15-19; Acts 4:8-12 - Peter's confession of Messiah and Peter's identification of Yeshua as the rejected stone and chief cornerstone.

Acts 2:14-21 - Peter explains the outpouring of the Holy Spirit through the prophet Joel.

Matthew 13:54-57; John 7:1-5; Acts 1:9-14 - James is identified as Yeshua's brother; the Teaching traces his movement from unbelief to participation with the disciples.

1 Peter 1:1-2; James 1:1 - The stated audiences: the dispersion and the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

Acts 15:1-21, 24-29 - The Jerusalem Council, circumcision and salvation, Peter's response, James's judgment, the four immediate instructions, and Moses read every Sabbath.

Matthew 11:28-30; 1 John 5:2-3 - Yeshua's easy yoke and the statement that God's commandments are not burdensome.

Leviticus 17-19; Deuteronomy 12 - Torah passages connected in the Teaching with the Acts 15 instructions concerning blood, sexual immorality, and idolatry.

James 1:19-25; Isaiah 40:6-8; Proverbs 10:19; 14:29; Psalm 119:44-45 - James's language is compared with the Hebrew Scriptures; the 'perfect law of liberty' is connected with Psalm 119.

James 2:14-26; Deuteronomy 15:7-8; Genesis 22 - Faith, works/obedience, care for the needy, Abraham, and Rahab.

Exodus 24:3-8; 1 Peter 1:1-2 - The sprinkling of covenant blood and Peter's language of obedience and sprinkling.

Leviticus 11:44-45; 1 Peter 1:13-16 - Peter's call to 'be holy' is connected directly with Torah.

Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2; Hosea 1-2; 1 Peter 2:9-10 - Chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation, special people, and the 'not a people / now the people of God' language.

Key Takeaways

- Peter and James teach by drawing repeatedly from the Torah, Prophets, and other Hebrew Scriptures.
- The Teaching identifies James as Yeshua's brother, not either James listed among the original Twelve.
- Acts 15 begins with the question of circumcision as a requirement for salvation; the Teaching treats this as the issue the council is resolving.
- James gives four immediate instructions to Gentile believers and connects their ongoing instruction with Moses being read every Sabbath.
- James describes the word as something to receive and do, not merely hear.
- The 'perfect law of liberty' in James is connected with Psalm 119's description of walking at liberty while seeking God's precepts.
- James presents faith and obedience as working together; obedience is described as the expression of faith rather than a replacement for faith.
- Peter's language about covenant blood, holiness, priesthood, nation, and people is rooted in earlier Scripture.
- Peter identifies Yeshua as the chief cornerstone.
- The Teaching emphasizes reading apostolic writings in the context of the Scriptures their original audiences already knew.

Study Outline

1. Peter and James: Who Are They?

- Peter's calling and role among the Twelve
- James as Yeshua's brother
- James's unbelief during Yeshua's ministry and later place among the believers

2. Who Were Their Letters Addressed To?

- Peter and the pilgrims of the dispersion
- James and the twelve tribes scattered abroad
- The Teaching's discussion of the House of Israel and Judah

3. Acts 15 and the Jerusalem Council

- The question raised in Acts 15:1
- Peter's response: faith, grace, and the Holy Spirit
- The meaning of the 'yoke' as presented in the Teaching
- James's four immediate instructions
- Moses read in the synagogues every Sabbath

4. James and the Hebrew Scriptures

- Isaiah and Proverbs reflected in James 1
- The implanted word
- The perfect law of liberty
- Hearing and doing

5. Faith and Obedience in James 2

- Care for a brother or sister in need
- Abraham's faith and action
- Rahab's action
- Faith expressed through obedience

6. Peter and Torah

- Obedience and sprinkling of blood
- Exodus 24 and covenant
- 'Be holy, for I am holy'
- Chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, special people
- Peter's use of Torah, Psalms, Isaiah, and Hosea

7. Reading the Apostles in Scriptural Context

- Tracing quotations and allusions back to the Hebrew Scriptures
- Comparing the words of Peter and James with earlier Scripture
- Reading passages in context before drawing conclusions

Discussion & Reflection

1. What distinction does the Teaching make between James, Yeshua's brother, and the men named James among the Twelve?
2. Who does 1 Peter identify as its audience? Who does James identify as his audience?
3. What question in Acts 15:1 leads to the Jerusalem Council?
4. How does Peter describe the way Gentiles received the Holy Spirit in Acts 15?
5. What does the Teaching identify as the 'yoke' discussed in Acts 15?
6. What four practices does James tell the Gentile believers to abstain from?
7. Which Torah passages are connected with those four instructions?
8. Why does the Teaching emphasize Acts 15:21 and the reading of Moses every Sabbath?
9. What does James mean by being a doer of the word rather than a hearer only, as presented in the Teaching?
10. How is James's 'perfect law of liberty' connected with Psalm 119?
11. How does the Teaching explain the relationship between faith and works/obedience in James 2?
12. How are Abraham and Rahab used by James to illustrate faith expressed in action?
13. What connection does the Teaching make between 1 Peter 1 and the sprinkling of blood in Exodus 24?
14. Where does Peter's phrase 'be holy, for I am holy' come from?
15. Which Torah and prophetic passages stand behind Peter's phrases 'chosen generation,' 'royal priesthood,' 'holy nation,' and 'special people'?
16. How does Peter identify Yeshua in Acts 4?
17. What examples in the Teaching show Peter and James using the Hebrew Scriptures to explain their message?
18. How does reading the Old Testament context affect the interpretation of Acts 15, James, and 1 Peter?

Personal Application

Read Acts 15, James 1-2, and 1 Peter 1-2 alongside the Torah and prophetic passages referenced in the Teaching. Note each quotation or allusion and write down what the earlier passage contributes to the apostolic text.