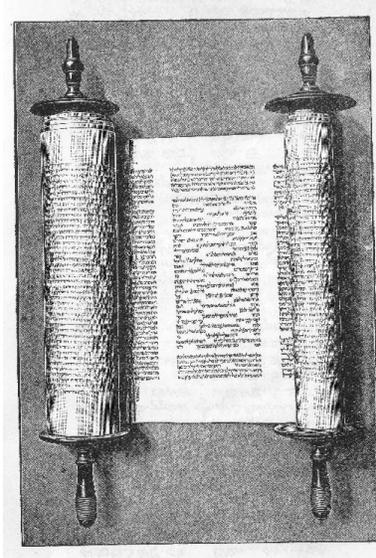


OH HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW



*Commentary on Texts that People Use in
Attempt to Abolish Yahweh's Holy Law*

Erich Matthew Janzen

Contents

Introduction.....	5
Galatians 4:10.....	6
Luke 6:1-11.....	8
Mark 7:1-23.....	10
Acts 10:15.....	13
Romans 14:14.....	17
Jeremiah 31:31-34.....	21
Philippians 3:2-9.....	22
Numbers 28.....	24
Ephesians 2:15.....	27
1 Corinthians 9:19-22.....	30
Hebrews 7:12.....	31
Romans 6:14.....	32
Galatians 3:24.....	33
Acts 15.....	35
Matthew 5:17.....	39

Oh How I Love Your Law!
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*Oh how I love your law!
It is my meditation all the day.
- Psalm 119:97 ESV -*

Sometimes I find myself involved in discussions with others concerning the validity of the Torah¹ under the New Covenant which we currently live in. For those familiar with this ministry² you will know full well that we believe wholeheartedly in the keeping of the Torah for the believers and followers of Yeshua³ the Messiah. Oftentimes I run across others who are very quick to use certain passages in the New Testament portions of our Bibles that seem to teach *to them* that certain aspects of the Torah (like Sabbaths, dietary laws, tassels, etc.) have been abolished and are even looked upon now as

¹ The word Torah is the Hebrew word translated law in our English Bibles. It literally means the instructions and teachings of the Creator.

² For those not familiar with this ministry you may visit www.ministersnewcovenant.org for further studies.

³ Yeshua is the Hebrew name of the Messiah commonly referred to as Jesus.

somewhat silly if one attempts to be obedient in these areas. What this booklet does is give *brief* commentary on several passages that are often abused and misused by others. It is certainly true that much, much more could be said concerning each of these texts. This ministry is currently in the process of writing a much more extensive study book which argues for the permanency of the Torah.⁴ My goal here is to give the reader a starting and focal point to be able to answer those who misinterpret these texts. These texts are dealt with in no particular order. May we all learn to love the Torah of Yahweh!⁵

GALATIANS 4:10

Study shows that Paul's audience in Galatia were the Gaul's, a Celtic people, whom *Gal*-atia was named after. These people were stooped in paganism and even celebrated the ancient Celtic

⁴ As of the printing of this booklet, our more detailed book is unfinished. I would invite the reader to consult Todd Bennett's excellent work "The Law and Grace" which may be ordered from shemayisrael.net.

⁵ Yahweh is the personal, proper name of the Creator. This name is commonly but improperly rendered in English translations as LORD, GOD, and Jehovah.

festival named Samhain (pronounced Soween) which is the root of the modern Halloween celebration.

It was to these people that Paul wrote to in Galatians 4:8 when he said, "But in the past when you didn't know God, you were enslaved to things that by nature are not gods." Notice Paul identifies their enslavement with a time when they *did not know* God. He then in verse 9 speaks of their conversion briefly and asks them why now, after their conversion, do they want to go *back* to the weak things they involved themselves in when they did not know God?

It is in this vein that Paul now mentions observing days, months, seasons, and years. The observation of these times were done by the Galatians when they *did not know* Yahweh, so these times could hardly be speaking about the appointed times of Yahweh in Leviticus 23. They had to be speaking of observing some type of false pagan calendar prior to their conversion.

There is a parallel here to Leviticus 19:26 and Deuteronomy 18:10, both of which speak of "observing times" as part of false worship.

There is much more to say on this text, but hopefully all can see that to use this text to speak

against observing Yahweh's holy Sabbath and Feasts is a gross misuse of the text to say the least.

LUKE 6:1-11

Here we have two cases of Yeshua's actions on the Sabbath. Remember that in Luke 4:16 we learn that Yeshua's custom was to go to synagogue on Sabbath. In Luke 2:41-43 we learn that during Yeshua's childhood He kept the feast days as well. His parents were avid keepers of Torah, even the ceremonial aspects (Luke 2:21-24, 39).

In the grain field incident in Luke what we have is an exceptional case. Human need always takes precedent over Sabbath regulation. For example, if one of my children were to fall into a well on the Sabbath, I would not wait until after the Sabbath to remove them from the well thinking I am some kind of pious person in doing so. If I had a flat tire on the way to the synagogue on Sabbath, I wouldn't just sit there and not change the tire until Sabbath was past.

This is the point Yeshua is making to the Pharisees. They ask Him why his disciples are doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath, but He responds by telling them that if they really

understood the Torah (Matthew 12:7; Micah 6:8) they would know that the disciples were guiltless. Yeshua used the example of David eating the sacred bread in the temple which was not normally allowed to be eaten, but for David an exception was made which was lawful, because of the surrounding circumstances (1 Samuel 21:1-6).

In Matthew's parallel account (Matthew 12:1-8) Yeshua also gives the example of the priests in the temple who violate the Sabbath but are blameless. His point is that the priests have to continue working on the Sabbath and really even more so because the offerings are more numerous on the Sabbath than the regular working days (Numbers 28:1-10). Why were they blameless? They were doing the work of Yahweh for the good of the people of Yahweh. This was Yeshua's entire point, and his point was valid at the time He made it, and also thousands of years before He made it.

The next instance in Luke 6 is similar to the grain field incident yet different to some degree. The scribes and Pharisees were watching Yeshua closely in order to see if He would do *what* on the Sabbath? Heal a man with a paralyzed hand.

Where does the Torah forbid that? It does not, but in the minds of the Pharisees (who upheld not only the written Torah, but also the traditions of the elders; Matthew 15:1-2; Mark 7:1-5) Yeshua was breaking the Sabbath. Yeshua violated these traditions (Luke 11:37-41) because they were exactly that - traditions of men which had nothing to do with the proper understanding and interpretation of the Torah.

When Yeshua healed the man's hand in Luke He wasn't violating the Torah, he was actually keeping the Torah and bringing a glimpse of the Kingdom of Yahweh to this man. Yeshua was teaching us that according to Yahweh's written Torah, it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

MATTHEW 15:1-20 & MARK 7:1-23

These passages are parallel so I would like to use Mark as a base seeing it is the one most people attempt to use to abolish the Torah's teaching on diet.

The context of the passage deals with the disciples of Yeshua eating bread without first washing their hands - ritually. We are not here talking about when our Mother's taught us as children to wash up before dinner. This is a tradition that had been elevated to the status of a

commandment in the eyes of some Pharisees. There was even one particular Jewish Rabbi of old that chose to use water given to him in prison to perform the ritual washing rather than drink it to quench thirst and sustain his life (see John Gill's commentary on Matthew 15:2).

The Pharisees had asked Yeshua why His disciples did not live according to the tradition of the elders. Yeshua responded by reprimanding them for exalting traditions of men to a commandment status, and violating the Torah by their own traditions. He goes on to tell them (Mark 7:7-13) that their little sneaky way of getting around honoring their parents was a violation of the fifth commandment. The Pharisees had come up with the idea of dedicating all of their belongings to the temple so that they would not have to honor their parents by taking care of them in their elderly age. Yeshua rebukes them pointedly by saying that they revoke God's commandment by their tradition that they had handed down.

In this context Yeshua then makes His remarks in Mark 7:14-23. He tells the crowds that things coming from outside of a person do not defile the person. His point in context is this: not

keeping the tradition of the elders (the ritual, traditional washing) does not cause a person to be defiled when they eat food. He is speaking to Judahites in a completely Jewish context. All His listeners would understand him to be talking about eating the food the Torah taught was permissible, but eating this food with ritually unwashed hands. This did not defile a person.

Yeshua goes on to say that the food doesn't go to the persons heart but rather to his stomach and is eliminated - *purging all meats*. His point is that the body takes in the nutrition needed from the food, but the digestive system purges out the toxins when a person relieves their self.

Many of the newer Bible versions, although great translations for the most part, completely miss Mark 7:19 by saying something to the effect of - "As a result, He made all foods clean." If this verse is teaching that Yeshua was okaying crab legs, catfish, and pork then He would have been a sinner and unable to be the perfect lamb of Yahweh to die for our sins. Also, if Yeshua was teaching His disciples that every animal was clean for food, why many years later had Peter not gotten the message? In Acts 10:14 Peter remarks to Yeshua that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. Peter did not understand

Yeshua's teaching in Mark 7:19 to be permitting the eating of what the Torah forbade.

ACTS 10:15 & 11:9

The context here is referring to the man Cornelius whom Luke calls a devout man that feared God (Acts 10:2). We also learn that he was considered "upright" (Acts 10:22) which is a word used of Joseph (Matthew 1:19) and the righteous sheep of Yeshua (Matthew 25:37). Yahweh was even hearing the prayers of Cornelius for they had come up as a memorial before Him (Acts 10:4). So we know Cornelius was not turning his ear from hearing the Torah, or else his prayer would have been an abomination (Proverbs 28:9).

Basically put, the issue was that Cornelius was uncircumcised and the vision given to Peter was to assure Peter that it was perfectly okay to go to Cornelius and witness to him about the salvation that existed in the Son of God. More on this in a second.

The vision given to Peter (Acts 10:9-16) was a large sheet that contained all sorts of animals - clean and unclean. The voice in the vision tells Peter to get up, kill (sacrifice) and eat. Peter's

response to the voice, "No Lord! I've never eaten anything common or unclean!"

Most theologians place the events in Acts 10 approximately 5 to 10 years after the ascension of Yeshua into heaven. Why is it then that Peter didn't learn that it was okay to eat unclean animals from Yeshua? People try to use Mark 7 to teach that Yeshua abolished the dietary laws but Peter was there in Mark 7 and that is certainly not the message he got from his Teacher.

The voice then talks back to Peter and says, "What God has made clean, you must not call common." A more accurate, technical translation here is, "What God deems to be clean, you should not call common." The point is not that Yahweh is cleansing something "anew" right here in Acts 10, but rather that Peter should not deem common what God deems clean. Notice that the voice never tells Peter to call something unclean, clean. The voice specifically uses the word "common" when correcting Peter. There is a difference between something common and unclean.

And unclean animal would be like a camel or pig. However, something common would be a cow that had been strangled or not slaughtered properly. The animal itself is not unclean, but is

considered common in this instance because of surrounding circumstances. Yeshua is telling Peter, "The things that God considers clean, don't refer to them as common."

Acts 10:17 tells us that Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might mean. I ask you - why? Almost everyone in modern times I talk to seems to interpret the vision very quickly and readily by saying you can eat unclean animals. Peter, however, knew that Yeshua - the sinless Son of Yahweh - was not telling him to violate the Torah. This is why Peter was perplexed. He knew that there must be another meaning to the vision.

While Peter thought about the vision (Acts 10:19) three men showed up at his house looking for him. I believe this corresponds to the three times the events of the vision happened to Peter (Acts 10:16). These men come into Peter and explain to them what had taken place back at Cornelius' house and Peter travels to meet with Cornelius.

In Acts 10:28 we get the climax of the story. Peter speaks to Cornelius and tells him, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner." Now, let's stop here for

a second. What did Peter mean by “forbidden?” Was Peter saying that the Torah of Moses forbade such? I do not believe so. The Torah of Moses welcomes the stranger and teaches to treat them as one born among Israel (Exodus 18:12; Numbers 15:14-16; Exodus 22:21; Leviticus 19:33-34).

Peter’s mentioning of forbidden is a reference to the “Oral Torah⁶” of the Jewish people of the day. This is what was then called the “tradition of the elders” (Matthew 15; Mark 7). This is what Yeshua often taught against in places like Luke 6 and John 5.

Think back upon the ministry of Yeshua. He was ridiculed by the Pharisees and scribes for eating with tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:1-2; Matthew 9:10-13). These people were considered “common” by certain Pharisees, but not by Yahweh. Yahweh deemed such people clean and the Pharisees should not call common what Yahweh calls clean.

⁶ The Pharisees of Yeshua’s day believed that Moses not only received the Torah from God that he wrote down, but also received a list of regulations from God that he passed down orally. They believe that Moses then taught them to the 70 elders orally and then from generation to generation these laws were passed down by mouth all the way to the Pharisees.

We even see in places like John 4 and John 8:48 that the Samaritans were considered to be "common" by many Jewish people of the day. On the contrary, Yeshua witnessed to the Samaritan woman in John 4 and in John 4:39-42 many Samaritans believed in Him and He stayed with them in their city for two days teaching. Yeshua did not call common what Yahweh deemed clean.

Peter was learning in his vision that just because Cornelius was uncircumcised did not mean he was common. Peter's father Abraham was called in un-circumcision and even was justified (declared innocent) *before* he was circumcised (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:9-11). God showed Peter that he shouldn't call any uncircumcised man common or unclean for salvation (Acts 10:28).

ROMANS 14

This passage is sometimes used by others to promote eating unclean animals under the New Covenant. I do not believe such can be proved from the text at all, that is, unless one removes this one verse from Romans 14 completely out of its original context and setting.

Romans 14:1 begins by contrasting the weak and the strong brother. The stronger brother is to accept the weaker, but not for the sake of arguing about secondary issues. Paul's use of weaker brother here is echoing his use of the same verbiage in 1 Corinthians 8:7-12. In both contexts he is dealing with brethren who are not inclined to eat meat out of fear that it has been offered to an idol. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians that idols are nothing and therefore one may eat meat and ask no questions about whether or not the meat had been sacrificed to an idol.

This is what Paul is talking about in Romans 14 as well. The stronger brother eats all things (veggies and meat) while the weaker brother eats only veggies (Rom. 14:2). The "all things" mentioned here should not be looked at as including all things in the sense of dogs, cats, poisonous creatures, etc. Rather it is understood as meat *on top of* a veggie diet. The stronger brother realizes that in and of itself an idol is nothing, so therefore he eats asking no questions.

This understanding filters down to verse 14 where Paul states that nothing is common of itself. Most translations will read here that "nothing is *unclean* of itself," but that is not the most accurate translation from the Greek. It

would be better to translate this Greek word as "common" as is done in Acts 10 and 11 where Peter explains that he's never eaten anything common *or* unclean. Peter uses two different Greek words for two different categories of animals. Something common does not necessarily mean it is unclean.

What Paul is saying in Romans 14:14 is that he is persuaded by the Lord Yeshua that there is no clean animal common of itself, but if a person esteems such a clean animal to be common, then to *them* (because they fear it's been sacrificed to an idol) it is common- but not to everyone.

The text doesn't have anything to do with the dietary laws of Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14, but people come to the text with a presupposition that this is what is being talked about without seriously considering the context of the chapter.

Some people attempt to combat this understanding by citing Romans 14:20. Romans 14:20 is simple. It falls on the heels of what I've already explained. The word clean used in the verse is used in many instances by Paul and other authors in the New Testament to describe purity and cleanliness *without reference to the dietary laws.* A

quick glance in an Englishman's concordance will show this.

So in context Paul is speaking about all foods (both meat and veggies) being pure in spite of being offered to idols, but to the man that eats thinking the idol is something - this man defiles his conscience.

Concerning the days mentioned in Romans 14 there isn't even a hint that the Sabbath, Feasts, and New Moons are under discussion. The most likely understanding is that it is talking about observing certain "fasting days." Romans 14:5 says that one person considers one day to be above another while someone else considers every day to be the same. Verse 6 expounds further by saying, "Whoever observes the day, observes it to the Lord. Whoever eats, eats to the Lord since he gives thanks to God, and whoever does not eat, it is to the Lord that he does not eat, yet he thanks God." Notice how those contrasting are like this:

(A) One person observes the day to the Lord

(B) The other person eats to the Lord and gives thanks.

This entire chapter has nothing to do with observance to the Torah, but rather to non-essential practices that may differ from one

believer to another. The Torah never commands a person to be a vegetarian or abstain from wine (Romans 14:21). This all had to do with personal preferences.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Many people speak of the Covenants, Old and New and they usually have a completely misinformed understanding when it comes to what the *New* Covenant is. If we allow the Bible itself to define for us the New Covenant then we will see that it by no means does away with the Torah of Moses (the Torah of Yahweh).

Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the primary text here and the definition given for the New Covenant is *the laws of Yahweh written upon physical Israel's heart and mind*. Jeremiah spoke to the then living Israelites and told them that a day would come when Yahweh would write *His* laws upon their (obviously their descendants) hearts and minds. When Jeremiah spoke this word from Yahweh to Israel, what would be the only law they would even think of? It would be none other than the law they lived by at that time. The original setting and context would be that the Law of Yahweh, also called the Law of Moses, would one day be

written in a special way upon the Israelites hearts and minds.

Therefore, to proclaim "We are under the New Covenant now!" as though it means we do not have to obey Torah, is not in keeping at all with the original prophecy of Jeremiah. The very definition for the New Covenant has to do with Torah keeping. Try asking someone what the New Covenant is. If they give you an incorrect answer gently point them to Jeremiah 31:31-34 as well as Hebrews 8:8-10. Make sure to explain to them that the law upon the heart doesn't mean we each choose what is right and wrong for ourselves individually, but rather that it is the law *of Yahweh* that is upon the heart.

PHILIPPIANS 3:2-9

Paul is expressing his former life as a Pharisee verses his new life as a believer in Yeshua; we might say a Christian.⁷ He is saying that prior to his conversion, he thought that he was very pious, above everyone else, living within what was felt

⁷ Some people in the Messianic movement do not like the term Christian, but it is not derogatory in its meaning. The term literally means, "a follower of Christ" and thus "a follower of Yeshua the Messiah. If you follow Yeshua's teachings that classifies you as a Christian.

by many to be the strictest sect in the Jewish faith. However, when Paul met the Messiah for who He really was, he had to acknowledge that he needed a Savior, someone to pay the penalty for even *his* sins. Being a Pharisee and being circumcised on the 8th day didn't make Saul of Tarsus righteous - he too like all of us fell short of Yahweh's perfect glory (Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23). He realized now that his righteousness was based upon faith in the Messiah and not upon his performance of any laws. He recognized that even sinning one time eliminated a person from being able to enter the kingdom based upon their own good deeds. This is something we must all recognize least we grow into thinking that somehow we are earning salvation by our works rather than by coming to him with an empty hand of faith in His Son.

None of this, however, violates believing that the Torah is the way of life for the people of Yahweh. True heart-felt Torah keeping is the fruit of justification, but it is *by no means* the root, cause, or means of justification.

NUMBERS 28

There are times when I get in a discussion about the Torah where the objecting person asks me this, "What about all those sacrifices and ceremonial aspects of the law?" Here is my answer.

I believe Matthew 5:16-19 is a foundational text in Scripture. Most people completely ignore it and the next biggest group of people grossly misinterpret it. If we truly believe in Yeshua - and that means we believe His teachings - and we honestly exegete these few verses from His mouth (historically and grammatically), I believe we have no choice but to teach that *all* the Torah is just as valid today as it was thousands of years ago.

That being said, there are obviously portions of the Torah that are not in activity currently. For starters, there is no Tabernacle or Temple. We do know that while the Temple stood the followers of Yeshua did not have a problem participating in even the *ceremonial aspects* of the Mosaic Law (Acts 21:15-26). We see this taught by Yeshua in Matthew 5 where just after He gives His dissertation on the Torah (5:16-19) He begins to speak of the three major divisions in the Torah: moral, civil, and ceremonial. In Matthew 5:21-24

he speaks of (1) do not murder (physically or in your mind), (2) the Sanhedrin, which was the supreme council in the Jewish court system with 70 members patterned after the 70 elders of Moses, and (3) offering the gift on the altar before reconciling with your brother. My point is that when Yeshua says not one jot or stroke will pass from the Torah, He is not just speaking of the moral aspect of Yahweh's law. He is speaking of the civil and ceremonial aspects as well.

Today, we cannot participate in those portions of Torah that involve the temple, but according to the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, they will be re-established in the future along with the Levitical priesthood. This means they must be currently suspended for reasons that Yahweh alone may be fully aware of.

People sometimes ask about keeping the feast days when this is discussed and I think they ask a very good question. My answer follows: Nowhere in the Torah does it say that the Temple is required to keep the feasts. We see the first Passover celebrated in Egypt and the second one in the wilderness. There was no Temple for either

of them and neither were kept in Shiloh⁸ or Jerusalem. Secondly, the feasts are not dependant upon the Levitical priesthood. I agree that there are particular laws in the Torah that require things of the priests during the feasts, but those are requirements for the priests and not the non-Levite people. My understanding is this: we keep the parts of the feasts found in the Torah that we have the ability to keep. For example, we have the ability to remove yeast from our homes during the feast of unleavened bread so my family does this. We have the ability to not work on the Sabbaths of the feasts and have holy convocations on these Sabbaths, so we do this. We have the ability to dwell in temporary shelters during the Feast of Booths so we do this. The fact that sacrifices were offered each day by the Levite priests at an earlier time in Israel's history doesn't remove us from keeping the portions of the feasts applicable to us.

Here's something else to think about, it wasn't just the feast days, Sabbaths, and new moons that were sacrificial days during the time the Levite priests were active. The working days were also

⁸ Most people are not familiar with the fact that Yahweh's place of worship prior to Jerusalem was in Shiloh (Joshua 18:1; 1 Samuel 1:3, 24; Jeremiah 7:12).

sacrificial days (Numbers 28:1-8). Are the working days no longer really working days because sacrifices are not being offered up on them? I do not think such is the case.

I believe we need to fulfill any aspect of the Torah that is in our grasp. This would go from anything to keeping the feasts all the way down to wearing fringes on the borders of our garments (Numbers 15:37-41; Deuteronomy 22:12).

EPHESIANS 2:15 & COLOSSIANS 2:14

These verses come on the heels of Paul speaking about Gentiles who had been alienated from the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2:11). These Gentiles were strangers to the covenants of promise, they had no hope, and they were without Yahweh. The good news towards these Gentiles was that because of *the blood of Yeshua the Messiah* they could be brought into a relationship with the Father, and likewise into a relationship with those currently in believing Israel.

Yeshua is said to be the peace that brings both groups (Gentile and Jew) into one. Yeshua tears down the dividing wall of hostility between the two (Eph. 2:13-14). Notice carefully that it is the *dividing wall of hostility* that is tore down, which

some translations refer to as *the enmity*. This is confirmed in verse 16 where once again it is *the enmity* that is said to be slain or put to death.

Verse 15 identifies this enmity or hostility as having something to do with the "law of commandments contained in ordinances." Many people today believe this teaches the Torah has been abolished. I do believe that the Torah is what is in view here, but is the text teaching that the Torah itself is abolished and no longer should be obeyed?

When a man sins against Yahweh, he incurs a debt to Yahweh. Yeshua refers to sin as debt in the famous prayer found in Matthew 6 where he teaches to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." These Gentiles had broken the law of commandments contained in ordinances and thus had acquired a debt that they could not pay themselves. They were in a state of enmity with the Father. Thus, because they had violated the Torah, the law of commandments was like a dividing wall between them and those in believing Israel. Only the blood of Yeshua was able to wipe the debt away seeing he paid the penalty for breaking the law of commandments contained in ordinances in His death on the cross, slaying *the hostility* that existed. This made it

possible for these Gentiles to be joined together with those who were already in believing Israel, making one new man out of the two groups (Ephesians 2:15b).

This is recognized even further by noticing the parallel passage of Colossians 2:14. The book of Ephesians when read side by side with Colossians is extremely similar and parallel in nature. Colossians 2:14 is undoubtedly referring to a debt of sin against the Torah being blotted out by mentioning the Greek term *cheirographon* (handwriting) and telling us that this is what was nailed to the cross. This is where we get the practice of the receipt spike still seen in many fast food restaurants today. Once you pay the employee of the restaurant the money you owe them, they take your bill and stick it over the spike which states in a manner that the bill is destroyed because it has been paid. Yeshua *nailed a spike* through our debt owed to Yahweh when He in His body on the cross took our sins upon Him self.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:19-22

Verse 19: Paul is not bound to anyone, but he acts as a servant to everyone in hopes of winning more people than not.

Verse 20: To the Jews Paul became like a Jew. Paul was a Judahite himself, so it's curious here as to why he says he became like a Jew. I take it as meaning he adopted the culture and practice of the Jewish people (so long as it did not violate Torah) in order to blend in with them in hopes of them listening to him in a more inquisitive fashion. Then Paul mentions "to those under the law." I don't see how "those under the law" are any different from the Jews he just mentioned. He says, he becomes as one under the law, even though he is not one who is under the law. I agree with Paul here who is probably speaking about him being under grace rather than law (Romans 6:14-15). Paul's statement about not being under the law does not mean that he continues in sin (which is defined in 1 John 3:4 as transgression of the law; see Romans 6:1) but rather that he is not under the law in the sense that those without Messiah are; under the *penalty* of the law.

Verse 21: Next Paul mentions those outside the law, and I take this to mean those who are not Jews and are not under the law. This would be

non-Israelites or the Israelites from the 10 northern tribes that had been divorced by God and scattered among the heathens (Hosea 1). Paul says he becomes like one outside the law but he does not mean that he has disregarded Yahweh's law for he states he is under the law to the Messiah. In other words, he adopts the culture of the those that do not know God but not to the extent of making void God's law.

Verse 22: Then Paul mentions becoming weak to those who are weak and concludes by saying that his purpose for becoming all things to all men is in hopes of winning some of them to the faith.

I do not see anything in these verses that would lead me to believe that the "law of Christ" is a different law than the "law of Moses." Paul is simply talking about how he, to the best extent possible, makes an effort to "get on the level" of differing persons.

HEBREWS 7:12

Because of previous revelation in the Tanak (Ezekiel 40-48 and Jeremiah 33:17-22) I do not believe the author of Hebrews is saying that the Torah has been abolished. The prophet Jeremiah

clearly says in his prophecy that the Levite ministers and the covenant with David will not be abolished. Ezekiel's prophecy clearly shows Levitical priests ministering in a physical temple during a particular stage of the Kingdom.

Hebrews 7:12's mentioning of a change in the law can be justly translated as a *transference* in the law. The point the author is making in Hebrews 7 is that the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the priesthood of Levi, which of course is not contrary to the Torah for Melchizedek's priesthood is found even before the Levitical one (Genesis 14). The Levite priesthood has its place in God's plan, but the priesthood of the Messiah - the Melchizedek priesthood - is obviously better when we "weigh the two" so to speak.

ROMANS 6:14

I've heard time and time again when discussing with people about obeying the Torah this phrase, "But we are not under the law." To most people, not being under the law means that we are not obligated to be obedient to the law. On the contrary, not being under the law actually means not being under the law's penalty or curse. Paul, in the book of Romans, labors to show salvation by grace through faith apart from works (Romans

chapters 2-5). He does this on the basis of the work of Yeshua; His perfect life and substitute death. Yeshua's works free us from the penalty of the law and therefore sin has no dominion over us any longer for we are not under the law, but rather under grace.

If you've ever been caught speeding you know what the phrase "under the law" can refer to. The moment the policeman turns on his blue lights and gets behind you, you know that you have broken the law and are therefore under or subject to the penalty of the law. If by grace someone pays the fine for you, you are then released from the penalty - it's been paid. You are no longer under the law. Should you continue to do wrong because you're under grace? God forbid; go read Romans 6:14-15.

GALATIANS 3:24

Paul here refers to the law as being our schoolmaster, guardian, or in some translations tutor. People often say that we are no longer under the schoolmaster and this must mean that we do not need to bother ourselves with obeying the Torah.

The Greek word used here (*paidagogos*) translated as "schoolmaster" literally means "to lead a child." In Greek culture this was a very trusted and well educated servant of the family that would supervise a child in the family from the age of six to sixteen. This person would constantly train the child, help him in moral development, assist him in his studies, etc.

Paul is referring to the law in a way that those in the Greek culture would understand. The law was our guide, guardian, and tutor so to speak. We looked at the Torah and it showed us right and wrong, pointing out our sins and inabilities. This lasted right up until we exhibited faith in the Messiah. Our faith in Messiah declares us innocent in Yahweh's "court" and thus no more are we under the tutelage of the tutor. We are rather looking to Yeshua - who, by the way, always observed the Torah of Yahweh, His Father.

There would obviously come a time in the Greek child's life when this guardian would no longer be needed; this was sometime around the late teenage years. Did this mean the child now discounted or neglected all that the tutor had instructed him in up to that time? Of course not, it was just that he was grown now.

We look to Messiah to justify us from all things, by which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses (Acts 13:39). However, our freedom does not grant us a license to live any which way we desire. The free gift of grace and faith also enables us to live overcoming lives of dedication, and thus obedience to Yahweh's Torah.

ACTS 15

Concerning Acts 15 I see it two-fold. Firstly the issue is whether or not a Gentile had to be circumcised in order to receive salvation (Acts 15:1). Secondly, the circumcision being insisted upon by the Pharisees was not even "physical circumcision" per say but circumcision based upon the tradition of the elders or what is now known as the Oral Torah.

These Gentiles were *turning to God* and did not need to come up under such circumcision to receive salvation. This is akin to the story of father Abraham who was counted righteous before Yahweh by faith, before he was circumcised (Genesis 15:6).

The council did place four necessary laws (from the written Torah) upon the Gentiles for

the time being. If the Torah itself was a yoke of slavery *why place these four laws upon the Gentiles?* Let me further point out that there were many, many more commandments that fell up under these four headings. It wasn't just four laws and that's it; these four contained within in them many other laws. Take for example the issue of sexual immorality. This would cover all the laws in Leviticus 18 and many in Leviticus 20. All these commands needed to be obeyed by the Gentiles.

Another point that many people miss is Acts 15:21. Directly after the four laws are settled upon James continues by saying, "For since ancient times, Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, and he is read aloud in the synagogues every Sabbath day." This verse is rarely commented upon by those who use Acts 15 to teach the "no law for the Gentile" doctrine. James' point is that the Gentiles will begin with these four laws and as they attend synagogue service on Sabbath they will listen to the reading of Moses (Torah) and grow in grace and knowledge in their walk with God in the commandments. This clearly shows that the Gentiles would be observing the Sabbath.

It should be obvious that the four laws given to the Gentiles here were not the only laws they

needed to obey. Nothing is said here about coveting, honoring one's parents, taking God's name in vain, theft, etc. Surely we don't believe that the Gentiles were free to disobey these aspects of Torah?

I believe the yoke (Acts 15:10) refers to both the traditions of the elders and the weight of your own sin. All have sinned, both Jew and Gentile, and to try to tell a man they have to keep the law in order to be saved is a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. There is no way that the yoke of slavery is the law itself. All one needs to do is read Psalm 119. To think that David thought the law was a yoke of slavery is wishful thinking. The yoke of slavery is rather the many traditions of men added to the Torah which includes when a person tries to tell someone that they must keep the law in order to have salvation. Scripture teaches a person is saved by grace through faith apart from any works at all (Genesis 6:8; 15:6; Ephesians 2:8-9). We should teach obedience to the law to others in this way: obedience is a loving response one gives to the Mighty God who saved them by His grace.

What the council decided was that the Gentiles must stop the practices they were most

steeped in, but they would continue to hear the remainder of the Torah – written Torah – taught by attending synagogue service on Sabbath and listening to Moses' writings being read (Acts 15:21).

I explained it to a friend of mine in modern terms as this: Suppose a drug user and dealer entered our church and the power of the Holy Spirit came upon him, delivered him, and saved him. He was so excited and really became a new creature. He then soon asked me what he needed to do in the area of living the Christian life. I would be foolish to drop the entire Torah on him at once, he is a babe in Christ. What I would tell him is, "Look man, you need to stop using and dealing drugs. You'll learn other aspects of the Christian life as you come to church and listen to sermons every week."

The text directly speaks about the Torah as it pertains to Gentile believers. The decision is that the entire Torah should not be laid down upon them all at once, but instead, they are to begin with the sins they are steeped in, attend synagogue service, and learn the remainder of the Torah over a period of time.

I deal with the same thing today that the early church dealt with. I know people in church who

want to take a sinner off the street who comes to visit and tell them everything at one time and expect them to obey in every area. People also attempt to heap upon others what they themselves think is sin but is not defined as sin in Scripture. What they should rather begin with is the message of Yeshua; His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection.

MATTHEW 5:17

I always point people to Matthew 5:17 to show them that Yeshua said He did not come to destroy the law. A common response I get is this, "I agree with you, but He did come to *fulfill* the law." In peoples minds they believe that fulfill somehow means the Torah is no longer applicable. If this is the case then the text is self contradictory. Fulfill must mean the opposite of destroy for the text to make logical sense. If fulfill meant destroy or was synonymous with destroy Yeshua would be saying, "I came not to destroy the law, but rather to destroy the law."

It seems people have in their minds that Yeshua fulfilling the law is like a prophecy being fulfilled. In other words the prophecy is given and then in the future fulfilled. This is certainly not

the context of Yeshua's words. Yeshua is rather speaking to an audience about *their* obedience to Torah. Notice Matthew 5:16 just before has Him saying to the crowd, "Let *your* light so shine among men so that others may see *your* good works." A bit later (Matthew 5:19) He explains that based upon His statements in verses 17-18 whoever breaks even the least of the commandments and teaches others to do so will be least in the kingdom of heaven. However, the one who practices and teaches the commandments will be great. So the entire context is about the Torah being kept by the *students* of Yeshua.

In what sense did Yeshua fulfill the law? Well, He fulfilled the law in that He perfectly obeyed the law and He calls us to strive for obedience too (Matthew 5:16, 19). He also fulfilled the law in the sense that He accurately handled and interpreted the law. During the first century it was common for people to listen to the teaching of various Rabbi's in the Jewish faith. If a Rabbi accurately interpreted the Torah he was said to have "fulfilled" the Torah; if a Rabbi misinterpreted the Torah he was said to have destroyed the Torah. This fits like a glove in Matthew 5. Yeshua is teaching the people not to think he came to give a

misinterpretation of the Torah, but rather to accurately teach them the Torah. He goes on in Matthew 5 to challenge the various interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20) contrasting what they say with what He is now saying.

The remainder of Matthew 5 then deals with Yeshua stating how the scribes and Pharisees interpreted the Torah in contrast with the true interpretation. For example, they read "do not commit adultery" and applied it to only the physical act. Yeshua pointed out that while the physical act was sin, adultery can be committed in the eyes and heart as well (Matthew 5:27-30).

CONCLUSION

I realize that I have not dealt with every single text people may use in attempt to abolish Yahweh's holy Torah, but I have centered in on those I have heard most used since I began to observe the Torah some years ago. Always remember the text of Scripture in Isaiah 8:20. It teaches us that if someone doesn't speak according to the Torah there is no light in them. If you have any further questions or comments please contact me by going to my website:

Oh How I Love Your Law

ministersnewcovenant.org. Thanks for taking the time to read this book, and may Yahweh bless you to see the truth and liberty of His Torah!

*I delight in Your commands,
which I love!*

- Psalm 119:47 HCSB -

