

# Christians and the Law

## Why Would a Christian Keep the Torah of God?

### A look at what the bible says about the Torah – did Jesus really end it?

By Constance Smith

I have talked before about my beliefs, but I want to dive deeper into the topic of Grace and the Torah (“Torah” is the Instructions or Law of God/YHVH.) You see the Torah in the first five books of the bible. The word “Torah” actually means God’s instructions.

First of all, there seems to be some misconception that because I try to keep as much of the Torah as I can, that I don’t believe in GRACE, or that I believe salvation comes through keeping the Torah.

I’ve had people actually scolding me for wanting to keep the Torah, and saying I am misleading new believers.

I challenge you to go back through every one of my videos and find a single instance where I made that statement. But I’ll save you the time, because I haven’t. I haven’t because I don’t believe that.

As I have said in MANY other videos, SALVATION comes through Faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus the Christ, Yeshua ha Mashiach our MESSIAH and savior. It is only through our faith that we are saved.

Over and over again, people have said that the Law, the Torah was abolished, and that we aren’t supposed to keep ANY of it. Mostly because that is what they were taught by their pastors, who in turn were taught this by someone else.

Grab a cup of coffee, and your bible because we are going to go through a LOT of scripture today. But even with all I share below, this is only scratching the surface.

## Did Jesus/Yeshua say that the Torah was ended?

*All of the following scripture references are quoted from the CJB bible.*

**Matthew 5:17-20** “Don’t think that I have come to abolish the *Torah* or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a *yud* or a stroke will pass from the *Torah* — not until everything that must happen has happened. So whoever disobeys the least of these *mitzvot* (commandments) and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the *Torah*-teachers and *P’rushim* (Pharisees), you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

“**Torah and the Prophets**” is a Hebrew idiom. Just like we have idioms in English (Raining cats and dogs!) as do all languages and cultures, this Hebrew idiom means the Law of Moses/the *Torah* – the Instructions of God/YHVH.

Let’s take a look at those key words: **Abolish** and **Complete**. Some bibles will translate them as destroy or fulfill.

### **ABOLISH/DESTROY** (defined by the Blue Letter Bible)

*Greek word – Katalyō*

*to dissolve, disunite*

1. *(what has been joined together), to destroy, demolish*
2. *metaph. to overthrow i.e. render vain, deprive of success, bring to naught*

1. *to subvert, overthrow*

*1. of institutions, forms of government, laws, etc., to deprive of force, annul, abrogate, discard*

Yeshua clearly stated that he did not come to abolish, dissolve, destroy, demolish, subvert, overthrow or bring to naught...the Torah.

Instead, he came to complete it.

## **COMPLETE/FULFILL** (defined by the Blue Letter Bible)

*Greek word – plēroō*

I. to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full

1. to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally

II - to render full, to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim

2. to consummate: a number

1. to make complete in every particular, to render perfect

2. to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out, (some undertaking)

3. to carry into effect, bring to realization, realize

1. of matters of duty: to perform, execute

2. of sayings, promises, prophecies, to bring to pass, ratify, accomplish

**3. to fulfil, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment**

Did you catch that last meaning? **to cause God's/YHVH's 'will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment.** In other words, to be taught properly, correctly, purely.

Jesus/Yeshua fulfilled the Torah by causing God's/YHVH's WILL to be obeyed as it should be. He was bringing clarity to the Torah. And you know that this is the case because if you keep reading, that is exactly what he does.

**“You have heard** that our fathers were told, **‘Do not murder,’** and that anyone who commits murder will be subject to judgment. **But I tell you** that anyone who nurses anger against his brother will be subject to judgment; that whoever calls his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing!’ will be brought before the *Sanhedrin*; that whoever says, ‘Fool!’ incurs the penalty of burning in the fire of Gei-Hinnom!

**“You have heard** that our fathers were told, **‘Do not commit adultery.’** **But I tell you** that a man who even looks at a woman with the purpose of lusting after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

**“It was said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her a get.’** **But I tell you** that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, makes her an adulteress; and that anyone who marries a divorcee commits adultery.

**“Again, you have heard** that our fathers were told, **‘Do not break your oath,’** and **‘Keep your vows to Adonai.’** **But I tell you** not to swear at all — not ‘by **heaven,**’ because it **is** God’s **throne;** not ‘by **the earth,**’ because it **is** his **footstool;** and not ‘by Yerushalayim,’ because it is **the city of the Great King.** And don’t swear by your head, because you can’t make a single hair white or black. Just let your ‘Yes’ be a simple ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No’ a simple ‘No’; anything more than this has its origin in evil.

**“You have heard** that our fathers were told, **‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’** **But I tell you** not to stand up against someone who does you wrong. On the contrary, if someone hits you on the right cheek, let him hit you on the left cheek too! If someone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well! And if a soldier forces you to carry his pack for one mile, carry it for two! When someone asks you for something, give it to him; when someone wants to borrow something from you, lend it to him.

**“You have heard that our fathers were told, ‘Love your neighbor — and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!**

And it goes on.

You see, what was going on, was that the Torah of God/YHVH was not being taught as it had been handed down through Moses to His people.

There was the Torah – also called the “Law of Moses,” or the “Torah and the Prophets.” Again, we see that in Genesis – Deuteronomy.

But there was also what was called the “Traditions of the Elders” or “Oral Law” or “Fence Laws”

### **“Traditions of the Elders” or “Oral Law” or “Fence Laws”**

When you read through the bible, particularly through the book of Judges and the prophets, you see where the Israelites, God’s people, obeyed His commandments and were faithful for a time. Then they would begin turning away, and turning towards the ways of the pagan nations around them. They would marry their women, begin serving their false gods, even sacrificing their own children to them.

This of course angered YHVH. He would allow them to reap the consequences of their actions, whether it was plagues, famine or often to fall to their enemies. The people would repent, turn back to YHVH. He would have mercy on them and the relationship would be restored.

Just like a wife who had strayed from her kind husband. She broke his heart, but she begged his forgiveness, and he brought her back home. You see this very same metaphor used repeatedly all through the bible, when YHVH is speaking to his people through the prophets.

Over time, the religious leaders decided that they never wanted this to happen again. They never wanted to be cast into bondage of an enemy nation because of their disobedience. So they created new laws to protect God’s laws from being broken. Those manmade laws were the fence to keep the people from ever breaking the Torah again.

An example of this would be where the Torah says not to cook a kid (baby goat) in its mother’s milk.

That led to not being able to eat dairy with meat. *Because what if the milk happened to come from the cow that bore the calf that the beef came from?*

Then they couldn't even use the same dishes. *What if there's a crumb of meat left on the dish, and it mixes with a dairy dish and then they "cook" together in the acids in your stomach?*

Then for some, not even the same STOVE could be used, and you see 2 stoves in the kitchen of some Jewish families.

Layer upon layer upon layer of laws were developed until the new "law" looked nothing like the perfect, easy and freedom-giving Torah that was given to Israel.

**The intention of the religious leaders was good to begin with.** But over time they began to see their own laws as being much more important than the Torah. Manmade traditions outweighed that of God.

Those laws still exist, and we know of them as Halachah or the rabbinical laws. They are found in the Talmud & Mishna. Jewish rabbis teach that these that these laws were handed down from Moses as well, despite that they came later, and continue to evolve today.

When Jesus scolded the pharisees for turning the law into a burden, these manmade laws are what he was talking about.

Matthew 15:1-9

Then some *P'rushim* (Pharisees) and *Torah*-teachers from Yerushalayim came to Yeshua and asked him, "Why is it that your *talmidim* (disciples) break the **Tradition of the Elders?** They don't do *n'tilat-yadayim* (ritualistic washing) before they eat!" He answered, "Indeed, why do you break the command of God by your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say, 'If anyone says to his father or mother, "I have promised to give to God what I might have used to help you," then he is rid of his duty to honor his father or mother.' Thus by your tradition you make null and void the word of God! You hypocrites! Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) was right when he prophesied about you,

**‘These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far away from me.**

**Their worship of me is useless,  
because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.’”**

LUKE 11:42-54

“But woe to you *P’rushim*! You pay your tithes of mint and rue and every garden herb, but you ignore justice and the love of God. You have an obligation to do these things — but without disregarding the others!

“Woe to you *P’rushim*, because you love the best seat in the synagogues and being greeted deferentially in the marketplaces!

“Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which people walk over without knowing it.”

One of the experts in *Torah* answered him, “Rabbi, by saying these things you are insulting us also.” Yeshua said, “Woe to you *Torah* experts too! You load people down with burdens they can hardly bear, and you won’t lift a finger to help them!

“Woe to you! You build tombs in memory of the prophets, but your fathers murdered them! Thus you testify that you completely approve of what your fathers did — they did the killing, you do the building!

### **But the Torah doesn’t Apply to Me Because I’m Not Jewish**

Okay, so the Torah hasn’t gone away, and now we have a brief understanding of the difference between the Torah and the Traditions of the Elders/Fence Laws/Oral Law/Rabbinical laws, etc. (Going forward I will simply call these the Oral Law.)

But does the Torah only apply to Jews?

First, the religion of Judaism as we know it today, did not exist when the Torah was given to Israel through Moses. And not all Jews even believe in

the Oral Law. There are many sects of Judaism, just like the countless denominations of Christianity out there today. They don't all have the same beliefs, or even follow the same traditions.

There is a sect called the Karaite Jews who only believe in following the Torah, and completely reject the Oral law. So the term "Jew" is a broad term covering any number of beliefs

Going forward, I will simply refer to them as Israel – the 12 Tribes who received the Torah through Moses.

So Oral law aside, does the bible say that the Torah is only for Israel and that the "Gentile" believers are under it as well, or are they to ignore it?

Romans 11:1-27

"In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated his people?" Heaven forbid! For I myself am a son of Isra'el, from the **seed of Avraham**, of the tribe of Binyamin. **2God has not repudiated his people**, whom he chose in advance. Or don't you know what the *Tanakh* says about Eliyahu? He pleads with God against Isra'el, "**Adonai, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars, and I'm the only one left, and now they want to kill me too!**" But what is God's answer to him? "**I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not knelt down to Ba'al.**" It's the same way in the present age: there is a remnant, chosen by grace. (Now if it is by grace, it is accordingly not based on legalistic works; if it were otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.) (He's saying right here that we are not save through works, we are saved by our FAITH, the Grace of God!) What follows is that Isra'el has not attained the goal for which she is striving. The ones chosen have obtained it, but the rest have been made stonelike, just as the *Tanakh* says,

**"God has given them a spirit of dullness — eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear, right down to the present day."**

And David says,



**“Let their dining table become for them a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a punishment. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they can’t see, with their backs bent continually.”**

“In that case, I say, isn’t it that they have stumbled with the result that they have permanently fallen away?” Heaven forbid! Quite the contrary, it is by means of their stumbling that the deliverance has come to the Gentiles, in order to **provoke them to jealousy**. Moreover, if their stumbling is bringing riches to the world — that is, if Isra’el’s being placed temporarily in a condition less favored than that of the Gentiles is bringing riches to the latter — how much greater riches will Isra’el in its fullness bring them!

However, to those of you who are Gentiles I say this: since I myself am an emissary sent to the Gentiles, I make known the importance of my work in the hope that somehow I may **provoke** some of my own people **to jealousy** and save some of them! For if their casting Yeshua aside means reconciliation for the world, what will their accepting him mean? It will be life from the dead!

Now if the *hallah* offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole loaf. And if the root is holy, so are the branches. **But if some of the branches were broken off, and you — a wild olive — were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree**, then don’t boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you. So you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.” True, but so what? They were broken off because of their lack of trust. However, you keep your place only because of your trust. So don’t be arrogant; on the contrary, be terrified! For if God did not spare the natural branches, he certainly won’t spare you! So take a good look at God’s kindness and his severity: on the one hand, severity toward those who fell off; but, on the other hand, God’s kindness toward you — provided you maintain yourself in that kindness! Otherwise, you too will be cut off! Moreover, the others, if they do not persist in their lack of trust, will be grafted in; because God is able to graft them back in. For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into

a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree!

For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness; and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the *Tanakh* says,

**“Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer;  
he will turn away ungodliness from Ya‘akov  
and this will be my covenant with them, . . .  
when I take away their sins.”**

If you are a follower of Jesus, Yeshua – you are **grafted into the family tree**. You don't have different laws.

If you are adopted into a family, you are expected to live like the family lives, and have the same household rules, obeying the Father just like the biological children – your new siblings - have to.

We also shouldn't be arrogant, and think we are better or more special than the biological children. A good father would love and treat all of his children equally. And our God is a **very good father**.

All through the Torah itself we see time and again where the people of Israel and the “Strangers or Foreigners” (non-Israelites a.k.a. Gentiles) are told that the same commands apply to both.

**For example:**

Leviticus 19:34

**“Rather, treat the foreigner staying with you like the native-born among you — you are to love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt; I am *Adonai* your God.”**

Exodus 12:49

“The **same teaching** is to apply equally to the citizen and to the foreigner living among you.”

Leviticus 24:22

“You are to apply the **same standard** of judgment to the foreigner as to the citizen, because I am *Adonai* your God.”

Numbers 9:14

“If a foreigner is staying with you and wants to observe *Pesach* for *Adonai*, he is to do it according to the regulations and rules of *Pesach* — you are to have the **same law** for the foreigner as for the citizen of the land.”

Numbers 15:29

“No matter whether he is a citizen of Isra’el or a foreigner living with them. You are to have **one law** for whoever it is that does something wrong by mistake.”

Leviticus 24:16

“and whoever blasphemes the name of *Adonai* must be put to death; the entire community must stone him. The **foreigner as well as the citizen** is to be put to death if he blasphemes the Name.”

Leviticus 18:24-26

“Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, because all the nations which I am expelling ahead of you are defiled with them. The land has become unclean, and this is why I am punishing it — the land itself will vomit out its inhabitants. But you are to **keep my laws and rulings** and not engage in any of these disgusting practices, neither the **citizen** nor the **foreigner** living with you”

### Exodus 12:19

“During those seven days, no leaven is to be found in your houses. Whoever eats food with *hametz* in it is to be cut off from the community of Isra’el — it doesn’t matter whether he is a **foreigner or a citizen** of the land.”

### Deuteronomy 5:14

“but the seventh day is a *Shabbat* for *Adonai* your God. On it you are not to do any kind of work — not you, your son or your daughter, not your male or female slave, not your ox, your donkey or any of your other livestock, and not the **foreigner** staying with you inside the gates to your property — so that your male and female servants can rest just as you do.”

### Numbers 15:14-16

“If a foreigner stays with you — or whoever may be with you, through all your generations — and he wants to bring an offering made by fire as a fragrant aroma for *Adonai*, he is to do the **same as you**. For this community there will be the **same law** for you as for the foreigner living with you; this is a **permanent regulation through all your generations**; the foreigner is to be treated the same way before *Adonai* as yourselves. The **same Torah** and standard of judgment will apply to both you and the foreigner living with you.”

In Ephesians we read that we were once strangers, we were once hopeless, but now through Jesus/Yeshua we have been brought in!

### Ephesians 2:1-22

You used to be dead because of your sins and acts of disobedience. You walked in the ways of the *‘olam hazeh* (this world) and obeyed the Ruler of the Powers of the Air, who is still at work among the disobedient. Indeed,

we all once lived this way — we followed the passions of our old nature and obeyed the wishes of our old nature and our own thoughts. In our natural condition we were headed for God’s wrath, just like everyone else.

But God is so rich in mercy and loves us with such intense love that, even when we were dead because of our acts of disobedience, he brought us to life along with the Messiah — it is by grace that you have been delivered. That is, God raised us up with the Messiah Yeshua and seated us with him in heaven, in order to exhibit in the ages to come how infinitely rich is his grace, how great is his kindness toward us who are united with the Messiah Yeshua. For you have been delivered by grace through trusting, and even this is not your accomplishment but God’s gift. You were not delivered by your own actions; therefore no one should boast. For we are of God’s making, created in union with the Messiah Yeshua for a life of good actions already prepared by God for us to do.

Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth — called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised — at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra’el. **You were foreigners** to the covenants embodying God’s promise. You were in this world without hope and without God.

**But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah’s blood.** For he himself is our *shalom* — he has made us both one and has broken down the *m’chitzah* (the dividing partition) which divided us by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the *Torah*, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. **He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity** and thus make *shalom*, and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity.

Also, when he came, **he announced as Good News *shalom* to you far off and *shalom* to those nearby**, news that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

**So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers. On the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with God’s people and members of God’s family.** You have been built on the foundation of the emissaries and the

prophets, with the cornerstone being Yeshua the Messiah himself. In union with him the whole building is held together, and it is growing into a holy temple in union with the Lord. Yes, in union with him, you yourselves are being built together into a spiritual dwelling-place for God!

We used to be foreigners and strangers, but now we are fellow citizens!  
And all of the citizens of a nation follow the same laws.

### Galatians 3:26-29

For in union with the Messiah, you are all children of God through this trusting faithfulness; because as many of you as were immersed into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah, in whom there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female; for in union with the Messiah Yeshua, you are all one. Also, if you belong to the Messiah, you are seed of Avraham and heirs according to the promise.

The new believers in many of the epistles **were** pagan gentiles, but NOW they have come to have faith in the Messiah, and to serve the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was not a peaceful time. Two completely different people groups were trying to learn to live together in unity.

One group was trying to learn all about this way of living that they had been previously ignorant of, and the other group was trying to unlearn and let go of manmade traditions and “laws” they had always followed.

Some of them didn’t want to let those traditions go, and still wanted to hang on to them being just as important as God’s Torah. They wanted the gentile believers to be just like them, and follow all of their rules in order to “earn” their salvation.

Some of the Jewish believers were trying to teach these new Gentile believers that they couldn't be saved without keeping the law perfectly. And some of the Gentile believers were falling for it. Likely because they didn't know any better.

How discouraged they must have been!

### **But What About Paul?**

Shau'ul/Paul not only continued to keep the Torah, we'll see that he taught it as well.

**Acts 21:15-26** So at the end of our stay, we packed and went up to Yerushalayim; and with us went some of the talmidim (disciples) from Caesarea. They brought us to the home of the man with whom we were to stay, Mnason from Cyprus, who had been a talmid since the early days. In Yerushalayim, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Sha'ul (Paul) and the rest of us went in to Ya'akov (James, the brother of Jesus) and all the elders were present. After greeting them, Sha'ul described in detail each of the things God had done among the Gentiles through his efforts. On hearing it, they praised God; but they also said to him, "You see, brother, how many tens of thousands of believers there are among the Judeans, and they are all zealots for the Torah. Now what they have been told about you is that you are teaching all the Jews living among the Goyim to apostatize from Moshe, telling them not to have a b'rit-milah (circumcision) for their sons and not to follow the traditions.

There was a rumor being spread around that Paul was teaching against the Torah. That he was violating it and teaching others to do the same. Remember, the religious leaders of the day considered their own Oral Law to be the Torah itself, and even more important than the real Torah from God. Which is why they repeatedly accused Jesus of violating the Torah...**which he never did.**

"What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. Take them with you, be purified with them, and pay the expenses connected with having their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that there is nothing to these rumors which they have heard about you; but that, on the contrary, you yourself stay in line and keep the Torah. "However, in regard to the Goyim (Gentiles) who have come to trust in Yeshua, we all joined in writing them a letter with our decision that they should abstain from what had been sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled and from fornication." The next day Sha'ul took the men, purified himself along with them and entered the Temple to give notice of when the period of purification would be finished and the offering would have to be made for each of them.

James knew that Paul had not stopped keeping the Torah, and knew that he wasn't teaching against it, so he told Paul to go and do a PUBLIC ceremony, to PROVE that he was still keeping the Torah and squash the rumors. Remember this was a very volatile and dangerous time to be living in. The early believers didn't want any more trouble from the religious leaders if it could be avoided.

He told Paul to go with a few brethren... meaning Messianic Jews... Jewish Believers in Yeshua...who had taken a Nazarite vow, and to go through the standard purification rituals as specified in the Torah, which accompany these vows. James, fully expected Paul to comply. And, there in Acts 21 we see that Paul did just that.

There are many examples of Paul continuing to keep the Torah. And he testified as such when he was arrested.

Acts 25:6-12

After staying with them at most eight or ten days, Festus went down to Caesarea; and on the following day, he took his seat in court and ordered Sha'ul to be brought in. When he arrived, the Judeans who had come down



from Yerushalayim stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him which they could not prove. In reply, Sha'ul said, "**I have committed no offense — not against the Torah to which the Jews hold, not against the Temple, and not against the Emperor.**"

But Festus, wanting to do the Judeans a favor, asked Sha'ul, "Would you be willing to go up to Yerushalayim and be tried before me there on these charges?" Sha'ul replied, "I am standing right now in the court of the Emperor, and this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Judeans, as you very well know. If I am a wrongdoer, if I have done something for which I deserve to die, then I am ready to die. But if there is nothing to these charges which they are bringing against me, no one can give me to them just to grant a favor! I appeal to the Emperor!" Then Festus, after talking with his advisers, answered, "You have appealed to the Emperor; you will go to the Emperor!"

#### Acts 26:1-8

Agrippa said to Sha'ul, "You have permission to speak on your own behalf." Then Sha'ul motioned with his hand and began his defense:

"King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that it is before you today that I am defending myself against all the charges made against me by Jews, because you are so well informed about all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

"So then! All Jews know how I lived my life from my youth on, both in my own country and in Yerushalayim. They have known me for a long time; and if they are willing, they can testify **that I have followed the strictest party in our religion — that is, I have lived as a Parush.** How ironic it is that I stand on trial here because of my hope in the promise made to our fathers! It is the fulfillment of this very promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they resolutely carry on their acts of worship night and day; yet it is in connection with this hope, your Majesty, that I am being accused by Jews! Why do you people consider it incredible that God raises the dead?"

#### Acts 28:17-20

After three days Sha'ul called a meeting of the local Jewish leaders. When they had gathered, he said to them: "**I have done nothing against either our people or the traditions of our fathers**, I was made a prisoner in Yerushalayim and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and were ready to release me, because I had done nothing to justify a death sentence. But when the Judeans objected, I was forced to appeal to the Emperor — not that I had any charge to make against my own people. This is why I have asked to see you and speak with you, for it is because of the hope of Isra'el that I have this chain around me."

You see, Paul continued to keep the Torah, as he repeatedly testified in court in his defense. Unless of course we are now accusing him of being a liar. And again, he continued to teach it through his letters.

Romans 3:28-31 Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting (*their faith*), which has nothing to do with **legalistic observance** of Torah commands. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting?

*Do we abolish the torah because we now have faith???*

**Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.**

Romans 4:1-3 Then what should we say Avraham, our forefather, obtained by his own efforts? For if Avraham came to be considered righteous by God because of legalistic observances, then he has something to boast about. But this is not how it is before God! For what does the Tanakh say? "Avraham put his trust in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness."

The TORAH does not save us. The Torah shows us how to live. **It tells us what sin is.**

1 John 3:4

“Everyone who keeps sinning is violating *Torah* — indeed, sin is violation of *Torah*.”

It teaches us how to serve God, and how to be a good human.

To love God with all your heart mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:33-40

When the crowds heard how he taught, they were astounded; but when the *P'rushim* learned that he had silenced the *Tz'dukim* (Sadducees) they got together, and one of them who was a *Torah* expert asked a *sh'eilah* (a question to test him) to trap him: “Rabbi, which of the *mitzvot* in the *Torah* is the most important?” He told him, “**You are to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.**’ This is the greatest and most important *mitzvah*. And a second is similar to it, ‘**You are to love your neighbor as yourself.**’ All of the *Torah* and the Prophets are dependent on these two *mitzvot*.”

Those two things, those two commandments are the **foundation** of ALL of the Torah.

They are not a new Torah. Not a new law or a new commandment.

When Jesus said if you love me, keep my commandments, (John 14:15) He wasn't just talking about those two commands, but what those two **represent**.

The Torah and the Prophets – the Law of Moses aka the Instructions of God.

In the Hebrew Wedding tradition – after the bride and groom have officially become engaged, the groom goes away and a “helper” is sent to the bride to teach her how to be a good wife to her someday husband.

What brings him joy, what breaks his heart. How to be faithful to him, what things are special to him, what things he can't stand. **(See my video about the Hebrew Wedding)**

That helper is the Holy Spirit that was given to us on Shavuot/Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit teaches us how to live according to the commandments of God.

Ezekiel 36:25-27

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you,  
and you will be clean;  
I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness  
and from all your idols.  
I will give you a new heart  
and put a new spirit inside you;  
I will take the stony heart out of your flesh  
and give you a heart of flesh.  
I will put my Spirit inside you  
and cause you to live by my laws,  
respect my rulings and obey them.

John 14:15-17

“If you love me, you will keep my commands; and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of Truth, to be with you forever. The world cannot receive him, because it neither sees nor knows him. You know him, because he is staying with you and will be united with you.

Jeremiah 31:33

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

In Zechariah 14, it talks about **in the millennial kingdom**, how the whole earth will keep the festival of Sukkot – one of the Feasts in the Torah – and that any who don't keep it, will be cursed with no rain for their crops.

### **I'm not under the Law, the Law was Nailed to the Cross, the Law is a Curse**

These are common statements made by followers of Christ. But are they actually expressed in the writings?

Colossians 2:11-16

Also it was in union with him that you were circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands, but accomplished by stripping away the old nature's control over the body. In this circumcision done by the Messiah, you were buried along with him by being immersed; and in union with him, you were also raised up along with him by God's faithfulness that worked when he raised Yeshua from the dead. You were dead because of your sins, that is, because of your "foreskin," your old nature. But God made you alive along with the Messiah by forgiving you all your sins. He wiped away the **bill of charges** against us. Because of the regulations, **it** stood as a testimony against us; but he removed **it** by nailing **it** to the execution-stake. Stripping the rulers and authorities of their power, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by means of the stake.

Let's have a quick grammar lesson.

IT was nailed to the cross. What is "it"?

## The bill of CHARGES

Those charges are the curses that we should have received because we were sinners. Sinning is breaking the commands of God. Violating the Torah. (1 John 3:4)

Nowhere in scripture does it say that the TORAH, the Law of God was nailed to the cross.

Taking away the penalty doesn't take away the law.

One time I got pulled over and was given a ticket for something. That ticket was a bill of charges. The charge was against me, and I was going to have to pay the price. But I went to court because in that case I was wrongly accused. The judge dropped the charge against me. But dropping the charge against me doesn't change the law I was accused of violating. That law still exists. It just means I am FREE of what was against me.

Does that mean since the charge was dropped, I could ignore every motor vehicle law out there now? Well of course not, that would be ridiculous. Rather I should be grateful the charge was dropped, and go forward being a good driver and do my very best to obey all of the driving laws!

### But isn't the Law a curse?

No, the law **contains** curses. It also contains BLESSINGS!

Over and over in the scripture, there is the IF – THEN pattern.

If you do this, THEN this will happen.

If you keep my statutes, then this will be the blessing.

If you break my statutes, then this will be the curse.

Exodus 19:5

Now **if you** will pay careful attention to what I say and **keep my** covenant, then **you** will be **my** own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Leviticus 25:18

“Rather, **you** are to **keep my** regulations and rulings and act accordingly. **If you** do, **you** will live securely in the land.

Leviticus 26:3-17 “If you live by my regulations, observe my *mitzvot* and obey them; then I will provide the rain you need in its season, the land will yield its produce, and the trees in the field will yield their fruit. Your threshing time will extend until the grape harvest, and your grape harvesting will extend until the time for sowing seed. You will eat as much food as you want and live securely in your land.

“I will give *shalom* in the land — you will lie down to sleep unafraid of anyone. I will rid the land of wild animals. The sword will not go through your land. You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall before your sword. Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand — your enemies will fall before your sword.

“I will turn toward you, make you productive, increase your numbers and uphold my covenant with you. You will eat all you want from last year’s harvest and throw out what remains of the old to make room for the new. <sup>11</sup> I will put my tabernacle among you, and I will not reject you, but I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. I am *Adonai* your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would not be their slaves. I have broken the bars of your yoke, so that you can walk upright.

“But if you will not listen to me and obey all these *mitzvot*, if you loathe my regulations and reject my rulings, in order not to obey all my *mitzvot* but cancel my covenant; then I, for my part, will do this to you: I will bring terror upon you — wasting disease and chronic fever to dim your sight and sap your strength. You will sow your seed for nothing, because your enemies will eat the crops. I will set my face against you — your enemies will defeat you, those who hate you will hound you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you.

...and it goes on.

This if – then pattern of blessings **and** curses is all throughout the instructions.

How does the bible itself describe the Torah? God’s laws and instructions?

“Holy and righteous and good” - Romans 7:12

“Truth” – Psalm 119:142

“Not burdensome” - 1 John 5:3

“a Delight” – Psalm 119:174

“pure, eternal and just” - Psalm 19

“for our good – preserves life” - Deuteronomy 6:24

## **Not under the Law**

First of all as I stated previously, there were different kinds of law being discussed in scripture. God’s law (the Torah), the Oral Law, Roman Law, etc. But most of our bibles just translate the word to “law” without specifying which law is being discussed. But remember, being “under” a law is like being “under” arrest.

Again, I refer to my traffic violation story. Technically I was under arrest. (That’s what a traffic ticket actually is.) I was under the law. More specifically, I was under the consequence or curse of it. But I was released from that by the forgiveness of the judge. I was no longer under the curse of it. The consequence of it.

Romans 5:14-23



For sin will not have authority over you; because you are not under **legalism** but under grace. (We aren't earning our salvation)

Therefore, what conclusion should we reach? "Let's go on sinning, because we're **not under legalism but under grace**"? **Heaven forbid!** Don't you know that if you present yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, then, of the one whom you are obeying, you are slaves — whether of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to being made righteous? By God's grace, you, who were once slaves to sin, obeyed from your heart the pattern of teaching to which you were exposed; and after you had been set free from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness. (I am using popular language because your human nature is so weak.) For just as you used to offer your various parts as slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led to more lawlessness; so now offer your various parts as slaves to righteousness, which leads to being made holy, set apart for God. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in relationship to righteousness; but what benefit did you derive from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end result of those things was death. However, now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you do get the benefit — it consists in being made holy, set apart for God, and its end result is eternal life. For what one earns from sin is death; but eternal life is what one receives as a free gift from God, in union with the Messiah Yeshua, our Lord.

Psalm 19 says

**The *Torah* of *Adonai* is perfect,**  
restoring the inner person.

The instruction of *Adonai* is sure,  
making wise the thoughtless.

The precepts of *Adonai* are right,  
rejoicing the heart.

The *mitzvah* of *Adonai* is pure,  
enlightening the eyes.

The fear of *Adonai* is clean,  
enduring forever.

The rulings of *Adonai* are true,

they are righteous altogether,  
 more desirable than gold,  
 than much fine gold,  
 also sweeter than honey  
 or drippings from the honeycomb.  
 Through them your servant is warned;  
 in obeying them there is great reward.

Who can discern unintentional sins?  
 Cleanse me from hidden faults.  
 Also keep your servant from presumptuous sins,  
 so that they won't control me.  
 Then I will be blameless  
 and free of great offense.

May the words of my mouth  
 and the thoughts of my heart  
 be acceptable in your presence,  
*Adonai*, my Rock and Redeemer.

And again, Paul continued to keep the Torah. He and the other Apostles continued to teach it to the new, previously pagan believers. But it was not an easy task.

## Acts 15

But some men came down from Y'udah to Antioch and began teaching the brothers, "You can't be saved unless you undergo *b'rit-milah* in the manner prescribed by Moshe." This brought them into no small measure of discord and dispute with Sha'ul and Bar-Nabba. So the congregation assigned Sha'ul, Bar-Nabba and some of themselves to go and put this *sh'eilah* (question) before the emissaries and the elders up in Yerushalayim.

After being sent off by the congregation, they made their way through Phoenicia and Shomron, recounting in detail how the Gentiles had turned to God; and this news brought great joy to all the brothers.

On arrival in Yerushalayim, they were welcomed by the Messianic community, including the emissaries and the elders; and they reported what God had done through them. But some of those who had come to trust were from the party of the *P'rushim*; and they stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and direct them to observe the *Torah* of Moshe."

Remember that some of the Jewish believers were saying that the Gentiles couldn't be SAVED unless they kept the law...and many wanted them to keep the Oral law too! They wanted the Gentiles to be exactly like them, immediately. But what to do?

The emissaries and the elders met to look into this matter. After lengthy debate, Kefa (Peter) got up and said to them, "Brothers, you yourselves know that a good while back, God chose me from among you to be the one by whose mouth the *Goyim* (Gentiles) should hear the message of the Good News and come to trust. And God, who knows the heart, bore them witness by giving the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) to them, just as he did to us; that is, he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their heart by trust. So why are you putting God to the test now by placing a yoke on the neck of the *talmidim* which neither our fathers nor we have had the strength to bear? No, it is through the love and kindness of the Lord Yeshua that we trust and are delivered — and it's the same with them."

Then the whole assembly kept still as they listened to Bar-Nabba and Sha'ul tell what signs and miracles God had done through them among the Gentiles. Ya'akov broke the silence to reply. "Brothers," he said, "hear what I have to say. Shim'on has told in detail what God did when he first began to show his concern for taking from among the *Goyim* a people to bear his name. And the words of the Prophets are in complete harmony with this for it is written,

**“After this, I will return;  
and I will rebuild the fallen tent of David.  
I will rebuild its ruins,  
I will restore it,  
so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,  
that is, all the *Goyim* who have been called by my name,”  
says *Adonai*, who is doing these things.’**

All this has been known for ages.

“Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the *Goyim* who are turning to God. Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood. For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every *Shabbat*.”

The early believers were having a hard time trying to figure out how to deal with all these new gentile believers who had never had instruction in the Torah. Not only did the early believers come from a history of the Torah, had learned the Torah their entire lives! But again they also had the Oral law that swayed some of their views. They were human beings. The traditions said that Gentiles were unclean and that a Jew couldn't have a meal with one, enter one's home...shouldn't even talk to them. And now suddenly they were expected to worship someone who didn't know anything!

This is the ULTIMATE blended family fireworks! These were real people with real flaws.

So they decided to give the gentiles some foundational lessons. **A new believer bible study** if you will. Get them what they needed to get started....and be patient while they learned the rest. You know.... show them some GRACE.

Because now they would attend synagogues every *Shabbat*. With the rest of the believers, and they would learn the Torah!

I could go on for days, but this is what it boils down to.

We are not redeemed through our keeping of the Torah. But we keep the Torah BECAUSE we are redeemed.

James 2 14-19

What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such “faith” able to save him? Suppose a brother or

sister is without clothes and daily food, and someone says to him, “*Shalom!* Keep warm and eat hearty!” without giving him what he needs, what good does it do? Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead.

But someone will say that you have faith and I have actions. Show me this faith of yours without the actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions! You believe that “**God is one**”? Good for you! The demons believe it too — the thought makes them shudder with fear!

If you believe that we aren’t supposed to keep ANY of the Torah, not one bit of it, or we then have to keep all of it, then I would ask you

What is it like to be a murderer? Because I’m not breaking that one.

What is it like to be an adulterer? Nope not breaking that one.

What is it like to keep a grudge instead of forgiving?

Or sitting back and watching someone die so you can benefit from it? Lev. 19:18

How about seeing an animal in distress and just ignoring it? Deut. 22:4

Or all of the “conjugal” things that the Torah forbids like with family members, animals...you seriously can’t say we’re supposed to throw that out...

Again, the Torah teaches how to live a life that is honoring and serving Him, and how to be a good person to others.

Paul was very much an intellectual. He trained under Gamaliel. To even qualify to train under him, a young boy would have to memorize the entire TANAKH – the Old Testament by the age of 12. The WHOLE THING!

Intellectuals can sometimes be misunderstood by other people. It’s pretty common today, and it was back then too. Just ask Peter.

2 Peter 3:11-18

Since everything is going to be destroyed like this, what kind of people should you be? You should lead holy and godly lives, as you wait for the Day of God and work to hasten its coming. That Day will bring on the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt from the heat; but we, following along with his promise, wait for **new heavens and a new earth**, in which righteousness will be at home. Therefore, dear friends, as you look for these things, do everything you can to be found by him without spot or defect and at peace. And think of our Lord's patience as deliverance, just as our dear brother Sha'ul also wrote you, following the wisdom God gave him. Indeed, he speaks about these things in all his letters. **They contain some things that are hard to understand, things which the uninstructed and unstable distort, to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.**

But you, dear friends, since you know this in advance, guard yourselves; so that you will not be led away by the errors of the wicked and fall from your own secure position. And keep growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Deliverer, Yeshua the Messiah. To him be the glory, both now and forever! *Amen.*

If you believe that Paul/Shaul taught to throw out the Torah, while JESUS taught the Torah would never go away until the new earth and the new heavens came...those do not agree.

And if the scriptures don't agree, then I suggest it is our understanding that is in error.

But even if that was the case, and Paul actually was teaching against the Torah, Jesus himself said:

**“Don't think that I have come to abolish the *Torah* or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. Yes indeed! I tell you that **until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud or a stroke will pass from the *Torah* — not until everything that must happen has happened. So whoever disobeys the least of these *mitzvot* and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the****

Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the *Torah*-teachers and *P'rushim*, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Whom do you serve?

Paul was a man, Jesus is my Messiah.

I'm going to listen to Yeshua, because Paul didn't climb up on an execution stake and shed his blood to save my soul.