

Not Subject to the Law of God?

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Preface

Christianity was founded upon, and maintains to this day, an erroneous view of what it calls "the Law." Because of this, false conclusions have been arrived at concerning the role of "the Law" in the life of a believer in the Messiah. This error has also caused errant theology regarding Israel, the Jews, and the Gentiles' relationship to G-d. The purpose of this document is to expose this error and help believers in Yeshua the Messiah, particularly Gentiles, find the correct application of "the Law" in their faith and lives.

The Christian View of the "Law"

The contemporary Christian mindset regarding what it calls "the Law," evolved from a Greek/Roman or "westernized" worldview and approach to studying the Bible. This was shaped by the early church fathers of the second to sixth centuries, and has been steadily reinforced since those times. When Christians hear or use the term "Law" in spiritual discussions, sermons, etc., they are thinking in a very "legal" sense, similar to how one would regard the laws we have in our secular society.

Three particular ideas found in Christianity regarding "the Law," pertinent to this discussion, are:

- 1. Those under the Law of Moses were "under bondage," which ended with Jesus, who has set us free*
- 2. "No one could ever do everything the law requires" -- that's why we needed Jesus*
- 3. The law was "a curse" that Jesus came to do away with.*

These three ideas may not be expressed in exactly the same words in every denomination, but the concepts are clear and present in the teachings of Protestant denominations and Catholicism.

For instance, Dr. Charles Ryrie's classic book on Christian theology makes it clear that "the Law" is terminated with Jesus:

"Another important benefit of the death of Christ was the inauguration of the faith-righteousness principle to replace the law-works principle. However, Paul's statement in Romans 10:4, that Christ is the end of the Law, might be understood as either signifying termination or purpose. In other words, either Christ terminated the Law, or the purpose of Christ's coming was to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17). However, the termination seems clearly to be the meaning in this context because of the contra (beginning in Rom. 9:30) between the Law and God's righteousness. Paul's argument that follows is not that the Jew was incomplete and needed the coming of Christ to perfect his position before God, but that his position under the law-works principle was absolutely wrong because it sought to establish righteousness by human effort rather than by accepting God's gift of righteousness. Though it is true that our Lord fulfilled the Law, this passage is not teaching that, but rather that He terminated the Law and provided a new and living way to God. (1)

Another example showing the difference between what "the Law" and Jesus could do for us, may be found in the popular Christian book, *When Skeptics Ask*, by Norman L. Geisler:

While Moses set up the moral and social structures that guided the nation, the Law could not save anyone from the penalty of their sins, which is death. As Paul says, 'By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin' (Rom 3:20). The revelation which came through Jesus, though, was one in which the sins which the Law made known are forgiven, 'being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus' (v. 2-3). Christ's revelation builds on the foundation of Moses by solving the problem of which the Law made us aware. (2)

Beyond the inability of anyone to be saved by "the Law," Christianity also says that those who taught people to continue in "the Law," after coming to believe in the Messiah, were heretics.

Christian author William Barclay states the following in his Bible study series:

"In the New Testament itself we get glimpses of teachers who failed in their responsibility and became false teachers. There were teachers who tried to turn Christianity into another kind of Judaism and tried to introduce circumcision and the keeping of the law." (3)

The Christian view of "the Law" is also conveyed in "headings" found at the beginning of sections throughout Christian Bibles. These captions are placed there by the editors to help direct the reader as to what the next group of verses is concerned with.

For instance, at the beginning of the following sections in the "New Testament," of a popular New King James version of the Bible, (4) we find the following phrases:

- Romans 7:1-6: ***"Freed from the Law"***
- Romans 14:1-13: ***"The Law of Liberty"***
- Galatians 3:10-14: ***"The Law Brings a Curse"***
- Galatians 5:7-15: ***"Love Fulfills the Law"***

Christianity's View of Judaism

Christianity distinguishes itself from Judaism (the "religion of Law") with the idea that the former is a religion of faith and love, whereas Judaism, is one of works. To quote William Barclay again;

"The Christian lives under the law of liberty, and it is by the law of liberty he will be judged. What he means is this. Unlike the Pharisee and the orthodox Jew, the Christian is not a man whose life is governed by the external pressure of a whole series of rules and regulations imposed on him from without. He is governed by the inner compulsion of love. He follows the right way, the way of love to God and love to men, not because any external law compels him to do so nor because any threat of punishment frightens him into doing so, but because the love of Christ within his heart makes him desire to do so." (5)

Christian Bible footnotes, commentary books and sermons from the pulpits have expressed this thought for centuries, maintaining that Christianity is God's true religion. For example, in a commentary appendix to one version of the King James Bible, regarding the book of Hebrews, it says:

"With carefully reasoned arguments the author showed that Christianity is superior to Judaism..."

"Christianity is the perfect religion."⁽⁶⁾

The same commentary regarding the book of Galatians states:

"Galatians has been called the Christian declaration of independence. It is Paul's answer to those who challenged his authority as an apostle and who urged Christians in Galatia to live according to the Law of Moses. Adoption of the Jewish Law by Gentile Christians would have made Christianity merely a sect within Judaism. Paul taught that bondage to the Law ended when Christ made all men free."⁽⁷⁾

Renowned Christian author, J. Vernon McGee, makes the following statement about the apostle Paul and the Jewish religion in his Bible commentary:

"Paul now calls the religion in which he was brought up the 'Jews' religion.' Paul was saved, not Judaism, but from Judaism." (Emphasized words are McGee's) ⁽⁸⁾

Christianity's View of the "New Testament's" Teachings on "the Law"

Christianity holds that those who come to "faith in Jesus," (Jew or Gentile) no longer need be concerned with "the Law" as they now have "liberty in their faith." Christianity gives most of the credit for this teaching to Paul, who is traditionally said to have taught against "the Law," and showed in his own life that "the Law" no longer had any practical meaning for him.

Frequently cited verses in supporting this are;

1. ***For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness for everyone who believes.***
(Romans 10:4)
2. ***For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them."***(Galatians 3:10)
3. ***Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree."***(Galatians 3:13)
4. ***Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.***
(Colossians 2:14)
5. ***Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.***(Colossians 2:16-17)

Christianity's Relationship to the Jews

Christianity teaches that Jesus indeed came to the Jewish people, but they rejected him. The Jewish leadership (the Pharisees) were so "caught up in the Law," that they missed their own Messiah. The Church was created and given the job of spreading the Gospel of Jesus to the unsaved. (Matthew 16:18,19; Acts chapter 2)

The Church teaches that even though the Jews failed in their calling, 2000 years ago, it has an obligation today to bring the Gospel to the Jewish people. Many Christian churches have created specific ministries, or launched campaigns, to evangelize the Jews.

In recent years, denominations such as the Baptists, and Assemblies of God, have stated that they have

not been as successful as they had wished in the area of Jewish evangelism, and have rededicated themselves to this effort. Some are now making efforts to take a more "Jewish approach" in their "witnessing," by training their people to use "Jewish terminology" when talking to Jews. (i.e., to say "Yeshua," rather than "Jesus," or "Messiah" rather than "Christ.")

The Hebrew View of the Law/Torah

Terminology

We begin with what Christianity calls *'the Law,'* but in Judaism is called *the Torah* -- the term given to the first five books of the Bible. This is also referred to by Christians as the "Pentateuch" (a Greek term). The term "Law," especially in the legal sense as the western mind understands it, is not an appropriate translation of the word "Torah." A correct translation of Torah is *'instruction'* or *'revelation'*-- as in *'God's instruction,'* or *'revelation from God.'* This is how the Torah is presented in Judaism.

The Torah is a revelation of the character of God as well as an insight of what is to come. The Torah is God's instruction on how those who place their trust in Him (Jew or gentile) are to live, so that *"all will be well with them."* (Deuteronomy 4:40) Verses such as Exodus 12:48-49, Leviticus 24:22 and Isaiah chapter 56, show that the Torah was not strictly for the Hebrews, but also for those Gentiles who wanted to be part of God's people. Although God chose to present His revelation through the Jewish people, it was not to be solely "their religion." They were to be a "light to the world," and bring this revelation to the Gentiles, as Yeshua reminded them in His sermon of Matthew chapter 5.

Though the Torah proper is the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), the term "Torah" can also include the rest of the Tenakh (commonly called the "Old Testament") and the books of the "New Testament," in that they are God's continued revelation/instruction. None of God's later revelation in the rest of the Tenakh (the Prophets & Writings) contradicts the Torah, and none of the "New Testament" contradicts the Torah, Prophets or Writings. God's word is one.

What Does the Tenakh say about the Torah, Forgiveness of Sin, and Salvation?

Unlike the movie, "Back to the Future," we will for the purpose of this study of the Torah, go "forward into the past." In the Gospel of John chapter 3, we have one of the foundational verses of "faith-based Christianity:"

You must be born again.

Christians tout this as a preeminent "faith teaching of Jesus." Notice however, what the Messiah says to Nicodemus when the latter asks, *"How can these things be?"*

Yeshua replies to him: *"Are you the teacher of Israel and do not know these things?"*

Nicodemus is criticized by the Messiah, who says that as a *"teacher of Israel,"* he should have known about being "born again." Now how would Nicodemus know about this if it was a new teaching of Yeshua?

The answer is that "being born again" is not an original teaching from Yeshua and the launching point for some new Christian faith. Being born again was and is fundamental to Torah-based Judaism, as the message of the Torah has always been to have faith in God for salvation and not "work your way."

This can be seen in the book of Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 10:16 -- *"Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiffnecked no longer."*

The term "*stiffnecked*" is equivalent to not having faith. God called the generation in the wilderness stiffnecked because they failed to trust (have faith) in Him. (See Exodus 32:9; 33:3,5; 34:9, Deut. 9:6,13; 2 Chron. 30:8; Acts 7:51)

Hebrews 3:7-4:2, commenting on these same stiffnecked people, said they received the Gospel but failed as they did not "*mix it with faith,*" and "*went astray in their hearts.*"

Deuteronomy 30:6 -- *"And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."*

Here the word "live" is used in a spiritual sense and is equivalent to salvation.

The epistles show that "*circumcision of the heart*" is the equivalent of "*being born again*":

Romans 2:29 -- *"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart ..."*

Colossians 2:11 -- *"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands ..."*

God has always asked that we first recognize and trust in Him **before** trying to "do" anything for Him. To have faith/trust in Him is the "first commandment."

Exodus 20:2-3 & Deuteronomy 5:6-7 -- *I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.*

Habakkuk 2:4 & Romans 1:17 -- *"The righteous live by faith"* (Paul quotes this "Old Testament" verse in Romans to make his point.)

Hebrews 11:6 -- *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him"* (This chapter then goes on to list those who "followed the Law," such as; Moses, David and Samuel)

Yeshua continues His discussion with Nicodemus, speaking of His ascending to heaven (John 3:12-13), thus linking the Torah, (as God spoke about it in Deuteronomy 30:11-14), with Himself (as Paul wrote in Romans 10:1-8). Yeshua concludes his discussion by pointing to the incident of the Children of Israel looking upon the bronze serpent and living (John 3:14) as a faith issue (Numbers 21:9) comparing that to faith in Himself.

God does not change. Salvation in Torah-based Judaism has always been by faith, both before Moses and after him, as well as before Yeshua and after Him. The Torah is God's revelation, as Yeshua is also

God's revelation. Faith, Torah and Yeshua are inseparable. Salvation was always through faith, Messiah and Torah, as *Yeshua is the lamb slain since the foundation of the world* (Hebrews 4:3, 9:26; Rev. 13:8). Yeshua Himself said:

John 8:56 -- "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad."

Yeshua is the goal of the Torah (Romans 10:4, see the section below, "*Making the Hebrew Connection: Torah and Messiah*") Yeshua is the Torah in the flesh -- the point of John 1:1.

The reason most people don't see this when they read the "Old Testament," is because their understanding of, "what the Scriptures say," is affected by hundreds of years of theology formed by previous generations studying and interpreting the Hebrew Bible in a Hellenized (non-Hebrew) way. This "mindset" is not an easy thing to shake off (especially in the USA) as it is reinforced daily by family, friends, sermons, books, Christian TV programs, Christian holidays -- the entire culture we live in.

How and why the Bible has come to be interpreted in this fashion is discussed further in this document.

A Tenakh Example: How Was King David Saved?

In Hebrews chapter 11 -- the "Faith Hall of Fame" as some have called it, we find three interesting names from the Tenakh -- Moses, David and Samuel. The book of Hebrews says they were saved by faith, even though they were well known for following the Torah.

In writing Psalm 119, David can't say enough about following the Torah. But, according to Christian theology, there is a dilemma with regard to what he writes.

David writes the following about himself:

Psalm 119:22 -- "Take away from me reproach and contempt, for I have kept your testimonies."

Psalm 119:51 -- "... yet have I not declined in my interest or turned aside from your Law."

Psalm 119:56 -- "I have kept your precepts ..."

Psalm 119:102 -- "I have not turned aside from your ordinances ..."

Psalm 119:121 -- "I have done justice and righteousness ..."

Is this the same David that committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah murdered? Not to mention a number of other documented violations of the Torah. According to Christian theology, David is clearly a liar. How can he claim to have followed "the Law," when we all know how he broke it in some terrible ways? To add to the "confusion," God Himself calls David, "*a man after His own heart.*" (1 Samuel 13:14)

So is David a liar? Perhaps God is making an "exception" for him?

There is a hint of the answer found in Psalm 119 itself:

Psalm 119:159 -- "Consider how I love your precepts; revive me and give life to me, O Lord, according to your loving kindness."

The term "loving kindness" is *hesed* in Hebrew, and is the equivalent of the word *grace* in the "New

Testament." David knew he was saved by God's grace -- NOT by keeping all the commandments perfectly, but rather by what he says at the beginning of the verse; "***Consider how I love your precepts ...***"

An interesting question to ask is, "Why does God save us?" The typical reply might be, "So we won't go to hell." That may be true, but it's an incomplete answer. In fact, God saves us so that we can perform the commandments (*mitzvot*) of His Torah in this lifetime. Our performing God's mitzvot is part of His desire to return us back into a correct relationship, the purpose and intent of mankind, as first seen in the Garden of Eden (*Gan Eden*).

(Taking it a step further, one could ask, why did Yeshua say, "we would always have the poor?" (Matthew 26:11) Part of the answer is so that we would be able to perform the mitzvot of charity!) (9)

Psalm 119 shows David asking to be saved ***so that he could then follow God's Torah*** God judged David on his faith AND desire to follow the Torah, NOT on his ability to keep every point of it. No one has ever been "saved" by their ability to keep Torah, nor has that ever been an option for salvation.

The idea that Torah-based Judaism taught that anyone was ever saved by works is false. Throughout the ages there have indeed been those in Judaism who have taught incorrectly. The behavior of specific individuals or groups does not change what Torah-based Judaism has always taught. Even the error of the Jewish leaders at the time of Yeshua does not make Christianity, or any other religion correct. (***Let God be true but every man be a liar***-- Romans 3:4.) The only thing that is "right," is what God Himself established.

Faith and desire to follow His Torah are inseparable according to God.

Why is this so?

1. God says what He wants from us ... ***to fear Him, walk in His ways, to love Him and to serve Him with all your heart and soul***(Deuteronomy 10:12) -- "***His ways***" were given in the Torah.
2. However, you cannot walk in His ways (follow the Torah) without faith (Hebrews 10:38)

Salvation "Under the Law"

Let us examine the aforementioned quote by Christian author, Norman Geisler:

While Moses set up the moral and social structures that guided the nation, the Law could not save anyone from the penalty of their sins, which is death. As Paul says, 'By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin' (Rom 3:20) the revelation which came through Jesus, though, was one in which the sins which the Law made known are forgiven, 'being justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus' (v. 24). Christ's revelation builds on the foundation of Moses by solving the problem of which the Law made us aware.

Geisler's statement summarizes Christianity's view of the Torah, forgiveness of sin and salvation:

1. There was no actual forgiveness and true salvation before Yeshua, when people were "under the Law," as all the Law could do was expose sin.
2. Forgiveness came only when Jesus arrived on the scene.

Scripture has something different to say on the subject however, with God Himself making it clear that forgiveness was attainable long before Yeshua's death and resurrection:

Isaiah 1:18 -- *Come now and let us reason together says the Lord, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.*

Strong's Concordance shows that there are more references to God forgiving sin in the book Leviticus, than in any other book in the Bible. Perhaps God wasn't serious all those times He told people that their sins were forgiven when they did what He told them to do, in faith?

An argument is made by some that the sacrifices in the "Old Testament" didn't really forgive sin, (even though the words of the Bible say they did). Rather, they merely provided a "covering" for people's sins. Unfortunately, there is nothing in Scripture that supports this idea, or indicates we should not believe what we read when God says their sins were forgiven. Attempts to prove otherwise always stem from pulling verses out of their context.

For example:

Hebrews 10:4 -- *"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin."*

The problem here is that this verse is in the specific context of the Yom Kippur sacrifice - not the daily sacrificial system in general. Christianity does not understand the difference between the two and completely misses the point of the letter of Hebrews. (See the section below, "*Christianity's Difficulty With the Law*," for more about Yom Kippur and the book of Hebrews.)

Another Christian teaching is that until "Jesus' victory at the cross," we were totally powerless against sin. If that is true, why did God tell Cain, the son of Adam, that he could win out over sin:

Genesis 4:7 -- *"If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."*

The fact that people could be considered righteous and blameless in God's sight, **before Yeshua's death**, is shown as early as Cain (above), through the Tenakh (i.e., David), right up to before Yeshua's birth, where in the "New Testament," Scripture says of the parents of "John the baptist":

Luke 1:6 -- *"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."*

According to Christian doctrine, how could these people be considered righteous, "according to the Law," prior to "Jesus' work on the cross?"

Why did God Give the Torah at Mount Sinai?

If salvation was always attainable by faith from the time of Adam, and the Torah (God's word), was also always in existence (John 1:1), then why did God give the Torah (as we have it in the Bible) to Moses at Mount Sinai?

The short answer is; *Out of mercy.*

First, recall the days of Noah. Man had become so sinful that God, after first removing the righteous (Torah-observant) people, such as Enoch and Methuselah, spared Noah and seven others to repopulate the earth. However, before He did this, out of mercy, He gave man 120 years to repent. (Genesis 6:1-8) They failed and the flood came. Note that Noah knew what animals were unclean (Genesis 7:2), *even though this was well before Moses received the Torah which contained those instructions*. Therefore, we know that God's revelation of the Torah, in some way, was given to man from the beginning.

Skip ahead ten generations to Abraham's time. God makes Abraham a promise to inherit certain lands that are presently occupied by evil people. However, God tells him that the time for their destruction has not yet arrived, as they have not reached *the fullness of their wickedness* (Genesis 15:16). God, out of mercy, gave those people another 400 years to turn from sin back to Him -- which they did not do.

Finally, move forward to the arrival of the Yeshua the Messiah. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ..."* (John 3:16) We all know the rest of that verse. Again, God acts out of mercy. Man has continually strayed from God. Ignorance of God's will, His Torah, is no excuse. That is why God, in the Torah he gave Moses, prescribed sacrifices for sins done in ignorance of the Torah.

God, in His mercy, hasn't destroyed the earth every other generation since Noah, or continually struck individuals with lightning bolts -- though some may have deserved it. Yeshua has been involved here, acting as a propitiation (an advocate or buffer) between God and man -- not only for believers, but also for the rest of the world. (1 John 2:2) Scripture tells us that the Lord's salvation was done at the foundation of the world. The idea of the Messiah's work being "done" thousands of years before His earthly crucifixion and resurrection, may be hard for some to grasp, however God does not work within the concept of time as we relate to it.

To summarize; the Torah at Sinai was given out of mercy and for several related purposes:

- To give guidance, as man's sin was getting so bad
- To "stir up" sin in man, in that given a "line to cross," human nature will be tempted to do so (Romans 7:7-11)
- To make man realize how he falls short of God's holiness
- To point man to God, whom he must trust for salvation, as trust in God is "Commandment #1"

The Torah was also given to show man how to live for God and with your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). The fact that we have faith in Yeshua does not void what the Torah says about HOW to do this. Christianity teaches that we don't have to follow the Torah, as Jesus nullified its specifics by summarizing everything in the two commandments that He gave in this Matthew verse. Instead of following God's revelation (the Torah), Christianity says we now have "liberty from the Law." We now follow something called "the law of love" or "law of Christ." Christianity says we are now "led by the Spirit" and no longer subject to "the Law."

Did God Give His People an "Impossible Task?"

As previously outlined, Christianity, in one form or another, teaches that God gave Moses and His people a list of commandments they were to obey perfectly in order to be saved, but as sinful humans, they could not keep these. Therefore, there was no way to "follow the Law" until Jesus arrived to usher in the "era of grace"-- 1300 years later.

According to this theology, God told His people to do something He knew they could not do, with the stipulation that if they failed, they were damned.

Is God a sadist? Of course not. Yeshua Himself said that even we, being evil, treat our children fairly, and that God treats us better than any of us treat our own. Yet some form of this perverse idea is taught throughout Christianity's denominations.

Examine what God Himself said when He gave the Torah:

Deuteronomy 30:11-14 -- *"For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it.' But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."*

God Himself makes it clear -- He told His people that the Law was not too hard for them to follow.

What does the "New Testament" Teach About the Torah and Salvation?

Is the Law "a curse" that Yeshua came to do away with? Two frequently cited verses Christianity uses to support the idea that "the Law is a curse," are:

Galatians 3:10 -- *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, and do them."*

Galatians 3:13 -- *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree"*

Clearly, there is something called *the curse of the Law*. But is the **Law itself** a curse?

- First, recall that God gave it so that *"it would be well"* with His people (Deuteronomy 4:40).
- Paul wrote that the Law is *holy, righteous and good* (Romans 7:12).
- Paul stated that the Law is *spiritual* (Romans 7:14).
- Paul said that he himself *delighted in the Law* (Romans 7:22-25).
- When accused that he might be teaching that the Law was done away, Paul took steps to prove otherwise (Acts 21:21-26).

On the surface there seems to be quite a contradiction. How can something God gave, which is *holy, righteous and good*, that Yeshua practiced and upheld (Matt 5:17-20), that "James" (Ya'acov/Jacob is his real name!) said was to be our standard (James 1:22-25), that Paul himself delighted in and also followed, be called a "curse" by Paul?

Part of the problem is a failure to understand and teach the *dual nature* of the Torah. God Himself alluded to this duality when He gave the Torah:

Deuteronomy 30:15-17a -- *"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgements, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your hearts turn away so that you do not hear, you shall surely perish ..."*

Notice in those verses that "faith" comes before, and is tied directly to, obedience. First, God says He commands His people to "love the Lord" (trust/faith), and then walk in His ways (obey Torah). Next, He says if their hearts turn away (lack of faith) they will perish. God's view of faith is not void of action on our part. It is not a matter of "just believing" in certain facts.

The most famous verse in Judaism is the *Shema*, found in Deuteronomy 6:4:

Shema Israel Adonai Elohenu Adonai echad.

"Hear oh Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

"Shema," the first word of the verse, is usually translated "hear," but is a complex word that implies to, ***"accept," implying faith, commitment, and obedience.***(10)

Hebrews 3:7-4:2, says Moses and the children of Israel were preached **the Gospel** in the Wilderness, but they perished. Were they condemned for "failing to follow every point of the Law?" No, It was due to **lack of faith**. The book of Hebrews says they did not "mix" what they knew to do (the Torah) with faith. Faith in God and following Torah are inseparable.

Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes about the purpose of the Torah. He compares it to a tutor to us before faith (11). Yet, he also talks about "the curse" of the Law. One seems "good" and the other "bad." How can this be?

The answer lies with the duality of the Torah and its multiplicity of purpose. One function of the Torah is to show man how sinful he is and that he stands condemned before a righteous God. This is not all the Torah does however! Only by trusting in God for salvation, AND agreeing to walk in His ways, can man escape judgment (1 John 2:4).

What is important to know here is that the Torah itself is not a curse, rather, the curse is but one part of the Torah.

The "curse of the law" AND its function of being "a tutor" (actually, a "guide" or "guardian," literally one who escorts you), apply to those who have not yet placed their faith in God. Christianity incorrectly teaches that when Paul spoke of the Law serving as a guardian before Yeshua, he was saying that it held the Jews, under the Law of Moses, in bondage until Yeshua came and died. (12) This is a biased misreading of the text, as God does not change. What Paul is saying is that in the life of every living person (yesterday and today), the Torah functions as such before they come to Messiah.

After anyone comes to trust in Yeshua, those two particular aspects of the Torah cease. (It being a "guardian" and a curse.) However, Torah's role as God's revelation of how we are to live for Him continues.

The Torah is a way of living for God, ***so all will be well with you***, is the other side of the duality of the Law -- a blessing and guide for us to live, and a revelation of God to us, so that we can draw closer to Him.

The Torah lists 613 direct commandments. According to the Judaism of Yeshua (and today) 365 of these are considered "negative" commandments. You can call these the ***"thou shall not's"***. The purpose of these negative commandments is to; a) point out (even to arouse) sin, b) show man he is condemned by his sin, and, c) point him to God for salvation.

There are 248 "positive" commandments. The purpose of the positive commandments, is to show us the things God wants us to do AFTER coming to faith.

As believers, we are indeed *"no longer under the Thou shall not's, BUT ONLY* in that they no longer condemn us, as we now trust God for salvation. By *"not under the Law,"* it does not mean we can murder, steal, or break any of God's Torah. It is assumed we no longer do those things as we now trust in God and live for Him. Rather, it means we are no longer under the curse of those negative commandments.

Put succinctly, this is what Paul is teaching throughout his letters:

Attempting to gain salvation by following the Torah on your own without faith, and inevitably failing at some point, is the "curse of the Law" -- not the Torah itself.

Reading the "New Testament" with this Hebrew understanding of where Paul was coming from, eliminates the conflicts caused by the (false) idea that he made contradictory statements about "the Law." Everywhere he went, Paul preached against the "popular" teaching that you could earn your salvation through legalistic observance of Torah. However, he never taught against Torah being a part of the life of any believer.

Christianity's Difficulty with "the Law"

As mentioned, the Hebrew view of faith is not just "believing" in God, as some teach. Even demons believe in him (James 2:19) and know who Yeshua is (Matthew 8:29). Having repented (*teshuvah*) in faith, we are now to look at the Torah as our "how-to guide" regarding God's will for our lives. The entire Torah is the *"Law of Liberty"* we are to live by. (James 1:25; 2:12) We cannot pick and choose which Torah commandments we want to follow either (James 2:10-11).

Any religion which, under the guise of "liberty," picks what it wants out of the Torah according to its own criteria and rejects the rest, stands in opposition to *God's liberty through the Torah.*(13)

Herein lies a significant problem with Christian Bible interpretation. When it comes to defining what "faith" is, Christianity pays little heed to the fact that in the Hebrew Bible, including the books of the "New Testament," the Hebrew authors had a different view of what "faith" meant as it was taught in their culture. Their view of "faith" is not the same as what we think of in our 20th century **non-Hebrew** culture.

You can have the best Greek interlinear Bible in the world, but if you don't put the "New Testament" back into its first century Hebrew context, you cannot arrive at a correct understanding.

For example, Christianity, particularly the more evangelical Protestant denominations, have difficulty explaining parts of the book of "James" -- especially verses such as:

James 2:24 -- *"You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone."*

If you open a dozen Christian Bible commentaries, you will probably get a dozen "explanations" of this verse. The "Protestant reformer," Martin Luther, had great concerns over the book of "James" being in the Bible, because in his view, it taught works as part of faith. Luther was too immersed in Hellenized Christianity and had such a hatred for the "works" in the Roman church, to understand what this Hebrew writer, (Ya'acov, the brother of Yeshua) was saying. Luther also disregarded Torah because of its

"works."

Because of this anti-Torah mindset, the book of "James" (along with the rest of Scripture) continues to be misunderstood. For instance, when "James" makes a POSITIVE reference to the "Law," such as in this verse, it's taught that he can't possibly mean the Torah. Take this verse as an example:

James 1:25 -- "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

The famous Christian teacher and author, J. Vernon McGee gives the following explanation of the above verse:

"'The perfect law of liberty.' This is not the Mosaic Law; it is the law of grace. James does not talk about law here in the same sense that Paul does. When Paul talks about the law, he is talking about the Mosaic Law. When James talks about law, it is the law of faith. There is love in law in the Old Testament, and there is law in love in the New Testament.'(14)

McGee doesn't offer any evidence to support why he says Paul means one thing and James another. His explanation as to why "James' law" can't be the same as "Paul's law," is based on the standard Christian theological view of "the Law," that being:

1. "Paul's Law" is the Law of the "Old Testament" which he taught was done away with in terms of us following it.
2. As James is making a "positive" reference to "Law," (us looking into it as our guide) then this "good Law" of James can't be the same "bad law" of Paul's, therefore it must mean something else, something called, "the law of grace."

Christianity will point to certain "New Testament" verses to "prove" the Law has ended. The aforementioned theology book by Charles Ryrie, on the subject of "The End of the Law" makes these three claims:

1. *"The Jerusalem Council settled this matter early and clearly (Acts 15) ... Peter described the Law as an unbearable yoke ... they did not try to place the believers under the Law ... they realized the Law had come to an end."*
2. *"In 2 Corinthians 3:7-11 Paul even specifies that the part of the Law which was written on stone (the Ten Commandments) was done away. He dares to label the moral part of the Law as a ministry of death and condemnation, but thank God, this has been replaced by the New Covenant which brings life and justification."*
3. *"In Hebrews 7:11-12 ... if the Law has not been done away, then neither has the levitical priesthood, and Christ is not our High Priest today. But if Christ is our High Priest, then the Law can no longer be operative and binding on us.'*(15)

Unfortunately, Ryrie's conclusions are arrived at by interpreting Scripture through the same preset anti-Torah bias. An interpretation of the same three verses from a context-sensitive, pro-Torah standpoint, would be as follows:

1. **Acts 15** -- The Jerusalem Council was called to address the specific issue of Gentiles having to prove themselves through works of the Torah PRIOR to salvation (15:1). The Gospel was now going out to a very pagan Gentile world, and these new believers were coming directly into the faith of Israel through the Messiah, no longer having to "come up through the ranks" of Judaism

as Gentiles had before. This was a "new way" of doing things, but it was confirmed by God (15:8). However, it was difficult for many Jews to accept this "instant acceptance of Gentiles," as these converted pagans knew nothing of Torah and brought a lot of terrible practices with them. Once they accepted Yeshua, the Council in fact required these Gentiles to follow certain minimal Torah commands (15:20) in order to fellowship with Jewish (and also other Gentile) believers who already knew and kept Torah. **The council gave these basic Torah commands with the understanding that they would learn more of Moses' Torah as they attended Synagogue/Temple. (This is the meaning of Acts 15:21.)** Peter's comment in verse 10 is pointing out that if God had commanded perfect Torah observance as a prerequisite to faith, then they all were in jeopardy, as none of them could keep it perfectly prior to faith.

2. **2 Corinthians 3:7-11** -- Paul does not *"label the moral part of the Law, a ministry of death and condemnation."* Rather, what he is saying is that only the Spirit of God, received through faith, gives life to the written text of the Torah, which if attempted to be followed apart from the Spirit (in faith), indeed brings death (the curse of the Law). Paul also taught this in Romans chapter 8, saying that those coming to faith, being of the Spirit, are no longer condemned by the Torah -- now saved, they are to follow it. (See the section below, *"Is the Torah Really for Believers?"*) It is not the Law that is taken away, but the veil (blindness of trying to do Torah without faith) that is removed (circumcised) through trusting in Yeshua.
3. **Hebrews 7:11-12** -- The book of Hebrews is concerned with a very specific teaching that Christianity is ignorant of. Hebrews shows that Yeshua is the permanent *Yom Kippur salvation sacrifice* and that His priesthood is part of a heavenly priesthood based in the heavenlies, that began with Adam and was passed through the "first born" (or specifically one more deserving than the first born, i.e., Seth, Shem, Jacob). As such, *this aspect* of the priesthood, the role of the High Priest (*cohen hagadol*) at Yom Kippur, has changed. In fact, it has in a sense, reverted back to that of the *first born*. God's original intention was for the first born of each family to continue acting as a priest, but this was corrupted by the sin of the golden calf and only then given to the Levites. (16) The first Covenant was not in itself corrupt. It was the sin of the people, (who made the promise to follow the Torah), that caused it to be considered corrupt (Hebrews 8:8). The new (renewed) Covenant, is essentially the same Covenant. It is "different" primarily in that it is based not on the promise of sinful men, but on the better promise of the Messiah, whose priesthood is eternal (Hebrews 5:6-9, 7:20-22, 8:6). Yeshua's death did not do away or change other parts of the Torah, including the rest of the sacrificial system (which was/is for reconciliation, NOT salvation). Hebrews is concerned with the salvation sacrifice of Yom Kippur, not the rest of the sacrificial system. Additionally, **we are NOT yet in the New Covenant.** (Jeremiah 31; Hebrews 8:13.) The books of Ezekiel and Revelation show the sacrificial system (other than the Yom Kippur sacrifice) will return during the Millennium when the Temple is back on Mount Moriah and Yeshua again walks the earth, ruling sinful man with a rod of iron. (17) There is no inconsistency in the idea that parts of the Torah were destined to change as the Torah has that "built into itself." For example, Israel received new revelation for when they were in the Land. Another example is found in Numbers 27:1-11, where we see the addition of commands to deal with the situation where a man dies without any sons to inherit. In none of these cases does God take away the Torah. These things are done, as author David Stern states, *"Within the framework of one eternal Torah."*(18)

Oddly, Christian author Ryrie acknowledges that the Jewish view of the Law was that of a unit. Speaking of the moral, ceremonial and judicial aspects of the Law, he states:

"Though this threefold division is almost universally accepted in Christian theology, the Jewish people either did not acknowledge it or at least did not insist on it" ... "commands from various parts of the Law were equally binding and the punishment equally severe. The Law was a unit... "James approached the Law as a unit. He decried partiality because it violated the law to love one's neighbo

as oneself, and this single violation, he said, made the people guilty of the whole Law (James 2:8). It could scarcely arrive at such a conclusion unless the Law were a unit.(19)

Ryrie admits there is a problem understanding how the Law still applies to Christians. His reply is that *"the Law of Christ contains some new commands ... some old ones ... and some revised ones"*(20)

Ryrie is correct about the unity of the Torah. This then provokes the question; If; a) the Jewish view of the Torah was that of a unit, and, b) Yeshua's own brother "James" taught oneness of the Law in his letter in the Bible, and, c) Yeshua taught the unity of Torah by saying not the smallest part of the Law was done away with by Him -- then how does Christianity defend its position of picking and choosing what is now binding on Christians as part of the "Law of Christ?"

There is no basis for doing so according to the Jewish faith of Yeshua and His early followers. How this theological change came about will be discussed further in this document.

In fact, God does not change. (A popular sentiment heard in churches but not practiced, as the foundation of Christianity is based on the notion that God did change, replacing Torah-observant Israel, as His people, with the non-Torah observant gentile "Church.")

Torah-based Messianic Judaism is the only "religion" God ever created. It is the faith of Yeshua and the faith of Paul (more properly *Rabbi Sha'ul*) before AND after his Damascus road conversion. It is the faith of the rest of the "New Testament" writers and the faith of the original Messianic community in the first century. (Also known as *Nazarene Judaism*.)

Torah-based Judaism has always been a religion of salvation by faith -- "Faith" as defined by the Judaism of Messiah Yeshua, his brothers Ya'acov and Yehuda, and his apostles, Kepha, Mattityahu, Yochanan and Sha'ul -- NOT a 20th century westernized gentile definition.

The Confusing Christian view of the Believer's Relationship to Torah

Christianity teaches that Paul is saying that now that we can have "faith in Jesus" we're no longer under "the Law," therefore it's done away with. This is a very confusing theology as Christianity itself recognizes that some parts of "the Law" remain.

Consider these four examples:

Example #1

We are to keep the 10 Commandments. However keeping the Sabbath (as God established it from Friday evening to Saturday evening) is also in the 10 Commandments yet isn't kept. Christianity claims that this was "changed" by God.

As Christian author James Montgomery Boice states:

"First, the Sabbath was a uniquely Jewish institution and was neither given to nor fully observed by any other race or nation either ancient or modern. This is not true of the other commandments; they a

generally paralleled in other ancient law codes. Sabbatarians generally appeal to Genesis 2:-3 (referred to in the fourth commandment) as showing the contrary ... Strictly speaking however, those verses do not say that God instituted the Sabbath at the time of creation; indeed there are other verses which seem to teach that he did it later. Two such verses are Nehemiah 9:13-14 ... Those verses link the giving of the law concerning the Sabbath to Mt. Sinai and imply that the Sabbath was now known observed before that time. Another important passage is in Exodus ... (Ex. 31:12-17). Those verses portray the Sabbath as a covenant sign between God and Israel; that is important, for it is repeated twice. It is hard to see, therefore, how observance of the Sabbath can legitimately be said to be applied to other nations. On the contrary, it was observed of the Sabbath that was to distinguish Israel from the nations, much as circumcision set them apart. But what about Sunday? Sunday is another day established by God, but for the church rather than for Israel and with quite different characteristics. The Sabbath was a time of rest and inactivity. In fact, failure to rest had strict penalties attached to it. By contrast, the Christian Sunday is a day of joy, activity and expectation ... The fact that Sunday was established and the Sabbath abolished is seen in the worship of the early church.(21)

Unfortunately, Boice's "proof" is replete with inaccuracies and falsehoods:

1. Regarding the Sabbath "only being given to the Jewish people" -- What institutions or commandments did God give to any other nation BUT Israel? None. Every commandment he gave was given to Israel to set them apart as His people to be a light to the world for God (Isaiah 49:5-6, Luke 2:32). The fact that other nations may have incorporated parts of what are in the Torah into their own law codes, (and ignored others), is not any kind of "proof" that the Sabbath is only for the Jews. (God did not instruct these nations to put things into their law codes.) God set one people apart for Himself to bring His revelation (Torah) to the world. He also said that His Law was the same for the Jew and the Gentile living within this "set apart" people (Leviticus 24:22). In fact, in Exodus 12:48-49, He speaks of one Law for Jew and Gentile -- and this is before Mount Sinai. In Isaiah 56, He speaks of the Torah being for Gentiles.
2. God Himself directly links the Sabbath of the ten Commandments to His work at the time of creation. He clearly says that it was blessed for that reason (Exodus 20:11).
3. Nehemiah's reference in no way "implies" any such thing. The Hebrews were following the Sabbath before Mount Sinai, as seen in Exodus 16:25-26 and is written about in Jewish literature.
4. Regarding the author's questioning how this, "*can legitimately be said to be applied to other nations*"-- once again, the point is missed that the Torah is God's revelation to the world, not some set of exclusively Jewish laws. God makes it clear that Gentiles would one day come into the faith that He established with Israel. The Gentiles were never to have some new faith apart from Israel (Isaiah 54:1-3). Paul reiterates this in Ephesians 2:10-12 where he says Gentile believers are now no longer strangers to the covenant and ordinances of Israel -- and this includes the Sabbath.
5. Scripture and the facts of history prove that the idea that God "changed" Sabbath to Sunday is not true. Attempts made to show that this is "in the Bible," involve out-of-context mistranslation of a few Scripture verses. (22)
6. The Sabbath was and is far more than just a "rest day." The statement that "failing to rest" brought strict penalties is inaccurate. Sabbath was/is a day of study, prayer and devotion focused on the coming "Sabbath" we would enter into one day with the Messiah. (23) There is much written in Jewish literature that also links the sabbath to a coming wedding, such as one verse in the Talmud that says, "*Let us come and go out to welcome the Sabbath bride.*"(24)
7. The fact that Sabbath was abolished for Sunday is not a sign that "God commanded it." Rather it is a sign that the original Torah-based community and its faith had been pushed aside and that Gentile anti-Semites had taken over and perverted the Word of the God of Israel. This subject is dealt with further on in this document.

History shows that Sunday worship replacing the Sabbath is a tradition of man, specifically the early Roman church. This was a key subject at the Council of Trent, held in northeast Italy (1545 to 1563). The papal representative, the Archbishop of Reggio, silenced the "scripture only" arguments of Martin Luther and the Protestant "reformers" when he correctly stated:

"The Protestants claim to stand upon the written word only; they profess to hold the Scriptures alone as the standard of faith. They justify their revolt by the plea that the Church has apostatized from the written word and follows tradition. Now the Protestant's claim that they stand upon the written word alone is not true. Their profession of holding the Scriptures alone as the standard of faith is false. Proof ... The written word explicitly enjoins the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. They do not observe the seventh day, but reject it. If they truly hold the Scriptures alone as the standard, they would be observing the seventh day as it is enjoined in the Scripture throughout. Yet they not only reject the observance of the Sabbath as enjoined in the written word, but they have adopted, and do practice, the observance of Sunday, for which they have only the tradition of the (Catholic) Church. Consequently, the claim of Scripture alone as the standard fails and the doctrine of 'Scripture and tradition as essential' is fully established, the Protestants themselves being Judges.(25)

God Himself says what the relationship of the Gentile who comes to true faith is to the Sabbath and all the Torah:

"Blessed is the man that does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely exclude me from His people.' And let not any eunuch complain, 'I am only a dry tree For this is what the Lord says: 'To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant -- to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off. And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to serve Him, to love the name of the Lord to worship Him and who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant -- these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.(Isaiah 56:2-7)

Even Christian books teach that the context of the above is the millennium. According to Isaiah, what gentiles get God's blessings in His Millennial Temple? Those who follow His Torah. The book of Revelation confirms this:

Revelation 22:14a -- "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Example #2

What if a man loves and cares for his wife but occasionally goes out for a meaningless sexual fling? Christianity (correctly) says that is adultery. But what if that man says with all sincerity, that his definition of adultery is, "not loving your wife and giving your affections to another." He also insists that is not the case with him as his escapades are pure physical acts, without any "love" or even "lust," and have no effect on his love for his wife.

As another example, what if a man is having an affair, and says "I'm doing it out of love, as all that matters is love, we only have to follow the 'law of love.' I still love my wife. I'm capable of loving more than one person."

How do you show either of these men what **God's definition** of the sin of adultery is, without turning to the Torah?

You can't. Which raises the question, *"If you can't alter God's precise definition of adultery, how can you alter His precise definition of the Sabbath?"*

Example #3

Christianity condemns homosexuality. That sin is not mentioned in the 10 Commandments, but elsewhere in "the Law." Perhaps then, homosexuality is still wrong because the New Testament "verifies" it? If specific "New Testament citation" is the criteria to determine what parts of the Law we follow, can you marry your sister? Christianity says that would be sin. Is that mentioned in the New Testament? No. Can you call it sin without saying, "because it's in the Torah?" No. This would apply to other sins not "specifically" mentioned in the "New Testament."

More and more of late, books supporting homosexuality, when discussing "Christian condemnation" are using this argument against Christianity, stating that if we are not under the "old Law" anymore, homosexual relationships, if done "in love," are not sin. It is the Christian position against Torah that has given a foothold to this argument. This was warned about in the book of Jude.

Example #4

What about all of God's serious prohibitions about not mixing pagan traditions with true faith and worship? God not only commands His people not to worship pagan deities, He also told them not to import any of the methods of worship they used, such as putting up trees (Deut. 16:21-22, also condemned in Jeremiah 10:1-5). You'll have a hard time explaining away the origins of Christmas and the Christmas tree (the Asheroth pole) and also Easter, along with the doing away with God's appointed times (His feasts). History shows Christmas and Easter are pagan practices that were brought into the Christian church.

Paul did not change any of these commandments. He himself kept Torah and spoke in favor of it in many places, such as: Acts 16:1-3; 18:18; 20:6,16; 21:17-26; 24:17-18; 25:8; 27:9; 28:17; Romans 3:31; 7:12; 1Cor. 5:6-8; 11:17-34; 16:8.

How Did the Christian View of the Torah Originate?

Most Christian's insight into the Judaism of Yeshua's day is limited to the few glimpses found in the "New Testament," taken apart from its historical context, and interpreted in a non-Hebrew fashion. This is part of the problem. If you have a skewed view of the culture of the times, you will arrive at incorrect conclusions that will contribute to and reinforce false doctrines. No level of grammatical scrutiny can make up for this. Trying to read the English text, solely "in its immediate grammatical context," isn't reliable, as the text of modern Christian bibles has been altered to suit Christian theology. (26)

An example of ignorance regarding the historical/cultural context can be found in the previously mentioned study by J. Vernon McGee. The Christian teacher comments on the word "assembly" as found in James 2:2, saying:

"The word assembly here means synagogue. Evidently the Jewish Christians were calling the place where they met a synagogue. They had erected no buildings and frequently met in private homes, but 1 chances are that in many places they rented a synagogue. They met on Sunday rather than on Saturd

and therefore did not conflict with the meeting of the Jew" (27)

Unfortunately, Christians will read statements as this, and accept them as "fact" -- after all, it's in a Bible commentary by a famous person, so it must be right. Unfortunately, Mr. McGee's comments are full of error and contribute to the standard Christian position.

An analysis of the statement reveals the following:

1. **"Jewish Christians"**-- There was no such thing as a "Jewish Christian." That is a modern term. Usage of this term supports the false idea that these first Jewish believers had now gone from Judaism to "Christianity." The earliest reference to the term "Christian" may have been the one commonly recognized as being given to the believers at Antioch (Acts 11:26) by the local Roman ruler, as a derogatory slur. (28) The original Jewish believers in Yeshua remained Torah-observant Jews (Acts 21:20).
2. They **"called the place they met a synagoguë"** for one of two reasons. They either were at a synagogue building, or they were meeting somewhere else under the authority of the synagogue. Not only was there no "Christianity" in existence at this time, in fact no "Christian" group could have organized and met, as this would not have been permitted by Rome. The Jews had such permission, as an existing group, under Roman law. (29) Aside from the legal aspect, early believers continued to go to Synagogue, including Gentile converts, as this was the only place the Scriptures were read and where they would learn Torah (Acts 15:21)
3. **"Renting a synagogue"**-- This is an example of how ludicrous ideas can be passed along as "knowledge." It would have been illegal for Jews to rent their buildings out to any new group that was not sanctioned by Rome. Jewish believers in Yeshua had full rights as Jews to continue going to normal synagogue services on the Sabbath.
4. **"They met on Sunday ..."** This has no basis in fact. Jewish believers in Yeshua continued meeting at synagogue (or the Temple) for Sabbath. Common practice would be *havdallah* -- meeting in homes after sundown on Saturday to continue discussions and praise from the Sabbath. This explains Paul "preaching until midnight" in Acts 20:7. The **first day of the week** for Jews (like Paul) began at Sundown at the end of the Sabbath -- **Saturday, not "Sunday."**
5. Again, they did not **"conflict with the meeting of the Jews"** because they remained Jews and were still going to Synagogue alongside their Jewish brethren who did not (yet) believe in Yeshua.

A Brief History on the Origins of the Christian Church and its Doctrines

How did we get from this Torah-based Messianic Jewish faith like this ...

- ***And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many of thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law*** (Acts 21:20)
- ***I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.*** (Acts 22:3)
- ***For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*** (Matthew 5:18-19)

To a non-Jewish, anti-Torah, arrogant faith (as warned about in Romans 11) like this ...

- ***"Christianity is superior to Judaism" ... "Paul taught that bondage to the Law ended when Chr made all men free."***(Quoted from William Barclay earlier in this article)

It is readily apparent in the Scriptures that Yeshua, the apostles and the early community of believers were Torah observant Jews. How did we go from there to the position of the Christian Church today, which is decidedly anti-Torah?

The "short version" of the events that caused this shift, goes something like this:

First century Rome had its "problems" with its Jewish province in Judea-Samaria. There were a number of skirmishes and two major wars fought in the first and second centuries. With the war that ended in 70 AD, much of the Torah-based Jerusalem-centered Messianic community was killed or scattered.

Two important events occurred around this time:

1. James (actually named Jacob/*Ya'acov*) the brother of Yeshua died.
2. The Temple was destroyed.

This combination of events caused a greater division between the Jerusalem Jews who believed in Yeshua and those who did not. Yeshua's brother, Ya'acov, was actually very instrumental in holding the believing and non-believing Jewish communities together. (30) This fracture in the Jewish community is significant as it pushed those Jews who believed in Yeshua (and also the gentiles who were coming to faith in Yeshua), further away from the rest of Judaism.

This division gave Gentiles (coming right out of the pagan Roman culture) who had no regard for the Jewishness of their "faith" a louder voice in community affairs and interpretation of Scripture. Anti-Jewish polemic can be found as early as the teachings of Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch at the end of the first century. Ignatius spoke out against Gentile Christians having anything to do with Jewish forms of worship and that Jews becoming Christians should stop living as Jews, saying that it was ***"absurd to speak of Jesus Christ with the tongue and to cherish in the mind a Judaism which has now come to an end."***(31)

With the war of 132 AD, Jerusalem was literally "plowed under," by the Romans and renamed ***Aelia Capitolina***. Shrines to the Roman gods, Jupiter and Venus, were erected. What little was left of the community of Jewish believers in Yeshua was wiped out and soon replaced with a very Roman non-Jewish "church." Rome went on to wipe out most of Judea, destroying 985 towns and killing over a half million Jewish men. (32) Even more died later from starvation, disease and fire. Rome then passed harsh laws banning worship on the Sabbath, the Jewish (Biblical!) feasts, public Jewish rituals, and reading of Torah. This is part of the reason we went from Saturday to Sunday worship. Jews, including those who followed Yeshua, weren't allowed within 150 miles of the city. The lineage of Jewish successors to Yeshua and Ya'acov ended and a string of Gentile popes soon followed.

The leadership of this new Gentile "church" was quick to embrace the Roman government's position regarding Jews and was overtly hostile to anything Jewish, including the Torah. Numerous false doctrines were established as early as the second century. Among these were the teachings that "the Law" was actually given as a punishment to the Jews, that Jerusalem had been destroyed and taken from the Jews due to their sin, and that the "Church" had replaced Israel as God's people.

For instance, as early as the second century, we have "Church father" Justin Martyr, saying:

We too, would observe your circumcision of the flesh, your Sabbath days, and in a word, all you festivals, if we were not aware of the reason why they were imposed upon you, namely, because of you sins and the hardness of heart. The custom of circumcising the flesh, handed down from Abraham, was given to you as a distinguishing mark, to set you off from other nations and from us Christians. The purpose of this was that you and only you might suffer the afflictions that are now justly yours; that on your land be desolated, and your cities ruined by fire, that the fruits of your land be eaten by strangers before your very eyes; that not one of you be permitted to enter your city of Jerusalem. Your circumcision of the flesh is the only mark by which you can certainly be distinguished from other men... as I stated before it was by reason of your sins and the sins of your fathers that, among other precepts, God imposed upon you the observance of the Sabbath as a mark⁽³³⁾

In the third century, we have the following opinion from the famous Origen of Alexandria:

We may thus assert in utter confidence that the Jews will not return to their earlier situation, for they have committed the most abominable of crimes, in forming this conspiracy against the Savior of the human race...hence the city where Jesus suffered was necessarily destroyed, the Jewish nation was driven from its country, and another people was called by God to the blessed election⁽³⁴⁾

The attitude of these two "Church fathers" was not an anomaly. The whole of Roman society around the time of Yeshua and Paul was extremely anti-Jewish. One reason being that many Roman families had lost sons in the Jewish wars. Roman intellectuals of the day wrote much derogatory material about the Jews living among them. ⁽³⁵⁾ Roman society was pagan and centered around the worship of many gods.

In the midst of this was a Jewish society of around 7 million, (about 10 percent of the Roman population), a very noticeable minority. ⁽³⁶⁾ Jews were despised for their peculiar religious practices and failure to worship the gods of Rome as every other conquered people was forced to do. ⁽³⁷⁾ The new "Gentile Christians" came out of this background and had no regard for anything Jewish. Once the Jewish leadership had been removed, changes were immediately put into effect with little opposition.

Continued anti-Jewish laws passed by the Roman government, assured that there would be "no going back." Constantine, (the 4th century emperor of Rome, who remained a pagan sun worshipper unto his deathbed), claimed to have had "a vision" that led him to "legalize Christianity." This initiated a process that would eventually make paganized Christianity the religion of the Empire. Now, if you were a Jew, and wanted to "believe in the Messiah," you had to publicly renounce all things Jewish and become "a Christian." Any Gentile who joined with the Jews in their worship would be breaking the law and punished. As early as the fifth century, laws were passed preventing Jews from holding public offices and forbidding the building of new Synagogues. ⁽³⁸⁾

The church councils of the fourth century formulated the doctrines and creeds that Christianity holds to this day. These councils were made up of Gentiles from the same anti-Semitic background as those of the previous two hundred years. Jewish believers who held regard for Torah were barred from attending these meetings, and their positions on the meaning of Scripture with regard to Torah were "overruled." ⁽³⁹⁾ One of the earliest councils ruled that anyone found eating with Jews would be prevented from taking communion so that he would "learn to amend," ⁽⁴⁰⁾ and that marriage to a Jew would result in excommunication. ⁽⁴¹⁾

The remaining believers who held fast to the Torah observant doctrines of the original community were mocked and considered at best "weak" in their faith if not in fact heretics.

For example, we have Epiphanius, in the fourth century, stating:

"They [the Nazarenes] have no different ideas, but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims and in the Jewish fashion-- except for their belief in Messiah... but since they are still fettered by the Law -- circumcision, the Sabbath, and the rest-- they are not in accord with Christians."(42)

By the end of the 4th century, anything resembling a "pro-Torah" view of "the faith" had become non-existent in what was now called "Christianity." The Councils of Antioch (341CE) and Laodicea (360CE) prohibited Christians from participating in Jewish rituals. As one modern historian puts it, this was all done to show that Jewish tradition was, ***"inherently evil, obsolete and irrelevant for practical Christian life."***(43)

Faith in Yeshua went from being 100 percent Jewish to 100 percent anti-Jewish in less than 300 years.

All of this laid the foundation for what became the Christian "Church." Persecution of Jews throughout history, the Crusades, the Inquisitions, numerous mass expulsions throughout history, and of course the Holocaust, are all the direct result of the Church's anti-Semitic doctrines.

Nor was any of Christianity's anti-Jewish foundation changed with the "Protestant Reformation" of the 16th century. These "reformers," such as Luther and Calvin, were as anti-Semitic, if not more so, as their predecessors a millennium before them. Martin Luther's writings were a favorite of Adolph Hitler, who acquired many of his ideas on how to deal with Jews from him. (44) The concerns of the "reformers" were solely with what they felt was corruption and abuse of power in the Christian/Catholic church. They had no desire to bring the Church back to the Torah-based Judaism of Yeshua and the apostles. (45)

It is critical to understand the following:

The anti-Semitic ideologies and anti-Torah theologies of the early Church leaders and later Protestant "reformers," established the foundation for all Christian opinion, Catholic and Protestant, to this very day. All "interpretation" of Scripture coming from Christian teachers, authors or institutions, including every Christian Bible translation available and all of their footnotes, every Christian Bible commentary book, study course, Sunday sermon and seminary's teaching curriculum and movies, has been filtered through the doctrines of these men and hundreds of years of compounded error.

Modern historical study, archaeology, and a return of the Jewish people to their Messiah, are all contributing to the exposure of the true "roots" of the Christian religion. There are well meaning people who publish material on the "Jewish roots" of Christianity. Unfortunately, they are in error, as Christianity's roots are gentile/pagan and have little in common with the Judaism of Yeshua's time.

Historical Reality Concerning What Yeshua and His Followers Believed

To better understand the faith that the Bible teaches, we need to go back to the time of Yeshua and Paul. First century Judaism was dominated by a group called the Pharisees whose affairs and leadership were both supported by, and limited by, the Roman government.

The first issue that must be addressed is the term "Pharisee" itself. A modern dictionary (46) gives two

definitions:

1. *A member of an ancient Jewish sect that emphasized strict interpretation and observance of the Mosaic law in both its oral and written form.*
2. *A hypocritically self-righteous person.*

Our western culture equates #1 above with #2. Pharisees are "the bad guys," and the beliefs they held were wrong too. After all, didn't "Jesus" call them hypocrites, evil, sons of snakes, etc.? Unfortunately, this view is the product of hundreds of years of anti-Jewish bigotry and stands in contrast with the facts of history and the Bible

Typical examples of Christian teaching in this area can be found in the works of the famous apologist and author, J. Dwight Pentecost, in his famous book, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*. In showing how Yeshua taught different doctrine than the Pharisees, and instructed the people to follow His teachings and not theirs, Pentecost supports his argument with the words of two other Christian writers:

Pentecost, quoting J.W. Shepard writes:

"Specimens of these discourses in the Mishna and Gemara (the two sections of the Talmud) show that they were dull collections of disjointed comments on many subjects. Their teachings were narrow, dogmatic, second hand, having no freshness, force, or power to move the heart to emotion or the will to action ... The sermon of Jesus quite to the contrary, with a swift intuitive insight pierced to the depths of the human heart, stirring the conscience and moving the will to action. ... Such words of grace fell from His lips, spoken in such a gracious manner, that the world said: "Never man spoke as this man"

Pentecost, quoting Frederick Farrar writes:

Much has been written lately in exaltation of the Talmud. Now the literature to which the general name of Talmud is given, occupies twelve immense folio volumes; and it would be strange indeed if out of this vast encyclopaedia of a nation's literature, it were not possible to quote a few eloquent passages, some beautiful illustrations, and a considerable number of just moral sentiments which sometimes rise to the dignity of noble thoughts. But what seems to me absolutely indisputable, and what any one may judge for himself, is that all that is really valuable in the Talmud is infinitesimally small compared with the almost immeasurable rubbish heaps in which it is imbedded.(47)

Let's make it clear -- Pentecost, Shepard and Farrar leave no doubt as to the Christian position on the Talmud (the teachings of the Pharisees). They all agree that:

1. The teachings of "Jesus" differed completely from those of the Talmud
2. There are no moral teachings of value compared to those of "Jesus"
3. The words of the Talmud were "second hand" in value
4. There is precious little in the Talmud of worth

For centuries the Church has held this opinion of the Talmud. Historically, whenever there has been Jewish persecution at the hands of Christians, "Talmud bonfires" were often a common part of the events.

There is a two-fold problem with the common Christian opinion of the writings of the Pharisees:

1. Few Christians have ever looked for themselves to see what the Talmud says.

2. Even fewer would know how to approach these texts as they are not written in a "western" style of literature. (Hence the comments by J.W. Shepard that it is, "*dull collections of disjointed comments on many subjects.*" Like all ignorant people, he condemns what he doesn't understand.)

The Talmud is indeed the quintessential piece of Pharisaic literature, most of it predating Yeshua. Examining some of its teachings and comparing them to the words of the Messiah, (48) we find something quite contrary to what Christianity teaches:

Teachings of YESHUA the Pharisee (Summaries in <i>italics</i>)	TALMUDIC Teachings of the Pharisees (Summaries in <i>italics</i>)
The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. - Mark 2:27	Rabbi Jonathan ben Joseph said: For it is holy unto you; I.e., it [the Sabbath] is committed to your hands, not you to its hands. - Talmud: Yoma 85b
Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. - Matthew 25:45	One who betrays his fellow, it is as if he has betrayed God- Tosefta Sh'vuot, ch. 3
Insulting someone is like murder. Matthew 5:21-22	He who publicly shames his neighbour is as though he shed blood.- Talmud: Bava Mezia 58b
But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. - Matthew 5:28	One who gazes lustfully upon the small finger of a married woman, it is as if he has committed adultery with her. Kallah, Ch. 1
That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. - Matthew 5:45	Rabbi Abbahu said: The day when rain fails is greater than [the day of] the Revival of the Dead, for the Revival of the Dead is for the righteous only whereas rain is both for the righteous and for the wicked - Talmud: Taanit 7a
Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. - Matthew 6:1	In the case of the recital of the Shema', since everybody else recites, and he also recites, it does not look like showing off on his part; but in the case of the month of Ab, since everybody else does work and he does no work, it looks like showing off.- Talmud: Berachot 17b
But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. - Matthew 6:3	What kind of charity is that which delivers a man from an unnatural death? When a man gives without knowing to whom he gives. and the beggar receives without knowing from whom he receives. - Talmud: Bava Batra 10a - 10b
But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.- Matthew 6:7	If one draws out his prayer and expects therefore its fulfilment, he will in the end suffer vexation of heart, as it says, Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. - Talmud: Berachot 55a
Do not worry about where your food will come from tomorrow, or your drink. - Matthew 6:25-31	Rabbi Eliezer the Great declares: Whoever has a piece of bread in his basket and Says. 'What shall I eat tomorrow?' belongs only to them who are little in faith. - Talmud: Sotah 48b
Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. - Matthew 6:34	A parable: [They were] like a man who was kept in prison and people told him: To-morrow, they will release you from the prison and give you plenty of money. And he answered them: I pray of you, let me go free today and I shall ask nothing more! - Talmud: Berachot 9b
Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No- Matthew 5:34-37	A righteous yes is a Yes; a righteous no is No- Talmud: Bava Batra 49b
At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father,	Rabbi Johanan said: Since the Temple was destroyed,

Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. - Matthew 11:25	prophecy has been taken from prophets and given to fools and children. - Talmud: Bava Batra 12b
And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. - Matthew 5:29-30	Come and hear what was taught: Rabbi Tarfon said, 'If his hand touched the membrum let his hand be cut off upon his belly'. 'But', they said to him, 'would not his belly be split'? 'It is preferable', he replied, 'that his belly shall be split rather than that he should go down into the pit of destruction'. - Talmud: Niddah 13b
But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. - Matthew 23:8	Shemaiah used to say: love work, hate acting the superior, and do not bring thyself to the knowledge of the ruling authority. - Mishnah: Avot 1:10
Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. - Matthew 24:44	Even as R. Zera, who, whenever he chanced upon scholars engaged thereon [I.e., in calculating the time of the Messiah's coming], would say to them: I beg of you, do not postpone it, for it has been taught: Three come unawares: Messiah, a found article and a scorpion. - Talmud: Sanhedrin 97a
<i>Yeshua taught in a parable that they can please the king (God) by pleasing one another.</i> - Matthew 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. - Matthew 25:40	Rabbi simeon said: if three have eaten at one table and have not spoken thereat words of torah, [it is] as if they had eaten sacrifices [offered] to the dead, for [of such persons] it is said, for all tables are full of filthy vomit, [they are] without the All-Present. But, if three have eaten at one table, and have spoken thereat words of torah, [it is] as if they had eaten at the table of the All-Present, blessed be he, as it is said, this is the table before the LORD. - Mishnah: Avot 3:3
<i>Love your enemy.</i> - Matthew 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; - Matthew 5:43	<i>They who are insulted but insult not back; who hear themselves reproached but answer not; who serve out of love and rejoice in their affliction--of them it is written in Scripture: They that love God are as the going forth of the sun in its might.</i> - Talmud: Yoma 23a, Gitin 36b, Shabat 88b
Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. - Matthew 5:23-24	If a man said, "I will sin and repent, and sin again and repent", he will be given no chance to repent. [If he said,] "I will sin and the Day of Atonement will effect atonement", then the Day of Atonement effects no atonement. For transgressions that are between man and God the Day of Atonement effects atonement, but for transgressions that are between a man and his fellow the Day of Atonement effects atonement only if he has appeased his fellow - Mishnah: Yoma 8:9

A comparison of the verses in this table (which is by no means exhaustive) reveals;

- a) Much of what Yeshua said was not "original"
- b) Yeshua directly quoted and supported the teachings of the Talmud

How then do Christian teachers and authors get away with such false statements as the ones quoted by Mr. Pentecost?

For one thing, who is going to challenge them?

Christians have no need to, as they are comfortable being fed whatever comes from the pulpit that supports what they're told to believe. Jews who do not follow Yeshua certainly have no desire to build a case that supports His Messiahship. Who does that leave to tear away the cloak of deception? Fortunately, God has a remnant, and truth has a way, albeit slowly, of finding its way into view.

Yeshua was a Pharisee

Referring to Yeshua as a Pharisee would sound utterly ridiculous to just about any Christian. Unfortunately, this shows how far removed Christianity is from the historical reality of the Bible, the Messiah and the faith of His earliest followers.

Yeshua did criticize some of the Pharisees for not practicing what they preached, for hypocrisy, and for making the "fences" they placed around the Torah greater than the Torah's commands themselves. (Though there is nothing inherently wrong with making such "fences" as Yeshua did this Himself.) What Christians don't understand is that vehement criticism was common between the various factions within Pharisaism, and was considered a normal part of discourse.

For instance, the Pharisees themselves noted that not all among themselves were good, in fact saying there were *"seven types of Pharisees."*(49) As for Yeshua calling some of them names such as *"sons of Satan,"* this was not unfamiliar dialogue among religious Jews at that time. The same term was used by the disciples of Rabbi Hillel to describe a disciple of Rabbi Shammai, just before Yeshua's time. (50)

It is critical to note that Yeshua never rebuked the Pharisees for teaching Torah correctly, a good example being Matthew 23:23. Here Yeshua says to them, "It's fine if you want to add things to your lives that you feel bring you closer to God." (Tithing on dill and cumin were not required by Torah). But He then says, you should keep what the Torah says is required first, then do these optional things." **Yeshua did not tell them to stop doing Torah -- He told them to do it right.**

Yeshua not only quoted and supported Pharisaic teaching, as seen in the chart above, He also upheld the religious authority of the Pharisees. He told the people to obey the Pharisees, as they "sat in Moses' seat," meaning their authority came from God. (Matthew 23:1-3)

When Yeshua spoke, He often was expressing His opinion on an existing interpretation of the Scriptures, supporting someone else's opinion. Much of Judaism's doctrine was "worked out" before Yeshua's time by the Pharisaic schools of Rabbis Hillel and Shammai. For instance, in Matthew 7:12, we find His famous "golden rule":

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

Yeshua is reiterating what Hillel had taught years before:

"What you do not like, do not do to anyone else; this is the whole Torah and everything else is explanation."(Babylonian Talmud, Shabat 31a)

In most cases, Yeshua upheld the teachings of Hillel (who was the grandfather of Gamliel, who instructed Paul). Hillel's opinions were actually considered more "liberal." On rare occasion, such as His ruling on divorce (Matthew 5:31), Yeshua upheld the teachings of Shammai, which taught more to what

may be called "the letter of the Law."

Examples of where Yeshua agreed with Hillel are found in all four of the Gospels (51)

Teaching	Yeshua	Hillel
Critical of tithing of plants grown only for seeds	Matthew 23:23	Ma'asrot 4:5-6
Healing by faith on the Sabbath was allowed.	Mark 3:2-4	Tosefta Shabat 7:14
Reached out to sinners and taught them	Luke, Ch. 15	Avot D'Rebbe Natan 3:1
Allowed the handling of an item on Sabbath for which there was no need	John, Ch. 5	Betzah 26b

The evidence is overwhelming. The Talmud, when compared to Scripture, shows that Yeshua upheld its Pharisaic teachings. Scripture shows He also upheld the Pharisaic authority in religious matters. When properly understood, (bias aside) His criticism of the Pharisees was within the framework of Pharisaic discussion with them as they were always critical of themselves. (This could best be called "a family argument" - the Talmud is loaded with such a wide array of opinions -- it is known as *"arguing for the Kingdom,"* or, *"arguing for the cause of HaShem [God]."*)

History and the Bible show that Yeshua identified Himself as a Pharisee. In fact, when the Pharisees went out to question John the Baptist about who John was, he said that one among THEM (the Pharisees) was the Messiah to come (John 1:26-27).

Yeshua was a Jew, a rabbi and a Pharisee, who wore tzitzit (Numbers 15:37-41), always upheld Torah, often quoted Talmud, and was Orthodox in His practices.

Is this the "Jesus" of Christianity?

Sha'ul (Paul) was a Pharisee

Returning to Paul, (properly named Sha'ul), he also read, understood, taught, and wrote about the Hebrew Scriptures and the Hebrew Messiah from a Pharisaic Hebrew mindset. Paul was personally taught by Gamliel -- a Pharisee and the head of the Sanhedrin -- probably for the purpose of taking over the Sanhedrin's leadership, which would have made Paul the equivalent of "Chief Justice of the Supreme Court."

Paul said he was a "Hebrew of Hebrews," a term that means he was not a Hellenistic Jew (Jews that had largely abandoned much of the Torah in order to be "more accepted" in the Greek/Roman culture they lived in). Scripture shows that none of this changed when Paul became a believer -- he remained a Torah observant rabbi and a Pharisee until the day he died. Twenty years into his ministry for Yeshua, he still identified himself as a Pharisee. (Acts 23:6, 26:5) Once you shake off the anti-Jewish mindset that "Pharisee = bad," then the supposed conflict vanishes.

All of this creates a serious problem for those who wish to understand Paul's epistles today.

How can a Christian, reading Paul's letters, in the 20th century westernized, an-Torah culture and religion that he has been raised and taught in, understand the deep meanings of Second Temple-period Jewish religious texts, written by a first century Rabbi, Pharisee and advanced Torah exper

And you wonder why Paul sounds so confusing, hard to follow, and even contradictory to many people who read him. For instance, in the Christian Bible commentary, "*The Daily Study Bible Series; the Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, by William Barclay, it says of Galatians 3:19-22:

"This is one of the most difficult passages Paul ever wrote, so difficult that there are almost three hundred different interpretations of it!"(52)

I would suggest that there are 300 interpretations ***not-grounded-in-Torah***

Make that 301 with Barclays. He goes on to say that God gave the law for the sake of transgressions. True, but then Barclay says what this means is, "***... where there is no law there is no sin. A man cannot be condemned for doing wrong if he did not know that it was wrong.***"(53) This is a nice sentiment, but not what the Torah, or Yeshua or Paul teaches. God provided sacrifice to make atonement for sins ***done in ignorance of Torah***, thus showing there was sin in ignorance to the Law that needed atoning for. Paul supported Torah when he taught that those ignorant of the Law stand condemned with those aware of it (Romans chapters 1-3).

Oddly enough, in the same Galatians commentary by Barclay, he correctly states that,

"... we have to remember that Paul was a trained Rabbi, an expert in the scholastic methods of the Rabbinic academies. He could, and did, use their methods of argument, which would be complete cogent to a Jew, however difficult it may be for us to understand them."(54)

Peter warned that Paul was hard to understand. Peter also wrote that there would be those who would twist Paul's words to mean something wrong. What kind of people would do that? Peter said these are ***lawless*** men (2 Peter 3:17). By "lawless," did Peter mean people who were without Roman law? Of course not. Lawless, in this religious context (understanding Paul's writings and other Scriptures correctly), refers to being without God's Law - ***the Torah***. Peter is saying that those who twist Paul's writings are those who don't have (know/follow) Torah. They will approach these letters, in (often willful) ignorance, and incorrectly interpret them.

This is the legacy of the Christian church. As early as 187, the Christian Bishop Irenaeus counted twenty different varieties of Christianity. By the year 384, Epiphanius counted eighty. (55) The lack of grounding in Torah allowed for every heresy to creep in under the guise of "love" and "liberty." The "New Testament" Scriptures warn about this in several places. Of course, no group who thinks they are "right with God," (especially if they are the "dominant voice") would consider themselves to be the false teachers spoken of in these texts.

Clarifying the Believer's Relationship to Torah

A probable Christian response to all the above is ... ***Are you telling me that I'm supposed to follow all the Law including sacrificing animals, not mixing fabrics and stoning people for adulter.***

Are you living in a theocracy, in the land of Israel?

No.

Then those laws don't apply.

The Torah has commandments in it that apply only to those living in the land of Israel. It also has rules that apply only to the priests, and others solely for the High Priest. There are instructions for men and others for women -- some to the married versus not married. As mentioned, it also leaves flexibility for amendment based on God's perfect plan. Paul taught in the same way. He also instructed Timothy to "rightly divide" the word of God -- meaning there is a correct way to "sort these things out" -- according to Torah!

Doesn't Paul Teach that We Don't Need to Follow the "Law?"

The first issue to address is that Paul's letters were dealing with specific situations. There were in fact TWO prominent heresies that crept into the early Messianic community in Paul's time. One was the idea that gentiles had to become Jews first, taking on all the Torah **before** they could be saved. This was the first problem to arise, coming from the "Jewish camp," as they had received the message of Yeshua first. They were still holding on to traditional ideas concerning Gentile salvation. Most Christians are aware of this situation as it is thoroughly taught throughout Christianity, the proponents of which are usually called "Judaizers," although this term is also used in a prejudiced fashion for anyone wanting to bring anything Jewish into their faith.

What is generally not taught in Christianity is the false teaching that later arose from the "Gentile side of the aisle." This was the view that gentiles had no relationship to Torah **after** they were saved. The background to this problem was completely different than the other one as it had to do with the pagan culture most of the new Gentile converts (outside of Israel) were coming out of. The majority of Christians today have not studied first century history and are unaware that Gentiles coming to faith in Yeshua, (those not already involved with Synagogue/Temple Judaism), were coming directly out of an extremely anti-Semitic Roman society. This is critical to a proper understanding to the Scriptures (especially Paul's letters). Two books that address this subject well are, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World*, by Louis H. Feldman, and *The Mystery of Romans*, by Mark Nanos. (56)

Paul was facing two very different types of problems, and it is important to know which he is addressing in his letters. For example, his early letter of Galatians dealt with the former (Jewish) heresy, whereas Romans, dealt primarily with the latter (Gentile) one. (57)

Three important rules of Bible interpretation are:

- Grammatical/Literary Context
- Historical Context
- Cultural/Religious Context

The latter two of these are usually ignored in most Bible studies as you have to go outside of the Bible to get the information, something frowned upon in Christian study groups, under the well-meaning but ignorant assumption that you **ONLY** need Scripture to interpret Scripture.

This raises another important issue regarding interpreting the Scriptures. Christianity generally views Paul's letters as "overarching" lessons for everyone throughout history to interpret according to their own situation. Although much of what Scripture teaches can be applied to "current events," ***unless you first understand the specific situation the writer was addressing in the proper context, you cannot begin to apply it in any other way with any validity.***

God did give us the intellectual ability to search for true meaning and correctly interpret His Word (Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15). To say that one need "only rely on the Holy Spirit," for understanding of the

text, is both ignorant and unscriptural, as it implies that the Spirit could contradict God's intended meaning as conveyed by the author writing within His Hebrew culture.

We are to search and study with God's Spirit - not casually read and wait for some personal enlightenment. This is how false teachings come about, how cults are formed and how people fall into grave sin without realizing it.

Returning to Paul's "opponents" in Galatians. These were recent Jewish converts who had an incorrect or incomplete view of faith/salvation. This is shown in several places including; 2:3-5; 3:1-4; 5:2-11 and 6:12-15. These people were telling new Galatian converts that you had to do certain things for salvation, other than trust in God through Yeshua. They were of the same faction mentioned in Acts chapter 15.

Note however, that these men also had an incorrect idea on what Paul was in fact teaching, ***accusing him of teaching against the Torah*** (58) If ever Paul had the opportunity to show that we no longer had to follow the Torah, this was it -- **However, Paul denied the charge that he taught against Torah in the strongest way possible, by taking a Nazarite vow.** (Acts 21:21-26) This involved him performing sacrifices and offerings (Numbers 6:1-21)

Paul's message to the Galatians is to remind them of the correct equation:

Torah-based faith + Nothing Else = Salvation.

This is the same message Moses gave his people in his day.

Paul does discuss "lifestyle" at the end of this letter. In Galatians 5:16-22, Paul makes a comparison between ***"walking in the spirit"*** and ***"walking in the flesh."*** He defines those who walk in flesh in verses 19-21 (adulterers, fornicators, sorcerers, etc.) What do those all have in common? They are all transgressions of the Torah. They are violators of the "negative commandments" of the Torah.

Because Christianity's interpretation of Scripture is founded on a Greek/western approach and not a Hebrew one, verse after verse in the "New Testament" are stripped from the original context in which the Torah-observant authors wrote them. In place of this, an anti-Semitic, pagan "spin" has been placed on the Word of the God of Israel.

Making the Hebrew Connection: Torah and the "Gospel"

The book of Hebrews says what the generation in the wilderness received was **the Gospel (*Beh-so-rah*)** and it was to be followed in faith. (Isn't it interesting that they received the Gospel BEFORE the Messiah died and was resurrected?) The "Old Testament" shows us that what they received was **the Torah**, that they needed to follow in faith. Thus a connection is made between the Gospel and the Torah.

The Torah = the Gospel = the Word = ***"memrd"*** (59) = Yeshua = ***the walking Torah who "tabernacled" among us.*** (John 1:1-14)

The Word of God is amazingly consistent and interwoven when you interpret it correctly.

The term "tabernacle" (booth) relates to ***Succot***, which is the seventh and "most Messianically-related" of God's feasts/appointed times (***moedim***). Recall when Peter saw Yeshua appear with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17:1-13). What did he think and what did he do? He viewed what was happening before his

eyes in terms of the Messianic fulfillment of Succot, the "feast of Tabernacles," and immediately wanted to build booths ("*succah*").

You can begin to see the "big picture" when you put the "New Testament" back in its Hebrew context!

Making the Hebrew Connection: Torah and Messiah

Take another look at what Deuteronomy 30:11:14 says about the Torah/Law:

"For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it.' But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it."

Now read the comparison Paul makes between the Torah and Yeshua in Romans:

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the goal of the Torah. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them' And the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.' (that is the word of faith which we preach) ..." (Romans 10:1-8)

The above rendition corrects two terrible mistranslations of the text that appear in almost all Christian Bibles. First, in verse 4, Yeshua (Christ) is NOT the "end" of the Law, (as in "abolishment of the Law.") He is the **goal** at which the Torah aims (*Gk: "telos" = "goal" in this context, not "end"*)

Also, the word "But," at the beginning of verse 6, has been replaced with the word "And," (*Greek = "de" = "and" in this context not "but"*) as this is correct. Paul, instead of showing some type of contrast between Moses/Torah and Yeshua/Grace, reveals a similarity and continuation, as God has not changed. If Paul wanted to draw a contrast he would have used the word "*alla*" which can only mean "but" which he in fact uses at the beginning of verse 8. (61)

Unfortunately, Christianity is guilty of bias in its translation(s) of the Bible. (62) This is especially true of the "*New Testament*"-- a term placed in quotation marks throughout this document, as it has no basis in Scripture and promotes the false idea that there was an "old" way (Judaism) before Yeshua, and a "new" way (Christianity) after Him. The "New Testament" writers did not view some new "church" as replacing the faith of Israel.

Not only is the idea of a new entity and faith ("the Church" and Christianity) replacing that of Israel's (Torah-observant Messianic Judaism), contrary to the unchanging Word of God, the word "church" itself is not in the Bible. The Greek word so translated, *ekklesia*, means "called out ones," not "church." *Ecclesia* was the same word used by the 70 Jewish rabbis who created the Greek Tenakh -- the "Septuagint," well before Yeshua lived. (The Septuagint is also called the LXX in literary references referring to these 70 rabbis.) (63)

Luke, in the book of Acts, makes it clear that those of Israel who accepted the Messiah of Israel AND followed the Torah, were the "ecclesia." (64)

The translation of "ecclesia" into "church" is completely wrong and is yet another mistranslation used to support a concept alien to what the Scriptures say.

Making the Hebrew Connection: Torah and the "Liberty" of the Believer

First we have to address the issue of "fluff" -- vague concepts that Christianity teaches such as "Christian liberty," and "the law of love." These terms don't have a precise definition -- they only define themselves in terms of being "not the Law." For instance, commenting on 1 John 2:3, J. Vernon McGee's Christian Bible study series says:

"First of all, let me point out that this verse has nothing to do with the security of the believer. John is talking about assurance. As God's children, we are in a family. But how can we have assurance that we are in God's family? He is telling us that assurance comes by keeping His commandments. 'If we keep His commandments' does not refer to the Ten Commandments. John is not dealing with any legal aspects; he is dealing with family matters."(65)

The same commentary says the following about James 2:12:

"The 'law of liberty' is the law of Christ. The Lord Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15). What is His commandment? 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.' (John 15:12)"(66)

"Assurance," but not "security?" Not God's "commandments," but "family matters?" The same author writes that the Old Testament commandments of the Father are replaced by new ones from "Jesus," such as; "bear ye one another's burdens," rejoice evermore," "pray without ceasing," and "quench not the Spirit."

It is true that following the commandments IS THE BELIEVER'S ASSURANCE that they have God's Spirit in them -- however those commandments are His Torah -- God has not changed. If Yeshua's commandments are not God's commandments, then Yeshua is not God, or we have a divided God. Christianity supplants the Torah with these vague concepts and teaches that the believer is to know what they mean for himself by "following the guidance of the Holy Spirit," thus allowing for multiple interpretations, many of which contradict God's Torah.

If this teaching isn't the doctrine for *itching ears* that turns from God's Word, then what is? (2 Timothy 4:3)

The teaching that *"we are free from the Torah,"* is a product of hundreds of years of anti-Semitic theology and is in opposition to Scripture. The "New Testament," when put back into its Hebrew context, says this about the Torah and believers in Yeshua:

- Faith does not abolish any part of the Torah as a whole (Matthew 5:17-21, James 2:10)
- Keeping the Torah is part of the faith that gets you to heaven (Matthew 19:17; Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:14)
- You will abide in Yeshua's love, if you keep Torah (John 14:15-23) as He abided in the Father's love by keeping Torah (John 15:10; Hebrews 2:17-18, 4:15)
- Faith in Yeshua does not cancel out what the Torah says, it establishes it (Romans 3:31)

- Torah is itself "liberty" and the standard we are to judge ourselves by (James 1:22-25)
- It is those of the flesh who are not subject to the Torah (Romans 8:5-8)
- If you say you know Him, and ignore His Torah, you are a liar (1 John 2:3-7)
- It does not matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, what matters is keeping God's Torah (1 Cor. 7:19)
- The "law of love" is that we keep his Torah - which is by no means a "burden" (1 John 5:3; 2 John 1:6; Matt. 11:29,30)

These "New Testament" references to "Torah" might at first confuse people as they aren't used to thinking in these terms. However, when the Jewish New Testament authors, and Yeshua, spoke of law/commandments in a religious context, it must be interpreted as "Torah," unless there is a clear reason to do otherwise, as this was what it meant to them in their culture.

This Torah, including the rest of the Tenakh ("Old Testament"), are the Scriptures Paul wrote about to Timothy;

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.(2 Timothy 3:17)

There are several important teachings in these three verses:

1. Timothy had the Scriptures, *since he was a child*. This did NOT include the "New Testament."
2. God's plan of salvation in the "Old Testament" Scriptures was faith not works.
3. The "Old Testament" Scriptures were what was to be used **by believers in Yeshua** for; *doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness*.
4. With the "Old Testament" Scriptures, the man of God is *thoroughly furnished*.
5. Works is inseparable from faith.

Christianity preaches "Jesus" almost exclusively from the New Testament. Did Paul and the other disciples preach Yeshua using the New Testament? Of course not -- all they had was the Tenakh. This is not diminishing the books of the New Testament which are indeed Scripture. The point is that the Torah, which is the Word of God, came first, and nothing can contradict it or it is to be rejected.

Torah is the foundation for properly interpreting the teachings of the "New Testament" -- NOT the other way around.

Every book of the "New Testament" was written by a writer with a Messianic Hebrew mindset with the assumption that it would be read and/or taught by someone with the same Messianic Hebrew mindset. Thanks to 1900 years of anti-Torah theology, this is no longer the case. The result is the false teachings about Torah and the "New Testament" that define Christianity.

Making the Hebrew Connection: The Role of the Torah in the Future

The verses in the Tenakh (Old Testament) that point to the return of the Messiah and the "millennium," all show Torah observance.

- The sacrificial system (for reconciliation, NOT salvation) returns. (Ezekiel 45:13-20)
- The nations don't come to do Christmas in Jerusalem, they come to do Succot. (Zechariah 14:16-

19)

- Believers are going to be priests in the Kingdom -- you cannot be a priest and disregard Torah. (Hebrews 7:12)
- The priests are all dressed in the 4 garments of the High Priest, reflecting a continual state of Yom Kippur. (Ezekiel 44:17-18 - Also see Exodus 28, Leviticus 16:4) (67)
- Men will take the tzitzit (fringes or tassels) of a Jew in that day and say "take me to the Lord." (Zechariah 8:23)
- The Millennium itself is the fulfillment of what the weekly Sabbath points us to.

In Isaiah 61:3 (the portion Yeshua read part of in Luke 4:16-21) it speaks of the Messiah, in the Millennium, calling His people "*trees of righteousness*." This term is a Jewish euphemism for being Torah observant. Revelation chapter 22 reflects the same idea, where "*tree of life*" also represents Torah. As mentioned earlier, Revelation places a stipulation on those hoping to enter New Jerusalem -- **they are the ones who kept his Torah:**

Revelation 22:14a -- "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*"

Outside the city are those who violate Torah (Rev. 22:14b).

Christianity has had its way for a long time, reinterpreting the verses of the both the "Old" and "New" Testaments in an anti-Torah, "Greek" mindset, to mean something other than what they say.

We are saved by faith alone -- but this faith, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, (both "Old" and "New" Hebrew Testaments) is a trusting relationship that is inseparable from following God's word on how we are to live -- His Torah. Yeshua Himself is inseparable from the Torah, as He is its goal and fulfillment - - *the "walking Torah."*

This teaching is consistent through the "New Testament" when interpreted correctly. Paul himself says if you are a Gentile who has chosen to follow the Messiah -- welcome to the Torah of Israel! (Ephesians 2:10-12)

Is This All Really That Big a Deal?

Problems within the Church

Sadly, issues such as divorce, teenage pregnancy and illicit drug usage in "the Church" mirror those of secular society. "Church hopping" is common among Christians. How many adults today are still part of the same denomination they grew up in? Many are leaving the ranks of "evangelical Christianity" altogether. The Mormon church is experiencing continued growth at the expense of these traditional churches, the majority of their converts in the United States in recent years being former Baptists. Then there are doctrinal problems such as the issue of homosexuality "still being sin." No longer are homosexuals staying away from Christianity. Rather, they are challenging Christianity's hypocrisy regarding the "Law of God," using the Christian argument that the Law is done away with, and that we are now under a "law of love."

These "symptoms" are recognized and preached about from the pulpit in Christian churches. However,

the problem has not been properly diagnosed. All of the above can be attributed to one thing -- the Christian church is not built on the rock of Torah, but on the shifting sands of anti-Torah doctrines. (Matthew 7:24-27 -- the concluding verses of Yeshua's teaching on following the Torah. (See the section below, "*Did Yeshua Consider a Relationship to Torah to be Important?*")

Problems with Jewish Evangelism

Let us first return to the Christian view of the Jews previously raised in the first section:

- The Jews "missed Jesus" 2000 Years Ago
- The Jewish leadership (mostly Pharisees) were so "caught up in the Law" that they missed their own Messiah
- The Church was created and given the job of spreading the "Gospel of Jesus"
- The church has an obligation to bring the "Gospel of Jesus" to the Jews
- Christian churches rededicating themselves to "Jewish evangelism"

The typical experience today, of a Jew "saved" by "accepting Jesus," is to become a "Jewish-Christian." This person is welcomed to the world/culture of Christianity, including; Sunday church services, Christmas and Easter. Regarding "the Law," Jewish-Christians are taught that they no longer have to keep doing things like keeping Sabbath and eating kosher, as "Jesus freed them from this bondage," and they now have "Christian liberty" regarding such things. Many new Jewish believers will be offered unkosher food to eat so that they can "show their faith."

Jews who come to Christianity eventually, if not immediately, abandon their Judaism. By the time they have grandchildren (especially if they marry Gentiles), these little ones don't identify themselves as Jews or with Judaism at all. They are now Christians -- fully assimilated. Unfortunately, this new lifestyle offered to Jews is in direct contradiction to the Word of God. Assimilation is a curse promised to the Jews, by God, should they go against His Torah. Assimilation is a sign to them that they are not following the one true God.

Scripturally, any Jew who abandons the Torah of God and identifies with any anti-Torah deity, is an idolater. This applies to any (false) "messiah" who does not teach the Torah remains in place. Conversely, any Jew who rejects an anti-Torah Messiah, is not rejecting the true Messiah of Israel. Thus, a Jew who rejects a "salvation message" which has at its heart an anti-Torah "Jesus," has not rejected the true Messiah of Israel, any more than if they rejected the "Mormon Jesus," which Christianity itself says is a false-messiah.

As mentioned at the beginning of this document, many Christian groups are launching new evangelism campaigns to convert Jews, training their people to use "Jewish terminology" when witnessing. The result of this has been a backlash from the Jewish community, who accuse churches of using deceitful means to lead Jews away from Judaism to Christianity. (68)

They have a valid point. Why put a Jewish veneer on what is truly a Gentile faith? The first group to successfully do this in an organized fashion was *Jews for Jesus*, which was essentially a Baptist outreach. Jesus was presented in a more "Jewish light," but the goal and result was always the same -- "convert Jews," and get them into a church. Of late, Jews for Jesus has opened up to the idea of pointing Jews to Messianic congregations, as well as churches. This is a step in the right direction, but as long as the group maintains the name of "Jesus" in its title, and continues to offer "the Church" as a valid option for Jews, it stands in opposition to Torah.

Did Yeshua Consider a Relationship to Torah to be Important?

Christianity would say, "**No - we are saved by faith only - so all of this 'Torah is for believers' doctrine is not important.**" As already mentioned however, there is a problem here with the definition of "faith." The modern Christian definition of "faith" is not the same as that of the Jewish Messiah and His first century Jewish contemporaries and Jewish writers of the "New Testament." The Christian definition is concerned with *what you believe*, whereas in Judaism, the focus is on a relationship grounded in trust and obedience to Torah. (69)

Yeshua Himself clearly upholds the Jewish view. Matthew 5:17-7:28 is a long dissertation by the Messiah on following the Torah correctly. He begins by establishing two facts:

- If you think any of the Torah is done away with, you are mistaken. (Matthew 5:17-18)
- If you teach people that they do not have to regard the Torah, you will answer to Him. (Matthew 5:19-20)

After a number of verses where he explains and expounds upon the Torah, he concludes His teaching (Matthew 7:21-23) by speaking of a future time, when certain people will not be allowed into heaven. Does he rebuke these people for "not believing He is the Messiah?" Or, "not having invited Him into their hearts?" Or, "not having said the 'sinner's prayer?'"

No. Rather, Yeshua clearly states that those who practice *lawlessness* (Greek: *anomia*) will not enter into His kingdom. What "law" are these people violating with their "lawlessness?"

The context of Matthew 7:21-23 is that of "religious law," *as Yeshua has been talking non-stop about the Torah.* His warning concludes His lecture on the principles of Torah that He began by saying that *none of the Torah is abolished* (Matthew 5:17-21). (70)

Take note that these are not pagans or atheists that He is talking to. These people are *shocked* when He rebukes them. **They claim to be believers, calling Him "Lord."**

This raises a serious question:

Is there a religion made up of people who say they are followers of the Messiah, but claim they no longer have a relationship to Torah that meets the description of Matthew 7:23?

Doesn't "the Church" fit this description?

Some may be offended by this statement (and much of the rest of this document.) The idea that "Christ's own Church" could be in such grievous error regarding the Word of God and what true faith in God entails, is simply impossible to believe. However, as mentioned, the very concept of "the Church" is a product of the anti-Torah (anti-God) replacement theology, and willful Bible mistranslation.

Did Paul Consider a Relationship to Torah to be Important?

There is a misconception held by many, including some in modern Jewry, that Yeshua may have supported Torah, but the apostle Paul -- well, he started the Christian religion by taking a stance against Law.

For example, as Christian author Daniel Fuller states in his book, *The Unity of the Bible*

But the historian must also explain how a person so involved with Judaism could then act in complete non-Jewish ways, rejecting circumcision as the sign of the covenant for believing Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 2:3-5) and willingly eating nonkosher food as he maintained table fellowship with the Gentiles (vv. 11-14). Nothing in his background as one totally immersed in the traditions of Judaism can explain such a profound reversal of conduct. The only alternative for explaining how Paul came to eat pork is accept his own explanation: this profound change resulted from his being confronted by the risen Jesus as he journeyed to Damascus to destroy the Christian church there.⁽⁷¹⁾

Paul's rebuke of Peter, in the second chapter of Galatians, is traditionally viewed by Christianity as a proof that "the Law" had ended for Jews who now followed the Messiah. The problem here is that the text shows that the issue is not one of the food being eaten. Peter was indeed eating with Gentile believers, however this is not "different" in that he was now eating non-kosher food. Rather, it was "different" because Jews generally did not sit and eat with Gentiles at that time. However, Peter was told by God that Gentiles were to be considered "clean." (This was the meaning of his dream in Acts chapter 10, which had nothing to do with eating unkosher food as seen by Peter's responses in Acts 10:17, 28, 34, 11:3-17; 15:7-10.)

Peter was rebuked by Paul because of his *hypocrisy*, as when he saw Jewish brethren approaching, he walked away from the Gentiles, treating them as if they were spiritual inferiors. When Paul says to Peter that they "live" in the same way, he is not talking about their eating habits. Rather, he is saying they are "saved" in the same way. This is consistent with the theme of the rest of the letter, that Jews and Gentiles are saved ("live") in the same way, by faith, not "works of Law." (72)

For Fuller to arrive at the conclusion that "Paul now eats pork," and is telling Peter he should as well, he has to:

- Assume Paul is anti-Torah and teaches this way
- Assume what Paul is talking about in these verses is "no longer following the kosher laws"
- Ignore the immediate and overall context, which is salvation by faith for both Jew and Gentile

As mentioned, this practice of injecting anti-Torah dogma into the text of Scripture stems from hundreds of years of Scripture twisting, first done willfully by those in power who held anti-Jewish opinions, and perhaps inadvertently today. This is even done, in the latter fashion, by Jews who are more than happy to distance Judaism from Christianity, especially with the resurgence of Messianic Judaism. (73)

However, this is not the case regarding Paul, who taught that Torah was indeed for Gentiles -- not for salvation, but as the direction they should be encouraged to follow subsequent to coming to faith. This is part of God's plan for the restoration of His unity (through the faith of Israel), as although "God is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4), He is not yet One, as this will occur at the end of days with the coming of Messiah (Zechariah 14:9). (74)

As an Orthodox Rabbi, this was Paul's view of God being "one," (*echad*) and is at the foundation of all his writings. This belief says that there is one God, here on earth, for the Jew and the Gentile (i.e., Romans 1:16). There is one God in heaven, with but one revelation (Torah) from Him for all mankind (Exodus 12:48-49, Leviticus 24:22, Isaiah 56). There is one God through history (Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8). The path He has provided for us, is leading to the restoration of the unity of God and His creation, which will be brought together through Messiah, in the Millennium and the ensuing "World to Come" (*Olam Haba*), a concept that is foundational to Judaism.

The book of Romans has within it a significant teaching (*a midrash*) regarding the Torah, which is overlooked due to poor translation and anti-Torah theology. Although Paul aggressively condemned the teaching that a Gentile had to take on the Torah in order to be saved (Acts, Galatians), he retained the view that subsequent to salvation, Torah was the desired goal for the lifestyle of all believers, as Torah observance brings closer the unification of the Name of God (shema).

Beginning at verse 6:1 and going through 8:14, Rav Sha'ul the Pharisee (Paul), provides the following teaching, directed primarily (if not exclusively) to the Gentiles in the Roman congregation:

Romans 6:1-16 -- Now that we are following Yeshua, and "of the Spirit," we are not free to break Torah and sin

Romans 6:17-23 -- As believers we are now to follow/serve the righteousness of His Torah as we learn it.

Romans 7:1-6 -- We no longer follow the Torah in the flesh, apart from trusting God (and thus condemned by its curse), but are now to follow it in the Spirit.

Romans 7:7-21 -- Although the Torah; a) served the purpose of condemning us, b) stirs up sin in us, and c) cannot be followed in the flesh, the Torah in itself is the holy, just, good and spiritual lamp that is to light the path of lives (Psalm 119:105).

Romans 7:22-8:14 -- The Torah is our delight and duty to follow in faith. A desire to follow the Torah is the real "blessed assurance" a believer has that God's Spirit in them.

A key section near the end of this midrash, is Romans 8:5-8, where Paul says people fall into one of two classes before God. They are either; a) *of the flesh*, or, b) *of the Spirit*. Paul says if you are "of the flesh," you cannot please God. Why is that? Because, Paul says, *those in the flesh are not subject to the Law (Torah) of God*.

Conversely, Paul is saying that those of the Spirit ("having been saved") ARE subject to Torah. God has not changed -- it has always been this way.

Concluding Thoughts

Christianity teaches that if someone claims to "be saved," but never stops blatantly sinning, then they probably did not truly repent and weren't really born again (i.e., often said of homosexuals). It also teaches that even if you "sincerely" follow incorrect doctrine regarding salvation, you aren't saved (i.e., often said of Mormons).

Yeshua warned that we will be judged by the same measure we judge by. Therefore, when a Christian judges a Mormon, or a homosexual, or anyone for that matter, using the unified Word of God (the Torah), he had better be ready to be judged by the same Torah.

Keeping this Biblical principle in mind, The Torah shows that God's position on the Sabbath is clear. It is Friday evening to Saturday evening and we are to set it aside for Him as a Holy Day. History shows that man changed this out of disrespect for Judaism and Torah. Christians don't bother to learn this history (or don't care) accepting the lie that God changed this. As a result, they violate God's Sabbath every weekend, *while carrying His Torah in their Bibles* on their way into "Sunday church services" that preach "freedom FROM the Torah."

According to Paul in Romans 8:5-8, if you consider yourself to be "of the Spirit," you ARE subject to the Torah of God.

Are you?

Or are you of the flesh and "*not subject to the Law of God?*"

1. *Basic Theology - A Popular Systematic Guide To Understanding Biblical Truth*, Charles C. Ryrie, 1986, SP Publications Inc., Victor Books, Wheaton IL, pp. 302-303.
2. *When Skeptics Ask*, Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, 1990, SP Publications Inc., Victor Books, Wheaton IL, p. 129.
3. *The Daily Study Bible Series - the Letters of James and Peter*, William Barclay, 1976, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 80.
4. New King James version, Nelson Regency Publishers.
5. *The Daily Study Bible Series - the Letters of James and Peter*, William Barclay, 1976, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 70.
6. *Introductions and Reading Guide*, King James Bible, 1962, Zondervan Publishing house, p. 9.
7. *ibid* p. 10.
8. *Thru the Bible Commentary Series, Galatians*, J. Vernon McGee, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1991, p. 23.
9. Another ancient Jewish teaching, regarding respect for the poor, is that material success often comes at the cost of spiritual failure. This is reflected in the saying, "*Be careful with the poor, for, from them Torah comes out*" (Talmud, Nedarim 81a). This teaching mirrors that of Yeshua in Matthew 19:23-24, where He expresses the difficulties that the wealthy have in finding the kingdom of God.
10. *The Shema, Spirituality and Law in Judaism*, Norman Lamm, The Jewish Publication Society, Jerusalem, 1998, p.16
11. Interestingly, the commentary of the *Midrash Rabbah*, on the first verse of the Bible (Genesis 1:1) has the Torah referring to itself as **a tutor** at the time of creation!
12. *The Unity of the Bible*, Daniel P. Fuller, 1992, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids MI, p. 346-359.
13. In order to retain the parts of the Torah it claims remain valid for believers (i.e., adultery, covetousness, homosexuality) Christianity divides the Torah into separate moral, ceremonial, civil, and/or other "sections." However, no such strict division has existed in Judaism, nor in the minds of the authors of the "New Testament." This can be seen in the epistle of "James" (2:8-11), where he says all the Torah is one, as well as Paul's writings, such as Galatians 5:19, where he lists things like "uncleaness" ("ceremonial law") in the same sentence as adultery ("moral law") and murder ("civil law") and of course Yeshua, in Matthew 5:17-21.
14. *Thru the Bible Commentary Series, James*, J. Vernon McGee, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1991, p. 68.
15. *Basic Theology - A Popular Systematic Guide To Understanding Biblical Truth*, Charles C. Ryrie, 1986, SP Publications Inc., Victor Books, Wheaton IL, p. 304.
16. Jewish literature outside of the Bible reflects this, i.e., Midrash Rabbah Genesis LXXXV:1; Midrash Rabbah Exodus V:7; Midrash Rabbah Numbers IV:8; Zohar, Bereshit Section 1, page 176a. (Soncino)
17. The web site www.nazarene.net has several informative articles on the facts concerning the New Covenant and other important topics.
18. *Jewish New Testament Commentary* David Stern, (Jewish New Testament Publication, Inc., 4th edition, 1995), commentary on Hebrews 10:8-10.
19. *Basic Theology - A Popular Systematic Guide To Understanding Biblical Truth*, Charles C. Ryrie, 1986, SP Publications Inc., Victor Books, Wheaton IL, p. 303.
20. *ibid* p. 305.

21. ***Foundations of the Christian Faith*** James Montgomery Boice, 1986, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, p. 234.
22. A book that addresses this subject in detail is ***From Sabbath to Sunday***(Samuele Bacchiocchi, 1977, The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, Rome). Bacchiocchi's research shows how the movement away from the Sabbath and other biblical feasts was prompted by the anti-Semitism of the early "Church fathers." Among other issues, Bacchiocchi specifically refutes the idea that, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, Acts 20:7-11 and Revelation 1:10, offer any "proof" for the argument that God switched from Saturday Sabbath to the Christian Sunday (pp. 90-131).
23. Jewish literature outside of the Bible gives enormous consideration to a coming Messianic Millennial Sabbath -- the same as the New Testament writers referred to (i.e., Midrash Rabbah Genesis 12:6, Zohar 1:119a, Talmud tractate Sanhedrin 97a, tractate Tamid 33b).
24. ***Babylonian Talmud***,tractate Shabbat 119a
25. ***Why the Protestant Reformation Failed***,Frank M. Walker. Published in ***Petah Tikvah Volume 15 No. 1***, found at: www.yashanet.com/library/reformf.htm.
26. See the article ***Equal Weights and Measures***at www.yashanet.com/library/equal.htm for more about this and other mistranslations in Christian Bibles.
27. ***Thru the Bible Commentary Series, James J. Vernon*** McGee, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1991, p. 56.
28. Even the term "***Christian***,"as seen in this verse, may be a mistranslation. There is evidence that this was a later entry to the Bible as early manuscripts have the term "***almsgiver***"(rather than "Christian"). This would make it a Jewish slur as that was a Jewish term and practice. The latter would make sense as it would indicate that Gentiles "had become like Jews" in their new faith. For a Roman Gentile to become like a Jew was considered a disgrace.
29. ***The Mystery of Romans***,Mark Nanos, 1996, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, pp. 64-68. Julius Caesar had respect for ancient religions and granted the Jews legal privileges as ***collegia***, giving them the right to assemble, have common meals and property, govern and tax themselves, and enforce their own discipline. They were the only non-pagan religious group to have this right. This led to much resentment from the rest of the Roman population. This also explains such occurrences as Paul being able to persecute Jewish believers (before his conversion) as mentioned in the book of Acts, and the right of the Synagogue to later discipline Paul, as he mentions in his epistles. The latter also shows that Paul kept himself under the authority of the Synagogue. According to Roman law, he could have used his Roman citizenship to stop this discipline but, according to Jewish law, he then would have forfeited his right to speak and teach in the Synagogue on the Sabbath. Although Paul is commonly known as "the apostle to the Gentiles," even this ministry was for the benefit of Israel (Romans 11:13). See also, ***Romans - A Shorter Commentary***C.E.B. Cranfield, 1985, William B. Eerdmans publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, pp. 275-276.
30. ***James the Brother of Jesus***,Robert Eisenman, 1997, Penguin Books, New York, NY.
31. Ignatius' ***Letter to the Magnesians***
32. ***Caesar and Christ***, Will Durant, 1944, Simon and Schuster, New York, p. 548.
33. Justin Martyr - ***Dialogue with Trypho***(Circa 138-161 A.D.)
34. Origen of Alexandria (185-254 A.D.) as quoted in ***Scattered Among the Nations, Documents Affecting Jewish History 49 to 1975***,Edited by Alexis P. Rubin, Jason Aronson Inc., London, pp. 22-23.
35. ***Jew & Gentile in the Ancient World***,Louis H. Feldman, 1993, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, pp. 123-176
36. ***Caesar and Christ***, Will Durant, 1944, Simon and Schuster, New York, p. 546.
37. ***The Mystery of Romans***,Mark Nanos, 1996, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, pp. 64-68.
38. ***Novella III***,as instituted by Theodosius II, Roman Emperor in the East, 439 A.D.
39. The last known meeting between the Jewish minority and Gentile majority was in the year 318, presided over by Sylvester, a representative of Emperor Constantine.
40. Council of Elvira, 304 A.D., ***Canon 50, Laws Relating to Jew***.

41. Council of Elvira, 304 A.D., *Canon 16, Laws Relating to Jew*.
42. Epiphanius; *Panarion 29*; 4th Century -- See *Biblical Law* by James Trimm at: www.nazarene.net/biblawn.htm.
43. *Paul and the Jewish Law - Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, Peter J. Tomson, 1990, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, p. 3.
44. Martin Luther called for persecution of Jews, including; burning their synagogues to the ground, destroying their homes, confiscating their Talmuds and prayer books, killing their rabbis who refused to stop teaching, revoking their right to travel, and putting them in concentration camps. Hitler followed Luther's recommendations quite well. See *Anti-Semitism of the "Church Fathers,"* at www.yashanet.com/library/fathers.htm and, *Why the Protestant Reformation Failed!* at: www.yashanet.com/library/reformf.htm.
45. See *Anti-Semitism of the "Church Fathers,"* at www.yashanet.com/library/fathers.htm.
46. *The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1985.
47. *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, J. Dwight Pentecost, 1981, The Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, MI, p.188-189.
48. *The Way of the Boundary Crosser*, Gershon Winkler, 1998, Jason Aronson Inc., Jerusalem, pp. 221-251. The examples shown in this table and the next, are only a portion of those given by Winkler, who shows Yeshua's teachings to be very much in line with *Talmud, Midrash Rabbah* and other ancient Jewish writings. It is rather ironic that a liberal Reformed Jewish author (Winkler) has done such a thorough job of revealing the truth of what Yeshua taught.
49. *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate Sotah 22b.
50. *Babylonian Talmud*, tractate Yevamot, footnote #14 to 16a: **"Literally 'the first-born of Satan.'"**
51. *The Way of the Boundary Crosser*, Gershon Winkler, 1998, Jason Aronson Inc., Jerusalem, pp. 221-251.
52. *The Daily Study bible Series - the Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, William Barclay, 1976, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, p. 29.
53. *ibid.* p. 29.
54. *ibid.* p. 27.
55. *Caesar and Christ*, Will Durant, 1944, Simon and Schuster, New York, p. 616.
56. *Jew & Gentile in the Ancient World*, Louis H. Feldman, 1993, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, -- *The Mystery of Romans*, Mark Nanos, 1996, Fortress Press, Minneapolis.
57. See *The Mystery of Romans*, Mark Nanos, 1996, Fortress Press, Minneapolis. Nanos' award winning book (National Jewish Book Award for Jewish-Christian Relations), offers historical insight into the background of Paul's letter not found in any previous work. In it he reveals Paul's concern over the conduct of the Gentiles within the Roman congregation, with respect to them modifying their behavior in order not to offend unsaved Jews who were amidst them in their fellowship, which was still conducted under Synagogue authority.
58. It may be hard for the western mind to comprehend how Paul could be accused by other Jews, of teaching against the Torah, when he was preaching a pro-Torah message. However, this was not the only time in Jewish history that a great teacher was thus misrepresented. Moses Maimonides (1135-1204 CE), one of the most famous Jewish thinkers and Torah scholar of all time, was accused by his Jewish contemporaries as denying bodily resurrection. They made this claim even though Maimonides had written in his commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 10:1, that, **"Bodily resurrection is one of the fundamentals of the Law of Moses; one who does not accept [resurrection] has no part in the religion, nor any connection to the Jewish people.**Maimonides admits he didn't think anyone would take the source of such false teaching and accusation seriously, stating, **"...we paid no attention thereto, saying that this individual's (opinion) is of no consequence, because no one can be so foolish as to find it so difficult to understand what we wrote (clearly in our composition). Moses Maimonides' Treatise on Resurrection, translated and annotated by Fred Rosner, 1997, Jason Aronson Inc., Northval, NJ, forward to the Secoi**

- Edition, p. ix, 29-31.* Paul too, was shocked to hear that he was being accused of preaching against the truth of Torah, as seen by his comments in Romans 3:8. Peter, in his epistle, also warned, that people were twisting Paul's words around. One has to wonder what Paul will one day have to say of churches who teach that he thought Torah was not to be followed by believers in Yeshua!
59. "**Memra**" is an Aramaic term for "**the Word**" and is found in the *Aramaic Targums* read in the Synagogues each Sabbath at the time of Yeshua. "Memra" appears in the Targums whenever a verse contains a double reference to YHVH, i.e. Psalm 110:1, where the "second YHVH" is called the Memra of God. Also in Genesis where Abraham prayed to YHVH in the name of the Memra of YHVH.
 60. *Vine's Expository Dictionary* a classic Protestant reference work, agrees that *telos* should not be translated as "*end*" in Romans 10:4, but rather as "*the result of a state or process*" (a goal). See also the, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* David Stern, (Jewish New Testament Publication, Inc., 4th edition, 1995), commentary on Romans 10:4. Interestingly, the Christian work quoted in this document, *The Unity of the Bible*, (Daniel P. Fuller, 1992, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids MI), also agrees with translating "telos" as "goal," but still arrives at typically Christian conclusions.
 61. *Jewish New Testament Commentary* David Stern, Jewish New Testament Publication, Inc., 4th edition, 1995, commentary on Romans 10:6-8.
 62. See *Equal Weights and Measures* at www.yashanet.com/library/equal.htm.
 63. The word "church" was entered into the "New Testament" text in the middle ages and may itself be pagan in origin. See *The Translation Conspiracy*, by Rabbi David M. Hargis, at <http://messianic.com/articles/translation.htm>
 64. *The Unknown Paul - Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History*, Jacob Jervell, 1984, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, p. 41.
 65. *Thru the Bible Commentary Series, First John*, J. Vernon McGee, 1991, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, pp. 41-42
 66. *Thru the Bible Commentary Series, James*, J. Vernon McGee, 1991, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, p. 61.
 67. See also *Mishna Yoma 7:5*.
 68. In August, 1999, a controversy arose over the Internet Search engine *Lycos*, refusing to run advertisements from *Jews for Jesus*, due to the expressed outrage of the Jewish community. News articles with the details of this story may still be found on the Web, by searching keywords "Jews for Jesus" and "Lycos."
 69. The Gospel of "James" stresses this point throughout, but particularly in 2:19, where he says that "believing" in God is meaningless if void of a trusting relationship grounded in the works of the Torah.
 70. The same Greek term for lawlessness, *anomia*, is used in 1 John 3:4, to describe those who commit sin, as well as 2 Thessalonians 2:7, to describe the anti-Messiah who is opposed to God's truth.
 71. *The Unity of the Bible*, Daniel P. Fuller, 1992, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids MI, p. 53. As another example of out-of-context interpretation, Fuller also states (p. 357) that Mark 7:19 shows Yeshua declaring all meats to be clean, ignoring the context of the discussion (established in 7:2-5) which is entirely about the non-Biblical command some Pharisees had added of eating (clean) meats with unwashed hands, a practice which has its origins in the *Zohar*, the more mystical part of Judaism. See also; *Introduction to the Talmud* by Harris Brody, Section 10, at www.yashanet.com/library/talmud.htm.
 72. See *The Mystery of Romans*, Mark Nanos, 1996, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, pp. 337-371, for a comprehensive discussion of these verses.
 73. Rabbi Tovia Singer (Jews for Judaism, Outreach Judaism) has made the comment that more Jews have come to believe Jesus is the Messiah in the past 19 years than in the past 1900 years. The origins of the modern Messianic movement can be shown to coincide with the return of Jerusalem

to Jewish hands in 1967. The number of Messianic congregations has increased exponentially in the past three decades (a true "end time revival" of God that Christianity is generally unaware of, or unconcerned with.) The later 1990's have seen a trend toward greater Torah observance among both Jewish and gentile Messianic believers. A global listing of Messianic congregations is kept at www.yashanet.com.

74. A recently published book that deals with some of the essentials of the Shema and offers a well-rounded view of Jewish thought in this matter is; *The Shema, Spirituality and Law in Judaism* by Orthodox scholar and Yeshiva University president, Norman Lamm (The Jewish Publication Society, Jerusalem, 1998.)

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