



# The Greatest Deception

In the Body of Messiah

*Hosea 4:6*

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge [of My law, where I reveal My will] Because you [the priestly nation] have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.*

*Author: Elzaan Da Camara*

*Published by: Healthy Vibes Pty Ltd.*

**First Edition: April 2023**

This book (or parts thereof) may not be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission from Healthy Vibes Pty Ltd.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version & The Amplified Bible.

Copyright © 2023 by Healthy Vibes Pty Ltd, All Rights Reserved.

This is a product of Healthy Vibes Pty Ltd.

**Contact Us:**

**Tel: +27 76 858 3854**

**Email: [healthyvibessa@gmail.com](mailto:healthyvibessa@gmail.com)**

# Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Foreword	8
Introduction: My testimony	10
Chapter 1: What is the great deception?	13
The serpent that twists the truth .....	<b>13</b>
How to twist the Word of God .....	<b>13</b>
How do we misinterpret the Word of God? .....	<b>15</b>
Ignoring the context	15
Doctrinal Bias	15
Allowing our traditions and culture to cloud the facts	16
Ignoring what the Bible teaches elsewhere on a specific topic	16
Changing the meaning of words, ideas and phrases	17
Why is it important to understand the Word of God correctly? .....	<b>17</b>
Chapter 2: How is the body of Messiah deceived?	18
Studying the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek .....	<b>19</b>
The pagan ways of Christianity .....	<b>20</b>
Pagan feasts kept by Christians today .....	<b>22</b>
Chapter 3: The Ancient Way	27
Abraham was a Hebrew .....	<b>28</b>
The Ancient Paths.....	<b>31</b>
Who is Israel? .....	<b>34</b>
Who are the Jews? .....	<b>35</b>
How the exiles shaped our understanding of Israel and the Jews.....	<b>36</b>
Who was the covenant made with at Mount Sinai? .....	<b>36</b>
Grafted into Spiritual Israel.....	<b>37</b>
Jesus was a Hebrew and a Jew.....	<b>39</b>
Chapter 5: What is the Torah?	41
The Torah means “the instructions of God” .....	<b>41</b>
Where do we find the Torah? .....	<b>43</b>
What is sin? .....	<b>46</b>
Chapter 6: I am not under the Law	49
What is Legalism? .....	<b>50</b>

The law of Christ is love .....	<b>53</b>
Keeping the commandments of God to obtain salvation.....	<b>55</b>
What does it mean to be under the Law?.....	<b>56</b>
What does it mean not to be under the Law?.....	<b>59</b>
What does it mean to be free from the curse of the Law? .....	<b>60</b>
Summary.....	<b>67</b>
Chapter 7: Paul – hypocrite, or keeper of the Law?	68
The Jerusalem Counsel .....	<b>70</b>
Who died for you on the cross?.....	<b>72</b>
Chapter 8: Jesus came to fulfil the Law	73
Jesus and the Pharisees .....	<b>76</b>
Jesus keeps the Law and teaches others to do so .....	<b>78</b>
Touching a Leper	79
Plucking Grain and Healing on the Shabbat	80
Washing hands before eating bread	81
The disciples and followers of Jesus	82
Chapter 9: The Written Torah, Oral Torah and Living Torah	84
The Written Torah .....	<b>85</b>
The Oral Torah.....	<b>85</b>
The Living Torah.....	<b>86</b>
Chapter 10: Jewish myths – Titus 1	88
Chapter 11: Faith without action	92
Reward and punishment based on what you do.....	<b>93</b>
Chapter 12: Believing in the Torah nullifies what Jesus did on the cross	96
Messiah Ben Yosef – The Suffering Servant .....	<b>96</b>
Messiah Ben David – The Conquering King.....	<b>97</b>
Grace in the Old Testament .....	<b>98</b>
Chapter 13: Moral Purity VS Ritual Purity	100
Chapter 14: The Torah and the Messianic Age	102
Chapter 15: The Old Testament and the New Testament	104
What is a Covenant?.....	<b>104</b>
Can a Covenant be broken?.....	<b>104</b>
Different types of covenants in the Bible.....	<b>105</b>
The New Testament and the renewed Covenant .....	<b>107</b>
Circumcision is a sign of the Covenant.....	<b>109</b>

Chapter 16: What commandments should we keep?.....	112
A summary of the commandments.....	115
Chapter 17: Keeping Sabbath	118
Chapter 18: Keeping the Feasts of the LORD	122
What Calendar to use? .....	123
The seven feasts of God .....	123
Chapter 19: What is food?	125
The Swine Dilemma.....	127
Meat and Dairy .....	128
Everything created by God is good.....	129
Romans 14: A matter of opinions .....	132
Genesis 9:3 Every moving thing shall be food for you.....	137
Acts 10 - Peter's Vision:.....	140
Chapter 20: Sexual Purity	143
Chapter 21: The rebellious son	146
Chapter 22: Animal Sacrifice	148
A history of the sacrifices .....	148
Types of Sacrifices .....	148
Who brought sacrifices? .....	150
What was sacrificed?.....	150
When were sacrifices brought? .....	150
Where were the sacrifices brought? .....	151
Why sacrifice? .....	151
Sacrifices today? .....	153
Sacrifices and the Millennial Kingdom .....	153
Chapter 23: The Stumbling Block	155
Chapter 24: Who is your father?	157
Conclusion	159
Glossary	160
Animism.....	160
Apocryphal Books .....	160
Binding of Isaac .....	160
Didache .....	161
Elohim .....	161
Failed State.....	161

Messiah .....	162
Moedim .....	162
Pantheism .....	163
Pentateuch .....	163
Polytheism.....	163
Rabbi .....	164
Sanhedrin .....	164
Septuagint.....	165
Shabbat .....	165
Strong's Reference Guide & Strong's Numbers .....	166
Synagogue.....	166
Torah.....	167
Yeshua.....	167
YHVH.....	168
Sources	169

## Acknowledgements

I would like to start by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to my Heavenly Father for His boundless mercy and grace over my life. I give Him all the honour and glory for the gift of writing and teaching, recognizing that every good gift comes from Him. As I continue to delve into the Word of God, I am continually awed and humbled by His incredible love for us, and His willingness to humble Himself so that we can enjoy a Covenant relationship with Him.

To my beloved parents, Elna and Herman Kleynhans, I dedicate this book. Without their unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement, I would not have achieved what I have today. They were exceptional examples of a life lived in sacrifice to God.

I am also immensely grateful to my husband, Tony Da Camara, for his unyielding support, prayers and spiritual covering. Having such a God-fearing man by my side is an immeasurable blessing.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals, who selflessly contributed their personal time to read through this book, offer advice, correct grammar, and spelling, and provide valuable insights into its construction:

Christo Bester, Leonie Bester, Sunel De Coning, Juanita Moolman, Jacolene Combrinck

Your contributions were invaluable and have helped to refine this book in ways that I could never have achieved on my own.

## Foreword

There are only two fathers in life with whom you can align yourself: the Father of creation or the father of lies. If you fall for the father of lies' deceit, all he needs to do is sow the seed and wait for you to nurture and cultivate it until it bears fruit in your life. With minimal effort, the father of lies can manipulate you into doing his bidding.

However, we have the option to align ourselves with our Heavenly Father, the Creator of everything, the Truth, and the sole path to life. It is unfortunate that many of us lack a profound, intimate experiential connection with our Heavenly Father, and we only know Him through knowledge. The primary reason for this is the extensive deception that the enemy has planted in the hearts and minds of numerous believers. He has accomplished this by distorting and misquoting the Word of God, as he attempted to do when he tempted Jesus.

*Matthew 4:5-7*

*English Standard Version*

*Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple<sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,*

*"He will command His angels concerning you,"*

*and*

*"On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone."*

*<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"*

Our lack of familiarity with the Word of God results in deception, causing us to sin even with good intentions.

The purpose of this book is not to condemn or induce feelings of guilt or shame in anyone. We have all fallen victim to deception at some point in our lives. The Holy Spirit



prompted me to write this book to dispel falsehoods, speak the truth, and encourage God's children to rediscover their passion for studying His Word.

As you read through the chapters in this book, I pray that you will hear the voice of your Heavenly Father. Most importantly, I pray for the truth to prevail, as it is the key to freedom.

*John 8:31-32*

*English Standard Version*

*The Truth Will Set You Free*

*So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples,<sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

## Introduction: My testimony

Growing up, my family attended Church every Sunday, and my parents read the Bible to us almost every night. My mother would teach us Bible verses, and we had to memorize one each week. By the end of the year, we could recite multiple verses. My parents did their best to raise us as good, Christ-loving Christian children.

When I was four or five years old, I had a dream in which Jesus came to me and told me to accept Him as my Saviour. I woke up and told my mother that I wanted to give my heart to Jesus. She prayed with me, and I accepted Jesus into my life.

Growing up in a family involved in ministry, I was exposed to many preachers, teachers, prophets, and others who served in the Kingdom of God through full-time ministry. As a curious child, I had many questions about the Bible that didn't make sense to me. I also struggled to reconcile the "angry, scary" God of the Old Testament, full of judgment, punishment, and curses, with the "loving" Jesus of the New Testament. It was hard for me to understand how these two could be "One." Moreover, if God is all-knowing and omnipotent as the Bible says, why could He not foresee that "the Law" would never work? Why did He bother giving all those rules, only to later decide to send Jesus to Earth as Plan B? I found it hard to grasp the idea that God could "make a mistake."

As devout Christians, my parents taught us about the Old and New Testaments and "the Law" in the following manner:

- Initially, God's plan was for everyone to follow "the Law" and be saved. Unfortunately, humans were unable to do so, and therefore, no one could keep "the Law," and they all failed. Hence, God devised a new plan to save everyone from going to hell.
- The new plan entailed sending Jesus, who perfectly followed "the Law" as the only human capable of doing so. As a result, after Jesus, no one else has to struggle to keep "the Law." We only need to pray "the prayer" and be saved, without having to follow "the Law" ever again.
- The Old Testament is not intended for us, but rather for those who lived before Jesus. However, we can use it as a reference guide to learn about the past.

- The New Testament is for us who live after Jesus, and it teaches us how to live like Him.

However, my life changed when I was given a DVD series by Michael Rood called "The Rude Awakening" in my early twenties. I finally found answers to many of the questions that had been troubling me. I learned that Jesus was not God's Plan B, and the Old Testament and "the Law" had more significance than just a mere history lesson. I was so excited that I shared my newfound knowledge with my mother, but she was not convinced and said that she would continue living her life as she always had.

However, something I said must have touched her heart because later that day, she prayed to the Lord to show her the truth. And just a few weeks later, a woman she had met three years prior at a women's conference sent her a DVD set about the Law and its relevance to us today. This was a blessing from God, and it changed our entire family for the better. We embarked on a journey together to discover the truth about our Messiah, a Jew who lived the way God intended all humans to live.

The motivation behind writing this book stems from the fact that our family has encountered numerous arguments over the years that challenge the belief in the entirety of God's Word and the observance of His commandments. What's disheartening is that these arguments have not arisen from non-believers, but from fellow believers who frequently misuse scripture to support their stance. This book aims to aid those who are perplexed by the arguments presented by both sides of the debate or those who have faith but struggle with answering challenging questions related to this subject. It is my hope that this book will prove useful to you.

As you read through this book, I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to remove any filters of doctrine and religion from your heart, eyes, and ears. Allow His Holy Spirit to guide you in understanding the truth of His Word. I would also encourage the reader to test everything that is written in this book, just like we are told to do in Thessalonians.

*1 Thessalonians 5:21*

*Amplified Bible*

*But test all things carefully [so you can recognize what is good]. Hold firmly to that which is good.*

As you conclude this study, remember to cling to what is genuine, beneficial, and life-giving. Instead of clinging to man-made doctrines and belief systems, we are instructed to worship God alone, not any particular Church, denomination, or man-made doctrine.

## Chapter 1: What is the great deception?

### The serpent that twists the truth

*Genesis 3:1*

*English Standard Version*

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.*

The word “crafty” means cunning. The definition of cunning is “having or showing skill in achieving one's ends by deceit or evasion.”

Why are snakes used in the Bible to represent evil? God created the snake, and the animal itself is not evil (mostly just scary!). The snake represents evil because it moves by twisting, and so the nature of evil is to twist. A lie, whether it is big or small, is a twisting of the truth. So, all evil is the twisting of the truth.

If we could sum up the master plan of the enemy in one word, it could certainly be “misinterpretation”. A leopard may not change its spots, but a serpent certainly does not change its ways either. And what did the serpent do when he tempted Eve? He caused her to misinterpret / twist the Word of God!

### How to twist the Word of God

We need to go back to where it all went wrong for humanity. If the serpent does not change its ways, then the original deception that caused the fall of mankind should be our focus when we study all other subsequent forms of deceit.

## *Genesis 3:1-4*

### *English Standard Version*

*He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"<sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"<sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die*

If we could break down the steps of deception it would look like this:

**Step 1:** Questioning if this was what God commanded and expects of you.

*Genesis 3:1 "Did God actually say"?*

**Step 2:** Changing the commandments of God to suit your own understanding.

*Genesis 3:3 "neither shall you touch it, lest you die."*

God never said they were not to touch it; Eve added this part to the commandment herself.

**Step 3:** Convince your prey that they should do the opposite of what God commands.

*Genesis 3:4 "But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die".*

This three-step master plan of the enemy is alive and well today in the body of Messiah! And the main focus of his twisting is still the Word of God. Why does the enemy twist the Word of God? Because in it lies the possibility of blessing and life! The Word of God is the manual to life, and if you misinterpret the manual, the enemy has a way of getting you to open a door for him to slither his way into your life and bring destruction.

## How do we misinterpret the Word of God?

### Ignoring the context

This is probably the most common mistake most believers make when reading the Bible. Taking anything out of context will nearly always result in false interpretation of the truth God intends for us to understand and apply to our lives.

What does context mean when we talk about it in terms of the study of Bible verses and passages? Context is *“the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.”* Or *“the parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning.”*

It is crucial to comprehend the complete context in which a Bible verse was written before quoting it. To acquire a comprehensive understanding, it may be essential to read the entire chapter, or even the entire book. For example, reading the entire book of Romans can provide context for a verse found in Romans. By understanding the context, we can accurately interpret it and apply it to our present situation.

Context can furthermore be gained by asking the following questions:

- Who wrote this passage / book?
- Who was it written to (the audience)?
- What time in history was it written?
- What were the common idioms and beliefs of that day?
- What was the social issues faced during that time?
- What was the original language it was written in?

### Doctrinal Bias

*“Doctrinal bias occurs when we conduct any Bible Study, translation of text, or analysis of a Bible topic through the lens of an opinion already formed.”*

How to overcome doctrinal bias? When approaching a study on a complex or controversial issue, you may ask yourself the following questions:

- What have I learned or been taught about this topic before?
- What are the opinions of the spiritual leaders / mentors in my life?
- Is there anything in my life experience, religious upbringing, culture, or prior study that would pre-dispose me for or against a specific view?

Different forms of bias to beware of:

- Confirmation bias: causes you to see what you want to see.
- Circular reasoning: falsely reinterpreting a verse to fit your own view.
- Framing bias: reacting differently to identical data depending on how something is framed.
- Over-confidence: elevating one's own opinion or the opinion of a favourite spiritual teacher or leader.
- The ambiguity effect: being biased towards views that tie things up in a neat package versus leaving ambiguities.
- Bandwagon effect: following the herd.

### **Allowing our traditions and culture to cloud the facts**

Many of us make the mistake of taking our own traditions and imposing it on our understanding of the Scripture, without ever checking the origin of those traditions against the truth of the Word of God.

### **Ignoring what the Bible teaches elsewhere on a specific topic**

We should always allow Scripture to interpret Scripture; more light is shed on a truth taught in the Word of God when we look at what other Bible passages teach about the same topic.



## Changing the meaning of words, ideas and phrases

Considering context, as well as the original language a passage was written in, helps to provide the correct meaning of words, ideas and phrases found in the Bible.

## Why is it important to understand the Word of God correctly?

If we go back to our original example of Adam and Eve, we see that their misinterpretation led to sin, which in turn led to death and them being exiled from the garden! Pretty severe consequences, and not only on them, but on all of humanity to follow.

We have allowed our traditions and own doctrinal bias to remove us from the blessing God intended for us. Many believers today are not living in the fullness of the blessings found in the Word of God. Why?

*Mark 7:13*

*English Standard Version*

*“thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”*

We have made the Word of God void through our own traditions!

In the upcoming chapters we will be looking at how deep this cancer of deception has been allowed to grow in the Body of Messiah, and how far we have strayed from the original Word of God!

## Chapter 2: How is the body of Messiah deceived?

In Chapter 1 we discussed how the serpent twists the truth, mixing a little truth with a little lie to create wickedness. The Bible frequently references the wicked and wicked ways, and while we may imagine these people to be evil Satan worshippers, the word "wicked" is rooted in the concept of twisting or winding, like the wick of a candle. In modern times, it has come to mean morally corrupt or evil. But who determines what is good or evil? I propose that only the Word of God has the authority to define these concepts. However, Satan has twisted the truth of the Word of God with the lie of idolatry, leading many believers astray from the true Word of God.

God calls the Body of Messiah to be one, but today Christianity has over 45,000 denominations, causing confusion and a lack of unity. Before we explore the cause of this confusion in the Church, I want to state my faith. I believe in the one true living God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, whose name is YHVH Elohim, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He created human beings in His image to serve as a kingdom of priests on earth, but due to Adam and Eve's rebellion and sin, death entered the world. God's greatest act of grace was removing them from the Garden of Eden before they could eat from the Tree of Life and be eternally stuck in a state of death. He sent His only Son, Jesus the Messiah, the Lamb of God, to die on the cross and break the curse of the law of sin and death caused by Adam and Eve's sin. Eternal life can only be attained through the Blood of the Lamb, and it is a gift that cannot be earned through actions. Only by accepting Him as your Saviour can one be saved.

While most Christian denominations would agree with the above to some extent, there are differences in their beliefs and practices that distinguish one denomination from another.

### The most notable differences among Christian denominations include:

- **Theology:** Different interpretations of the Bible, the nature of God, and the role of Jesus.
- **Structure:** Varied organizational structures, ranging from hierarchical with a single leader to decentralized.
- **Worship:** Distinct styles of worship, encompassing music, liturgy, and sacraments.

- **Practices:** Divergent practices such as baptism, communion, and confession, and varying views on issues such as contraception, marriage, and the role of women in the Church.
- **Origin:** Some denominations have roots in the early Christian Church, while others have been formed more recently as a response to social and cultural changes.

The Bible is often viewed as the unifying factor in Christianity, but it is actually a source of contention between different denominations. This is because each denomination may have its own translation of the Bible, which reflects its unique beliefs and interpretations. Some denominations may even use different versions of the same translation based on their congregations' specific needs and beliefs.

Certain denominations may place more emphasis on certain books or parts of the Bible, which can affect their interpretation of the text and their understanding of it. For instance, some modern-day believers may misquote passages of Scripture from the "New Testament" to fit their doctrines and beliefs because they do not have a good understanding of the "Old Testament."

This leads to the main point that the Word of God cannot be used to support one's doctrinal beliefs. Doctrine refers to the teachings and beliefs of a particular Christian denomination or tradition, and it is man-made. In contrast, God's ordinances, laws, decrees, and judgments in His Word should take precedence over man-made doctrine.

To avoid falling into this trap, it is important to do one's own research on issues held as firm doctrine, study the Word of God, and see if these doctrines align with the Bible's actual message. Ultimately, the written Word of God is the one and only authority that will judge us when we stand before His throne one day.

## Studying the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek

Studying the original Hebrew and Greek text of the Bible can reveal nuances and subtleties that are lost in translation. This is because the choice of word and syntax can greatly affect the meaning of the text. Moreover, cultural references, idioms, and historical

events may not be readily apparent to readers in different cultures or time periods. Additionally, translations may be inaccurate or imprecise, reflecting the translator's biases that can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

However, studying the original languages may not always be feasible. In such cases, there are alternative ways to approach Bible study to avoid losing the context and true meaning of the text. Utilizing study tools such as Strong's Concordance can provide valuable insights into the cultural and historical context in which the Bible was written. Reading multiple translations, along with studying commentaries and other Biblical resources, can help provide a more comprehensive understanding of the text. It is important to keep in mind that studying the Bible is a continual process and requires dedication and a willingness to seek guidance from the Holy Spirit.

## **The pagan ways of Christianity**

The wickedness that Satan used to mix the truth and the lie extends much further than just the mistakes we find in different translations of the Bible. It extends to the very roots of what is called Christianity. Before delving into the concept of the "pagan ways of Christianity," it is necessary to define the term pagan. This term refers to the impact of pre-Christian beliefs and customs on the evolution of Christianity.

The term "pagan" typically refers to a person who is not a believer in a monotheistic religion, such as Christianity. It can also be used to describe non-Abrahamic religions or belief systems, especially those that existed before the advent of monotheistic religions. Paganism, on the other hand, is a broad term used to describe a range of non-Abrahamic religious and spiritual traditions that often involve a reverence for nature and the worship of multiple deities. These practices and beliefs vary widely across different cultures and historical periods, and can include forms of animism, polytheism, and pantheism, among others.

In the ancient world, many cultures had pagan religious beliefs that were centred around the worship of gods, goddesses, and other supernatural beings. When Christianity emerged, it encountered a widespread pagan culture and, in some cases, aspects of these pagan beliefs and practices were incorporated into the (new) religion. But Christianity was never intended by God to be a new religion. It was the same religion practiced by Adam

and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, etc. Jesus never came to change a religion or to start a new religion. He simply came to give revelation and insight into the Word of God!

But I digress, let's go back to the early days of Christianity, where some pagan festivals were transformed into Christian holidays, such as the celebration of the birth of Jesus at the winter solstice, which was previously a pagan festival honouring the sun god. Similarly, symbols and rituals from pagan religions, such as the use of the cross as a symbol of the Christian faith, may have also been incorporated into Christianity.

One of the people that shaped early Christianity in the most profound way, is Constantine. Constantine, also known as Constantine the Great, was a Roman Emperor who lived from February 27, c. 272 AD to May 22, 337 AD. First, Constantine's conversion to Christianity marked a significant turning point in the history of the Christian faith. Prior to Constantine's reign, Christians were often persecuted, and their faith was not widely accepted. However, after Constantine's conversion, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which granted religious tolerance to Christians and effectively made Christianity an officially recognized religion in the Roman Empire. This had a major impact on the spread and development of the religion, and many pagan practices and beliefs were incorporated into Christian worship because of this increased exposure to pagan culture.

Constantine's political and religious policies played a role in shaping the development of Christian doctrine. For example, Constantine was instrumental in convening the Council of Nicaea in 325, which was a gathering of bishops and other Christian leaders who sought to address theological disputes and establish a unified Christian doctrine. This council had a major impact on the development of Christian doctrine, and its decisions helped to shape the beliefs of the Christian Church for centuries to come. Interestingly enough, the people in charge of establishing this unified doctrine did not include any of the Jewish believers in the Messiah, or any Rabbis. This council consisted of bishops, not Rabbis! This is profound because the ones who studied the word of God from generation to generation, who knew what the words meant in the original Hebrew, were the Rabbis. This is where the paganistic beliefs of the Roman world were woven into the very foundation of the Church!

Overall, while the influence of paganism on Christianity can be seen throughout its history, the reign of Constantine was a particularly significant moment in the development

of the religion. By granting religious tolerance to Christians and playing a role in shaping Christian doctrine, Constantine had a lasting impact on the development of the Christian faith.

The account of Constantine's conversion from paganism to Christianity does not follow the model we see Jesus and His disciples preaching to the Gentiles. He did not repent of his sins, and he did not change his paganistic ways.

In the early 4th century, Constantine experienced a vision of a cross in the sky and heard a voice that said, "By this sign, conquer." After this vision, he became a supporter of Christianity and declared himself a Christian.

While Constantine's conversion to Christianity was a major turning point in the history of the Roman Empire and the Christian Church, his beliefs and practices as a Christian were not always orthodox. Some sources suggest that Constantine continued to observe pagan rituals and worship pagan gods, and there is evidence that he held a somewhat syncretic belief system that combined elements of Christianity and paganism.

Just like the "father" of the faith, Constantine, many believers today also have a syncretic belief system. The difference may just be that they are not even aware of it. They are so far removed from the true roots of their faith, that they don't even know that mixed with the truth they believe, is the lie of paganism.

## Pagan feasts kept by Christians today

Many Christian traditions have adopted or adapted pagan celebrations and feasts over time. Some examples of pagan celebrations that have been added to Christianity include:

- **Christmas:** December 25th was originally a pagan holiday celebrating the winter solstice, but it was later adopted by Christians as the day to celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- **Easter:** The celebration of Easter is thought to have originated from a pagan festival celebrating the spring equinox and the goddess Eostre. Christians later adopted the holiday to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

- **Valentine's Day:** The origins of Valentine's Day are not entirely clear. One theory is that the holiday originated from a pagan festival called Lupercalia, which was celebrated in mid-February and was associated with fertility and the coming of spring. Another theory is that it is named after Saint Valentine who performed marriages during a time when the Roman Emperor banned marriages.
- **Halloween:** Halloween is a holiday that is celebrated annually on October 31st. The origins of Halloween can be traced back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, which was celebrated by the Celts of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales more than 2,000 years ago. Samhain marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter and was believed to be a time when the boundaries between the world of the living and the world of the dead were at their weakest.
- **New Year's:** New Year's Day has a variety of pagan roots and influences. One of the most significant of these is the ancient Roman festival of Janus, which was celebrated at the beginning of the year and honoured the two-faced god Janus, who could look back on the past and forward to the future. The festival was a time of renewal, reflection, and making resolutions for the coming year.

Another important pagan influence on New Year's Day is the Germanic festival of Yule, which was celebrated at the winter solstice and marked the return of the sun after the longest, darkest night of the year.

When the early Christian Church began celebrating the birth of Jesus as a holiday, it was often associated with the pagan celebrations of the winter solstice and the beginning of the year, and many of the customs and traditions associated with these festivals were adopted and adapted into the Christian celebration of Christmas and New Year's.

- **Sunday as the Sabbath:** One of the main reasons for the change was the desire to differentiate Christian worship from Jewish worship. The early Christians observed the Jewish Sabbath on Saturday, as specified in the Ten Commandments, but as Christianity spread and became more diverse, there was a growing desire to separate Christian worship from its Jewish roots. This led to the adoption of Sunday as a day of worship. Sunday was associated with the worship of the sun in ancient pagan cultures, particularly in the Roman Empire. The Roman god Sol Invictus (the "Unconquered Sun") was associated with Sunday, and this day was considered a day of rest and celebration.

These are just a few examples of the many pagan celebrations and feasts that have been adopted or adapted by Christians over time. It's worth noting that the exact nature and

significance of these holidays varies from one Christian tradition to another, and the way they are celebrated can also vary widely depending on local customs and traditions.

Why is this even an issue one may ask. Well, let's look at how God feels about pagan feasts.

### *Deuteronomy 12:29-32*

#### *English Standard Version*

*"When the Lord your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, <sup>30</sup> take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.' <sup>31</sup> You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way, for every abominable thing that the Lord hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.*

<sup>32</sup> *"Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.*

### *Colossians 2:8*

#### *English Standard Version*

*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

### *Jeremiah 10:1-4*

#### *English Standard Version*

*Hear the word that the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. <sup>2</sup> Thus says the Lord:*

*"Learn not the way of the nations,  
nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens  
because the nations are dismayed at them,  
<sup>3</sup> for the customs of the peoples are vanity.*



*A tree from the forest is cut down  
and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman.  
4 They decorate it with silver and gold;  
they fasten it with hammer and nails  
so that it cannot move.*

I urge you to conduct your own investigation into what God defines as Idolatry and how He addresses it, as these Scriptural references are only a few examples. Worshiping God cannot involve mixing the truth with a lie. God abhors it when we claim to be "redeeming" something that belongs to the kingdom of darkness for the Kingdom of Heaven. Idolatry and paganism, along with their beliefs and traditions, were never God's and cannot be "redeemed" because redemption only applies to things that originally belonged to Him.

Why is all this important to know? Well, my friend, you and I have been deceived. The enemy has brought deception to the deepest roots of the foundation of our faith. I do hope that through this study, we may find again the true roots of our faith, and a renewed love for the Word of God!

*John 8:32*

*English Standard Version*

*"and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

The primary purpose of this book is to separate falsehood from reality, leading us towards freedom. One of the approaches to achieving this goal is by uncovering the deception and bringing to light the truth. But where can we find the truth?

*Jeremiah 6:16*

*English Standard Version*

*Thus says the Lord:*

*"Stand by the roads, and look,  
and ask for the ancient paths,  
where the good way is; and walk in it,*

*and find rest for your souls.  
But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'*

Some will read this book and will heed the teaching of it and will start to walk in the ancient paths. But others may be hard hearted, like Pharoah, and say "I will not walk in it". May the LORD have mercy on your soul, and may the Holy Spirit soften your heart so that the seed of the Word of God may fall on fertile ground!

## Chapter 3: The Ancient Way

As stated in the preceding chapter, Christianity was not a recent faith; it had ancient origins. The Messiah who sacrificed Himself on the cross for our transgressions, was prophesied from the book of Genesis throughout all the prophets and Scriptures until we reach the book of Matthew. Therefore, if you genuinely desire to comprehend the authenticity of your faith, we must revisit the beginning.

*Malachi 4:6*

*English Standard Version*

*And He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...*

Whom did Malachi prophesy about as the fathers of our faith? We have overlooked the identities of our faith's forefathers, failed to adhere to their guidance and methods because we have not been educated about them.

*Isaiah 51:2*

*English Standard Version*

*Look to Abraham your father  
and to Sarah who bore you;  
for he was but one when I called him,  
that I might bless him and multiply him.*

It's essential to realize that Constantine is not the father of our faith, but rather Abraham. Even though Abraham was a pagan idol worshipper, God summoned Abraham to worship Him. Abraham responded by abandoning the land of idolatry, forging a Covenant with God, and following Him, making Abraham the first Hebrew. If we profess to believe in Jesus, we must walk the same route as Abraham. We must leave behind our idolatry and paganism, and start following the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

To discover the ancient ways of our faith, which leads to peace in our souls, we must seek the ancient paths.

## Abraham was a Hebrew

It's a common misconception for people to equate the term "Hebrew" with "Jew," which is entirely inaccurate. Let's explore the meaning of "Hebrew" and its relevance to our lives today.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God's chosen people referred to themselves as Hebrews. The first individual to be labelled a Hebrew was Abraham, who is also recognized as the father of those who are devoted to the Living God and Creator of the universe. Given that Abraham hailed from Ur of the Chaldeans, why was he recognized as a Hebrew then?

The simplest form of the word Hebrew means "one from beyond".

H5680 – עברי – 'ĕbrî – Hebrew

**Brown-Driver-Briggs Dictionary Definition:**

*Hebrew = "one from beyond"*

***Genesis 14:13***

***Amplified Bible***

*Then a survivor who had escaped [from the invading forces on the other side of the Jordan] came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the terebinths (oaks) of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner—they were allies of Abram.*

Abraham's origins on the far side of the Euphrates River, and his subsequent settlement in Mamre are two possible explanations for why he was dubbed a Hebrew. Additionally, the Hebrew word "Ivri / Hebrew" is closely linked to "Eber," which denotes "beyond" or "across." Thus, being a Hebrew can be interpreted as being someone who comes from across or beyond.

God summoned Abraham from a land steeped in idolatry, urging him to take a leap of faith and migrate to a new land that God had pledged to him and his descendants. This mirrors every believer's personal calling from death to life. God summons each one of us out of idolatry (which leads to death) and into life through faith rather than works. As we see with Abraham, salvation is achieved through faith and not works.

### *Romans 4:3*

#### *Amplified Bible*

*For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed in (trusted, relied on) God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness (right living, right standing with God)."*

#### **Believed**

##### **Strong's Number - G4100**

Definition: From G4102; to have faith (in upon or with respect to a person or thing) that is credit; by implication to entrust (especially one's spiritual wellbeing to Christ): believe or believer, commit (to trust) put in trust with.

#### **Righteousness**

##### **Strong's Number - G1343**

Definition: From G1342; equity (of character or act); specifically (Christian) justification: righteousness.

Abraham's faith in God, despite not having met the Messiah yet and living many years before Jesus' crucifixion, is what ultimately saved him. He believed in the Word of God before it became flesh and dwelled among us. This principle is crucial to grasp about the ancient way. Many accuse the ancient way of promoting salvation based on works, but this is not the case. Faith in the Messiah is the only way to salvation, and nothing a person does can save him / her. A Hebrew is someone who has transitioned from death to life, from a life of sin to one of righteousness through obedience to God's commandments. They leave behind false gods and dedicate themselves to worshipping and obeying the true Creator of the universe. Jesus discusses this idea frequently, promising that those who hear His voice and trust in God will pass from death to life.

John 5:24

*Amplified Bible*

*"I assure you and most solemnly say to you, the person who hears My word [the one who heeds My message], and believes and trusts in Him who sent Me, has (possesses now) eternal life [that is, eternal life actually begins—the believer is transformed], and does not come into judgment and condemnation, but has passed [over] from death into life.*

1 John 3:14

*Amplified Bible*

*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers and sisters. He who does not love remains in [spiritual] death.*

1 John 3: 19-24

*Amplified Bible*

*By this we will know [without any doubt] that we are of the truth and will assure our heart and quiet our conscience before Him <sup>20</sup> whenever our heart convicts us [in guilt]; for God is greater than our heart and He knows all things [nothing is hidden from Him because we are in His hands]. <sup>21</sup> Beloved, if our heart does not convict us [of guilt], we have confidence [complete assurance and boldness] before God; <sup>22</sup> and we receive from Him whatever we ask because we [carefully and consistently] keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight [habitually seeking to follow His plan for us]. <sup>23</sup> This is His commandment, that we believe [with personal faith and confident trust] in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [that we unselfishly] love and seek the best for one another, just as He commanded us. <sup>24</sup> The one who habitually keeps His commandments [obeying His word and following His precepts, abides and] remains in Him, and He in him. By this we know and have the proof that He [really] abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us [as a gift].*

To clarify; a Hebrew is anyone who has transitioned from a state of spiritual death to life through faith in God and obedience to His commandments. However, not all Hebrews are Jews. The term "Jew" specifically refers to the descendants of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi who are from the region of Judea. Even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (later named Israel) were not Jews. While the concept of a Jew will be further explored later in

this study, it is important to note that returning to the ancient way does not entail becoming Jewish, converting to Judaism, or identifying as a Jew.

## The Ancient Paths

By following the ancient paths as declared in Jeremiah 6:16, the believer returns to the foundation of the faith in a Living God through repentance and obedience to His commandments. This way advocates adherence to the commandments and believes in Jesus as the Messiah. In essence, the ancient way embraces the entirety of the Word of God, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. This contrasts with Judaism, which primarily focuses on the Old Testament, and Christianity, which mainly emphasizes the New Testament. Even the apostle Paul, who is often misquoted and misunderstood, affirmed the importance of the whole Word of God, as stated in 2 Timothy.

### *2 Timothy 3:16*

#### *English Standard Version*

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

The ancient way has a long history, dating back to the time after the death of Jesus (the Hebrew name for Jesus is Yeshua) when His disciples and apostles began meeting in small groups in houses to share the Gospel. These groups, known as "The Way", believed in Jesus as the Messiah and adhered to the Torah (the commandments given by God).

Their approach mirrored that of Abraham, who, through faith, was obedient to the commandments of God and abandoned man-made laws. In essence, they returned to the fundamental foundation of the faith. Instead of fearing man, they feared God.

They called themselves "The Way" because they believed that Jesus was the Living Word, the Torah, who came to live among them and show them how to live out the commandments as God intended. He was "The Way" to life and "The Way" back to the Garden of Eden.

*John 14:6*

*English Standard Version*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Let's look at some references to "The Way":

*Acts 19:9*

*English Standard Version*

*But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.*

*Acts 24:14*

*English Standard Version*

*But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,*

Living according to the ways of Abraham, the father of our faith, is a fundamental aspect of being grafted in by Jesus into the Covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, if we identify ourselves as children of Abraham, we should strive to live in accordance with his ways.

*Genesis 26:4-5*  
*Amplified Bible*

*I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of the heavens, and will give to your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,<sup>5</sup> because Abraham listened to and obeyed My voice and [consistently] kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*



How could Abraham have followed the commandments, statutes, and Laws (Torah) if they were not given until hundreds of years later at Mount Sinai? Actually, the commandments of God have always existed. Even Adam and Eve knew them, and Noah knew about clean and unclean animals. The Israelites, when they went to Egypt, forgot the commandments, and assimilated into the idolatry of Egypt. God brought them into the wilderness to Mount Sinai to remind them of His rules, which He expected them to live by. God has always been unchanging, and His rules have remained the same since the beginning of creation. He desires all living beings to be obedient to the same set of rules that He established from the beginning.

## Chapter 4: Grafted into Israel

In the preceding chapter, we established the meaning of a Hebrew as someone who, like Abraham, transitions from death to life. The subsequent term we must clarify is "Israel," and its relevance to us.

### Who is Israel?

The first mention of the word Israel in the Bible is in Genesis 32.

*Genesis 32:27-28*

*Amplified Bible*

*So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." <sup>28</sup> And He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed."*

### Israel

**Strong's Number - H3478**

Definition: From H8280 and H410; he will rule as God

{Jisrael} a symbolical name of Jacob; also (typically) of his posterity: - Israel.

God changed Jacob's name to Israel, making him the first person associated with the name. Israel had 12 sons, who became the 12 tribes of Israel, and collectively known as Israel. When they entered the Promised Land, they did so as one people. However, after King Solomon's death in 930 B.C., the Kingdom of Israel split into the Northern Kingdom, which retained the name Israel, and the Southern Kingdom called Judah.

**The Northern Kingdom consisted of the following tribes:**

- Asher
- Dan
- Half tribe of Ephraim (representing Joseph)

- Gad
- Issachar
- Half tribe of Manasseh (representing Joseph)
- Naphtali
- Reuben
- Simeon
- Zebulun

The Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, was primarily inhabited by the powerful tribe of Judah, along with the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. Their settled region was called Judea, and from this area, the term "Jews" originated.

Therefore, the concept of Israel began with a single person, Jacob, who was later renamed Israel. From there, it expanded to include the twelve tribes of Israel, and eventually the land of Canaan became known as Israel. The Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel were later divided, with the tribes of the Northern Kingdom maintaining the name Israel.

## Who are the Jews?

To clarify, Jews are not simply descendants of Judah. Rather, the term "Jews" primarily refers to individuals who can trace their lineage back to the Southern Kingdom of Israel, specifically the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi. These three tribes were collectively known as the Jews because the Temple Mount was in the territory of Judah and Benjamin, and the Levites served in the Temple.

It is important to note that being a Jew is an ethnicity and keeping the commandments / Torah does not necessarily make someone Jewish. In fact, many Jews today do not practice the faith at all. Therefore, non-Jews who choose to observe the commandments / Torah are not converting to Judaism or becoming Jews.

There is much to learn from Jewish culture and tradition, as they have preserved the Hebrew Scriptures and offer valuable insights into the interpretation of the Word of God.

Understanding the Jewish culture in which Jesus lived is also essential for fully grasping the depth of His teachings and parables in the New Testament.

## How the exiles shaped our understanding of Israel and the Jews

Understanding this important piece of history provides context to the present-day association of the land of Israel with the Jewish people. However, both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms eventually fell into idolatry and sin, leading to God's judgment and their eviction from the Promised Land. This event parallels the eviction of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. The Assyrian King Shalmaneser V conquered the Northern Kingdom, and its tribes were exiled to upper Mesopotamia and Medes (present-day Syria and Iraq) and became known as the lost tribes of Israel because they never returned to the land of Israel. The Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, was conquered by Babylon in 587 B.C. About 70 years later, many Jews returned to the land of Israel and established a nation that lasted for generations. Although Israel today is commonly associated with the Jewish people, it's important to note that according to the Bible, Israel comprised all 12 tribes, not just the Jews.

## Who was the covenant made with at Mount Sinai?

The covenant established at Mount Sinai was not exclusively with the Jews, nor were the Torah / commandments solely for them. Rather, they were given to all of Israel, including the mixed multitude.

*Exodus 12:38*

*Amplified Bible*

*A mixed multitude [of non-Israelites from foreign nations] also went with them, along with both flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.*

Mixed

Strong's Number - H6154

Definition: the web (or transverse threads of cloth); also a {mixture} (or mongrel race): - {Arabia} mingled {people} mixed ({multitude}).

## **Multitude**

### **Strong's Number - H7227**

Definition: abundant (in {quantity} {size} {age} {number} {rank} quality)

During Israel's time in Egypt, people from different countries were also enslaved there. Some Israelites intermarried with the Egyptians, and when the God of Israel called them to leave, anyone was welcome to answer the call and apply the blood of the lamb to their doorposts. As Israel crossed the Red Sea, this mixed multitude left with them. It is a beautiful picture of the prophecy of spiritual Israel.

There is a common misconception that the Covenant at Mount Sinai was only made with the Jews. Yet, the concept of Jews did not emerge until much later with the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel after King Solomon's death. The Covenant at Mount Sinai was made with the mixed multitude, and it was meant for both physical and spiritual Israel.

God's plan was never limited to an elect few. It has always been an open invitation to anyone who believes, like Abraham, and follows God's commandments by faith, to enter the Promised Land. The Israelites serve as an example for every "Hebrew" or true believer in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

## **Grafted into Spiritual Israel**

Understanding the distinction between Israel, the Jews, and spiritual Israel is crucial for believers today. It is relevant to our understanding of Biblical history and prophecy.

With the knowledge you have gained about Israel and Judah, I encourage you to conduct a comprehensive personal study of the following two passages in the Bible:

Ezekiel 37:15-23

Romans 11

We are grafted into the Covenant that God made with Israel, which means that the same rules and commandments of that Covenant apply to us today.

*Romans 11:17-20*

*English Standard Version*

*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, <sup>18</sup> do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. <sup>19</sup> Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." <sup>20</sup> That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear.*

God's plan has always included the Jews, Israel, and the Gentiles, as He desires all who are obedient to Him to become part of spiritual Israel. Salvation is not exclusive to the Jews, as Paul teaches in Romans, but also available to the Gentiles.

When one does an in-depth study of the complete passage of Romans 11, it will become clear that the Gentiles have not replaced Israel or the Jews. Instead, it is all part of God's plan to provide salvation to both Gentiles and Jews alike.

Before we look at Romans 11, let's define the term "Gentile". In the Scriptures, the term "Gentiles" generally refers to all nations or peoples who are not part of the Israelite community. It is a term used to distinguish between the Israelites and non-Israelites. The concept of "Gentiles" appears frequently in the Scriptures, particularly in the prophetic writings. For example, in Isaiah 42:6, God says, ***"I will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles."*** This passage implies that the Israelites have a special role to play in bringing God's message to the non-Israelite peoples of the world.

In other passages, such as Ezekiel 47:22-23, the Gentiles are described as being able to share in the blessings of God's Kingdom. Here, the prophet states that the Gentiles will be allotted portions of the land alongside the Israelites and will be given the same rights and privileges. Overall, the Scriptures suggest that while the Israelites were chosen by God for a special role, the Gentiles are not excluded from God's plan of salvation and can be included in the covenant community through faith and obedience.

*Romans 11:1-2*

*Amplified Bible*

*Israel Is Not Cast Away*

*I say then, has God rejected and disowned His people? Certainly not! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup> God has not rejected His [chosen] people whom He foreknew.*

If you do not consider yourself part of Israel, then you can with ease discard most of what is written in the Bible, because the majority of the Word of God is directed at the sons of Israel. This does not mean the sons of the physical seed of Israel. This is the sons of the spiritual seed of Israel. We are part of spiritual Israel, and as such we form part of the descendants that God promised Abraham would be as numerous as the sand of the seashore and the stars in the heavens.

**Jesus was a Hebrew and a Jew**

*Matthew 1:1*

*English Standard Version*

*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*

Matthew's genealogy in chapter 1 of his Gospel confirms that Jesus was both a Jew and a Hebrew. He is identified as the son of David, which is a spiritual fulfilment of Messianic prophecy rather than a literal genealogy. Jesus is also identified as the son of Abraham, which holds significant fulfilment of prophecy. A study of the binding of Isaac is

encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of Messiah as the son of Abraham.

It is important to recognize the Jewishness of the Messiah and to study His teachings and parables from the foundation of Torah to fully grasp their meaning. Jesus had to fulfil many requirements in the Torah to qualify as the prophesied Messiah. This may be what He meant when He said He came to fulfil, not abolish, Torah.

To conclude, the Complete Jewish Study Bible offers a direct quote on this topic.

*“This is the genealogy of Yeshua the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham. Matthew opens with a genealogy because in the first-century Jewish world, descent is often more important than character. Furthermore, the phrase “This is the genealogy” reflects the Hebrew phrase eleh toldot, which appears ten times in Genesis, framing the story of Messiah Yeshua as the reflection and continuation of the narratives of the Torah. This genealogy confirms that Yeshua meets all the requirements of the Tanakh (Old Testament) for the Messiah; a descendent of Avraham (Abraham; Gen. 22:18), Ya’akov (Jacob; Num. 24:17), Y’hudah (Judah; Gen. 49:10), Yishai (Jesse; Isa. 11:11), David (2 Sam. 7:13), and Z’rubavel (Zerubbabel; Hag. 2:22-23). Yeshua is Jesus’ name in Hebrew and Aramic, which are the languages he spoke. The word Iesous represents the Greek speakers’ attempt at pronouncing “Yeshua”. The Greek word for “Messiah” is Christos, with the Hebrew Masiach, meaning “anointed” or “poured on”. More than three hundred and eighty times in the B’rit Hadashah (New Testament), “Messiah” appears as a reminder that he is revealed as the promised Messiah for whom the Jewish people have yearned.”*

*Complete Jewish Study Bible, Page 1380*

For more information, watch the below YouTube Video by Jim Staley:

Click on the hyperlink below to open the YouTube video:

[Jim Staley - Identity Crisis](#)



## Chapter 5: What is the Torah?

### The Torah means “the instructions of God”

What does the word Torah mean?

Torah (תורה) in Hebrew means teaching, direction, guidance, and law.

The Torah represents the loving instructions of our Father, the Creator of all things. He understood that certain behaviours and actions would lead to life, while others would result in death. This is evident from the very start, when He provided clear commandments, laws, and instructions to Adam and Eve in the Garden.

*Genesis 1:28*

*Amplified Bible*

*And God blessed them [granting them certain authority] and said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subjugate it [putting it under your power]; and rule over (dominate) the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth.”*

*Genesis 2:15*

*Amplified Bible*

*So the Lord God took the man [He had made] and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.*

*Genesis 2:17*

*Amplified Bible*

*but [only] from the tree of the knowledge (recognition) of good and evil you shall not eat, otherwise on the day that you eat from it, you shall most certainly die [because of your disobedience].*

It is interesting to note how God has always been concerned with what we eat, as seen from the very beginning when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because of their disobedience regarding food. Throughout history, God has given specific instructions about what is considered food and what is not.

Unfortunately, there is a negative stigma attached to the word Torah or Law in Christianity, even though it is a loving Father's instructions to His children. As parents, we also have rules and instructions for our children because we love them and want what's best for them. Similarly, God's commandments are for our own well-being. However, we tend to reject His commandments and view them as something negative that we should avoid.

Furthermore, there is a false teaching and doctrine that God had changed His mind and removed His commandments because He knew we could not keep them. However, this is illogical and inconsistent with how a loving parent would act towards his / her child. If your child has difficulty following the rules, would you eliminate the rules and allow them to act as they please? Or alternatively, would you provide guidance and discipline to help them develop obedience? God's rules and regulations have existed since the beginning of creation and still stand today. His Word remains unchanged, and His commandments still apply.

To support this claim, here are a few Scripture references that demonstrate that God does not change, and His commandments remain relevant today.

*Malachi 3:6*

*Amplified Bible*

*"For I am the Lord, I do not change [but remain faithful to My Covenant with you]; that is why you, O sons of Jacob, have not come to an end.*

*Isaiah 40:8*

*Amplified Bible*

*The grass withers, the flower fades,  
But the Word of our God stands forever.*

*Psalm 119:89*

*Amplified Bible*

*Forever, O Lord,*

*Your Word is settled in heaven [standing firm and unchangeable].*

*Psalm 33:11*

*Amplified Bible*

*The counsel of the Lord stands forever,*

*The thoughts and plans of His heart through all generations.*

*Numbers 23:19*

*English Standard Version*

*God is not man, that He should lie,  
or a son of man, that He should change His mind.*

*Has He said, and will He not do it?*

*Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfil it?*

*Hebrews 13:8*

*Amplified Bible*

*Jesus Christ is [eternally changeless, always] the same yesterday and today and forever.*

One of the greatest deceptions that many believers readily accept is that God has changed His mind and that we are no longer required to obey His commandments / Torah!

## Where do we find the Torah?

The Torah is a collection of books found in the Old Testament. If you own a Bible with the Old Testament in, you are in possession of the Torah.

The first five books of the Bible that make up the Torah are:

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

If anyone speaks against the Torah, teaches against it, or claims it is irrelevant to believers today, they should remove these five books of the Torah from their Bible. However, this creates a new problem because every other book in the Old and New Testament after the Torah is commentary on and references back to it. The Torah is the foundation on which the rest of the Bible is built; remove the foundation, and the whole structure collapses.

When Jesus was tempted by the adversary in the wilderness, He used Scripture from the Torah to rebuke Satan. In fact, all four times He specifically quoted from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus used the Torah to refute the adversary, which is why the enemy has worked so hard to persuade believers to reject it.

Many of Jesus' teachings are rooted in the Torah. This should not surprise us since He is the Living Word (the Living Torah) who came to dwell among us. The Torah cannot contradict itself.

*John 1:14*

*English Standard Version*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*2 Timothy 3:16*

*English Standard Version*

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

When Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, the New Testament did not yet exist. So, which Scripture was he referring to?

It's important to understand that all the teachings of Jesus, the disciples, and the apostles were based on the Old Testament, which consists of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings (books like Psalms, Proverbs, etc.). Despite the idea that the Old Testament is viewed as a mere history lesson, the very Word that the enemy wants you to reject is what the Messiah and His followers taught from.

James spoke highly of the Torah, calling it perfect and saying that it brings freedom. However, this freedom is only experienced by those who not only hear the Word but also obey it by keeping the commandments. In fact, James even states that keeping the commandments will result in blessings.

*James 1:25*

*Complete Jewish Bible*

*But if a person looks closely into the perfect Torah, which gives freedom, and continues, becoming not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work it requires, then he will be blessed in what he does.*

As per the Word, Satan seeks to steal, kill, and destroy, but his access to us is only through sin. His goal is to rob us of the blessings James spoke of in this passage. I believe that is why he has spent centuries propagating the false doctrine against keeping Torah /commandments of God. This false doctrine goes against the very essence of the Word of God.

This leads us to a crucial question - what is sin? Since the adversary uses sin as his tool to achieve his evil agenda, it is essential for us to understand the definition of sin according to the Word of God, so we can avoid it.

## What is sin?

Take a few minutes to define sin in your own words.

Sin is \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your own idea / definition of sin).

Many people provide diverse answers when asked what constitutes sin. Some may even cite the "7 deadly sins" - pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. However, it is worth noting that this list, arranged in this order, is not found in the Bible. Rather, it is the Roman Catholic Church's compilation of the "7 deadly sins." Therefore, let us turn to the Word of God to discover what it defines as sin, rather than relying on human or institutional interpretations.

*1 John 3:4*

*English Standard Version*

*Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*

*1 John 3:4*

*Amplified Bible*

*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness [ignoring God's law by action or neglect or by tolerating wrongdoing—being unrestrained by His commands and His will].*

*1 John 3:4*

*Complete Jewish Bible*

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

Even when we examine various translations, the conclusion is unanimous: sin is defined as the transgression of the commandments, which is the Torah. Therefore, if Jesus abolished the Torah, why did John, in the New Testament, continue to teach us (after Jesus'

ascension to heaven) that sin is the transgression of the Torah? If the Torah is not relevant to us today, does that mean that Jesus not only abolished the Torah but also eliminated sin? Does this mean we can live however we please? Do whatever we desire? Because there is no more sin?

If that is the case, then these verses are no longer relevant, because there is no more Torah, and there is no more sin. What do we have to repent for if there is no sin?

*1 John 1:9*

*Amplified Bible*

*If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose].*

*Acts 3:19*

*Amplified Bible*

*So repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins] and return [to God—seek His purpose for your life], so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased], so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord [restoring you like a cool wind on a hot day];*

*Matthew 4:17*

*Amplified Bible*

*From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent [change your inner self—your old way of thinking, regret past sins, live your life in a way that proves repentance; seek God’s purpose for your life], for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

*James 4:8*

*Amplified Bible*

*Come close to God [with a contrite heart] and He will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; and purify your [unfaithful] hearts, you double-minded [people].*

The Church faces a significant predicament as it invites sinners to come to Church, accept Jesus, and repent of their sins. However, this practice contradicts the doctrine that denies the existence of Torah. If Torah doesn't exist, then sin doesn't exist, and there's no need for repentance.



## Chapter 6: I am not under the Law

The average Christian's catchphrase might as well be "I am not under the Law." If I had R100 for every time I heard it, I'd be a wealthy woman. Unfortunately, this rejection of the Torah dates to Adam and Eve's disobedience in the garden, resulting in disastrous consequences for them and all of us. Humans tend to be rebellious, while God is inherently good and desires us to choose life and blessings. He presents us with the truth and allows us to choose.

**People can be grouped into three categories:**

- Those who do not acknowledge God as the Creator and do not follow His commandments, including those who serve other gods or do not believe in God at all (agnostics and atheists).
- Those who claim to follow Jesus but do not keep God's commandments, believing that Jesus had also abolished the Law. This includes all Christian denominations that do not observe the Torah.
- Those who believe in the whole Word of God as truth and obey His commandments out of love, known as the ancient way (The Way in the time after Jesus' death).

The question one must ask oneself is, which category do I fall into?

I believe that society's moral decay is not solely caused by Satanism, Hollywood, New-Age beliefs, or the New World Order. Rather, it is due to the rejection of God's Torah. People live according to their own desires, and conveniently blame someone or something else for the consequences. In Biblical times, the enemy sowed confusion around the concept of Law / Torah, leading Jesus and Paul to spend significant time clarifying it for Jews and Gentiles alike.

## *Deuteronomy 4:2*

### *English Standard Version*

*You shall not add to the Word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.*

God explicitly warns us not to add to or subtract from the commandments, and this is precisely where the issue lies with the word "Law." The Jews added their own laws and enforced them as if they were God's commands, which was Jesus' main point of contention with the Pharisees during His time on earth. Meanwhile, Christians have taken away from God's commands, claiming they are no longer applicable to us or have changed for the New Testament believer. Both Jews and Christians have fallen into the very trap warned against in Deuteronomy 4:2.

Therefore, when we refer to the Law, we must be mindful of this distinction between God's Laws and man's laws. While some human laws may be good, they should never be elevated above God's commandments. It's important to recognize the fine line between obedience and legalism.

## **What is Legalism?**

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines legalism as:

*"A strict, literal, or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code the institutionalized legalism that restricts free choice."*

God and His commandments are not an institution, unlike religion, which is. Each denomination of Christianity has created its own rules on how to serve God, while God's commandments remain unchanged. Despite accusing those who follow the ancient way of being legalistic, some Christians themselves follow doctrines that contradict the Word of God. This implies that legalism lies in elevating human teachings above the commandments of God.

Sadly, some who claim to follow the ancient way have also fallen into legalism by confusing God's commandments with man-made traditions. While studying Rabbinic literature and teachings, many start to adhere to extra traditions and even judge others who do not follow them. Although Rabbinic teachings and traditions may sometimes provide context, we should be cautious not to become overly attached to them and forget the perfect Word of God.

During His teachings, Jesus warned against this pitfall multiple times, as we can see in the following Scriptural references:

*Mark 7:6-9*

*Amplified Bible*

*He replied, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites (play-actors, pretenders), as it is written [in Scripture],*

*'These people honour Me with their lips,*

*But their heart is far from Me.*

*<sup>7</sup> 'They worship Me in vain [their worship is meaningless and worthless, a pretence], Teaching the precepts of men as doctrines [giving their traditions equal weight with the Scriptures].'*

*<sup>8</sup> You disregard and neglect the commandment of God, and cling [faithfully] to the tradition of men."*

*<sup>9</sup> He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside and nullifying the commandment of God in order to keep your [man-made] tradition and regulations.*

Jesus frequently rebuked the Pharisees for imposing an overwhelming burden on the people, inventing their own regulations, and augmenting the Word of God, thereby making it difficult for individuals to comply with the commandments due to the excess of regulations.

*Matthew 23:4*

*English Standard Version*

*They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

God never intended for us to be legalistic. Throughout the Torah, the Prophets, and the New Testament, we are instructed to keep the commandments out of love and reverence for God, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Rather than our actions, God is concerned with the intentions of our hearts when we follow His commands. Let's examine some Scriptural passages to support the idea that God never intended for us to be legalistic.

*Hosea 6:6*

*English Standard Version*

*For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.*

*Psalms 51:16-17*

*English Standard Version*

*For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.  
<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

*Deuteronomy 10:1*

*English Standard Version*

*"You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep His charge, His statutes, His rules,  
and His commandments always.*

*John 14:15*

*English Standard Version*

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

The purpose of this book was never to burden anyone with legalism. Rather, it is a deep exploration of the pure, unaltered Word of God, which brings forth life and liberation. By definition, it can be deduced that someone who adheres to the commandments of God, is not legalistic. On the other hand, anyone or any organization that prioritizes man-made doctrines over the veracity of God's Word is legalistic.

For more information, watch the below YouTube Video by 119 Ministries:

Click on the hyperlink below to open the YouTube video:

[119 Ministries - Acts 15 Obedience or Legalism](#)

[119 Ministries - Don't be under the Law](#)

## **The law of Christ is love**

Critics of Christianity often accuse the faith of lacking consistency, as different denominations selectively uphold or ignore certain commandments. In response, some denominations argue that they only follow the commandments reiterated by Jesus in the New Testament, disregarding those given to Israel in the Old Testament. These believers claim that Jesus established a New Covenant that abolished not only the Torah, but also the Old Covenant. As the commandments were Israel's part of the Old Covenant, which no longer exists, Christians are not bound to follow them.

These denominations teach that Jesus introduced a New Covenant with new commandments, based on the law of love. They contend that believers are no longer under the Law of God but under the law of Christ, which is the law of love. However, we need to scrutinize this doctrine in light of the Word of God.

## *Matthew 22:36-40*

### *English Standard Version*

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”<sup>37</sup> And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.<sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

To begin with, Jesus does not suggest that the Law will be abolished or altered in response to the question posed to him. Instead, He quotes Leviticus 19:18, which commands us to "Love your neighbour as yourself" – a precept from the Torah. Jesus then asserts that the entirety of the Word of God, encompassing the entire Law, hinges on our love for God and for others. This is not a novel concept, but rather a reaffirmation of the Torah's fundamental tenet – teaching us how to love God and our fellow human beings. Therefore, by embracing Christ's law of love, we are essentially acknowledging our adherence to the Torah.

Jesus' instruction reinforces numerous other verses that underscore the central message of the Torah – that love is the summation of the entire Law. Furthermore, what does the Scripture caution us will occur when the Torah is ignored?

## *Matthew 24:12*

### *English Standard Version*

*And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.*

Jesus cautioned us that disregarding the Law would cause love to wane. As per the Scriptures, Jesus encouraged obedience to God's Law, which is the law of love encapsulated in the Torah. Consequently, failing to uphold the Torah's commandments can trigger the decline of love in many.

## Keeping the commandments of God to obtain salvation

Many will accuse a person who follows the commandments of God that they are doing so to obtain salvation. No person who is a true student of the Word of God will believe this or teach this to others, as it is simply not true, and there is no Scriptural reference for this false belief. I want to make it very clear that this is a common misconception held by those who have not made an effort to really find out what the ancient way teaches and believes.

There is only one way a person can be saved, that is through faith, and by the Blood of the Lamb. Earlier we discussed how Abraham was saved through faith. The people of Israel serve as the perfect example for us. Remember we discussed how we are grafted into spiritual Israel?

The Israelites were saved from a place of idolatry and slavery through trusting God and by putting the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of their houses. In the same way salvation is when one believes in God and applies the Blood of the Lamb to the doorposts of one's own heart.

From there God takes the Israelites into the wilderness, and to Mount Sinai, to give them His commandments so they will know how people who are saved live like. How to conform to His likeness, and not look, talk, and act like idolatrous Egyptians anymore.

Once it is time for them to enter the Promised Land, they do not enter through Moses (symbolic of the Torah), but Joshua / Yehoshua (in Hebrew his name means God is deliverance). I would also like to draw your attention to the similarities between the names Joshua (Yehoshua) / Jesus (Yeshua). We are saved from Egypt and taken into the Promised Land by the Lamb of God, Jesus.

God does not expect us to keep the commandments so that we will be saved, because He knows that no person could ever keep the commandments perfectly (except for Jesus), so the keeping of the commandments was NEVER God's plan for salvation and will NEVER be His plan for salvation. The idea of the commandments is to teach us how to live like a child of God. The commandments show us how to live a righteous life! Obedience is the fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation.

I love this quote by Mark Biltz:

*"We are not under the law in regard to salvation, but it would be madness and folly to assume that by grace we have some special immunity to the keeping of God's commands."*

## What does it mean to be under the Law?

If only there was a clear explanation in the New Testament about this phrase "under the Law", then there may not have been so much confusion! The reason there is no definition or explanation of this in the New Testament, is because the idea of "being under the Law" was already well established by the time the New Testament was authored. It was assumed that the reader already knew the concepts and definitions of the topics discussed in the New Testament.

I submit to you that the explanation of what it means to be "under the Law" is found elsewhere. The challenge with the modern-day believer is that they start with the New Testament and then try to define the whole Word of God based on the New Testament. When in fact we should be starting at the beginning. The Torah is the foundation of the whole Word of God, it provides all the definitions that we need to interpret the Word. We should be reading the Bible from the front to the back, not the other way around.

This is a very logical way to approach any book. In fact, I don't know of a person who reads any other book like they attempt to read the Bible. Whether you are reading a Novel, Self-Help book, Autobiography, etc., you always start at the front and finish at the back. You also don't just read some of the sentences here and there, then close the book and know exactly what the plot is. No! Yet that is what we do with the Word of God. And that is why we get confused about what certain phrases mean, like "under the Law".

During the time of Jesus, everything He taught had to be measured against the established Word of God. The established Word of God was the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings – what we know today as the Old Testament. When we read the book of Acts, we see that those who followed Jesus did not simply accept whatever teaching was heard. How did they test a new teaching or revelation? By measuring it against the established Word of God. At that time the New Testament did not even exist! The first books of the New Testament were written about 40 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. So, what He



taught, what the disciples taught, what the apostles taught had to be measured against the Old Testament. If it did not confirm or agree with the Old Testament, it was deemed a false teaching, and thus rejected. It would serve every believer well to follow this same principle today in their own lives, measuring teachings, revelations, and prophetic words against the Old Testament to establish whether it is true or false.

If the New Testament is read and studied in this way, the reader will clearly note that what was established in the Old Testament by God, was confirmed in the New Testament teachings by Jesus.

When we insist on interpreting the Scriptures backwards like many believers do today, we end up with a message that is backward! No wonder the confusion in Christianity has reached such a height that there are officially 45 000 Christian denominations, each holding fast to their own interpretation of the Word of God, instead of allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Another stumbling block we face is the issue of translation, and how the meaning of a word in Hebrew and Greek may be translated to have a whole different meaning in English. Translation can cause the true meaning and sense of a word to be lost. I guess that is where the saying "lost in translation" comes from!

The adversary is aware of this and has utilized it to create chaos. Adolf Hitler, one of the most wicked individuals in history, is often quoted as saying: "if you can change the meaning of a word, you change society itself." This is undoubtedly applicable to the definition of the term "Law" as it is found in the Word of God. Although God intended it to be pure and beneficial, providing structure and guidance for those who desire to dwell in His Kingdom, it has now taken on a negative connotation, causing people to perceive it as something dreadful to be shunned at any cost.

The Greek term "nomos" was used in the New Testament to refer to the English word "Law." It's crucial to comprehend the evolution of this term because our understanding of a sentence's entire significance, in which the word is utilized, is influenced by how we define it. The meaning of the word "Law" has already been altered by the translation process from Greek to other languages. In Greek society, the notion of Law retained a constructive,

instructive, and honourable quality. When compared to what is present in the Old Testament, it is evident that the Law was highly respected by those who had a love for God.

As the term "Law" was translated into various languages, it gradually gained a negative meaning. In the 3rd century AD, the early Christian leaders, led by Constantine, began to denounce the term. They claimed that the Law was a Jewish invention, and some even suggested removing the entire Old Testament. This contradicted the Scriptural concept of Law and blessing, as they started preaching that the Law was a form of enslavement, rather than sin being enslavement. Unfortunately, this sounds similar to what most believers hold fast as truth today.

What is the Hebrew understanding for the word Law? We already looked at what the Torah is, the Torah is the first five books of the Bible that contain the commandments of God. But the commandments of God are divided into subcategories, and together they make up the Torah or what we call Law in English.

### *Deuteronomy 11:1*

#### *King James Version*

*Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep His charge, and His statutes, and His judgments, and His commandments, always.*

#### 1) Statutes

Strong's Number – H2708

Definition: Ordinance, statute

#### 2) Judgements

Strong's Number - H4941

Definition: to render a verdict, divine law, judgement

### 3) Commandments

Strong's Number - H4687

Definition: A command, the law, precept, ordinance

For more information on statutes, judgements, and commandments, please visit the below link:

[119 Ministries Blog - Commandments, Statutes, Ordinances and Judgments...What's the Difference?](#)

Being under the Law then means that you submit to the statutes, judgements, and commandments of God. Not because you want to earn salvation through works, but because you love God and want to live the way He expects you to live.

And what does Jesus say about the commandments of God?

*John 14:15*

*English Standard Version*

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."*

What commandments would He be talking about here? There is only one place that you will find His commandments, that is in the Torah.

### **What does it mean not to be under the Law?**

If the Torah / Law represents the loving guidance of the Father, then disregarding it means you are in a state of rebellion. No parent likes a rebellious child, and if you are a parent, you probably have household rules. These rules are not intended to punish your children or withhold good things from them. Rather, they are in place to protect and discipline them, shaping them into well-rounded adults before they venture into the world.

Consider countries without law and order, which we deem to be failed states, such as Somalia, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Sudan. Would you want to live in one of these places? Schools also have rules and codes of conduct, and students who break them are expelled. Likewise, every sport has its own set of rules, without which it would be chaos.

There are many other examples in our daily lives where rules, law, and order are present. It would be presumptuous to assume that God, who is a God of order rather than chaos, would allow us to do as we please in His Kingdom. With all due respect, I submit to you that a kingdom without rules would be a kingdom of chaos!

## What does it mean to be free from the curse of the Law?

Romans 16:4 is frequently cited by those who oppose the observance of God's commandments / Law. However, before we examine this passage more closely, let us first consider who Paul was, his history and background. Paul is often accused of being the primary proponent of rejecting God's commandments / Torah.

### *Philippians 3:4-5*

#### *English Standard Version*

*though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee;*

### *Acts 22:3*

#### *English Standard Version*

*"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day.*

According to the standards of his time, Paul was a highly educated man. Studying under Gamaliel was a great honour, and it is likely that Paul had memorized the Torah by the age of 10. This makes him much more knowledgeable than the other apostles and disciples, who were mainly fishermen and tax collectors. On the other hand, Paul was a "Hebrew of Hebrews."

But what does Paul's background mean for us today? Let's turn to Peter and his insights into Paul and his writings.

## *2 Peter 3:15-17*

### *English Standard Version*

*And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, <sup>16</sup> as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. <sup>17</sup> You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*

If people in ancient times were confused by Paul's writings, even though they only had the Old Testament, how much more should we be careful today? Peter warns us that those who lack understanding and are unstable, will twist the words of Paul to distort the Word of God. He cautions us not to be carried away by the error of lawless individuals. If Paul was truly teaching against the Law / Torah, then Peter's words would not make sense. Both Peter and Paul advocated for adherence to the Law, which leads to stability.

Having established who Paul was and the potential for misunderstandings of his teachings, as well as the danger of twisting his words to fit personal opinions, let's examine Romans 6:14.

## *Romans 6:14*

### *English Standard Version*

*For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.*

To fully grasp Paul's teachings, it's important to consider the context in which he speaks. Upon closer examination of other passages authored by Paul, we can determine that he's not referring to "The Law / Torah" in general, but rather a particular law. Through studying Paul's writings, we discover that he addresses seven distinct laws.:

- The Law of God (Romans 3:31, 7:22-25, 8:7).
- The law of sin (Romans 7:23-25).
- The law of sin and death (Romans 8:2).
- The law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2).
- The law of faith (Romans 3:27).
- The law of righteousness (Romans 9:31).
- The law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21).

Based on Romans 6:14, it appears that Paul's teachings suggest we are no longer bound by the Law, but instead governed by grace. I wholeheartedly concur with this notion. However, it's worth examining what this truly entails. Are we certain we fully comprehend its implications? Often, individuals fail to scrutinize their interpretation of being under grace, assuming it to be self-evident. Yet, it's critical to consider what else Paul conveyed on this subject.

### *1 Thessalonians 5:21*

#### *English Standard Version*

*but test everything; hold fast what is good.*

Note that Paul says that "sin will have no dominion over you " (Romans 6:14). This then means that there was a time when sin had dominion over us. Meaning that at one time, we were under sin, according to Paul. One of the ways this passage is misunderstood, is that one may erroneously think that Paul is writing about two different things, the first part of this verse is speaking about sin, while the second part is speaking about the Law.

Biblical Hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible. One of the principles of Hermeneutics is context. Because if a verse, chapter, or passage is read or quoted out of context, it greatly changes the understanding and meaning of that verse, passage or chapter. Let us keep this in mind as we dissect this verse so often misquoted in Romans 6:14.

Think about this: the context of Romans 6:14 has got something to do with sin that no longer has dominion over us. The law that we are no longer under, has something to do with no longer being under sin. One would think this is something that is easy to figure out, but doctrinal bias is extremely strong. Have you ever considered the following:

If Paul is saying we are no longer under the dominion of sin and that equates to no longer being under the Law of God, is Paul then saying that the Law of God = Sin? So, the next question would be: is the Law of God sin? Let's see what the Bible says:

### *1 John 3:4*

#### *Amplified Bible*

*Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness [ignoring God's law by action or neglect or by tolerating wrongdoing—being unrestrained by His commands and His will].*

If Paul is teaching that keeping the Law of God is sin, then Paul is a false teacher, and his teachings must be rejected. Because the Word of God clearly equates the breaking of the Law to sin, not the keeping of the Law as sin. Please also note that the Scripture being used to confirm this is in the New Testament. After Jesus died and was raised from the dead and ascended to heaven, His disciples still taught that the breaking of the Law / commandments is sin.

I submit to you that Paul is not speaking of the Law of God, but a different law that we are no longer under. Paul anticipates that this verse may be misunderstood and could be taken out of context. In Romans 7:7 he addresses this possible misunderstanding of Romans 6:14.

### *Romans 7:7*

#### *Amplified Bible*

*What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, if it had not been for the Law, I would not have recognized sin. For I would not have known [for example] about coveting [what belongs to another, and would have had no sense of guilt] if the Law had not [repeatedly] said, "You shall not covet."*

We see Paul confirming what John said, that only by the Law of God can we define sin.

Sin = Lawlessness / being without Torah.

From this we can conclude that sin is any instruction that is AGAINST the Law of God. It is widely acknowledged by those who follow the ancient way that this is the law of sin, the law instructing against the keeping of the commandments.

Sin / breaking the instructions of God leads to death. We see this in Genesis 2:16.

*Genesis 2:16-17*

*English Standard Version*

*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,"<sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

God gives a commandment, warning that the breaking of the commandment (sin) will lead to death. Even before arriving at Romans 6, Paul intentionally addresses this subject, establishing a framework for comprehending the context in which Romans 6 should be interpreted.

*Romans 5:12*

*English Standard Version*

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned —*

Just as God instructed Adam that sin will lead to death, so Paul is reiterating this in Romans 5:12. Making it clear that following the law of sin (the instructions to break the Torah of God) will lead to death.



We can thus conclude that Romans 6:14 is not speaking of the Law of God, but the law of sin that leads to death. Paul is teaching that when we are saved through Messiah, death no longer has any power or dominion over us. Because Messiah has overcome death, we also have the grace of God that will allow us to be resurrected into new life. This is the grace of God that Paul teaches, grace is the forgiveness of sin. Sin is transgressing the commandments of God, so if Paul was really teaching that there is no Law / commandments anymore, that would mean that there is no sin, and thus no need for grace.

God's Law / Torah = Provides the definition of what sin is.

No Torah / Law of God = No definition of sin.

No sin = No need of grace.

Because Romans 6 does not specifically say we are no longer under the Law of God, we need to draw our conclusions from the context of the whole book of Romans to understand exactly what law Paul is referring to. The verses below clearly provide context of the power of death being broken over the believer, through the sacrifice brought by Jesus, our Messiah.

### *Romans 6:8-9*

#### *Complete Jewish Bible*

*Now since we died with the Messiah, we trust that we will also live with Him. <sup>9</sup> We know that the Messiah has been raised from the dead, never to die again; death has no authority over Him.*

How does Paul conclude his teaching?

### *Romans 8:1-2*

#### *English Standard Version*

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

The word “therefore” is used to conclude what Paul is teaching, as a summary of everything preceding these verses. Jesus, the Messiah, has set us free from the law of sin and death. Nowhere in the Bible is the Law of God called the law of sin and death. We are not freed from the perfect Torah / Law of God, we are freed from the law that sin will lead to permanent death. We have a hope of resurrection just as our Messiah was resurrected!

It is important to remember that any teaching that denies the relevance of the Law or Torah is sinful. This is because it leads to disregarding God's commandments, which will lead to sin. If a person teaches that the Law of God is no longer applicable, it can lead to going back under the law of sin and death, which is a sin. Rejecting the Law of God means rejecting the grace of God, which is also sin. Thus, if someone teaches that you are no longer under the Law of God, they are essentially placing you under the law of sin and death again, undoing what the Messiah did on the cross!

We learn from this short study of Romans that Paul was under the Law of God, as were the other disciples and apostles. As was Jesus! Being under the Law of God, places you in good company! And the writer of Psalms clearly warns about being in the company of scoffers and sinners (those that are not under the Law of God). Our delight should be in the Law of God!

### *Psalm 1:1-2*

#### *English Standard Version*

*Blessed is the man  
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup> but his delight is in the Law of the Lord,  
and on His Law he meditates day and night.*

I would like to include a commentary on Romans 6-8 with from the Complete Jewish Study Bible:

#### *“Romans 6:1-2*

*Faith in the Messiah pertains to every sphere of life (cf. James 2:12-26). Yet despite this truth – and the fact that the love of God is linked to obedience (1 John 5:3) – many in the*

*body of Messiah in recent years have been influenced by the false teaching of antinomianism (anti-Torah). Some hold that the believers are no longer obligated to follow even the moral laws of Torah in the light of Yeshua's work of grace.*

*In Romans 6:1-2, John 14:15 and 1 John 5:3, Sha'ul answers his critics – Jews who felt that his message abolished the need to overserve Torah. This misconception by his critics assumes that Sha'ul was advocating an antinomian worldview: that Torah was now a relic of the past. Sha'ul retorts with the Hebraic idiom 'Heaven Forbid', or Chalilah (A curse be upon it!). Sha'ul reminds his followers that by virtue of being united with the Messiah (Romans 6:3-6), the believer has actually died to sin. Although the penalty was paid on the Messiah's execution stake (v. 6), this is not a license to violate the Torah, to sin. From such a strong defence, it is impossible to conclude that Torah observance was revoked. What Sha'ul disparages is a legalistic observance of Torah commands, something God never intended for Isra'el in the first place."*

## Summary

This study concludes that both Jesus and Paul advocated for the adherence to God's Law and instructed others to do the same. The author of Hebrews concurs with their teachings and cautions that departing from the Law of Moses (which, during that era, referred to the Torah as Moses was the one who transcribed it as instructed by God) may result in dying without mercy. Kindly note that this passage is directly from the New Testament!

### *Hebrews 10:28*

#### *English Standard Version*

*Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.*

## Chapter 7: Paul – hypocrite, or keeper of the Law?

In the previous chapter, we examined one of Paul's most misunderstood passages. Despite the presentation of evidence on the book of Romans, there are still some who remain unconvinced. To those individuals, I suggest delving deeper into the life of Paul himself. There are numerous accounts where Paul not only advocated for the Law but also observed it.

One of the most well-known instances can be found in Acts 21, which took place between 4-9 years after Jesus' crucifixion. In this passage, we observe that neither James, the disciples, the apostles, nor Paul taught that the Law had been annulled.

### *Acts 21:20-24*

#### *English Standard Version*

*And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law,"<sup>21</sup> and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.<sup>22</sup> What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.<sup>23</sup> Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;<sup>24</sup> take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law.*

Paul was falsely accused of no longer adhering to the Law and teaching others to do the same. The leadership of The Way found this concerning as it was untrue and needed to address the rumour. To resolve the false accusation against Paul, the leadership proposed that he finance the Nazarite vow of four believers, which would serve as evidence of his commitment to, and advocacy for, the Torah / Law of God. Not only did he fund the cost for the sacrifice they had to make at the end of the Nazarite vow, but he also followed the commandments for ritual purification, as outlined in the Torah. He accompanied these men to the Temple to fulfil their vow.

The Nazarite vow involved abstaining from wine, strong drink, and cutting one's hair for at least 30 days. After completing the vow, the person would cut his / her hair, present themselves to the priest, and offer a sacrifice according to Numbers 6:1-21.

In Acts 21:23-24, four men were under the Nazarite vow, and James and the other apostles advised Paul to purify himself, as per the Law, and pay for the four men to shave their heads and offer the required sacrifice to signal the end of their vow. This advice demonstrated that they believed in and adhered to the Law of God.

Another part of this passage is very telling in what the beliefs were of the early followers of The Way:

*Acts 21:20*

*English Standard Version*

*And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the Law,*

Numerous new converts were enthusiastic about the Law, and there is no indication in this chapter that they were dissuaded from maintaining their enthusiasm for it. Throughout his life, Paul was repeatedly accused of disregarding or opposing the Law of God, and he devoted much of his time to disproving these false accusations. Unfortunately, even today, Paul continues to face such false accusations.

*Acts 25:7-8*

*English Standard Version*

*When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove.<sup>8</sup> Paul argued in his defence, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense."*

Although the Jews that formed part of the Sanhedrin at that time brought serious accusations against Paul, they had no evidence and therefore could not convict him. This means that they could not find any evidence that Paul broke the Law of God.

## The Jerusalem Counsel

But what did James, Paul and the Jerusalem counsel advise all the new Gentile believers to do?

*Acts 21:25*

*English Standard Version*

*But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality."*

Initially, some of the instructions given to the Gentiles may appear illogical. However, when viewed through a Jewish lens and with knowledge of God's Law, they become logical and rational.

The Apostles instructed the Gentiles to avoid certain activities that could defile their bodies, which were considered temples of God, and thus prevent them from attending the Synagogue. These activities related mainly to ritual impurity, and by remaining ritually pure, the Gentiles were able to enter the Synagogue on Shabbat and learn more about moral purity from the Torah. This lesson is still applicable to believers today. Beginning with ritual purity, we must strive to keep our temples clean by refraining from defiling activities, and then proceed to delve deeper into the Torah's teachings on moral purity.

### 1) Abstaining from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood

During that time in Gentile towns, there were numerous temples where foreign gods were worshipped, and sacrifices were offered. The resulting meat from these sacrifices was sold for human consumption. However, as it had been used in a ritual to other gods, it was considered impure and unfit for consumption by believers in the Messiah. Additionally, the

exchange of money for this meat, which went to support idol-worshipping priests, was not blessed by the one true Living God, as it funded the kingdom of Satan.

Historical sources also indicate that the blood of sacrificial animals was often consumed, in addition to being offered as a sacrifice. However, there is a strict prohibition in God's Law against consuming blood, as the life is in the blood. The method of slaughtering the animals played a crucial role in draining the blood from all sacrificial meat.

## **2) Abstaining from meat of animals that were strangled**

This passage has suffered some translation discrepancies. During that time, the Jews referred to non-food meat as "traife." This word was commonly used slang that referred to any food that did not adhere to the dietary Laws of Torah.

According to the Torah, it is forbidden to consume the meat of any animal that died naturally or through an accident, even if it was a clean animal. These animals were later collectively referred to as "traife," which also included any meat unfit for human consumption. The Jerusalem council urged the Gentiles to adhere to God's dietary Laws and avoid consuming things that are not deemed fit for human consumption. We will explore this subject in greater detail in a later chapter.

## **3) Abstaining from sexual sin**

During that time, temple prostitution was part of the idol worship practice. However, Gentiles also engaged in sexually immoral behaviour, such as adultery, fornication, and even homosexual relationships, all of which are strictly forbidden by God's Law.

## **Conclusion on the advice given by the Jerusalem Counsel**

These three prohibitions are all sins against one's own body, they are all part of idol worship, and they cause one to become ritually and morally impure. Abstaining from these things would set Gentiles apart as holy and allow them to attend the Synagogue on Shabbat to learn more about the Law. This is also the first step to purification and sanctification for any person seeking to return to the ancient way.

## Who died for you on the cross?

When it comes to the debate about whether to keep or not keep the Law, there are arguments on both sides. However, we should keep in mind that the writers of the New Testament, including Paul, were fallible human beings who could have made mistakes in presenting their teachings. It is easy for misunderstandings to arise due to human error.

Ultimately, we should focus on the teachings and words of Jesus our Messiah, the Living Word of God who died on the cross for our sins. He is the one we should follow and worship. Instead of spending countless hours debating what the writers of the New Testament really meant, let us turn to the source and examine what the Messiah taught. In the end, we will be judged by the Word of God, not by the teachings or beliefs of others.



## Chapter 8: Jesus came to fulfil the Law

Believers often argue that Jesus came to fulfil the Law, so they no longer have to keep it. However, reading the passage in Matthew 5, from nearly any available translation, will disprove this argument. Unfortunately, doctrinal bias often causes people to be blind to what the verse really says.

### *Matthew 5:17-18*

#### *English Standard Version*

*“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*”

Let’s first look at the original Greek words used for “abolish” and “fulfil”, as this will provide the original meaning of the writer of this passage as it was penned down in Greek.

#### Abolish

##### Strong's Number - G2647

Definition: From G2596 and G3089; to loosen down (disintegrate) that is (by implication) to demolish (literally or figuratively); destroy dissolve.

#### Fulfil

##### Strong's Number - G4137

Definition: From G4134; to make replete (full, complete) that is (literally) to cram (a net) level up (a hollow) or (figuratively) to furnish, to satisfy, to verify (or coincide with a prediction); (be), (be make) full (come) fully preach perfect supply.

Based on the original Greek text, it can be concluded that Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish or destroy the Law and the Prophets. I have not come to abolish

them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

Jesus did not come to do away with the Torah, but to fully live it out and show how to live in the fullness of God's commandments. He came to satisfy and verify the commandments of His Father. The Torah is still intact as per the word of the Messiah, until heaven and earth pass away.

Jesus did not have an issue with people of his time keeping the Torah, but with how they kept it. The Pharisees added extra rules that were burdensome to the people, and Jesus came to remove that burden. He showed us how to keep the commandments according to His Father's instructions, not the doctrine of man. Jesus also gave a warning to those who teach that the Torah has been done away with.

### *Matthew 5:19-20*

#### *English Standard Version*

*Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus cautions that there will be individuals who will preach that certain commandments are no longer applicable today or have been abolished. Even though this will not effect their redemption, they will be regarded as least in the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, those who teach and adhere to the commandments will be esteemed as great in the Kingdom of God. Furthermore, Jesus discusses righteousness and how a deficiency of it could prevent one from entering the Kingdom altogether.

What is this word righteousness, and what does it mean?

## Righteousness

### Strong's Number - G1343

Definition: From G1342; equity (of character or act); specifically, justification: - righteousness.

*"Righteousness is the quality or state of being morally correct and justifiable. It can be considered synonymous with "rightness" or being "upright"." – Wikipedia*

Salvation is not dependent on righteousness. Rather, righteousness pertains to cultivating one's character and living in accordance with God's will. How can one determine what is morally right, comprehend God's character, and behave ethically towards others and God? The only way is by adhering to God's commandments. The Torah serves as a guidebook for leading a life in a manner that is pleasing to God.

I would like to conclude this study on Matthew 5 with a quote from the Complete Jewish Study Bible:

*"Matthew 5:17-20*

*These verses provide crucial insight into Yeshua's understanding of the Torah and its meaning. Here he is not cancelling the Torah; instead he is stating that he came to interpret it correctly. Romans 10:4 is misinterpreted by many, making Yeshua's words in Matthew 5 difficult to understand. Some teach that his use of the word telos, often translated "fulfil," means that his life, or perhaps his death meant the termination or end of the law. Yet as David Stern notes, 'an error made by all major English versions and by most commentators – and one with profound anti-Semitic implications even when none are intended – is the rendering of the Greek word telos as "end" in the sense of termination' (Jewish New Testament Commentary 395). Yet telos is used forty-two times in the New Testament, but only five times (Mark 3:26; Luke 1:33; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 7:3; 1 Peter 4:7) is it translated "finish", "cessation" or "termination." In all other cases (including Romans 10:4), telos is understood as "outcome", "result", or "consummation."*

*Moreover, the statement that Yeshua did not come to abolish the Torah is a first-century rabbinic idiom. To "abolish" the Torah meant to misinterpret it, not to cancel it. Second, Yeshua's expression, to "complete" Torah, meant that he came to teach it correctly. David Friedman reinforces this: 'Yeshua is here stating that it is not his intention to teach the*

*Torah incorrectly, but quite the opposite, to affirm its fullness and truth by teaching all of it in a way that is true to its intended meaning' (Friedman, Jewish Idioms in the New Testament).*

*The defence of this idiomatic usages in Matthew 5:17-20, Shabbat 116b states, 'I have come not to take from the Torah of Moses (Moshe), but on the contrary; I have come to add to it.' Yeshua's intent by reinforcing a correct understanding of Torah was to establish Torah's full and intended meaning so that his disciples would know how to follow God."*

## Jesus and the Pharisees

The Torah / commandments of God were never intended to be a heavy yoke; it is the user manual for life that teaches believers how to live a Godly life. However, the Pharisees were not interested in making it easy for the average Jew to serve God. They found pleasure in enforcing lots of extra rules that people had to keep, making the Living Word something that became dead works of tradition.

Jesus admonished them for this quite often! But we also see Him clearly commanding those who followed Him to distinguish between Pharisaic law and the Law of God. Since the Pharisees were also the Torah teachers of their day, they would be reading from the Torah scroll to the people in the Synagogue on Shabbat. There was a rule that you did not interrupt God, and since God was the one who was speaking from the Torah, a portion from the Torah was read without interruption or commentary. The person (usually a Pharisee) reading from the Torah scroll would sit in a seat that they called the seat of Moses while reading from the Torah scroll. That is why Jesus commanded the people to listen to and do what the Pharisees say while they are sitting in the seat of Moses. Because that was the only time the people heard the true, unadulterated commandments of God. And that is what we are expected to keep.

But Jesus also accused them of preaching one thing and doing something else. What was the greatest commandment according to Jesus? Love the LORD your God and love your neighbour as yourself. The Pharisees did not love their neighbour; they were harsh judges and did not do anything to lighten the religious load they placed on others.

## *Matthew 23:1-4*

### *English Standard Version*

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, <sup>3</sup> so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

In this passage, we see Jesus commanding us to keep the Law of Moses, which is equivalent to the Law of God, as Moses wrote the Torah. As we examine Jesus' life and teachings, we find numerous instances where He instructs people to keep the Torah. Jesus came to demonstrate that there is a proper way to interpret God's commandments, based on how God intended them, rather than human interpretation. A great teaching series on the sermon on the mount by Grant Luton provides a comprehensive study of the entire sermon on the mount and is highly recommended for listening.

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5a](#)

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5b](#)

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5c](#)

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5d](#)

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5e](#)

[Beth Tikkun Matthew 5f](#)

According to the noted Messianic Jewish Scholar, Arnold Fruchtenbaum: *“In its context – in the Jewish frame of reference in which it was spoken – the Sermon on the Mount is the Messiah's interpretation of the standard of righteousness which the Torah demanded, put in contrast with some of the Pharisaic interpretations. A better title for this “sermon” would be ‘The Messiah's Interpretation of the Righteousness of the Torah’. Simplistically state, the difference is between mere external conformity in contrast to internal conformity that naturally lends itself to external conformity to Torah.”*

From the below passage we find more evidence that Jesus was not against the Law / Commandments:

### *Matthew 22:35-40*

#### *English Standard Version*

*And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" <sup>37</sup> And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."*

Jesus didn't deny the existence of commandments; in fact, He proclaimed the greatest commandment. Whenever the people asked Him foolish questions, He rebuked them. However, in this instance, He answered them because He recognized the significance of the commandments for everyone, including us today. Keeping the commandments will lead to blessings, life, and protection.

## **Jesus keeps the Law and teaches others to do so**

Jesus was born into a family that adhered to the Torah. Yosef and Mary, whom God chose to be His earthly parents, were both raised in a Davidic clan in Nazareth known for their enthusiasm for the Torah and their expectation that the Messiah would emerge from their community.

- Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day.
- His mother, Mary, underwent the rites of purification after she gave birth.
- Jesus was redeemed by the "Pidyon Ha'ben" – redemption of the first born.
- Luke 2:22-24 states that Mary and Joseph were careful to observe, everything the Torah commanded before they left Jerusalem and returned home.
- Luke records that Mary and Joseph went up to Jerusalem every year to keep the feast of Pesach.

All the above come directly from the Law of God, the Torah. From this we can deduce that Jesus was raised in a Torah-observant family. At approximately 30 years of age, Jesus

began His ministry. He was often referred to as Rabbi by His followers and disciples, which means "teacher" in the Jewish religious context, specifically one who instructs on the Torah. As a Rabbi, Jesus' credibility required Him to demonstrate complete adherence to and respect for the Torah. However, some readers of the Bible today misunderstand Jesus' commitment to the Torah due to their confusion between the oral law (man-made laws, Rabbinic law, and traditions of man) and the Written Law (God's commandments and Torah). Jesus Himself admonished the Pharisees for their misuse of God's Law and their adding of their own traditions.

### *Mark 7:13*

#### *English Standard Version*

*"thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."*

Let's examine some instances that are wrongly cited as proof that Jesus violated God's Law and instructed others to do the same:

#### **Touching a Leper**

(Matthew 8, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16)

The Law specifies that anyone who touches a leper will become ritually unclean (Leviticus 5:2). Furthermore, the Law instructs lepers to keep their distance from others and the community (Leviticus 14:45-46). It is evident that it was not Jesus who transgressed these Laws since He was not afflicted with leprosy. Rather, it was the leper who violated these commandments.

Jesus did not touch the leper in defiance or to cause a spectacle; instead, He touched him with the purpose of curing him of his affliction. Right after healing the leper, Jesus instructed the man to observe all the commandments in the Torah that pertained to someone who had been healed of leprosy! Far from detracting from the Torah, Jesus commanded the man to abide by it!

## Plucking Grain and Healing on the Shabbat

(Matthew 12; Luke 6:1-11, Luke 14:1-6, John 5:1-18, John 9)

Jesus' disciples were accused of violating the Shabbat by plucking and grinding grain between their fingers to eat it. The Torah prohibits work on the Shabbat, which includes field labour, ploughing, and harvesting (Exodus 34:21). However, this passage does not mention the plucking of a few kernels of grain for immediate consumption, and it is also not considered intense labour for the explicit purpose of financial gain (work for reward). The disciples were not working in the field to earn a profit; they were simply doing what we all do when we're hungry: eating. Furthermore, eating on the Shabbat is not prohibited.

All the commandments in the Torah are designed to promote life. We can see this principle in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve's sin led to death. Sin is the transgression of the commandments, and it always results in death. Keeping the commandments leads to life! We should bear this in mind when interpreting God's commandments.

*Deuteronomy 30:15-18*

*English Standard Version*

*"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. <sup>16</sup> If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup> But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, <sup>18</sup> I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.*



## Washing hands before eating bread

(Matthew 15, Mark 7)

Although the washing of one's hands before eating is a good hygiene practice, it was not a commandment in the Torah but rather a tradition of the Jewish people that was part of their oral law.

However, one text describing this event often causes confusion regarding the dietary laws of the Torah. Mark 7:19 is quoted as saying that Jesus "declared all foods clean." Although the washing of hands before a meal is not part of the Torah, eating clean food as the Torah prescribes is still part of God's Law.

But let's focus first on the ritual washing of hands. Jesus, like the prophets before Him, was not interested in people going through the motions of ceremonial rituals unless their hearts were fully oriented towards God (Hosea 6:6, Joel 2:12-13, Micah 6:8). When we study the prophets, we get a better understanding of Jesus' objection. He was not teaching that they were not allowed to participate in these rituals listed in the oral law, but He was simply objecting to the traditions of man (however hygienic or beautiful) being imposed with the same importance as the written Law of God. When we look at what was really said in Mark 7:19, it is important to go back to the original Greek text, as this is one of those verses where the true meaning got a little lost in translation. Or shall we say, "added in translation".

If you open your bible at Mark 7:19, you will note *"Thus He declared all foods clean"* either being in brackets or italics, this is because the words were never there in the original text. They were added afterwards by the translators.

*Mark 7:19*

*English Standard Version*

*since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)*

Mark 7:19 is a well-known verse in the Bible that has been a subject of discussion among scholars and theologians for many years. The verse, as translated in most English Bibles,

includes a parenthetical statement that reads "Thus he declared all foods clean." Some translations of this verse do not include this parenthetical statement, leading to questions about whether it was added by the translators or if it was present in the original text.

The Greek text of Mark 7:19 reads: "ὅτι οὐκ εἰσπορεύεται αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἀλλ' εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀφεδρῶνα ἐκπορεύεται, καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα." This translates to: "For it does not enter into his heart, but into his belly, and goes out into the draught, cleansing all the foods." As you can see, there is no explicit statement in the original Greek text that declares all foods clean. The phrase "cleansing all the foods" refers to the process of digestion and elimination, not to a declaration that all meat is suddenly declared food. Based on this evidence, some scholars argue that the parenthetical statement was added by the translators, and it was not present in the original text of Mark 7:19.

## **The disciples and followers of Jesus**

Jesus did not oppose Torah, but rather taught its fullness through His interpretation and enhancement of God's instructions. He openly supported the oral law and the traditions of His people, as long as they did not supersede God's commandments. In fact, Jesus' dedication to Torah is evident through His actions. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, He rebuked him by using passages from Torah (Matthew 4, Luke 4:1-13). He upheld the cleansing Laws of the Temple (Luke 17:11-19) and even added additional restrictions around the divorce Law (Matthew 19). He upheld all the commandments (Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34), knowing that if He broke even one, He would be disqualified as the Messiah.

The lifestyles of Jesus' followers also demonstrate their dedication to Torah. The first Messianic Jewish community was led by four Jewish men, including James (Jesus' brother), Simon Peter, Paul, and John (son of Zebedee). They prayed three times a day, sacrificed at the Temple, shared ritual meals, observed Biblical feasts as prescribed in Torah, and met in the Temple after Shabbat to hear teaching and encourage each other. The early leaders, including Polycarp, followed the teaching of Jewish disciples of Jesus, who were their mentors. They believed that they were empowered through Jesus, by the mercy and love of God, to love God and their neighbours in a new and more powerful way. It's worth noting that Gentile believers of that time understood that they did not have to become Jewish to follow the Jewish Messiah. Instead, they were guided by Jewish leaders to

conform to the moral and ritual purity taught by Torah without submitting to the oral laws (man-made laws) and ritual observances related to it.

## Chapter 9: The Written Torah, Oral Torah and Living Torah

Most of the disputes and arguments we find in the New Testament, are around the importance of the oral Torah versus the Written Torah. Because most of us stem from a Gentile background, we have no clue that what Jesus and the Pharisees are arguing about is not the Torah of God, and the question is not whether it should be kept or not! They are arguing the importance that should be attributed to the oral Torah. The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in the New Testament was largely centred around the interpretation and application of the oral Torah.

The Pharisees were the keepers of the oral Torah, and they placed great emphasis on its study and adherence. They believed that the oral Torah, along with the Written Torah, was given by God to Moses and was just as binding as the Written Torah. They also placed great emphasis on the tradition of the elders, which was a collection of additional laws and customs that had been passed down through the generations.

Jesus, on the other hand, challenged the Pharisees' interpretation of the oral Torah and the tradition of the elders. He believed that the laws and traditions of the Pharisees had become more important than the original intention of the commandments, and that they were being used to burden people with excessive legalism and to justify neglecting the spirit of the Law. This disagreement led to conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, as seen in the New Testament. For example, in the story of the healing on the Sabbath, Jesus was criticized by the Pharisees for breaking the tradition of the elders, which stated that healing was not permitted on the Sabbath as it was seen as work.

Jesus, however, argued that healing was an act of compassion and mercy and was therefore in keeping with the spirit of the Sabbath. In summary, the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was largely centred around their differing views on the interpretation and application of the oral Torah and the tradition of the elders. While the Pharisees emphasized the strict adherence to these traditions, Jesus believed that they had become too legalistic and had neglected the spirit of the Law.

## The Written Torah

The Written Torah, also known as the Pentateuch, is the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). It contains the laws, commandments, and narratives that form the basis of the Jewish faith. And it should also form the basis of faith for every believer in Jesus, as He is the Living Torah!

## The Oral Torah

The oral Torah, on the other hand, is the body of Jewish tradition and law that has been passed down orally from generation to generation, and includes explanations, interpretations, and expansions of the Written Torah. It includes the Mishnah, which is a collection of Rabbinic teachings and interpretations of the Written Torah, and the Talmud, which is a compilation of the Mishnah and additional commentaries and discussions. The oral Torah is considered by the Jewish people to be of equal importance to the Written Torah. According to them, it provides the context and interpretation necessary for a full understanding of the Written Torah.

Although there are several beautiful truths in some of the Rabbinic stories contained in these writings, there are also some teachings that are not necessarily lining up with the Word of God. As with anything that is man-made (including this book you are reading now), we should trust the Holy Spirit to guide us in wisdom and understanding to know what to accept and what to reject.

Jesus did not rebuke them for teaching from the oral Torah, He rebuked them for attributing equal weight to the oral Torah as to the Written Torah. They made the teachings of man equal to the teaching of God.

*Mark 7:8-9*

*English Standard Version*

*You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."*

*<sup>9</sup>And He said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!"*

It is important to educate oneself to know what the oral Torah is, and what the Written Torah is. If one should remain ignorant of this matter, it would be very easy to read the New Testament, and wrongly believe that Jesus is teaching that the Laws of God are no longer applicable to believers today.

## The Living Torah

In the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as the "Living Torah" because He embodied and fulfilled the teachings and commandments of the Written Torah.

*John 1:14*

*English Standard Version*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

This verse describes how Jesus, as the Word of God, became a physical person and lived among us. By doing so, He revealed the grace and truth of God to the world in a tangible way.

*Matthew 5:17*

*English Standard Version*

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.*

This verse shows that Jesus did not come to abolish the Written Torah, but rather to fulfil its teachings and commandments. He taught that the commandments of the Written Torah should be followed with a deeper understanding of their spiritual intent and purpose, rather than just adhering to the letter of the law.

*John 14:6*

*English Standard Version*

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

This verse shows that Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of the commandments and teachings of the Written Torah. He is the way to a relationship with God, the truth about God's character, and the source of eternal life.

In summary, Jesus is referred to as the "Living Torah" because He embodied and fulfilled the teachings and commandments of the Written Torah. He revealed the grace and truth of God in a tangible way and taught that the commandments of the Written Torah should be followed with a deeper understanding of their spiritual intent and purpose. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus became the ultimate fulfilment of the Written Torah and the way to a relationship with God. If you reject the Torah, you are rejecting Jesus, because He is the Torah made flesh!

## Chapter 10: Jewish myths – Titus 1

When arguing against the keeping of God's Law, some believers misinterpret the passage in Titus 1 and wrongly use it. To properly understand the Bible, we must follow the sound principles of study we previously discussed, which emphasize the importance of considering context. This includes understanding the intended audience of the letter, the issue it aimed to address, and the cultural background of that time.

The letter to Titus begins with the following verse, as written by Paul:

*Titus 1:1*

*English Standard Version*

*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth...*

In his letter to Titus, Paul uses the Greek word "doulos" to refer to himself as a servant, which specifically denotes a bondservant. This term is rooted in the Torah and God's Law, highlighting the importance of the concept of bond-servitude. By identifying himself as a bondservant of God, Paul emphasizes that he has not abandoned God's Law, as doing so would mean disregarding the law of the bondservant outlined in Exodus 21:1-7.

It would be fascinating to explore how many times the New Testament writers refer to themselves as bondservants, indicating their continued adherence to the teachings of the Old Testament and the Law of God, and I would encourage the reader to do so.

Moreover, in the beginning of his letter to Titus, Paul states: "*for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth...*"

It's worth noting that the sole source of divine knowledge and truth is the Word of God. It's important to keep in mind that at the time Paul wrote this letter, the New Testament had not yet been compiled. Thus, when Paul refers to knowledge and truth, he is pointing to the Old Testament and the Torah as the primary sources.



As we progress through Titus 1, we observe that Paul addresses two specific subjects. First, he outlines the characteristics of a righteous leader within the congregation. Second, he cautions against false teachings promoted by those who deviate from the truth presented in the Word of God.

### *Titus 1:5-9*

#### *English Standard Version*

*This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—<sup>6</sup> if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

1 Timothy 1:5-9 provides guidance on how to judge or determine the following traits: being above reproach, debauchery, insubordination, arrogance, quick-temperedness, drunkenness, violence, greediness, hospitality, love of good, self-control, uprightness, holiness, and discipline. All these concepts are defined within the Torah of God. To discern properly, one must examine what God deems wicked, and what He deems holy.

During Paul and Titus's time, the only source available to determine these traits, was the Torah. They relied on it to determine what was holy and what was not, what was upright and what was not upright. The book of Leviticus specifically deals with the topic of holy and profane, and most of the laws within it are relevant. It's impossible to define these traits using human understanding alone without consulting the Law of God.

### *Titus 1:10-13*

#### *English Standard Version*

*For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. <sup>11</sup> They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. <sup>12</sup> One of the Cretans, a*

*prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." <sup>13</sup> This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith,*

In verses 10-13, Paul clarifies that he is not addressing believers in the Law of God, but specifically the Cretans. The Cretans were known for being insubordinate, empty talkers, deceivers, liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons, all of which are prohibited by the Torah. Therefore, Paul is referring to individuals who are not following the Law of God.

The circumcision party, also known as "Judaizers," taught that salvation could only be achieved through circumcision. However, the Law of God never taught that salvation was dependent on circumcision. Paul strongly objects to this false teaching in his letter to Titus. We will discuss the "Judaizers" and the issue of circumcision in a later chapter. Let's continue with our passage:

### *Titus 1:13-16*

#### *English Standard Version*

*<sup>13</sup> This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, <sup>14</sup> not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. <sup>15</sup> To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. <sup>16</sup> They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.*

To be grounded in faith, it is essential to have a proper understanding of how God commands us to worship and honour Him. When Paul warns against Jewish myths, he is not attacking the Law of God. Nowhere in the Bible is the Law of God referred to as Jewish myths. Paul is denouncing human traditions and man-made laws that some people value above the Law of God. It would be blasphemous to suggest that Paul is discrediting the perfect Law of God as a Jewish myth.

The New Testament makes only four other mentions of "Jewish myths", and not one of these passages refers to the Law of God. Instead, these references serve as warnings against deception and the distortion of the truth found in the Word of God.

Moreover, it is impossible to distinguish between what is pure and defiled, without studying the Law of God. One's deeds should match one's statement of faith when professing to know God. Faith without works is dead. Therefore, our obedience and good works demonstrate our faith.

## Chapter 11: Faith without action

Why is it important for a believer to know and keep the Torah of God? As we have mentioned before, it is not your works that save you, no, it is the sacrifice of Jesus that brings eternal life. So why keep yourself busy with the commandments then?

### *James 2:18-21*

#### *English Standard Version*

*But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?*

I would like to quote a passage from the Complete Jewish Study Bible Page 1754:

*"Faith and actions are inseparably linked: 'A person is always liable for their actions whether awake or asleep' (Bava Qamma 3b). Therefore Ya'akov (James) is correct and guided by Torah in declaring, 'What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such faith able to save him?... Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead' (James 2:14, 17). In James 2:21-23, the believer is reminded that Avraham (Abraham) was told by God to 'go to the land that I will show you'. He had to perform an action. His final test of faith was when God asked him to offer on the altar his only son, Yitz'chak (Isaac).*

*As many distinguished theologians have noted – including Walter Kaiser, Luke Johnson, and Rabbi David Friedman – the entire book of James is arguably patterned after the call to holiness when ADONAI said to Moses 'Speak to the entire community of Isra'el; tell them' "You are to be holy because I, ADONAI your God am holy" (Lev 19:1). The book of James, as well as Leviticus 19, describes how to live a holy life based in faith. Trust and obedience in every sphere of life are also always linked. Each day, people choose to either 'sanctify the Name of God' or 'desecrate the Name of God' by their actions. Therefore, Avraham, the paragon of faith and trust, glorified the Name of the Lord by being obedient in offering his son. It was Avraham's faith in God that led to the righteous actions and 'by the actions the faiths was made complete'. It is for this reason that James 2:24 reads: 'You see that a person is declared righteous because of their actions and not*

*because of faith alone'. Faith, leading to action, has always been the mode by which an individual proves and strengthens his faith. "*

You simply cannot call yourself a believer without acts of righteousness. Like James says, faith without action is nothing, it is dead. What action is James referring to? We need to listen to and act upon the commandments of God. This obedience to what He commands, are our acts of righteousness.

## Reward and punishment based on what you do

Jesus shared this parable with his followers:

*Matthew 25:14-30*

*English Standard Version*

*The Parable of the Talents*

*<sup>14</sup> "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup> He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup> So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup> Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' <sup>21</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>22</sup> And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' <sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' <sup>24</sup> He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup> so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' <sup>26</sup> But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup> Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten*

*talents. <sup>29</sup> For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

The worthless servant did not steal, murder, lie, betray, or commit any other kind of horrible sin. The only thing he did was nothing. He did nothing! The reference to weeping and gnashing of teeth is often misinterpreted as meaning hell. Would God really send you to hell for doing nothing? The weeping and gnashing of teeth in these passages was understood by those listening to this parable as referring to the bitter tears Esau cried when he realised that Isaac had given Jacob the blessing. The keeping of the commandments of God will not save you, but your reward in the life to come will be based on your keeping of the commandments.

Let's look at some Scriptural references in support of this:

*Matthew 16:27*

*English Standard Version*

*For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay each person according to what he has done.*

*Ecclesiastes 12:14*

*English Standard Version*

*For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.*

*Romans 2:6-8*

*English Standard Version*

*He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, He will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*

*Revelation 20:12*

*English Standard Version*

*And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.*

In summary, these verses teach us that our actions in life will have consequences in the afterlife, both in terms of reward and punishment. Our deeds will be judged by God, and we will be held accountable for both the good and the evil that we have done.

## Chapter 12: Believing in the Torah nullifies what Jesus did on the cross

Some believers argue that if you start to follow in the ancient way, it nullifies what Jesus did on the cross. This just proves that those believers have no clear understanding what Jesus came to do on the cross in the first place! We know that there are two comings of Messiah, the first time He came as the suffering servant, Messiah Ben Yosef. The second coming is as the conquering king, Messiah Ben David. Both comings have a specific mission and goal related to it.

### Messiah Ben Yosef – The Suffering Servant

Messiah Ben Yosef is believed to precede Messiah Ben David; His mission is to clear the way for the Messiah Ben David. This is the first coming of Messiah, and the reason for this first coming is:

- To gather the scattered people of Israel (refer to the Chapter covering the topic of Israel and being grafted into Israel) (Matthew 15:24).
- Restoring faith and spiritual purity (Matthew 15:21-28, Luke 5:31-32, John 3:1-21).
- Defeating the forces of evil (Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 12:11).
- Leading the people in war against the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
- Deliver us from the curse of death, being the first fruits of those who have risen from death to life (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).
- Dealing with intentional sins.

Some believe that Jesus died just for the forgiveness for sins. Although His blood covers our sins, it is interesting to note that forgiveness of sin is all over the Old Testament as well, and this was before the Lamb of God died. What is important to understand is that the grace and mercy of God is what leads to the forgiveness of sins. Jesus did not just come to the earth to die so that He could solve our sin problem! He came to gather us back to the true Torah, to restore faith and purity, to give us authority to overcome the enemy, and to be set free from the curse of death, giving us eternal life!



Let's look at some verses in the Old Testament that suggest that people's sins can be forgiven:

- *Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more."* This passage suggests that God forgives the sins of His people for His own sake and that He remembers their sins no more.
- *Psalms 51:1-2 "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."* This passage suggests that people can seek forgiveness from God and have their sins blotted out and washed away.
- *Matthew 9:2 "And behold, some people brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Take heart, My son; your sins are forgiven."* In this verse we see Jesus saying to the paralytic that his sins are forgiven; this was before Jesus died on the cross.

The point I am trying to make is that we have been served a watered-down Gospel, where we think the only mission of Messiah was to die so our sins can be covered. This is so far from the truth. He came to show us how to follow the commandments of His Father, so that our faith may grow, and we will be pure. He came to show us how to take up our authority and serve God and one another as true sons and daughters of God.

## Messiah Ben David – The Conquering King

The final mission on the second return of Messiah is to restore peace and prosperity to all mankind, and to teach all of mankind the Torah of God. Those who have a problem with Torah now, will not like the Messianic Age!

*Isaiah 2:2-4*

*English Standard Version*

*It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the Lord  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,*

<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that He may teach us His ways  
and that we may walk in His paths."  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

## Grace in the Old Testament

Another misconception is that grace is a New Testament concept. But we find grace all over the Old Testament! Let's look at a few examples:

- *Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*
- *Exodus 33:19 And God said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before you; for I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion (lovingkindness) on whom I will show compassion.*
- *Numbers 14:19-20 Please pardon the wickedness and guilt of these people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You have forgiven these people, from Egypt even until now.*
- *2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has allowed your sin to pass [without further punishment]; you shall not die.*
- *2 Kings 13:23 But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion on them and turned toward them for the sake of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and He was unwilling to destroy them, and did not cast them from His presence until now.*
- *Nehemiah 9:17 They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that You performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader*

*to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.*

- *Psalm 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God [who protects and is] merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.*
- *Joel 2:13 Rip your heart to pieces [in sorrow and contrition] and not your garments. Now return [in repentance] to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness [faithful to His covenant with His people]; And He relents [His sentence of] evil [when His people genuinely repent].*

There are those who claim that we are no longer required to abide by God's commandments because we are "under grace." However, this is an inaccurate belief that lacks Biblical support. In truth, Scripture states the contrary:

*Romans 6:1-2*

*English Standard Version*

*What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?<sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

A true believer is one who has renounced sin. Since sin is defined as the violation of God's Torah / commandments, renouncing sin implies denying oneself and following God's commandments. Grace is not a permit to engage in sinful behaviour; rather, it is the divine empowerment that enables one to overcome sin.

## Chapter 13: Moral Purity VS Ritual Purity

I got caught up on many of the commandments because I did not understand this vital distinction between the reason for certain commandments. I must be honest, some commandments even offended me! I could not understand why a woman was “punished” for giving birth to a baby, or for having her monthly cycle. Oh, how wrong I was! Our Heavenly Father does nothing to punish us, He has a reason for every single commandment, and it carries spiritual weight! Being a Gentile, thinking and arguing like a Gentile, meant that I never understood the difference between commandments that dealt with moral impurity and the commandments that dealt with ritual impurity. It was only many years later, when I listened to a series done by Ricco Cortes on the Tabernacle, that I learned of this distinction, and a whole new world opened to me!

For more on Ricco’s teachings, feel free to visit his website:

[Wisdom in Torah - Ricco Cortes](#)

While ritual impurity may not jeopardize your salvation, moral impurity or sin certainly will. It's important to note that ritual impurity pertains to the state of being in contact with death, such as blood or a dead body, and requires a ritual cleansing before participating in Temple worship or sacrifices. Ritual purity refers to the physical state of being pure according to the Laws of ritual purity and impurity in the Torah. These Laws dictate how individuals and objects become impure and how they can be purified. For example, there are Laws concerning menstruation and bodily discharges, which render a person temporarily impure and in need of purification through immersion in a ritual bath.

Moral purity, on the other hand, refers to the moral and ethical behaviour of individuals and society. The commandments of the Torah promote moral purity by providing guidance on how to live a virtuous life, including commands related to interpersonal relationships, such as not stealing, not lying, and treating others with respect. The Torah also includes commandments related to worship, such as the prohibitions against idolatry and blasphemy.

Keep in mind that every sentence in the Word of God has a purpose. It provides us with guidance and correction. Therefore, even the Laws concerning ritual purity offer valuable

lessons to learn from. However, it is the moral impurity that arises when we do not adhere to God's commandments that I want to emphasize. It is important to note that whenever there was judgement over Israel, it was related to moral impurity, never ritual impurity.

To fully comprehend the context of the teachings of Jesus and His disciples in the New Testament, it is essential to distinguish between moral purity and ritual purity. It is crucial to recognize when they are addressing matters related to moral purity versus ritual purity.

## Chapter 14: The Torah and the Messianic Age

According to some perspectives, the doctrine taught by the Church in general is not solely based on the foundation of the Word of God, leading to the belief that the Torah is only temporary. Consequently, some members of the Church believe that the Torah has already been abolished. Others hold that certain parts of the Torah remain applicable but will ultimately be done away with once Jesus returns and the Messianic Age commences. However, it is important to note that the Torah is the very Word of God. As an example, John 1:1 emphasizes that Jesus is the Torah who was with God at the beginning before creation.

*John 1:1*

*English Standard Version*

*The Word Became Flesh*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

If we believe that Jesus is the Living Word, as the Bible tells us, then why would He do away with the very Word that He is? The Word was present at the beginning and will exist for eternity, and Jesus will be the ultimate judge, ruling from the New Jerusalem. The foundation of His reign will be the Torah, and every soul and nation will be judged according to it. This is prophesied in Isaiah 2.

*Isaiah 2:2-3*

*English Standard Version*

*It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the Lord  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;  
and all the nations shall flow to it,  
<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that He may teach us His ways*

*and that we may walk in His paths.”  
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

It is evident from Isaiah 2 that the Torah is an eternal and unchanging part of God's plan. In the Messianic Age, Jesus will reign and teach us the Torah, just as He did 2000 years ago on earth. As Jesus and the Father are one, and God is unchanging, it is clear that the Torah will always be relevant and important for us to follow. This is confirmed in Hebrews 13:8, which states that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

## Chapter 15: The Old Testament and the New Testament

I believe that the division of the Bible into the "Old Testament" and "New Testament" can cause unnecessary confusion and separation within the Body of Messiah. These titles were not given by God but were added by men. It is important to remember that the Word of God is one unified message, and every part of it is valuable and relevant to our lives. I would like to propose that the term "Old Testament" refers to the first Covenant, while the term "New Testament" pertains to the renewal, or updated version of that same Covenant. Let's take a closer look at the concept of Covenants as presented in the Word of God.

### What is a Covenant?

A Covenant is a binding agreement or contract between two parties, often accompanied by a ritual or ceremony to mark its importance. In the context of the Bible, a Covenant is an agreement made between God and His people, where He promises to bless and protect them if they follow His commandments and worship Him alone. A Covenant is typically characterized by a set of conditions, or obligations that must be fulfilled by both parties for the Covenant to remain in effect. Biblical Covenants are seen as a way of establishing a special relationship between God and His people and are a central theme throughout the Bible.

### Can a Covenant be broken?

Yes, a Covenant can be broken. In the Bible, breaking a Covenant usually results in severe consequences. Breaking a Covenant is essentially a violation of a sacred agreement, and in many cases, it is considered a sin against God. Breaking a Covenant can happen in several ways. One way is by failing to fulfil the conditions or requirements of the Covenant. For example, if one party agreed to do something in exchange for the other party doing something else, and one party fails to fulfil their end of the bargain, they are breaking the Covenant. Another way a Covenant can be broken is by outright disobedience. For example, if God makes a Covenant with a group of people and they choose to worship other gods or engage in immoral behaviour, they are breaking the Covenant.



The consequences of breaking a Covenant in the Bible can be severe, ranging from personal consequences to national ones. In some cases, it can lead to physical punishment or even death. For example, the Israelites broke their Covenant with God multiple times, and as a result, they were exiled from their land and faced other forms of punishment. Ultimately, breaking a Covenant is considered a serious offense in the Bible, and it is something to be avoided at all costs. It is important to take Covenants seriously and to fulfil any obligations that have been agreed upon. Despite human fallibility and frequent failure to uphold the conditions of the Covenant, God never breaks His Covenant. He is a God who keeps His Covenant and remains faithful, even when we are unfaithful. This is demonstrated throughout Scripture.

There are several verses in the Bible that affirm God's faithfulness to His Covenants and His promises, below are a few examples:

- *Psalm 89:34-35 "I will not violate My Covenant or alter the word that went forth from My lips. Once for all I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David."*
- *Numbers 23:19 "God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man, that He should change His mind. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfil it?"*
- *Isaiah 54:10 "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and My Covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.*
- *Hebrews 6:17-18 "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us."*

These verses and others like them demonstrate that God is faithful to His promises and Covenants, and that He does not change His mind or go back on His word.

## Different types of covenants in the Bible

- **Edenic Covenant** (Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15-17): God made a Covenant with Adam, giving him dominion over the earth and forbidding him from eating from the tree

of the knowledge of good and evil. The condition of the Covenant was obedience to God's command. The Covenant was broken when Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree.

- **Adamic Covenant** (Genesis 3:14-19): God made a Covenant with Adam after the fall, declaring the consequences of sin and the promise of a Saviour. The condition of the Covenant was the promise of the coming Messiah. The Covenant was fulfilled (not nullified!) in the coming of Jesus the Messiah.
- **Noahic Covenant** (Genesis 9:8-17): God made a Covenant with Noah after the flood, promising never to destroy the earth by a flood again. The condition of the Covenant was that Noah, and his descendants were to be fruitful and multiply. The rainbow is a sign of the Covenant.
- **Abrahamic Covenant** (Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-21): God made a Covenant with Abraham, promising him land, descendants, and blessings. The condition of the Covenant was faith and obedience. The Covenant was fulfilled in the birth of Isaac, the father of the Jewish people, and in the coming of Jesus, the promised Messiah.
- **Mosaic Covenant** (Exodus 19-24): God made a Covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, giving them the Law and promising blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. The condition of the Covenant was obedience to the Law. The Covenant was broken by the Israelites' disobedience, but it was fulfilled (not abolished) in Jesus, who kept the Law perfectly.
- **Land of Israel Covenant** (Deuteronomy 30:1-10): God made a Covenant with Israel, promising to restore them to the land if they repented and obeyed God's commandments. The condition of the Covenant was repentance and obedience. The Covenant was fulfilled in the restoration of Israel to the land in 1948.
- **Davidic Covenant** (2 Samuel 7:8-16): God made a Covenant with David, promising him an everlasting kingdom and a descendant who would reign forever. The condition of the Covenant was faithfulness to God. The Covenant was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus the Messiah, who is a descendant of David and who reigns forever as King of Kings.

Each Covenant had different conditions and meanings, but they all point to the ultimate fulfilment of God's plan of redemption through Jesus.

The fulfilment of a Covenant does not mean that it is done away with because a Covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. When the terms and conditions of the Covenant are met, it is considered fulfilled, but the Covenant itself remains in effect.

In the Bible, the Covenants made by God with His people were fulfilled in various ways, such as the Covenant with Abraham, which was fulfilled through the birth of Isaac and the establishment of a great nation through his descendants. The Covenant with Noah was fulfilled through the preservation of humanity and all living creatures during the flood. In terms of these Covenants, fulfilment means that God has brought about the purpose for which the Covenant was established, but the Covenant itself remains in effect as a reminder of the relationship between God and His people. Therefore, fulfilment does not mean the Covenant is done away with, but rather that it has been accomplished and remains binding.

All the Covenants share the common conditions of faithfulness and obedience. As children of the Covenant-keeping God, we are expected to fulfil these conditions. Our faithfulness and obedience to the commandments testify that we are in Covenant with Him. If you keep the commandments, it is a testimony that you are in covenant with God. On the other hand, if you break the commandments, it indicates that you are not in Covenant with Him.

## **The New Testament and the renewed Covenant**

The New Testament is often referred to as the renewed Covenant because it is the renewal or updating of the old Covenant made with the Jewish people. This renewal was made possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus who fulfilled the conditions of the old Covenant and established a new relationship between God and humanity.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of a new Covenant that God will make with the people of Israel, in which He will write His Law on their hearts. This passage is quoted in Hebrews 8:8-12 as a reference to the new Covenant established by Jesus. However, it is important to note that the renewed Covenant does not mean that the old Covenant, or Old Testament, is done away with. Rather, the renewed Covenant is an expansion of the old Covenant to include not only the Jewish people, but also the Gentiles.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, Paul explains how Jesus has broken down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, making it possible for all to be included in the renewed Covenant. Similarly, in Galatians 3:26-29, Paul emphasizes that those who belong to Jesus are heirs to the promise given to Abraham, regardless of their ethnicity.

Therefore, the renewed Covenant is a continuation and expansion of the old Covenant, not a replacement or annulment of it. It is a Covenant of faith and obedience to the commandments, and it is available to all who accept Jesus as their Messiah.

I would like to include the below quote from the Complete Jewish Study Bible, Page 96:

*“On the basis of the Abrahamic Covenant and promise made to Avraham (Abraham) in Genesis 15, God delivered the children of Isra’el from Egypt and established another covenant with them at Sinai. God used Moshe (Moses) as the deliverer and mediator of this covenant between Isra’el and God. It is not a covenant of salvation, but instead a covenant of “blessing and cursing” based on and faithfulness on Isra’el’s part. The Mosaic Covenant is similar to a marriage contract (ketubah) or a vassal treaty between God, as husband and king, and Isra’el, as his wife and people. It spells out the parameters of the relationship between them summarized in Exodus 19 and 20. The Mosaic Covenant includes blessings and security in the land for faithful obedience (Deut. 28), and curses and exile for faithless disobedience.*

*The Mosaic Covenant further includes a promise that even though Isra’el will not keep this covenant fully and will ultimately be removed from the land, God will not completely forsake them, but he will punish them and scatter them among the nations. From their exile, God will circumcise their hearts and they will return to him (repentance, t’shuvah). God will gather Isra’el back and atone for his people and the land (Deut. 30-33). This promise is to confirm and keep his promise to Avraham. The generation that made this covenant with God at Sinai was not able to enter into the land. The next generation reaffirmed the covenant and entered the land under Y’hoshua (Joshua). Each generation of Isra’el in the land and Diaspora must confirm the Abrahamic Covenant by the circumcision of their males and confirm the Mosaic Covenant by binding the words of God on their forehead and hands. Though they waver in their faithfulness to the covenant, God remains faithful.*

*The promises of this covenant must be fulfilled. Yeshua says (Matt. 5:17-19) that until heaven and earth pass away (based on the covenant with Noach), the smallest letter or*

*stroke of a letter will not pass from the Torah (Mosaic Covenant) until it is all fulfilled. God said through the prophets that as long as heaven and earth remains consistent with the Noachide Covenant, Isra'el would remain a people before him. The Mosaic Covenant is not a replacement of the covenants with Noah and Avraham. It is dependent upon them and along with them, is presently in effect. As we will see, the Davidic Covenant also affirms and expresses the earlier covenants. Therefor the new covenant fulfils rather than merely replaces the previous covenants, and the Christianity community errs severely whenever it claims that the new covenant has replaced the covenant made between Moshe, the children of Isra'el, and God at Sinai."*

## Circumcision is a sign of the Covenant

Circumcision is an important aspect of the Covenant between God and His people in the Bible. In the Old Testament, God commanded Abraham to circumcise himself and all males in his household, *as a sign* of the Covenant between God and His people. This Covenant is described in Genesis 17:10-11, where God says to Abraham:

*"This is My covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between Me and you."*

God made it clear that circumcision was a sign of the Covenant and a requirement for all males among His people. The importance of circumcision is further emphasized in Leviticus 12:3, which states that a male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after birth:

*"On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised."*

However, while circumcision was an outward sign of the Covenant, it was also important for believers to have a circumcision of the heart. In Deuteronomy 10:16, God commands His people to circumcise their hearts:

*"Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer."*

This command emphasizes that the physical act of circumcision alone was not enough, but there had to be a spiritual transformation as well. The importance of circumcision is also emphasized in the New Testament. In Romans 2:28-29, Paul writes:

*"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."*

Here, Paul is emphasizing that true circumcision is not a physical act, but a spiritual one. It is a change of heart that is brought about by the Holy Spirit. But once this change has taken place, the Holy Spirit will always guide one back to the commandments of God, and God was clear as to what He sees as the sign of the Covenant.

In Acts 15, the apostles debated whether Gentile believers should be instructed to be circumcised. It should be noted that the discussion was not about whether circumcision was necessary, as the Word of God clearly commanded that all males who were part of the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob should be circumcised as a sign of the Covenant. During that time, circumcision had become synonymous with being Jewish, and a Jewish man was known as circumcised. As a result, the two words had become interchangeable. However, there was a sect of Jews (known as "Judaizers") who taught the new believers who were Gentiles that they could not be saved by faith in the Messiah alone; they had to convert to Judaism to be saved. One of the signs of conversion was to be circumcised. These individuals had twisted the meaning of circumcision as a sign of the covenant and instead turned it into a requirement for salvation. This is not in accordance with the Living Word of God but rather a manifestation of Jewish legalism.

*Acts 15:1*

*English Standard Version*

*But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."*

Paul's argument was that Gentiles could be saved through faith in the Messiah and receive the Holy Spirit without having to become Jewish. It is important to note that during that time, being a Jew and being circumcised were synonymous. Essentially, Paul was saying that there was no need for Gentiles to convert to Judaism to be saved. This would require following not only the Written Law of God (the Torah) but also the oral law (the traditions of the Jews). Paul believed that burdening newly converted believers in the Messiah with

such requirements was unnecessary. Instead, he advised that they should only follow the Written Law of God and not the traditions of man.

*Acts 15:10-11*

*English Standard Version*

*Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.*

Therefore, we can conclude that the decision made in Acts 15 was that Gentile believers were not required to convert to Judaism for their salvation. While circumcision is a practice observed by the Jews, it does not diminish the fact that it is a commandment from God for all males who are part of the Covenant of Abraham to be circumcised as a sign of their participation in the Covenant.

## Chapter 16: What commandments should we keep?

*John 14:15*

*English Standard Version*

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.*

Notice that He does not say "some of My commandments," but rather instructs us to keep all of them. Although each commandment may not be physically applicable to all of us, each commandment contains a lesson for us to learn, and we should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to interpret them according to the Spirit rather than our own personal agendas or doctrines.

The Bible is concise and purposeful, containing no irrelevant information. Every commandment holds a truth that is applicable to every person. For instance, Leviticus 25:4 teaches us how to treat oxen, which can be applied to caring for domestic animals. Although Deuteronomy 25:4 specifically instructs not to muzzle an ox while it treads grain, the principle of caring for animals remains relevant. Additionally, 1 Timothy 5:18 provides an alternative interpretation of this commandment by linking it to fair wages for those who labour in ministry.

The four levels of Scriptural interpretation, known as PaRDeS (this is the Jewish acronym for the four levels of interpretation), were first taught by Jewish sages and are still widely used today.

- **Peshat:** This level is the most basic and literal interpretation of the text. It seeks to understand what the words of the text mean. It involves looking at the context, grammar, and syntax of the text.
- **Remez:** This level looks beyond the literal meaning of the text and seeks to find hints or hidden meanings in the text. It involves looking at wordplay, numerical values, and symbolic references to uncover deeper meanings.
- **Derash:** This level involves interpretation and application of the text. It seeks to find lessons, moral teachings, or religious principles that can be applied to everyday life. It involves looking at how the text has been interpreted throughout history and in different contexts.



- **Sod:** This level is the deepest and most mystical level of interpretation. It seeks to uncover the hidden and divine truths that lie beneath the surface of the text. It involves looking at the text as a revelation of God's character and His plan for humanity.

These four levels of interpretation are not exclusive to Judaism and can be applied by any person who is serious about Bible study. They allow for a deeper understanding of the text, its context, and its implications for our lives.

According to the Jewish sages, there are 613 commandments in the Torah. They can be divided into the following categories (included in these 613 commandments are the 10 commandments that most believers are familiar with as well):

- Commandments applicable to men: 268.
- Commandments applicable to women: 345.
- Commandments applicable to priests: 103.
- Commandments applicable to the Temple service: 20.
- Commandments applicable to the Land of Israel: 26.
- Commandments applicable to agricultural activities: 43.
- Commandments applicable to ritual slaughter and the consumption of meat: 21.
- Commandments applicable to vows, oaths, and pledges: 30.
- Commandments applicable to charity and gifts: 34.
- Commandments applicable to justice and judges: 25.
- Commandments applicable to business and finance: 55.
- Commandments applicable to interpersonal relationships: 72.
- Commandments applicable to speech: 30.
- Commandments applicable to forbidden sexual relations: 35.
- Commandments applicable to family life: 17.
- Commandments applicable to festivals and holy days: 31.

- Commandments applicable to the Temple vessels and their use: 14.
- Commandments applicable to the king and his conduct: 20.
- Commandments applicable to war and peace: 72.

*Note: These categories and numbers are based on traditional Jewish sources and interpretations of the commandments. Different sources may have slightly different breakdowns.*

If you are a woman, then obviously the commandments for men do not apply to you, and vice versa. While certain commandments pertaining to the Levitical priesthood, such as ritual slaughter and sacrifices, may not apply to you physically since you are not a priest, they still offer spiritual lessons that are relevant to all believers. For example, the commandments for kings and priests can be studied for spiritual insights, especially since we are called to be a royal priesthood and to serve as king-priests.

Scripture clearly states that the commandments of the Lord are not just physical instructions but hold deep spiritual truths as well. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, it is written: "***And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.***" This indicates that the commandments are to be studied and applied in all aspects of life.

Furthermore, the Torah provides a framework for moral behaviour that is still applicable today. As the Psalmist declares in *Psalm 119:105*, "***Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.***" The commandments contained in the Torah were ahead of their time in terms of human and animal rights, justice, and fairness. The principles of loving one's neighbour, caring for the poor and marginalized, and seeking justice for all are some of the subjects covered in the Laws of the Torah. Despite this, many believers reject the keeping of the Torah. However, as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks stated, "*The Torah is not just a collection of Laws; it is the story of a people in search of a moral vision, a sense of direction and purpose, and a shared identity and destiny.*" Therefore, to disregard the Torah is to miss out on the deep spiritual truths and moral guidance it provides.

## A summary of the commandments

*Matthew 22:36-40*

*English Standard Version*

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”<sup>37</sup> And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment.<sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.<sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”*

In this passage, Jesus provides the two foundational principles that the Law of God is built upon - love for God, and love for others. This passage shows that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law, but rather to fulfil it. He affirms the importance of keeping the Law of God, while at the same time emphasizing that the Spirit of the Law is just as important as the letter of the Law. Similarly, the Ten Commandments can be divided into two categories: commandments that pertain to our relationship with God, and commandments that pertain to our relationships with others. By keeping these two pillars in mind, we can better understand and apply the principles of all the commandments in our lives.

The Ten Commandments provide a summary of the entire Torah for us, a quick reference guide if you will. It is like a summary of the constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven. What is a constitution? A constitution is a fundamental set of principles that establishes the framework for how a government operates, and it often outlines the rights and responsibilities of its citizens. In the case of the Ten Commandments, they can be seen as a kind of constitution for the believer, outlining the principles and guidelines that God expects them to live by. The two tablets of the Ten Commandments can be viewed as the written record of this constitution. The Ten Commandments provide a foundation for the entire body of the Law and offer a concise summary of the ethical and moral standards that God expects His people to uphold. They are divided into two tablets, the first dealing with man's relationship with God, and the second dealing with man's relationship with others. The Ten Commandments are a set of foundational laws given to the Israelites by God through Moses. Each commandment forms a category that the other 613 commandments can be divided into.

A breakdown of the Ten Commandments:

1. **"I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt"** - This commandment establishes the monotheistic belief in the one true God, who delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It also serves as a reminder of God's power and authority. If God says we should do something then we obey, because He is God. If He forbids something we obey, because He is God. Our obedience is not subject to our understanding, in other words: even if you don't understand a commandment, you still obey it because He is God. This includes dietary laws.
2. **"You shall have no other gods before Me"** - This commandment forbids the worship of any other gods or idols, emphasizing the exclusivity of God's authority. This also speaks to idolatry, and the keeping of pagan feasts.
3. **"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain"** - This commandment prohibits the misuse of God's name or any irreverent speech about God.
4. **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"** - This commandment establishes the observance of the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as a day of rest and worship. As well as the Sabbaths related to the feast days as set out in the rest of the commandments.
5. **"Honour your father and your mother"** - This commandment instructs children to respect and care for their parents. Not only should we honour our parents and all other forms of authority on earth, but we should also honour God, our Heavenly Father! We honour Him through our obedience.
6. **"You shall not murder"** - This commandment prohibits the taking of human life without just cause. Under this commandment will also be "murdering with your tongue" – this includes gossip, slander, character assassination, etc.
7. **"You shall not commit adultery"** - This commandment prohibits sexual immorality, specifically the violation of the sanctity of marriage. It includes all acts of sexual perversions, same sex marriages, sex before marriage, bestiality, etc.
8. **"You shall not steal"** - This commandment prohibits theft or unjust acquisition.
9. **"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour"** - This commandment prohibits lying or giving false testimony against others.
10. **"You shall not covet"** - This commandment prohibits envy or desire for that which belongs to another.

The Ten Commandments provide a framework for ethical behaviour and form a foundation for the entire body of the Law, which includes the 613 commandments found in the Torah. By dividing the 613 commandments into categories based on the Ten Commandments, believers can better understand and apply the Laws in their daily lives.

While it's important to acknowledge that no single commandment is more important than another, it can be daunting for someone new to the faith to know where to begin when it comes to keeping God's commandments according to the ancient way. To establish a solid foundation for obedience, it's helpful to start with the basics. The Ten Commandments offer an excellent starting point, and I would suggest the following foundational commandments for every believer new to the ancient way:

- Keeping the weekly Sabbath.
- Keeping the feasts of the LORD.
- Eating clean food and abstaining from what is deemed unfit for human consumption.
- Keeping oneself sexually pure.

## Chapter 17: Keeping Sabbath

There are some believers who mistakenly associate the Sabbath or the practice of keeping the Sabbath with Judaism. However, throughout the Word of God, we can observe that God refers to the Sabbath as His Sabbath. This can be traced back to the very beginning of creation when God rested on the seventh day, sanctified it, blessed it, and declared it as holy. We find in the Word of God that there are two types of Sabbaths: the weekly Sabbath and the High Sabbaths related to God's feasts.

The weekly Sabbath is a day of rest and worship that is observed every week from sunset on a Friday to sunset on a Saturday. It commemorates the seventh day of creation when God rested after creating the world. It is a time where believers refrain from work, engage in prayer, and study, and spend time with family and friends. The weekly Sabbath is a holy day, and it is observed every week throughout the year. This weekly Sabbath is a day of rest and is part of the covenant blessings that we have as children of God. But some refuse to enter His rest. As we see in Hebrews 4:1-9, it is only through faith and obedience that we can truly enter the rest of God.

### *Exodus 20:8-11*

#### *English Standard Version*

*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

The Sabbath is a sacred day of rest that is important to God and is called a sign between Him and His people. In Exodus 31:13, God says, *"You must observe My Sabbaths. This will be a sign between Me and you for generations to come, so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy."* The Sabbath is a day set apart for rest and worship, where we can focus our attention on God and His goodness.

God commands that no work should be done on the Sabbath day (Exodus 20:8-10). This includes not only physical labour but also business transactions and pursuing our own pleasure. However, certain activities are permissible on the Sabbath, such as preparing food (Exodus 16:23) and performing acts of mercy (Matthew 12:11-12).

Throughout the Bible, we see the importance of honouring the Sabbath. Jesus Himself observed the Sabbath and went to the Synagogue on that day (Luke 4:16), and the apostles continued to gather on the Sabbath to worship and preach (Acts 13:14-16, 42-44; 17:2). The Sabbath is a reminder of God's goodness and His rest after creation (Genesis 2:2-3), and it provides a time of rest and rejuvenation for our bodies, minds, and souls.

Keeping the Sabbath is a powerful statement of faith, as it acknowledges the existence of a Creator and our dependence on Him. In Genesis 2:2-3, God rested on the seventh day, blessed it, and made it holy. By observing the Sabbath, we honour God's work of creation and acknowledge Him as our Provider. This is exemplified in Exodus 16:22-30, where the Israelites were commanded to gather a double portion of manna on the sixth day, as they would not work on the seventh day. The Sabbath also serves as a sign of our commitment to God and our readiness for the return of our Bridegroom, as stated in Ezekiel 20:12 and Exodus 31:13. Finally, the Sabbath serves as a sign of God's authority over our lives, and it is a commandment that should not be taken lightly.

What are you allowed to do and not allowed to do on the Sabbath and High Sabbaths according to God's Law?

- Remember it, set it apart, keep it holy (Ex 20: 8).
- You are not to do any kind of work. Not you, your livestock, your slave, your son or daughter, or any foreigner inside your gates or property (Ex 20: 10).
- Rest on the Shabbat (Hebrews 4:9).
- Do not kindle a fire (Ex 35:3).
- Do not do evil on the Shabbat (Isaiah 56:2).
- Do not buy and sell on the Shabbat (Nehemiah 13:15-22).
- Do not do your own pleasure on God's holy day (Isaiah 28:13-14).

- Call it a delight and honour it (Isaiah 28:13-14).
- Do not speak idle words on the Shabbat (Is 28:13-14).
- Do not treat it as ordinary (Ex 31:14).
- It is a perpetual commandment (Ex 31:16).
- It is a holy convocation (Lev 23:3).

### *Exodus 31:13-17*

#### *English Standard Version*

*“You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep My Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. <sup>14</sup> You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>15</sup> Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. <sup>16</sup> Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. <sup>17</sup> It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.’”*

The Sabbath is even prophesied to be around during the Messianic Reign. And remember; the 7000<sup>th</sup> year when Messiah Ben David returns, is the Millennial Sabbath! We will be keeping Sabbath with Messiah for a period of a 1000 years!

### *Isaiah 56:6-8*

#### *English Standard Version*

*“And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,  
to minister to Him, to love the name of the Lord,  
and to be His servants,  
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,  
and holds fast My Covenant—  
<sup>7</sup> these I will bring to My holy mountain,  
and make them joyful in My house of prayer;*



*their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
will be accepted on My altar;  
for My house shall be called a house of prayer  
for all peoples.”*

*<sup>8</sup> The Lord God,  
who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares,  
“I will gather yet others to him  
besides those already gathered.”*

## Chapter 18: Keeping the Feasts of the LORD

If you see yourself as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, then dates matter, they matter a lot! We see in Genesis that God made time and seasons part of the very foundation of creation.

*Genesis 1:14*

*Complete Jewish Bible*

*God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years;"*

To truly understand what this verse means, we need to look at two words found in this verse in their original Hebrew:

**Signs:**

**Strong's Word H226**

Definition: Appearing, flag, beacon, monument, evidence, mark, token

**Seasons:**

**Strong's Word H4150**

Definition: properly appointed, fixed time, festival, assembly, congregation, place of meeting, appointed place and time, feast

Before I even knew to look at the Hebrew meaning of these words, I just thought this meant that the sun, moon and stars were there to show us the seasons: summer, autumn, winter and spring. But if we look at what God really meant, we see it has to do with evidence related to an appointed time for a feast or an assembly. Yes, the feasts were there, at the very beginning of creation! God is a God of relationship, and He has appointed times during the cycle of one year, where He meets with His children. The question is: are you showing up for these "dates" with the King?

These moedim (feasts) do not just refer to the weekly Sabbath, but also to the 7 feasts that we find in the Word of God. God calls these His feasts, while people in general tend to call it the feast of the Jews. Although the Jews have been faithful in the keeping of these

Godly feasts, they are not exclusively just for the Jews, they are for every person who calls himself / herself a child of God.

## What Calendar to use?

There are different calendars that are followed. The Bible commands us to use the sighting of the New Moon or the harvesting cycles in Israel, to know when many of these feasts start. But this is related specifically to the land of Israel, and since we are not in Israel, we cannot use these physical signs to know exactly when to honour the feasts of the LORD. Because the authority (Genesis 49:8-12) was given to Judah (this tribe would later become part of the Jewish Nation), we align ourselves with the Jews as the leading authority today and as a sign of coalition we keep the feasts based on the Hillel calendar, which they also follow.

Hillel was a Jewish scholar and religious leader who lived in Jerusalem during the 1st century BCE. He is known for his contributions to Jewish law and his role in establishing the Jewish calendar. Prior to Hillel's time, the Jewish calendar was determined based on observations of the moon and the harvest seasons. However, this method was not always accurate, and it led to confusion and disputes about when to celebrate the feasts of God. Hillel proposed a new system for calculating the calendar based on mathematical calculations and astronomical observations. He established a 19-year cycle that included seven leap years, in which an additional month was added to the calendar. This helped to align the lunar and solar cycles and ensure that the festivals fell at the appropriate times of the year. Hillel's calendar became widely accepted by the Jewish community and is still used today to determine the dates of major Jewish holidays such as Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

## The seven feasts of God

- **Pesach / Passover** - Leviticus 23:5 - This feast is observed on the fourteenth day of the first month and commemorates the deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. For believers in Jesus, it is a prophetic picture of His sacrificial death on the cross, which brings deliverance from sin.
- **Feast of Unleavened Bread** - Leviticus 23:6-8 - This feast is celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the first month and involves the removal of leaven

from the home. It represents the removal of sin from our lives. For believers in Jesus, it is a reminder to live a life without sin.

- **First Fruits** - Leviticus 23:10-11 - This feast is observed on the day after the Sabbath following Passover and involves the offering of the first fruits of the barley harvest to God. It represents the resurrection of Jesus and the hope of our own resurrection.
- **Shavuot / Pentecost** - Leviticus 23:15-16 - This feast is celebrated fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. For believers in Jesus, it represents the second outpouring of the Holy Spirit (the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit was at Mount Sinai).
- **Yom Teruh / Feast of Trumpets** - Leviticus 23:24-25 - This feast is observed on the first day of the seventh month and involves the blowing of trumpets. It represents a call to repentance and preparation for the Day of Atonement.
- **Yom Kippur / Feast of Atonement** - Leviticus 23:27-28 - This feast is observed on the tenth day of the seventh month and involves fasting and repentance. It represents the atonement made for our sins by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- **Sukkot / Feast of Booths** - Leviticus 23:34-36 - This feast is celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first day of the seventh month and involves the building of temporary shelters. It represents the provision and protection of God during the wilderness journey of Israel. For believers in Jesus, it is a reminder of our temporary dwelling on earth and represents the wedding feast of the Bridegroom and the Bride.

To learn more about the Biblical Feast days and how to observe them, check out our YouTube Channel: Quantum Talk with Natanja and Elzaan. Additionally, the Healthy Vibes website provides updated manuals for each feast on a yearly basis.

[Quantum Talk with Natanja and Elzaan](#)

[Healthy Vibes Free Downloads](#)

## Chapter 19: What is food?

Do you believe that God doesn't care about what you eat? I would like to challenge that idea and say that the answer is that He is very much concerned with what you put into the temple of your body where His Holy Spirit dwells! One of the initial commandments God gave to Adam and Eve was related to food. He clearly stated what they were permitted to eat and what was off-limits. The violation of that straightforward commandment resulted in consequences that still impact us today!

But why is God interested in what we consume? It's because God considers our bodies as His temple. Let's examine some Bible verses that support this claim:

- *"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" - 1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV).*
- *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own." - 1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV).*
- *"For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will make My dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'" - 2 Corinthians 6:16 (ESV).*

If we are the dwelling place of God's Holy Spirit, as the Temple of God, then it would be logical for Him to be concerned about what we consume, which is offered on the altar of our temple (the mouth). In Scripture, we can find multiple verses that suggest the mouth is the altar of our temple:

- *Psalms 141:2: "May my prayer be set before You like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."*
- *Hebrews 13:15: "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess His name."*
- *Romans 12:1: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship."*
- *1 Peter 2:5: "you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

These references show the connection between the altar and the mouth, and how our words and actions can be seen as sacrifices to God.

God is very specific about what He deems food and what is not food. The Torah provides specific guidelines on which foods are considered clean (permissible) and unclean (not permissible) for human consumption.

Clean (permissible) animals:

- Cattle: Leviticus 11:2-3.
- Sheep and goats: Leviticus 11:2-3.
- Deer and gazelle: Deuteronomy 14:5.
- Wild goats: Deuteronomy 14:5.
- Wild oxen: Deuteronomy 14:5.
- Birds (with some exceptions): Leviticus 11:13-19, Deuteronomy 14:11-18.
- Fish (with some exceptions): Leviticus 11:9-12, Deuteronomy 14:9-10.

Unclean (not permissible) animals:

- Pigs: Leviticus 11:7-8, Deuteronomy 14:8.
- Camels: Leviticus 11:4.
- Rabbits: Leviticus 11:6.
- Shellfish and other sea creatures without fins or scales: Leviticus 11:9-12, Deuteronomy 14:9-10.
- Eagles, vultures, and other birds of prey: Leviticus 11:13-19, Deuteronomy 14:11-18.

In addition to these specific animals, the Torah also prohibits the consumption of any animal that has died from natural causes (Leviticus 11:39) or that was not properly slaughtered (Leviticus 17:15-16). It's important to note that these guidelines were given to the Israelites as part of their Covenant with God, and if we are grafted into Israel, these commandments still apply to us today.

## The Swine Dilemma

It seems that two things can really ruffle people's feathers: not celebrating Christmas and abstaining from pork. I am amazed by people's reactions to this because both are clearly forbidden by God Himself!

Although I may not fully comprehend the reasoning behind God's dietary Laws, I understand that His ways are higher than mine. The very reason for acknowledging God as the ultimate authority is because He possesses infinite wisdom and knowledge beyond human understanding. It is not my place to question or modify His commands. As followers of God, we are called to obey His commands, regardless of whether we fully comprehend them. The Bible does not instruct us to "understand and obey", but rather to simply obey. True obedience requires submission to God's authority, even if we do not fully comprehend His reasoning. If we only obey when we understand, we are displaying a rebellious spirit that refuses to submit to God's authority.

There is something especially vile to God about pigs' meat. Let's look at some interesting prophecies about the end times and the final judgement.

*Isaiah 66:17*

*English Standard Version*

*"Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the Lord.*

*Isaiah 65:3-4*

*English Standard Version*

*a people who provoke Me  
to My face continually,  
sacrificing in gardens  
and making offerings on bricks;  
4 who sit in tombs,  
and spend the night in secret places;*

*who eat pig's flesh,  
and broth of tainted meat is in their vessels;*

Suppose we entertain the idea that God made an "error" and decided to revoke all dietary Laws after Jesus' death, and also "did away with the Torah". Then why would He have prophesied a specific judgment on those who consume unclean food in an end-time prophecy? If we believe that God is omniscient, then He would have known that the Law would eventually be abolished? Unless our doctrine is incorrect, and God never changes, never makes mistakes, and did not abolish the Torah, then these verses would make perfect sense.

## Meat and Dairy

Jewish dietary laws prohibit the mixing of meat and dairy products, based on the Biblical verses Exodus 23:19 and Exodus 34:26. However, it's important to note that the prohibition against cooking a goat in its mother's milk, mentioned in these verses, is not listed with the rest of the dietary Laws. Instead, it is included with Laws related to the observance of feast days and avoiding idolatrous practices that resemble those of pagan nations. Therefore, the prohibition against mixing meat and dairy is seen as a broader principle of not mixing incompatible practices, rather than a specific dietary Law.

The practice of cooking a goat in its mother's milk is mentioned in the Bible several times, and it is believed to have been a pagan ritual in the ancient Near East that was associated with fertility cults. In these cults, it was believed that cooking a young goat in its mother's milk would promote fertility and ensure a bountiful harvest. Some scholars believe that this practice may have been related to the worship of the ancient Canaanite goddess Asherah, who was often depicted as a fertility goddess and associated with milk and dairy products. Archaeological evidence from the ancient Near East suggests that the Canaanites engaged in this practice as part of their religious ceremonies.

This commandment may be more relevant to the pagan festivals of Christmas and Easter, which have connections to fertility cults and are widely observed by many believers today, rather than being strictly interpreted as a prohibition against consuming meat and dairy products together.



## Everything created by God is good

Everything God created is good, but not everything God created is food! How do we know this? Because He gives us a list of animals that He created for a purpose, but their purpose was not human consumption.

It is important to make this distinction, and especially because some believers may selectively quote Scripture to support the idea that all animals are now permissible to eat, often taking verses out of context. However, as responsible Bible students, it is important to examine the full context of these verses. Let us review some of these frequently misused Scriptures and study them in their proper context.

### *1 Timothy 4:1-5*

#### *English Standard Version*

*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,<sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,<sup>3</sup> who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.<sup>4</sup> For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,<sup>5</sup> for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*

When we read this passage in Timothy, with the assumption that this passage now declares all meat as food, then we should also make the following deductions from this same passage:

- Keeping the Law of God is departing from faith.
- Keeping the Law of God is devoting oneself to deceitful spirits and the teaching of demons.
- Those who keep the Law of God are insincere and liars, and their consciences are seared.
- The Law of God forbids marriage.

Considering the context of this passage, it would appear almost sacrilegious to accept the aforementioned ideas. However, if one teaches that this passage indicates that all animals

are acceptable for human consumption, then that would be the contextual interpretation of the passage.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy is a letter, it should be interpreted as such. Imagine receiving a letter and only reading one sentence; would you have a clear understanding of the message conveyed in the letter? At the very least, it is essential to examine the verse before and after verse 4 to comprehend the message fully and let Scripture interpret Scripture.

### *1 Timothy 4:3*

#### *English Standard Version*

*who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*

Thanksgiving is a concept taught by the Torah:

### *Deuteronomy 8:10*

#### *English Standard Version*

*And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land He has given you.*

What is truth? Is truth what man teaches? Or what God commands?

### *Psalms 119:160*

#### *English Standard Version*

*The sum of Your Word is truth,  
and every one of Your righteous rules endures forever.*

The Word of God is often referred to as the truth in numerous references. When Paul wrote to Timothy stating that those who know the truth will not be deceived, he was

referring to which part of the Word of God? Since the New Testament had not yet been established, he was referring to the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings – the truth!

Let's look at verse 5:

*1 Timothy 4:5*

*English Standard Version*

*for it is made holy by the Word of God and prayer.*

- The term "holy" means to set apart, consecrate, and venerate (according to Strong's word G37).
- "To sanctify" means to designate something for a special use or purpose, essentially making it holy or sacred. Therefore, sanctification refers to the act or process of setting something apart.
- Consecration involves making something sacred or dedicating it for a specific purpose.

Thus, when Paul writes about certain foods being set apart and made holy by God, it implies that there are other foods that are not considered holy or suitable for human consumption. This verse suggests that there are two distinct categories of food that a believer who knows the truth can differentiate between: meat that is consecrated as fit for human consumption, and meat that is not consecrated as such.

As we end our discussion on this verse, I want to pose one final question to the reader: why is it that God is so specific in the Torah about what is suitable for food and what is not, yet we do not find any instance where God changes His mind and declares previously unclean things as now clean for human consumption? Every time someone tries to use a verse out of context to justify eating unclean meat, it is always a human interpretation, not a divine command to eat all things! We have allowed our culture to dictate what is food and what is not food, instead of allowing the Word of God to be our guideline for our dietary needs.

## Romans 14: A matter of opinions

Before we break down this chapter of Romans, I would like to encourage the reader to read through the entire chapter of Romans 14 before continuing this study.

The context of the letter to the congregation in Romans is crucial to understanding its message. Unfortunately, many passages in Romans 14 have been misconstrued to suggest that the Torah's dietary Laws and holy days are no longer relevant. However, this interpretation is completely incorrect. To gain a better understanding of Paul's message, it is essential to examine the letter in its historical context and consider the audience it was written to, as well as the specific issues that Paul was addressing within the congregation.

Paul's letters were not written in a vacuum; he typically addressed specific issues in the congregations he wrote to. Some believers may read Romans 14 and assume that Paul is referring to the Torah's dietary Laws and holy days, but this is not the case. When we consider other passages of Scripture, we see that Paul regularly attended Synagogue on the Sabbath (Acts 13:14, 44, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4), expressed a desire to be in Jerusalem for Shavuot (Acts 20:16), and instructed the congregation on how to keep Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Therefore, we can conclude that Paul believed in keeping the holy days. It is important to approach Romans 14 with fresh eyes, setting aside our assumptions and reading it in context.

The subject matter is already introduced by Paul in the opening sentence of his letter to the congregation in Romans 14.

### *Romans 14:1*

#### *English Standard Version*

*As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.*

In this opening statement of the letter to the congregation in Romans, we see that the issue being discussed is quarrelling over **opinions**, not quarrelling over the Law of God. This was a matter of personal opinion, not a matter of settled Law. While some believers today may view the holy days and dietary Laws as a matter of opinion (which would be a faulty view to say the least), in those days it was not the case. Both Jewish and Gentile believers adhered to the commandments regarding the holy days and dietary Laws because they

recognized them as valid and authoritative. The issues addressed in this letter was not about the validity or authority of the commandments, but rather about personal opinions.

Let us establish the following points before moving forward:

- Paul's concern in Romans 14 is not about commandments, but rather about disagreements based on personal opinions.
- Despite having his own opinion, Paul remains neutral in the debate and urges both parties to respect each other's views.
- Paul celebrates the unity between Jews and Gentiles in Christ and encourages believers to avoid judging one another, as both groups are accepted by God.
- This suggests that Paul is not addressing issues of sin, and we know from Romans 7:7 that he identifies the Torah as defining sin.

In what ways do the opinions of the believers differ, as addressed by Paul in his letter to the congregation in Romans?

- One group believed that any meat that the Torah deemed acceptable for human consumption was permissible to eat, while another group believed that even if the Torah declared something to be food, external factors could render it unclean and unfit for consumption.
- Additionally, some individuals observed fasts on certain days of the week, while others discouraged fasting on those days and promoted different days for fasting than those traditionally observed.

In Romans 14 we see Paul referring to two types of believers, those who are weak in faith and those who are strong in faith. In the early Church, Jews and Gentiles began to fellowship together, leading to some tensions between the two groups. The Jews and Gentiles had a long-standing conflict, and as they started to gather in the congregations, these conflicts resurfaced. One of the issues related to food, was that the Jews traditionally refused to eat with Gentiles or to eat food handled by Gentiles. They believed that this caused ritual impurity, which does not mean that the food is unfit for human consumption according to the Laws of Torah. Instead, due to the Jewish traditions, they believed that certain meat, although deemed good for human consumption by the Torah, could be "defiled" by contact with Gentiles or by being touched by unwashed hands or

contaminated through contact with unclean meat that, according to Torah, is not permitted as food.

There is ample historical evidence indicating that Jews would limit their food intake during periods when Gentiles oversaw food preparation. This can be seen in various sources such as the apocryphal book of Judith, where Judith brought her own food and drink when dining with Nebuchadnezzar's general, Holofernes. In the book of Tobit, Tobit refused to eat the food of the Ninevites. Josephus also noted that some Jewish priests he knew in Rome, ate only figs and nuts, reverting to a vegetarian diet. Furthermore, later Rabbinic literature includes regulations governing interactions between Jews and Gentiles that prohibit Jews from consuming food and wine handled by Gentiles (m.Tahorot7; m.Avodah Zarah 2, 4-5).

### *Romans 14:14*

#### *English Standard Version*

*I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.*

To better comprehend the meaning of the term "unclean" used by Paul, we must refer to the original Greek text. In Greek, the word used is "Koinos" (Strong's Number G2839), which means ritually impure. It is essential to note that this term does not refer to Biblically unclean. When the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, discusses unclean meat as per the Torah's dietary Laws, the word used is "akathartos." Therefore, if Paul was referring to meat from unclean animals in Romans 14, we would expect him to use the word "akathartos," but he does not; he uses the word "koinos." We see the same word, "koinos," used in the context of eating Biblically permitted food during Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees in Mark 7. The Pharisees criticized Jesus' disciples for neglecting their hand-washing rituals and asked, *"Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands?" (Mark 7:5)*. The word "defiled" in this verse is "koinos," which means ritually impure. From the Pharisees' perspective, eating with ritually impure hands made one's food ritually impure by association. Although the Torah commands priests to wash their hands when serving in the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:17-21), there is no commandment for non-priests outside of the Tabernacle to wash their hands before eating. The point is that the Torah does not say that clean food becomes ritually impure if touched with unwashed hands; this concept

comes from man-made tradition. Nonetheless, many Jews in Jesus' and Paul's day held that perspective.

From the perspective of many believers in Paul's day, particularly Jewish believers, some clean foods could become "koinos" (ritually impure) through association with unclean animals. This is a significant distinction. This means that many Jewish believers at this time not only avoided unclean meat per the Torah's dietary Laws but also avoided any clean meat that they considered to have become ritually impure.

*According to E.P. Sanders, Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah (P279-280):*

*"Because of ignorance, general suspicion, or the long-standing association of meat with sacrifice, Jews were reluctant to eat Gentile food, especially meat, just because it was Gentile. The objection, that is, may not have been technical – 'it has blood in it' – but vague and traditional – 'our family has never eaten Gentile meat'. Some Jews would eat Gentile meat if they could receive the right assurances about it, others simply would not eat it because it was Gentile.*

After considering the aforementioned, it is evident that there were Jewish believers who abstained from eating meat in the company of Gentiles, and this is a crucial aspect of Paul's message to the congregation in Rome. Now, let us examine the second concern addressed in this epistle. The issue of the holy days.

### *Romans 14:5-6*

#### *English Standard Version*

*One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. <sup>6</sup> The one who observes the day, observes it in honour of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honour of the Lord and gives thanks to God.*

It is a common misinterpretation among believers that verses 5-6 refer to the holy days of the Torah, such as the Sabbath. However, this is improbable as Paul does not explicitly mention the Sabbath or the holy days in his letter to the Romans. This should caution us from hastily concluding that the subject is the holy days of the Torah.

It is evident that there is a connection between the holy days mentioned by Paul and the act of eating or abstaining from food. However, it is important to note that traditionally, there is no fasting on the weekly Sabbath, in fact, the High Sabbaths (except for Yom Kippur) are typically a time for celebration, which includes enjoying festive food and drink. From this, we can conclude that Paul is not referring to the holy days as defined by the Torah. It is important to remember that the letter begins by addressing human opinions, rather than God's Laws.

Biblical scholars agree that the days discussed in Romans 14 refer to traditional fast days observed by early believers in Jesus. The Pharisees traditionally fasted on Mondays and Thursdays. Due to the tension between Jews and Gentiles, it is believed that the Didache instructed its followers to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, rather than the same days as the hypocritical Pharisees. The conflict between Jewish and Gentile believers over which days to fast was the second issue that Paul addressed in his letter. He encouraged them not to argue over something that should be an act of worship to the Lord.

Now that we have a better understanding of Romans 14, we can draw the following conclusions:

- Romans 14 does not suggest that God is indifferent about whether believers follow the commanded holy days and dietary Laws. The broader context of Romans and other writings in the New Testament rules out this interpretation.
- The conflict over food was related to concerns about ritual purity, while the conflict over days was about traditional fasting practices.
- In both cases, Paul was addressing matters of opinion, not commandments. Therefore, since the issues in Rome did not involve obedience to clear Scriptural commandments, Paul did not take a side.
- While he had his own opinions, Paul tolerated differences in opinion and encouraged the congregation to do the same, hoping that the fellowship in Rome could be united in Messiah despite their differences.



## Genesis 9:3 Every moving thing shall be food for you

*Genesis 9:3*

*English Standard Version*

*Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.*

It is a common misconception among believers that the Torah was only given to us at Mount Sinai, when in fact God's commandments have existed since before the foundation of the earth. So, how do we arrive at this understanding?

*John 1:1*

*English Standard Version*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*Revelation 13:8*

*English Standard Version*

*and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.*

There are numerous Scriptural references which indicate that Jesus is the Word who was with God from the beginning, and that Word became flesh and lived among us. Furthermore, we know that Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden every day, where He taught them His statutes, ordinances, and commandments. Additionally, we see evidence that Noah observed the Torah, as he made a distinction between clean and unclean animals, as recorded in Genesis.

Before the flood:

*Genesis 7:2*

*English Standard Version*

*Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate,*

After the flood:

*Genesis 8:20*

*English Standard Version*

*Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*

Thus, it is evident that a distinction between clean and unclean animals existed both before, and after the flood, in line with Leviticus 11:46-47, indicating that God and His commandments remain unchanging. However, some believers find themselves perplexed by the seeming contradiction presented in Genesis 9:2-3.

*Genesis 9:2-3*

*English Standard Version*

*The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. <sup>3</sup> Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.*

Does this really mean that Noah could eat every moving thing? I would like to suggest that this specific passage is confusing - not because God is confused, but because of a translation error from the original Hebrew. To support this, I would like to quote two mainstream Christian scholars:

*"The noun (H743 Remes) and the associated verb (rms) each occur seventeen times in the Old Testament, ten times each in Genesis 1-9. This word group is distinct from both the*

*wild (predatory) beasts and domesticated flocks and herds. Neither verb nor noun is ever used to refer to larger wild animals or domesticated animals. No place is remes (H743) a catch-all category of creatures. It is one category of creature only. The division of the Hebrew terms used up to this point in Genesis reflects the nature of the animal.... These animals were typically characterized as being the prey of hunters and predatory beasts"*

- *John H. Walton's, The NIV Application Commentary*

According to John H Walton, the Hebrew word "remes" (H743) translated as "moving" specifically refers to a category of animals, not all animals as many English translations suggest. It refers to wild clean animals like antelope and deer, which are typically hunted by humans or predatory beasts.

Regarding Genesis 9:2-3, French theologian, pastor and reformer John Calvin stated that *"God did not give humans more than what had previously been given but rather restored what had been taken away, allowing them to enter the possession of the good things from which they had been excluded."*

One may wonder why Noah was given permission to eat clean animals after the flood even though he also ate them before the flood. Biblical scholars suggest that while Noah and his family were on the ark, they followed a strict vegetarian diet to preserve the animals' lives. In Genesis 6:20-21, Noah was commanded to keep the animals alive, implying that they were not allowed to eat any of the animals while on the ark. After the flood, God again gave permission to hunt and eat clean animals.

Considering the teachings of scholars like John H Walton, a more precise translation of Genesis 9:2-3 would be:

***Genesis 9:3***

***English Standard Version***

***Every (clean) moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.***

In conclusion, the assumption that God constantly changes His mind and alters His rules is highly unlikely. If we were to believe that Genesis 9:2-3 means that all animals are now declared clean and fit for human consumption, then we must also accept that God changed His mind multiple times. For example, before and after the flood, there were rules about what is clean and unclean meat. In Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14, Isaiah 65, Ezekiel 4, Daniel 1, and Hosea 9, God commands people to stick to dietary Laws. However, in the New Testament, God seemingly changes His mind again and teaches that all food is clean and good for human consumption. This portrayal of God as inconsistent and confused is not the God I serve. The God I serve is a God of order, not confusion, and such confusion is the work of the father of lies.

## Acts 10 - Peter's Vision:

Before we delve deeper into the study of Acts 10, I would like to suggest that the reader first read the entire chapter and then proceed with the following analysis. Contrary to common misconceptions, this passage has nothing to do with food but is rather focused on the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Kingdom of Heaven. It is possible for some to argue that if God didn't want Peter to eat unclean animals, why did He instruct him to do so? However, one could respond by asking if God didn't want Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, then why did He instruct Abraham to do so?

Now, let's examine Peter's reaction to the vision:

*Acts 10:17*  
*English Standard Version*

*Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate*

Despite having the vision, Peter did not arrive at the same conclusion as many present-day believers do. He did not simply rise and eat unclean meat. Instead, he was confused. This confusion might have been because he was uncertain about the vision's interpretation. Peter knew that God's dietary Laws were still in effect, and he knew that God would not instruct him to violate His own commandments. In Acts 10:14, Peter confirms that he had never eaten anything that was considered unclean. Hence, we can deduce that even after Jesus' death, the disciples continued to follow the dietary Laws of the Torah.

It is worth noting that the vision was repeated three times to Peter and shortly after that, three Gentiles arrived at his house.

Peter's interpretation of the vision can be found in Acts 10:28:

*Acts 10:28*

*English Standard Version*

*And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.*

This word for unlawful is not the same word used for the Torah. It is Strong's word G111 and is only used in two places in the Bible. Acts 10:28 and 1 Peter 4:3. This is not the same word that is used for the Torah or the commandments. It was in fact the oral law of the Talmud that commanded Jews not to associate with the Gentiles. It was never a commandment from the Law of God.

Peter concludes that the vision is not about food but about people. God is revealing to Peter His plan to include Gentiles in the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Pharisees may have considered the Gentiles unclean based on their oral law, but God commands Peter not to call any person unclean. This interpretation is repeated in Acts 11:18.

*Acts 11:18*

*English Standard Version*

*When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."*

What God revealed to the believing Jews through Peter's vision, matches what He commanded in the Torah:

*Numbers 15:15-16*

*English Standard Version*

*For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord. <sup>16</sup> One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."*

## Chapter 20: Sexual Purity

Based on the principles found in the Word of God regarding sexual purity, a morally and sexually pure life should involve abstaining from sexual immorality, including premarital sex, adultery, and homosexual activity. The Bible teaches that sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman. A morally pure life involves avoiding pornography, lustful thoughts, sexual fantasies, and honouring the sanctity of marriage. In addition, believers are called to respect their own bodies, as well as the bodies of others, avoiding sexual exploitation and abuse. Fleeing from sexual temptation and putting on the armour of God to resist the devil's schemes are also crucial aspects of living a sexually pure and moral life.

Sexual immorality has become the norm in society today and is even considered a form of entertainment. Popular music, TV shows, and advertisements often contain sexual themes, and objectify women's bodies. The rich and famous promote and perpetuate this message, leading to a widespread normalization of sexualization. This cultural shift away from sexual purity, has contributed to high divorce rates and a decline in morality in society.

There are several ways in which sexual immorality can be linked to high divorce rates and the moral decline of society. Firstly, statistics show that sexual infidelity is a common cause of divorce. A study conducted by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy found that 15% of wives and 25% of husbands reported engaging in extramarital sex at some point in their marriage. Additionally, a study conducted by the National Opinion Research Centre found that 16% of divorces were caused by sexual incompatibility or infidelity. This highlights how sexual immorality can lead to the breakdown of marriages and the resulting high divorce rates.

Secondly, sexual immorality can contribute to the moral decline of society. When sexual activity occurs outside of the bounds of marriage, it can lead to the erosion of traditional values, and the breakdown of family structures. This can contribute to a general decline in societal morals and values. Additionally, the normalization of sexual promiscuity and casual sex can lead to a culture where sexual gratification is prioritized over long-term commitments and healthy relationships.

Furthermore, the impact of sexual immorality on mental health cannot be ignored. Sexual activity outside of marriage can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety. Additionally, sexually transmitted infections can have long-term health consequences and contribute to the overall decline of a person's health and well-being.

Overall, sexual immorality can have far-reaching consequences on both an individual and societal level. It is important for individuals to prioritize sexual purity and morality to promote healthy relationships, strong families, and a thriving society.

Many references are made in the New Testament about sexual morality. These passages in the New Testament are commentary on what is taught by the Torah of God:

- **Leviticus 18:6-23** This section outlines various sexual relationships that are prohibited, including incestuous relationships, adultery, and bestiality.
- **Leviticus 20:10-21** This passage lists the punishments for sexual sins, including adultery, incest, and homosexuality.
- **Deuteronomy 22:13-30** This chapter covers various issues related to sexual purity, including virginity, rape, and adultery.
- **Exodus 22:16-17** This passage deals with the issue of premarital sex and the responsibility of the man to provide for the woman he has had sex with.
- **Deuteronomy 23:17-18** This verse prohibits prostitution and the use of the wages of prostitution in the service of God.
- **Leviticus 15:16-24** This section deals with the issue of bodily emissions and the need for cleanliness in sexual relationships.
- **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** This passage outlines the process for divorce and the need for a certificate of divorce in order to remarry.

It's crucial to keep in mind that God instructs us to love our neighbour, so it is not our place to judge or condemn them. We are called to love the person but reject the sin. The Church's acceptance of same-sex relationships and marriages is one of the most controversial topics we encounter today. While I will not provide my opinion on this matter, I will refer to the Scriptures below. God's commandments do not change!



- *Genesis 19:1-13* This passage describes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which some interpret as being due to the widespread practice of homosexuality among the people there.
- *Leviticus 18:22* "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."
- *Leviticus 20:13* "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."

The Scriptures are clear, this is an abomination to God, and will incur a curse of death.

As believers, it is essential to maintain sexual purity before God since our bodies are temples where the Holy Spirit resides, and we should not defile it with sexual immorality. Remember that through Jesus, we can overcome any struggle we face, and we can do all things through Him who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13).

## Chapter 21: The rebellious son

The directive to stone the disobedient son is frequently cited as a reason to reject adherence to the Torah. At first glance, this commandment may seem severe and merciless. However, when we have such feelings, it is important to pause and inquire whether this aligns with the characteristics of God that we witness in Exodus 34:5-6.

When confronted with such a commandment, it is beneficial to keep in mind that there are important contextual, historical, and theological aspects to consider that can help to clarify the meaning of the text.

### *Deuteronomy 21:18-21*

#### *English Standard Version*

*"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, <sup>19</sup> then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, <sup>20</sup> and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' <sup>21</sup> Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.*

Is it necessary to stone a disobedient child to death? This seems like an extreme form of discipline, but there are many factors to consider that can help us understand this seemingly barbaric text. Firstly, it is important to note that there is no record of this punishment ever being administered in Israel. The Law was given as a deterrent, as a means of educating the people, and not necessarily as a practical scenario.

Secondly, we need to understand that the "son" in question is not a child or teenager, but a young man who is of accountable age before the Law of God. He is accused by his parents of being a hardened delinquent, a drunkard, and a glutton, which could lead to his own ruin and that of his family. His choices would not just threaten his safety but would also destroy his entire family. Furthermore, this young man is a repeat offender who has rejected all counsel and rebuke, even from his parents. In Ancient Israel, honouring one's

father and mother was one of the ten foundational commandments and a foundation of family relations, as well as a structure for political authority in general.

It is also noteworthy that Scripture, especially in the Old Testament, seldom deals with a person as an independent but instead deals with the entire nation of Israel. Thus, one man's disobedience is a threat to the entire community.

It is important to note that it is not the parents who condemn and stone the young man, but the community leaders. The parents bring the young man to the judges at the city gate, and the community investigates the accusations and renders a judgement. This was not a hasty act of parental vindictiveness, but one of justice, administered by the proper civil authorities.

In summary, this commandment serves as a warning for all believers to guard their hearts against rebellion. God places spiritual mothers and fathers in our lives for a reason, and we are commanded to submit to authority and to honour them. But this serves as a reminder for every child of God to obey the commands given by our Heavenly Father.

## Chapter 22: Animal Sacrifice

The topic of animal sacrifice can often be a source of controversy, but this may be due to a misunderstanding of their true meaning. To better understand the history and context of sacrifices, it is important to examine them from a Biblical standpoint. This involves not only looking at the Levitical priesthood's history, but also studying the prophecies about the Temple and the Messianic Reign.

Animal sacrifices, along with offerings of grain, oil, wine, and other substances, were a crucial part of the Tabernacle service in the wilderness, and later in the Temple in Jerusalem. These services were entrusted to the priests, as not just anyone could slaughter and sacrifice an animal. Additionally, strict guidelines were established for which animals were acceptable as sacrifices. This largely corresponded to the types of animals humans were allowed to eat as meat.

### A history of the sacrifices

Throughout history, sacrifices have played a significant role in various cultures and religions. In the Bible, we see examples of sacrifices being offered to God, such as Cain and Abel bringing sacrifices, Noah sacrificing clean animals and birds after the flood, and Abraham being provided with a ram to sacrifice instead of Isaac. During the Israelites' 40 years in the wilderness, sacrifices were a daily occurrence in the Tabernacle. Even after they settled in the Promised Land, they continued to offer sacrifices to God in the first and second Temple.

### Types of Sacrifices

Animal sacrifices are usually divided into four categories:

- **Burnt Offering (Olah)** – In the olah offering, the entire animal was burnt, except for the skin. The Hebrew name for this offering, olah, means "to go up" because the smoke rising from the burning offering ascended to Heaven. This offering was made every morning and evening, to distinguish between day and night. Unlike other offerings, the burnt offering required the entire animal to be burned on the altar, signifying complete surrender and devotion to God.

- **Sin Offering (Chalat)** – The offering is partially burned, while the remainder is consumed by the priests. This sacrifice is typically made during or after atonement for unintentional sins or sins committed in ignorance. Intentional sins require other forms of atonement, such as prayer and repentance.
- **Guilt Offering (Asham)** – A guilt offering, also known as a trespass offering, is a type of sacrifice described in the Bible. It involved offering an animal that was partially burned, and the rest consumed by the priests. This type of sacrifice was made as a compensation payment for certain unintentional transgressions.
- **Peace Offering (Shelamim)** – The offering would be distributed among the altar, the priests, and the individual who offered the sacrifice. Typically, the shelamim sacrifice is known as a peace offering, and it was usually given as a voluntary gift, a sacrificial offering meant to establish fellowship with God.

To gain a deeper understanding of the distinctions between the sin offering and the guilt offering, it is important to grasp the differences between sin and transgression. In the Old Testament, different terms are used to describe sin, transgression, and iniquity. Hamartia, a Greek term often used for "sin," denotes falling short of God's glory. "Transgression" suggests the violation of a line or boundary established by God's Law. "Iniquity," as seen in Psalm 51, connotes a state of being that is twisted or perverse.

It is worth noting that in the Old Testament, there was no animal sacrifice prescribed for wilful sin. This is reinforced in many examples throughout the Scriptures, and there is no offering specifically designated for wilful sin. Instead, we see instances where prayer and repentance were offered when wilful sin was committed. Let's examine some examples below.

- Moses praying for forgiveness on behalf of Israel: Exodus 32:30-32.
- David's prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba: Psalm 51.
- Nehemiah's prayer of confession for the sins of the people: Nehemiah 1:5-7.
- Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple, including asking for forgiveness:  
1 Kings 8:33-36, 46-50.
- Daniel's prayer of confession and repentance for the sins of his people: Daniel 9:4-19.

The only sacrifice that could atone for wilful sin, was the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross. But forgiveness of sin, based on a prayer of repentance, was around from the very beginning, even before Jesus died. How can that be? It may have something to do with the Bible telling us that the Lamb of God was slain before the foundations of the world.

*Revelation 13:8*

*Complete Jewish Bible*

*Everyone living on earth will worship it except those whose names are written in the Book of Life belonging to the Lamb slaughtered before the world was founded.*

## Who brought sacrifices?

Sacrifices could be brought by anyone, whether male or female. Even non-Israelites could bring certain offerings. However, the services related to the sacrifices were almost exclusively performed by the Levitical priests. These priests had to meet specific criteria outlined in the Torah to qualify for service.

## What was sacrificed?

There were only five types of animals considered acceptable for sacrifices: oxen, sheep, goats, turtledoves, and pigeons. The flour offerings were made from a mixture of wheat or barley flour, oil, and frankincense. Wine, and occasionally water, were also poured into specific cavities in the altar as part of the offerings.

## When were sacrifices brought?

Sacrifices served a variety of purposes and could be brought on different occasions. Some sacrifices were voluntary, such as when a person felt inspired to donate a sacrifice or to offer a thanks offering to God for saving them from danger. Other sacrifices were obligatory, either for the community, or the individual.

The Community of Israel was obligated to bring a daily sacrifice of two lambs, as well as additional sacrifices on Shabbat, new moon, and specific feast days. An individual was obligated to bring a sacrifice as atonement for unintentional sin, or to cleanse themselves from ritual impurity. Other types of obligatory sacrifices included the Pesach lamb, the firstborn offering, the tithe, and the sacrifices brought by a person who made a Nazirite vow.

## Where were the sacrifices brought?

When offering an animal sacrifice, the person bringing the offering would place their hands on the animal and confess their unintentional sin or transgression. The animal would then be slaughtered, and its blood collected in a specially designed container to be applied to the walls of the altar. The blood would be sprinkled, smeared, or poured onto the altar depending on the type of sacrifice. Certain parts of the animal, or the entire animal, would be offered on the altar while other parts would be consumed by the priests and /or the person offering the sacrifice.

For most flour offerings, the priest would use a process called *kemitzah*, to scoop three fingerfuls of flour to be offered on the altar while the remaining flour would be eaten by the priests.

*It is important to note that certain types of sacrifices had unique methods of treatment that differed from the above descriptions.*

## Why sacrifice?

Sacrifice served as an act of worship, obedience, atonement for unintentional sin, and cleansing in the Bible. However, the first instance of sacrifice in the Bible is implied rather than explicitly stated.

## *Genesis 3:21*

### *English Standard Version*

*And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.*

Adam and Eve lost the glory of God, which they were clothed in, after intentionally sinning, leaving them naked and ashamed. God made garments of skins for them, which raises the question of where the skins came from. Something innocent had to die to cover their nakedness caused by their sin. It's worth noting that there were no individual sacrifices for intentional sin, only for unintentional sin.

This means that if you sinned through ignorance, or made an honest mistake, there was a sacrifice you could bring to atone for that. However, for intentional sin, there was no sacrifice an individual could offer. The only two instances where we see a sacrifice being made for intentional sin, was when God made the sacrifice in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned, and when Jesus the Messiah laid down His life to atone for all of mankind's intentional sins.

It is important to understand that intentional sin cannot be atoned for by a person's actions or sacrifices, but only by God's mercy and grace. Additionally, it is a misconception that sacrifices were solely for the purpose of atoning for sin, as they were also a regular aspect of worship and thanksgiving to the LORD. In fact, the principle of tithing and offering that is practiced today has its roots in the sacrifices that Israel was commanded to bring to God.

Sacrifices served multiple purposes, including expressing gratitude, honouring God for His provision, cleansing from ritual impurity, and atoning for unintentional sins. However, only a small portion of sacrifices were specifically for atonement.

Recognizing the link between every believer and the Tabernacle, sacrifices, and priesthood is crucial. According to the Word of God, we are called a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:5), a living Tabernacle (1 Corinthians 3:16-17), and a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).



## Sacrifices today?

As there is no Temple, priesthood, and temple service today, there are no animal sacrifices. It is strictly forbidden by the Law of God to bring a sacrifice in any other way than through the prescribed Torah priesthood and temple service. Some people may argue that following the complete Law of God means sacrificing again to atone for sin. However, this would be sinful as there was no sacrifice for intentional sin, and it goes against God's commandments. Therefore, going back to the ancient way does not require you building an altar in your backyard and sacrificing an animal to atone for your sin.

Today, we have different ways of honouring God through sacrifice, such as offering our prayers, obedience, tithes, offerings, and blessing others during the feast days. Our prayers serve as a replacement for the daily morning and evening sacrifices. Through prayer, we not only ask God to meet our needs, but we also take time to focus on self-improvement. It is an opportunity for us to offer our "animal soul" to God, refining our animalistic tendencies and submitting them to His will.

## Sacrifices and the Millennial Kingdom

The subject of sacrifices in the Millennial Kingdom is controversial due to doctrinal bias, even though it is supported by Scripture. Many believers ignore or reject this idea because it goes against what they are taught in their congregations.

To learn more about the Millennial Kingdom and the role of sacrifices, I recommend studying passages such as Isaiah 56:6-8, Zechariah 14:16, and Jeremiah 33:15-18. However, the most detailed and extensive account can be found in Ezekiel 43:18-46:24, which describes the temple that will exist during the Millennial Kingdom in great detail. In these passages, the LORD provides instructions for animal sacrifices that will be offered, as well as who will be officiating the offerings. It is mentioned that not all Levites will be allowed to officiate due to previous sin, but only the lineage of Zadok will serve in this Millennial Temple.

Believers often object to the idea of animal sacrifices returning during the Millennial Kingdom, citing Christ's perfect sacrifice for sin as the primary reason. However, it's important to note that many of the sacrifices in the Torah were voluntary and was part of

daily worship and thanksgiving to God. And remember; there was no sacrifice that a person could bring to atone for intentional sin.

### *Hebrews 10:1-4*

#### *English Standard Version*

*For since the Law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*

The New Testament supports the idea that animal sacrifices cannot take away sin, as we learn from also studying the Old Testament sacrifices. The writer of Hebrews explains that the sacrifices were intended to serve as an object lesson for the sinner, showing that sin is a terrible offense against God and results in death.

While there is disagreement among scholars, many premillennial scholars believe that the purpose of animal sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom is memorial in nature. Just as the Lord's Supper serves as a reminder of the death and resurrection of Christ for believers today, animal sacrifices will serve as a reminder during the Millennial Kingdom.

## Chapter 23: The Stumbling Block

In a previous chapter, we discussed how Jesus the Messiah is the embodiment of the written Word of God. He came in the flesh to dwell among us and interpret the written Word. Unfortunately, many believers today judge the Jewish people for not recognizing the Messiah. However, it's important to remember that it wasn't the average person on the street who rejected him, but rather the top scholars of Israel who studied the Word of God day and night. They were well-versed in the prophecies about the Messiah and eagerly awaited His arrival. Yet, when He stood before them, they failed to recognize Him and ultimately rejected Him.

*1 Peter 2:8*

*English Standard Version*

*and*

*“A stone of stumbling,  
and a rock of offense.”*

*They stumble because they disobey the Word, as they were destined to do.*

If we read 1 Peter 2:8, we may assume that it refers to the Jews who rejected the Messiah. However, it can also be applied to believers today. While the Jews rejected the Living Word, many believers reject the written Word. Those who speak against God's commandments, Law, and Torah commit the same offense as the scribes of Jesus' day, rejecting the Messiah without even realizing it.

God's Word does not instruct us to understand and then obey; rather, it tells us to obey. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

It is significant that the passage in 1 Peter 2:8 directly links stumbling with disobedience to God's Word.

Although we may attempt to justify and rationalize our desire to do as we please and disregard God's Laws, the reality remains that such behaviour constitutes rebellion and sin. No amount of reasoning, or excuse-making, can alter this fundamental truth. May we follow David's example and change our attitude towards God's Law.

*Psalm 19:7-14*

*English Standard Version*

*The Law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the Lord is sure,  
making wise the simple;  
<sup>8</sup> the precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is pure,  
enlightening the eyes;  
<sup>9</sup> the fear of the Lord is clean,  
enduring forever;  
the rules of the Lord are true,  
and righteous altogether.  
<sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey  
and drippings of the honeycomb.  
<sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.*

## Chapter 24: Who is your father?

At the beginning of this book, we established that there are two fathers: the Father of creation and the father of lies. Jesus also taught in Luke 6:43-45 that a tree is recognized by its fruit, meaning our words and actions reveal what we believe and who we follow. I want to suggest that there are two types of fruit: the fruit of obedience, and the fruit of rebellion. The book of Isaiah provides a vivid description of Satan's rebellion, often referred to as the five "I wills" of Satan.

### *Isaiah 14:13-14*

#### *English Standard Version*

*You said in your heart,  
'I will ascend to heaven;  
above the stars of God  
I will set my throne on high;  
I will sit on the mount of assembly  
in the far reaches of the north;  
<sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High.'*

This passage illustrates how Satan attempted to elevate himself above God's authority, disregarding His rules and dominion. This parallels the events in the Garden of Eden, where he cunningly convinced Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, allowing her to determine what is right and wrong. This tree remains prevalent today, and the deceiver continues to persuade believers to partake of its fruit - the fruit of rebellion, and the declaration of "I will" instead of "Your will". In Matthew 6:10, Jesus instructs us to pray daily for God's Kingdom to come, and for His will to be done, on earth, as it is in heaven. God's will is clearly expressed in His Word and remains unchanging.

Anyone who rejects the teachings of Jesus, the Messiah, the Living Torah, and the written Torah of God, risks aligning themselves with the father of lies. Jesus Himself warned of this in John 8:42-45.

*John 8:42-45*

*English Standard Version*

*Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of My own accord, but He sent Me. <sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear My word. <sup>44</sup> You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.*

As Satan is the father of lies, it is important to remember that God's Word is truth - all of it, not just the parts we find convenient or understand. To align oneself with truth, is to align with the whole Word of God and with the Father of creation, YHVH Elohim.

*Psalms 119:160*

*English Standard Version*

*The sum of Your Word is truth,  
and every one of Your righteous rules endures forever.*

## Conclusion

This book was not written to burden you with the same legalism (doctrine based on man's interpretation of the Word of God) that Yeshua came to free us from. While the goal is to prove through Scripture that many religious beliefs are flawed, it is not to burden you unnecessarily. God never intended for us to follow His commandments out of obligation or adherence to man-made laws. Rather, His desire is for us to have a heart-felt relationship with Him.

The message of Jesus and the New Testament writers is clear: following the commandments of God without a genuine heart change is meaningless. God desires intimacy with us, and the commandments offer us an opportunity to achieve a level of holiness that brings us closer to Him. Just as Adam and Eve once enjoyed intimacy with God, so too can we through obedience to His commandments.

If reading this book has inspired you to follow a list of rules without heart change, then it has failed in its purpose. Similarly, if you think this book is a tool for winning arguments, you have missed the message entirely. God's Word is founded on love, not division. Using it as a weapon against other believers is contrary to His intent.

Our obedience to God's commandments should stem from our love for Him, not an attempt to earn His approval through performance. He has made it clear that our love for Him is demonstrated through our obedience to His commandments. May this book inspire you to love God's Word and His commandments, not out of obligation, but out of a desire to love and honour Him who created us for intimacy with Him.

# Glossary

## Animism

Animism is a belief system that attributes spiritual or supernatural qualities to all living things, including animals, plants, rocks, and natural phenomena such as thunderstorms, earthquakes, and the wind. According to animism, these entities possess a soul or spirit, and they can influence human life and destiny.

The term "animism" comes from the Latin word "anima," which means soul or spirit. The concept of animism is found in many cultures throughout history and around the world, but it is mostly associated with the indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

## Apocryphal Books

The Apocryphal books are a collection of religious writings that are not included in the Hebrew Bible or accepted as part of the Protestant Old Testament. These books were written during the period between the Old and New Testaments and are regarded by some Christians as historically and spiritually valuable, while others do not consider them to be divinely inspired scripture. The Apocryphal books include writings such as Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, and others.

## Binding of Isaac

The Binding of Isaac is a story from the Bible in which God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, as a test of his faith. According to the Bible, Abraham takes Isaac up to a mountain, builds an altar, and prepares to sacrifice him. At the last moment, an angel stops Abraham and provides a ram for him to sacrifice instead of Isaac.

The story is often interpreted as a demonstration of Abraham's faith and obedience to God, and as a foreshadowing of God's own sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ.



## Didache

The Didache, also known as "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," is an ancient Christian document that was likely written in the late first or early second century CE. The Didache consists of a series of teachings and instructions for Christian communities, covering topics such as baptism, prayer, fasting, and the Eucharist.

The Didache is believed to have been used as a manual for early Christian communities, particularly those outside of the major urban centres. It was likely written by a group of early Christian leaders, possibly based on earlier oral traditions and teachings.

The text begins with a section known as the "Two Ways," which outlines the basic principles of Christian morality and behaviour. The Didache then goes on to provide specific instructions for Christian worship and community life, including guidelines for baptism, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the appointment of Church leaders.

Although the Didache was not included in the New Testament canon, it was widely circulated and respected in the early Christian Church. It was eventually lost for several centuries but was rediscovered in the late 19th century and has since been recognized as an important document for understanding the development of early Christian thought and practice.

## Elohim

In the Hebrew Bible, Elohim is a name for God that is used throughout the Old Testament. The word "Elohim" is a plural noun that can be translated as "Gods" or "Mighty Ones," but it is often used as a singular noun to refer to the one true God of Israel. The use of the plural form may suggest the concept of the Trinity or the divine council, where God is surrounded by other heavenly beings. However, it is also possible that the plural form is simply a linguistic convention of the Hebrew language. Overall, Elohim emphasizes God's power, authority, and sovereignty as the creator and sustainer of the universe.

## Failed State

A failed state is a political entity that has lost its ability to provide basic services and maintain law and order within its borders. Failed states often suffer from extreme poverty, corruption, violence, and political instability, and are unable to effectively govern their

territories or protect their citizens. This can lead to widespread humanitarian crises, civil unrest, and regional instability.

One example of a failed state is Somalia, which has experienced decades of conflict, political instability, and economic collapse. The country has been without a functioning central government since 1991, and is plagued by violence, corruption, and widespread poverty. The lack of effective governance and security has led to the emergence of armed militias, terrorist groups, and piracy off the Somali coast, making the country a major source of regional instability in the Horn of Africa.

## Messiah

The Messiah is a term used in Judaism to refer to a future king or deliverer who will be sent by God to save the Jewish people, and usher in a new era of peace and prosperity. In the Hebrew Bible, the term "Messiah" (מָשִׁיחַ) is used to refer to a variety of individuals, including the kings of Israel, priests, and prophets. In later Jewish tradition, the Messiah came to be seen as a single individual who would embody all of these roles, and bring about the ultimate redemption of Israel.

In the Greek language, the equivalent term for "Messiah" is "Christos" (Χριστός), which means "anointed one." This term is used in the New Testament of the Christian Bible to refer specifically to Jesus of Nazareth, whom Christians believe to be the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, the term "Christ" is essentially a title rather than a name, and it signifies Jesus' role as the anointed one who fulfills the Messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible.

In short, while the Hebrew term "Messiah" refers to a future deliverer of Israel, the Greek term "Christos" specifically refers to Jesus as the anointed one who fulfills this role.

## Moedim

The Hebrew word "Moedim" (מוֹעֲדִים) refers to the appointed times or feasts of God that are described in the Bible, particularly in Leviticus 23. These feasts include the Sabbath, Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of First Fruits, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths).

The observance of these feasts is seen as a way for God's people to remember and celebrate key events in their history, such as the exodus from Egypt, and the giving of the

Law at Mount Sinai. These feasts are also seen as prophetic, pointing to future events, such as the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom.

Observing the moedim is therefore an important aspect of a believer's faith, and can help foster one's fellowship with God. By participating in these feasts, individuals can deepen their understanding of God's plan for redemption and their place in it. The feasts also provide opportunities for corporate worship, fellowship, and service, which can enhance one's relationship with both God and fellow believers.

## **Pantheism**

Pantheism is the belief that the universe, or nature itself, is divine and worthy of reverence. According to pantheistic philosophy, god and the universe are one and the same, and there is no separation between the physical world and the divine. In other words, everything that exists is part of the divine and interconnected web of existence. This belief system emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things, and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

## **Pentateuch**

The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Torah in Judaism. The word "Pentateuch" comes from the Greek words "penta," meaning "five," and "teuchos," meaning "scrolls," and it refers to the five scrolls or books that make up this section of the Bible.

## **Polytheism**

Polytheism is the belief in and worship of multiple gods and goddesses. In polytheistic belief systems, each god or goddess is associated with a particular aspect of nature, human activity, or emotion, and is often depicted with distinct personalities, powers, and attributes. Examples of polytheistic religions include ancient Greek, Roman, and Egyptian religions, as well as modern-day Hinduism, Shintoism, and various indigenous religions. Polytheistic belief systems often involve elaborate rituals, offerings, and ceremonies to honour and appease the gods and goddesses.

## Rabbi

A Rabbi is a Jewish teacher or spiritual leader who is trained in Jewish law and tradition. The word "Rabbi" comes from the Hebrew word "rav," which means "great one" or "master."

Rabbis are responsible for teaching and interpreting Jewish law, guiding their congregations in spiritual practice, and providing pastoral care and support. In addition to leading worship services and teaching Torah, Rabbis also play a vital role in Jewish community life, providing guidance on issues related to ethics, social justice, and community organization.

In the New Testament, Jesus is often referred to as "Rabbi" by his disciples and followers. This title recognizes Jesus as a Jewish teacher who has a deep understanding of Jewish law and tradition. Jesus' teachings are rooted in Jewish Scripture not tradition, and he frequently quotes from the Torah and other Jewish texts in his teachings.

However, Jesus is also seen as the ultimate Rabbi because he takes Jewish teachings to a new level, emphasizing the importance of love, forgiveness, and compassion. Jesus' teachings challenge traditional Jewish law and interpretation, calling for a deeper understanding of God's mercy and grace. Through his life and teachings, Jesus transforms the role of the Rabbi from simply a teacher of the law to a spiritual leader who embodies the very heart of God's message.

## Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin was a council of Jewish leaders and scholars that served as the supreme judicial and legislative body in ancient Israel. The council was comprised of 71 members, including the high priest, elders, scribes, and other prominent leaders. The Sanhedrin was responsible for interpreting and enforcing Jewish law, settling disputes, and making important decisions related to the religious and political life of the Jewish community.

The Sanhedrin is first mentioned in the Hebrew Bible in the book of Numbers, where it is referred to as the "congregation" (Numbers 16:2). However, the council is best known from its role in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus in the New Testament.

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the Sanhedrin ceased to exist as a formal institution. However, the term "Sanhedrin" has been used at various times throughout Jewish history to refer to councils or bodies of scholars that have sought to uphold Jewish law and tradition.

## Septuagint

The Septuagint is an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Old Testament. The name "Septuagint" comes from the Latin word "septuaginta," which means "seventy." According to tradition, the Septuagint was translated by seventy Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt in the 3rd century BCE.

The Septuagint was created to make the Hebrew Bible more accessible to Greek-speaking Jews and non-Jews, who were becoming increasingly common in the Mediterranean world at the time. It includes all the books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as several additional books and passages that are not found in the Hebrew Bible but are considered canonical by some Christian denominations.

The Septuagint was widely used by Greek-speaking Jews and Christians throughout the Roman Empire, and it played an important role in the spread of Christianity in the early centuries CE. In fact, many of the quotations from the Old Testament in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint.

Today, the Septuagint remains an important text for scholars and theologians studying the Hebrew Bible and its interpretation in the ancient world. It provides valuable insight into the ways in which ancient Jewish and Christian communities understood and interpreted the scriptures, and it continues to be a significant part of the Jewish and Christian religious traditions.

## Shabbat

Shabbat is a Hebrew word that refers to the weekly day of rest and is observed from sundown on Friday until nightfall on Saturday. The term Shabbat comes from the Hebrew root word "shavat," which means "to rest" or "to cease."

According to the Scriptures, Shabbat is seen as a sacred time for rest, reflection, and spiritual connection. It is a time to disconnect from the busy-ness of the week and focus on the present moment, spending time with family and community, and engaging in prayer and study.

## Strong's Reference Guide & Strong's Numbers

The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance is a reference guide that lists every word in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible and assigns a number to each word based on its original Hebrew or Greek word. It was compiled by James Strong in the late 19th century.

The numbering system used in Strong's Concordance is called the "Strong's numbers." These numbers are used to identify the original Hebrew or Greek word behind each English word in the KJV translation. By using a Strong's Concordance, readers can look up the number associated with a particular English word in the KJV and find the original Hebrew or Greek word, along with its definition, other occurrences in the Bible, and various forms (e.g., verb tenses or noun cases).

Strong's Concordance can be used for various purposes, such as studying the original meaning and usage of a word in the Bible, researching the context and usage of a word in other parts of the Bible, or finding related words in the original language.

The Strong's numbering system has become popular among Bible students and scholars because it allows them to dig deeper into the original languages of the Bible without needing to be proficient in Hebrew and Greek. It has also been used as a tool for Bible translation, as it can help translators understand the precise meaning and context of a particular word in the original language.

## Synagogue

A Synagogue is a Jewish house of worship and communal gathering place. It is the centre of Jewish religious and cultural life, where people come together to pray, study, and socialize. The word "Synagogue" comes from the Greek word "synagoge," which means "assembly."

Synagogues were established as a result of the Babylonian exile in the 6th century BCE, when Jews were forced to gather together in order to maintain their religious and cultural traditions. Over time, Synagogues developed into the central institutions of Jewish life, and became an important focal point for Jewish identity and community.

In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples are often seen visiting Synagogues to teach, pray, and interact with the Jewish community. Jesus is described as preaching in Synagogues throughout Galilee and Judea, and he often used the Scriptures and teachings of the Synagogue to illustrate his own messages.

The disciples also continued to visit Synagogues after Jesus' death and resurrection, using them as a platform to spread the Gospel message and connect with Jewish communities throughout the region.

Overall, the Synagogue played an important role in the life and ministry of Jesus and his followers and remains a central institution in Jewish life to this day.

## Torah

The Torah is the first five books of the Bible, which are also known as the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch. These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Torah contains a wide range of stories, laws, and teachings that form the foundation of our faith.

In addition to being a collection of historical narratives and religious teachings, the Torah is also seen as a Law code that outlines God's commandments, statutes, and ordinances for His people. The Laws contained in the Torah cover a wide range of topics, including worship, morality, social justice, and civil governance.

Many of these Laws are considered to be binding and applicable to every believer's life today. These Laws are seen as a way for believers to connect with God, live a righteous lives, and uphold their covenant with God.

In summary, the Torah is both a collection of books in the Bible and a Law code that contains God's commandments, statutes, and ordinances. It is considered to be the foundation of our faith and practice.

## Yeshua

The name Yeshua comes from the Hebrew root word "yasha," which means "to save" or "to deliver." Thus, the name Yeshua can be interpreted to mean "salvation" or "saviour."

In the New Testament of the Bible, the name Yeshua is often translated into Greek as "Iesous," which is then translated into English as "Jesus." However, in the original Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the name Yeshua was used to refer to figures such as Joshua, the successor of Moses, and Joshua the high priest.

In Christian theology, Jesus is often referred to as the saviour because of his role in offering salvation to humanity through his death and resurrection. The name Yeshua, with

its meaning of "salvation" or "saviour," is thus fitting for the central figure of the Christian faith.

## YHVH

YHVH is the four-letter Hebrew name of God, also known as the Tetragrammaton. In Hebrew, it is written as יהוה. The name is often considered too sacred to be spoken aloud and is typically pronounced as Adonai, which means "Lord" in Hebrew, in Jewish tradition.



## Sources

Strong's Concordance (Online Version)

The Amplified Bible

English Standard Version Bible

Complete Jewish Bible

The Book of Mysteries – Jonathan Cahn

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

<https://biblethingsinbibleways.wordpress.com/2019/03/22/the-meaning-of-the-word-hebrew-and-crossing-over/>

<https://www.livescience.com/55774-ancient-israel.html>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ten-Lost-Tribes-of-Israel>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/israel/losttribes.html#:~:text=Conquered%20by%20the%20Assyrian%20King,have%20never%20been%20seen%20since.>

[https://www.Churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/Gospel-library/manual/32506/32506\\_000\\_057\\_09-history.pdf](https://www.Churchofjesuschrist.org/bc/content/shared/content/images/Gospel-library/manual/32506/32506_000_057_09-history.pdf)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27913875>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/mmfour.html#:~:text=Written%20over%20the%20course%20of,very%20different%20ideas%20and%20concerns.&text=A%20period%20of%20forty%20years,writing%20of%20the%20first%20Gospel.>

<https://www.livescience.com/christianity-denominations.html>

<https://www.covenantchristian.net/blog/inscribing-scripture-on-your-childs-heart>

<https://youtu.be/CWWg9ZKOc6g>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical\\_hermeneutics#:~:text=Biblical%20hermeneutics%20is%20the%20study,of%20communication%2C%20nonverbal%20and%20verbal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_hermeneutics#:~:text=Biblical%20hermeneutics%20is%20the%20study,of%20communication%2C%20nonverbal%20and%20verbal)

<https://www.quora.com/How-long-after-Jesus-death-was-Paul-converted>

<https://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/18806/the-time-span-between-acts-21-and-acts-123>

<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1949/11/meats-offered-to-idols>

<https://jewsforjesus.org/learn/did-jesus-keep-torah>

<https://www.thirdmill.org/files/english/html/nt/NT.h.Pratt.1Corinthians.16.1.24.html>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-formation-of-the-oral-torah/>

<https://research.lifeway.com/2017/04/12/10-ways-to-misunderstand-scripture/#:~:text=Ignoring%20the%20context.,and%20apply%20to%20our%20lives.>

<https://ebible.com/questions/13023-what-is-doctrinal-bias-how-can-holding-a-doctrinal-bias-affect-us-when-interpreting-the-scriptures>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/obedience-bible-verses/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@119Ministries>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/millennial-sacrifices.html>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/qas/what-is-the-difference-between-sin-transgression-and-iniquity>

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4440323/jewish/Korbanot-The-Biblical-Temple-Sacrifices.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4440323/jewish/Korbanot-The-Biblical-Temple-Sacrifices.htm)

<https://www.gotquestions.org/millennial-sacrifices.html>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/forgiveness-bible-verses/>

<https://derekzishmawy.com/2015/07/08/understanding-the-execution-of-the-rebellious-son/>