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Is Messiah the Termination of the Torah?

(or: Is Christ the End of the Law?)

A foundational principle of Christianity is supposed to be “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NASU). In theory, a majority of evangelical Believers claim to honor the Bible as if all of it is the inspired, inerrant Word of the Lord. However, in practice, the same cannot often be said, especially when it comes to the attitude that many have concerning their approach to the Law of Moses or the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy), and by extension the Tanach or Old Testament.

The Psalmist declared, “I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart” (Psalm 40:8, NASU), and “If Your law had not been my delight, then I would have perished in my affliction” (Psalm 119:92, NASU). Yeshua (Jesus) said in Matthew 19:17, “if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments” (NASU). These concepts are admittedly hard to understand for many of today’s evangelical Believers. They show us that God’s Law is to play some role of importance in the lives of His people.

Have we not also been taught, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, NASU), and “if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Messiah

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died needlessly” (Galatians 2:21, NASU)? These too are important concepts of our faith not to be disregarded.¹

The Apostle Paul instructed, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling² the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, NASU). We are to be very careful when handling Holy Scripture, especially if one claims that certain parts of it, such as the Law of Moses, are no longer relevant for today’s Believers to pay attention to. As Yeshua warned, “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19, NASU).

What is the average Christian to do about what can appear to be contradictions in the pages of the Bible? From one perspective, we could argue that the Torah is not relevant instruction for Believers today, whereas from another we could come to the conclusion that Believers must and should be observing God’s commands, with His judgment ready to strike the disobedient at a moment’s notice. Rather than be dogmatic about a particular persuasion, let Biblical continuance be our quest. Let us understand that the Bible has no contradictions regarding God’s purpose and plan for His people—and that it is our job to seek what is true above all else—even our own opinions. We must synthesize what appear to be opposing viewpoints among Scriptural passages.

Through the advent of the Messianic movement and many Believers embracing their faith heritage in Israel’s Scriptures, many have been convicted to study and keep God’s Torah. But at the same time, there are concerns that exist, the first one often being, “you are not under law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14, NASU). Letting *the whole of Scripture* be our guide, we will attempt to set straight many of contemporary Christianity’s misconceptions of the Law in this article, as “The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7, NASU). As Yeshua told a group of Pharisees, “if

¹ It is interesting that even though many quote Ephesians 2:8-9 to rightfully affirm that salvation comes by grace through faith, that the following verse, Ephesians 2:10, is often not often quoted. This ever-important verse asserts, “For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (NASU). Salvation indeed comes by God’s grace, but good works are to accompany such salvation.

² Grk. *orthotomeō*; “to teach it aright” (H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994], 567).

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you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me” (John 5:46, NASU), as they seemingly forgot to read what the Torah said of Him. Have many we know made the same mistake, failing to see Yeshua for who He is in the Torah of Moses? How much do today’s Christians not understand human sin, *and the Savior who came to redeem them*, because they do not study God’s Torah (cf. Galatians 3:24; Romans 3:20)?

Initial Misgivings About “the Law”

When many contemporary Christians think about the Law of Moses or the Torah, they often conjure up a listing of rules and regulations given by a God who will apparently “strike them down” if they disobey or do not obey them “perfectly.” Too many fail to observe that much of modern Western government is, in fact, based on the writings of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Even more so, the United States of America has more laws than any other country on the face of this planet, and it is considered by many to be an example of “true freedom.” Law by no means is something that equals “bondage” or “slavery”!

As far as personal understanding or application is concerned, the Torah is not just “the Law.” The Hebrew *torah* is often defined as “direction, instruction, law,” and could also be called “teaching” (*BDB*),³ being derived from the verb *yarah*.⁴ Depending on your perspective, you can treat God’s commandments as “orders,” or as the proper instructions of the Heavenly Father toward His own. The Apostle John observed, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3, NASU). God Himself directed Ancient Israel, “For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach” (Deuteronomy 30:11, NASU). God’s Torah is not intended to be something impossible for His people to follow.

Most of our controversy concerning the validity and relevance of the Torah is not going to come from the Tanach or Old Testament. It will rather come from the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, and common Christian misunderstandings—or sometimes biased translations—of certain Greek words. One such example can exist with the Greek word *nomos*, commonly translated as “law.” Imperative to a proper understanding of *nomos* is that this word is an all-inclusive Greek term

³ Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 435.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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entailing: law, teaching, instruction, rules, and natural laws of the universe.⁵ When the Apostolic Scriptures speak of “law,” it is important to determine what law it is speaking of. Is the *nomos* mentioned the Torah or the Law of Moses, or is it a spiritual law/constant such as the law of sin and death (i.e., Romans 8:2)? This can only be known by the context of how *nomos* is used.

Many Christians I have known would agree with what has thus far been mentioned. Very few Christians will say that the Law of Moses did not serve a purpose, as Jesus did say, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17, NASU). They will agree that Yeshua did not come to “destroy” (KJV) the Law. But certainly He has already fulfilled it, right?

What does it mean that the Messiah has fulfilled the Torah or the Law? The Greek verb translated “fulfill” in Matthew 5:17, *plēroō*, notably means “to make full, to fill, to fill up,” or more importantly, “to make complete in every particular, to render perfect” (Thayer).⁶ In order to be the promised Messiah of Israel, Yeshua must have observed the Torah of Moses perfectly, as He is our Passover Lamb and blameless sacrifice. Yeshua had to fulfill the Torah by living it without any error. Nowhere in His sayings or actions did He ever contradict the Torah or teach others to disobey it. Even those who believe that the Law of Moses is not to be followed by today’s Christians, recognize that Jesus lived as a Torah-faithful Jew; the most that can be said is that Yeshua, as the Messiah and God in the flesh, transcends the Torah.⁷

If we continue reading Yeshua’s critical admonition in Matthew 5:18-19, we discover some extremely important statements:

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:18-19, NASU).

⁵ L.A. Jervis, “Law/Nomos in Greco-Roman World,” in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 632.

⁶ Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), pp 517-518.

⁷ D.J. Moo, “Law,” in Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 456.

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In these verses, the Messiah said, “till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished” (RSV). Now we would have to ask ourselves, has all been accomplished? *Are Heaven and Earth gone?* Have the prophecies within the Tanach or Old Testament all been fulfilled? Are we presently in the restored Kingdom of God on Planet Earth? Is Yeshua ruling and reigning from Jerusalem?

Any objective reader is forced to answer a resounding “No” to these questions. Furthermore, what did Yeshua mean by stating, “Anyone who breaks 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 practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20, NIV)? This is important to comprehend because there are some who believe and teach that the Messiah came to do exactly this: abolish or abrogate the commandments of the Torah. But this is obviously not proper unless such people really do want to be considered “least” in God’s Kingdom.

From Yeshua’s own words, is He saying that His followers need to pay attention to and keep the commandments of the Law of Moses? **Yes!** Because Yeshua also said,

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS’ [Psalm 6:8]” (Matthew 7:21-23, NASU).

This, of course, opens up an entirely new range of theological questions. Your average Christian’s understanding of Holy Scripture may be widely derived from the epistles of Paul—which were letters written to various communities of Believers in the First Century, to address *specific* problems that each one of those congregations faced. In fact, some I have encountered have gone as far as to say that Christian people need not concern themselves with Yeshua’s words, because He “was speaking to the Jews” and that Paul was the “apostle to the Gentiles.” But as you will find as you examine them closely, a great deal of Paul’s writing is teaching on Torah-related issues as applied in a community!

Throughout his writings the Apostle Paul upheld the importance of God’s Torah, as he affirmed, “the Law is holy, and the commandment is

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holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12, NASU). The Torah is something that is “spiritual” (Romans 7:14). In Romans 3:31, he asserted, “Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” (NASU). The Greek verb *histēmi* is translated “established” in the NASU, but it fully means “to uphold or sustain the authority or force of any thing” (Thayer).⁸ The RSV and NIV actually render it as “uphold.”

Some Christians might argue at this point that they are “under the law of Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2), which would be correct in the sense that we are to follow the Messiah’s teachings and instructions. But who is the Messiah? Is not Yeshua the LORD God made manifest in the flesh? As God, was not the Messiah at Mount Sinai giving the commandments to Moses? Ancient Israel “drank from a Spirit-sent Rock which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah” (1 Corinthians 10:4, CJSB). To follow the “Law of Christ” means to follow the Torah as Yeshua followed and interpreted it (as would be principally seen in His ethical teaching in the Sermon on the Mount of Matthew chs. 5-7).

To deny that the Torah composes Yeshua’s commandments says that He is not the LORD God, and can be tantamount to denying His Divinity and oneness with the Father. And Yeshua’s oneness with the Father (John 10:30) also involves the Father and Son being of one accord (John 17:11, 21).

Others would argue that the Law of Moses was only “for Israel,” and thus that non-Jewish Believers should not concern themselves with its instructions, unless only as a matter of Bible history. 2 Kings 17:37 does summarize, “The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do forever” (NASU). But such people may misunderstand the fact that Yeshua came as the Messiah of Israel to restore Israel (Jeremiah 33:7; cf. Matthew 16:18), and that at *Shavuot*/Pentecost Peter declared, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah—this Yeshua whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36, NASU). Most importantly, the Apostle Paul wrote non-Jewish Believers that because of their salvation in Yeshua they had become a part of the “commonwealth of Israel,” previously having been without “hope and without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12, NASU; cf. 3:6).

Born again Believers are not part of a separate group of elect known as “the Church.” On the contrary, in the Last Days the Lord’s major purpose is to restore Israel—and this includes *both* Jewish and non-Jewish Believers

⁸ Thayer, 308.

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in His Son, Yeshua! This is the people that the Messiah is returning to rule and reign with, and this people is certainly called to obey God's Instruction, as the Torah is to go forth from Zion (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3).

There is a plethora of references throughout the pages of the Bible describing how the Torah and its commandments are "everlasting" or "for all generations."⁹ Various matters do have specific contexts, but they denote, for certain, a level of permanent significance for the people of God—not one of temporal regulation. They cannot just be disregarded on a whim, without some level of contemplation, and regard for what they communicate about the character of God.

Why do some people so easily, or even flippantly, want to disregard God's instructions? Are there those within contemporary Christianity whose traditions are more important to them than Scriptural truth and continuity? Are some trying to maintain the "status quo," so they do not have to admit they are possibly wrong and might have to change, even if it might just be in a few areas? Has the modern Church truly benefited from largely ignoring and disregarding the Law?

What does Romans 10:4 actually mean?

In most Bibles, Romans 10:4 is translated along the lines of, "**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**" (NASU). The first part of the verse, "Christ is the end of the law," can be a cause of much confusion among Bible readers today. First, it would seem to contradict Yeshua's admonition in Matthew 5:17-19. Second, it would also contradict Paul's previous writing in Romans 7:12.

The Messiah is **not** the "end" or the "termination" of the Law of Moses. The Greek word translated as "end" in Romans 10:4 is *telos*, meaning "*the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose*" (Thayer).¹⁰ AMG offers some valuable commentary, by stating that *telos* "does not, as is commonly supposed, mean the extinction, end, termination with reference to time, but the goal reached, the completion or conclusion at which something arrives...or as a result, acme, consummation."¹¹ Yet how many

⁹ Exodus 27:21; 28:43; 29:28; 30:21; 31:17; Leviticus 6:18, 22; 7:34, 36; 10:9, 15; 17:7; 23:14, 21, 41; 24:3; Numbers 10:8; 15:15; 18:8, 11, 19, 23; 19:10; Deuteronomy 5:19; Psalm 119:160.

¹⁰ Thayer, 620.

¹¹ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1881.

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people fail to read that small footnote in their Bibles for Romans 10:4, which often says “Or, goal?”¹²

The Complete Jewish Bible offers a good translation of Romans 10:4: **“For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts.”** The 2005 Today’s New International Version says, **“Christ is the culmination of the law.”** Approaching *telos* as “climax” has also been argued persuasively by various theologians.

More generic English Bible translations such as the Contemporary English Version render Romans 10:4 as, “But Christ makes the Law no longer necessary for those who become acceptable to God by faith.” Interestingly enough, a footnote exists in the CEV stating, “or ‘But Christ gives full meaning to the Law.’”¹³

Romans 10:4 also brings a Bible reader to a more perplexing paradigm: What does it mean when today’s Christians commonly say, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes”? The Apostle Paul continued, by explaining,

“For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness [Leviticus 18:5]. But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows: ‘DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, “WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?” (that is, to bring Messiah down) [Deuteronomy 9:4], or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching [Deuteronomy 30:12-14], that if you confess with your mouth Yeshua *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED’ [Isaiah 28:16, LXX]. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for ‘WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED’ [Joel 2:32]” (Romans 10:5-13, NASU).

Some might say that the Messiah is a termination of the Torah as far as righteousness is concerned. But this comes from the assumption that

¹² Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible*, NASB (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1994), 1498.

¹³ *Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995), 971.

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righteousness, as widely defined as being innocent and acquitted before God, can actually result from Torah keeping. *Did such righteousness ever come through the Torah?*¹⁴ Paul commented in Galatians 2:21, “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness *comes* through the Law, then Messiah died needlessly” (NASU). Yet this is not a dismissal of the value of the Torah, as Paul further said, “Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law” (Galatians 3:21, NASU). Even if the source of one’s righteousness is not the Torah, this does not all of a sudden make the Torah unimportant, as its commandments do compose God’s standard of holiness.

If we consider a more correct understanding of Romans 10:4, we see that the Messiah is the aim or purpose or climax of the Torah, and faith in Him provides the redeemed with the righteousness, meaning the forgiveness from sins and justification, that they should all desire. *The Torah is to point to the Messiah*, who is the Source of such righteousness (Philippians 3:8).

The purpose or *telos* of the Torah is to convict a person of his or her sin, reveal the individual’s violation of God’s commandments, and thus reveal a person’s sin nature and need for a Divine Savior.

As Paul has said, “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COVET’ [Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21]” (Romans 7:7, NASU). The commandments of God’s Torah *are to convict a person of his or her sin*. Paul further communicated, “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3, NASU). The Torah on its own cannot provide redemption; only the sacrifice of the Son of God can. God in turn provides righteousness or forgiveness to a sinner, and obedience to His commandments should come from one who emulates Yeshua’s example.

For the born again Believer, the Torah can continue to convict, so one can “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians

¹⁴ Consult the Messianic Apologetics FAQ, “Deuteronomy 6:25,” which considers the individual and corporate dynamics of *tzedaqah*, discussing the likelihood that Ancient Israel’s declaration “It will be righteousness for us...” relates to its corporate identity as God’s people. That righteousness or justification has multiple aspects or components, not solely involving being innocent and acquitted before God, is not something that contemporary Christians often realize.

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2:12, NASU), knowing what to confess daily before the Father when a man or woman falls short of His high standard. Paul told Timothy that “We know that the law is good if one uses it properly” (1 Timothy 1:8, NIV), an appropriate use being “a corrector of the foolish...having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth” (Romans 2:20, NASU). For born again Believers, the Torah should instruct them on what it means to live as a part of God’s Kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). Yeshua the Messiah summed up the Torah of Moses for His followers very nicely:

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ 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’ [Deuteronomy 6:5]. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” [Leviticus 19:18]. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:36-40, NASU).

What may be surprising to some of today’s Christian Bible readers, is that Yeshua’s admonition for His followers to love God and neighbor is *quoted directly* from the Torah. These instructions were not “made up” as some may unconsciously believe when they gloss over the Gospels:

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, NASU).

“You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:18, NASU).

Summarized, both Yeshua the Messiah and the Apostle Paul uphold the validity of the Torah for the Believer. This is not to say that the position of the Torah has not changed since Yeshua’s sacrifice, and that some modifications have not been made in regard to the Temple and priesthood (Hebrews 7:12)—but it is to say Christians today must reevaluate the Torah’s position and applicability for their lives. Let us truly make the

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Messiah “the goal at which the Torah aims” (Romans 10:4, CJSB), as opposed to the “end of the law,” meaning its termination. Otherwise, Paul has contradicted himself (Romans 7:12) and we should consider Yeshua’s admonition of the Law not passing away (Matthew 5:17-19) to be null and void, or Yeshua has misled His followers. *This cannot be*, and we have a job to do in reconciling what may appear to be contradictions in the Biblical text.

If we assert the position that the Torah is no longer valid, then do we join liberal theologians and their assault on the Holy Scriptures—that they are not the inspired Word of God and are full of contradictions? Has a wide dismissal of the Law of Moses, and the Old Testament in general, really helped today’s Christian people to be all the things that God wants them to be? We probably need to do better in acknowledging the words of our Lord Yeshua: “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (John 14:15, NASU).

What are those commandments? They are found in God’s Torah! *Let us return to Moses’ Teaching* and be molded into men and women who have the wisdom that God desires us to have—testifying of His goodness to the world around us by lives of faithful obedience (Deuteronomy 4:6).

Your Response

Your response to the message of the Torah’s validity for Believers today is totally up to you. As it is written in Psalm 119:142, 152, “Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Your law is truth...Of old I have known from Your testimonies that You have founded them forever” (NASU). The Psalmist also declared, “Those who love Your law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble” (Psalm 119:165, NASU). An unfortunate admonition appears Proverbs 29:18: “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law” (NASU).

Is this the state of Christianity today? What is the long-term purpose of the modern Christian’s walk with the Messiah? Are contemporary Christian people truly praying “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, NASU), and doing all that they can to see Yeshua return in power and glory to establish His Kingdom? Let us not be as “one [who] turns aside his ear from hearing the law, his prayer, too, will be [considered] an abomination” (Proverbs 28:9, NASU). Would today’s Christianity be riddled with the ethical and moral problems it currently faces, if it had a much higher view for the role of the Law?

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There are no easy answers to these questions. There is no easy answer that I can give to the person whose beliefs have just been challenged. I can tell you, however, what Yeshua taught: “He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him” (John 14:21, NASU). If we truly believe that Yeshua is God, then we will do what He said and will believe that the commandments of the Torah are *His commandments*. We should all want the best relationship with God as possible, and obey Him because we love Him.

Yeshua said in Matthew 24:12 that in the Last Days “because lawlessness shall have been multiplied, the love of many will grow cold” (LITV). The Lord issued a very sobering word in that, “The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness [the people who are far from *Torah*, CJSB]” (Matthew 13:41, NASU).

Will you be one of those lawless people? Will your messiah be the man of lawlessness, the antimessiah/antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3)? *I sincerely hope not*. Or will your Messiah be the One who said, “Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19, NASU)? Will you seek to *not* be one of the least, and strive to obey God? Should we not all want to be great in God’s Kingdom? Knowing that obedience to God brings His blessings should not be a difficult lesson to learn.

I leave you to contemplate these questions. Will you see the Torah as pointing to the Messiah, by revealing the sin you need to repent of in your life—drawing you to the foot of His tree of sacrifice (cross)? Or will you see Yeshua as lawless, annulling the commandments of His Father? As it has been validly observed, if God had a problem with His Torah, then He must have found a problem with Himself. **To say that the God of the Universe has a problem with Himself is to say that He has made a mistake.**

But the Lord has not made the mistake. Too many, in their fallen human nature, have made the mistake in discounting His statutes and considering them to be archaic and unimportant. Too many have also suffered from failing to take note of important things that God’s Law speaks against, often having a view of sin which fluctuates too much in various shades of gray.

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If the Torah is for you and its validity is upheld by our Lord Yeshua and the First Century Believers, what Christian traditions or practices might you need to reevaluate, because they may violate our Father's commands in some way? If Scriptural continuity is what you seek, then I would encourage you to truly aim to see the Messiah in the Torah! If you are a Christian who truly desires to live a life like Jesus Christ, then you will want to follow the Father's commandments as He did. *This is what being a disciple is all about.*

The Torah is what has defined sin for humanity (Romans 3:19b), and as all have sinned—we are all guilty of transgressing God's commandments in varying degrees. We have a responsibility to repent of our disobedience, and pursue obedience to our Heavenly Father's Instruction. We know that as regenerate Believers, we may still stumble, but we should have the understanding that the Messiah has taken away the curse of the Law—eternal punishment (Galatians 3:13). Out of gratitude for what He has done for us through His shed blood atonement, we should naturally want to follow His example and seek to follow the Torah. This obedience comes as an outworking of the Holy Spirit via the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:16-17), and is something that is to bring us great blessings as we are continually sanctified and changed by God's love!

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SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 3

1. Is it inconsistent to say that all of the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but to then cast aside, or at least downgrade, the Torah or Law of Moses? What are your thoughts?

2. How important do you believe understanding the Torah is for our walk of faith?

3. Describe how important it is to have a proper understanding of the Hebrew word *torah*. How could we misinterpret what the Apostolic Scriptures tell us by misunderstanding *nomos*?

4. What does the Messiah say in Matthew 5:17-19 regarding the Torah? Did He come to do away with it? What are your thoughts?

5. Do you believe that the commandments of the Torah make up Yeshua's commandments? Why or why not?

6. Why do you think that there are those who want to say that eternal ordinances of our Heavenly Father have been done away?

7. Do you believe that Romans 10:4 really means that the Messiah is the "end" or "termination" of the Torah or Law of Moses? Why or why not?

8. What purpose do you believe the Torah is to play for born again Believers who have been redeemed from the Law's curse?

9. Do you think that the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) uphold or discount the validity of the Torah? Explain your thoughts.

10. List some of the serious challenges people face when they embark upon a lifestyle of Torah obedience. What do you believe is a proper and spiritually edifying way for people to become Torah obedient?