

The Noahide Laws Explained

BLOGCAST

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What are the seven Noahide laws? A new teaching circulating online proposes that Orthodox Jews are secretly controlling the New World Order, and that they will impose the Noahide laws to get people to only worship God proper, and that those who worship Yeshua the Messiah will be put to death.

The following is a brief description of “Noahides” as provided by the *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*:

“[Noahides] are non-Jews who observe the seven laws that apply to the descendants of Noah (namely, all peoples). According to rabbinic authorities, these include the following prohibitions: idolatry, adultery and incest, bloodshed, blasphemy, robbery, social injustice, and eating the flesh of a limb cut from a living animal (T. *Abodah Zarah* 8:4-8).”¹

Today’s Messianic community has various opinions as they relate to what are often considered to be the Noahide laws. Some think that the Noahide laws form the basis of the Apostolic decree of Acts 15:20, 29, whereas others think that the Noahide laws—while surely useful principles to be followed by all followers of Israel’s God—were the product of post-Second Temple Judaism.

In a great deal of historic Jewish thought, while the Torah proper is widely concluded to only be applicable to ethnic Israelites and proselytes to Judaism, the nations at large are thought to only have to really follow seven precepts affecting the *b’nai Noach* or children of Noah, derived from Genesis 9.² Aside from many finer details, it is safe to say that today’s broad Messianic community expects non-Jewish Believers in Israel’s Messiah to observe far more principles from Moses’ Teaching than just the Noahide laws. But what is a little more important than this, is how academically, it is not agreed among scholars that there were seven stipulations known as the “Noahide laws” even in place during the Second Temple period. Many conclude that what has become known as the Noahide laws, were likely not formulated until after the destruction of the Second Temple. There are two lists of these different regulations found in Jewish literature:

“And in the twenty-eighth jubilee Noah began to command his grandsons with ordinances and commandments and all of the judgments which he knew. And he bore witness to his sons so that they might do justice and cover the shame of their flesh and bless the one who created them and honor father and mother, and each one love his neighbor and preserve themselves from fornication and pollution and from all injustice. For on account of these three the Flood came upon the earth. For (it was) because of fornication which the Watchers, apart from the mandate of their authority, fornicated with the daughters of men and took for themselves wives from all whom they chose and made a beginning of impurity” (*Jubilees* 7:20-21).³

“Concerning seven religious requirements were the children of Noah admonished: setting up courts of justice, idolatry, blasphemy [cursing the Name of God], fornication, bloodshed, and thievery” (t.*Avodah Zarah* 8:4).⁴

In his article “Infanticide and the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15,” David Instone-Brewer points out how “The two versions of the list in Jubilees and in later rabbinic texts have so little in common that we cannot know what this list contained in the first century or even if such a list existed.”⁵

Moving on to more modern times, particularly concerning the positive contribution that the Jewish community has made to Western society, various governmental authorities have wanted to recognize the usefulness of what Judaism has deemed to be the Noahide laws. The United States government has officially considered the seven Noahide laws to be regulations to be followed by its citizens. Yet it needs to be fairly recognized how the United States government has also considered other religious codes and philosophies to be beneficial as well. Endorsing the usefulness of the Noahide laws is quantitatively indifferent than endorsing the usefulness of the philosophy of Plato or Aristotle, the speeches of Cicero, or the rights espoused by the Magna Carta.

Unfortunately, for whatever reason or series of reasons, various conspiracy theorists have concluded that the United States’ historic support of the State of Israel and the Jewish community has gone too far, and concluded that certain

¹ “Noahides,” in *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, 456.

² Cf. Nahum M. Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), pp 376-377.

³ O.S. Wintermute, “Jubilees,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp 69-70.

⁴ Jacob Neusner, trans., *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew With a New Introduction*, 2 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 2:1291-1292.

⁵ David Instone-Brewer, “Infanticide and the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15” in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* Vol. 52 No. 2 (2009):308.

Orthodox Jewish authorities are preparing the way for the persecution, and even execution, of followers of Yeshua the Messiah. By establishing the Noahide laws as regulations to be followed by American citizens, which includes prohibitions on idolatry and blasphemy, it is thought that the Jewish influence on American politics will lead to Believers being persecuted, and even killed, for having faith in a Messiah that Judaism corporately rejects. This will probably also lead to the rise of the antimessiah/antichrist, who as the false messiah will use the Noahide laws as a means to persecute Believers as well.

This conspiracy theory presumes a great deal about the Orthodox Jewish influence on global politics, and is rooted in a great deal of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist sentiment certainly extending back to the late Nineteenth Century. *The Orthodox Jewish community does not have the same kind of influence on the American political scene, as the evangelical Protestant community.* Furthermore, while it is safe to say that the antimessiah will claim to be the true messiah of Israel, the bulk of the worldwide Jewish community is secular, and agnostic at best—meaning that principles such as the Noahide laws do not bear any significance to them.

More than anything else, though, the New World Order and government of the antimessiah, will not need the Noahide laws in order to persecute Believers. Revelation 13:3-4 makes it clear enough that the population of this planet will willingly worship the beast, and concede to his reign—meaning that he can do whatever he wants: “And the whole earth was amazed *and followed* after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?’” (NASU).