

A Reply to Daniel Juster

by Avram Yehoshua

<http://SeedofAbraham.net>

The original article (*One Law Movements*) was written by Dan Juster (and Rabbi Russ Resnik, the former and current head of the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations, respectively). It's their theological position on why the Gentile shouldn't keep Torah (Mosaic Law). In it I also see their position on Torah for the Jewish believer. My reply is interspersed throughout their article, which was an ongoing dialogue with Juster, and then Resnik

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ONE LAW MOVEMENTS

A Challenge to the Messianic Jewish Community

By Daniel Juster and Russ Resnik

www.torahresource.com/English%20Articles/OneLawMovement.pdf

One of the glories of life in the Messianic Jewish community is the unity of worship and service between its Jewish and Gentile members within a specifically Jewish context. In recent years, however, a trend has developed that challenges the Messianic Jewish community on this very issue. This trend involves various groups and movements that teach that all Jews and Gentiles under the new covenant are called to keep the same Torah in all regards.

In so doing, these One Law movements not only misinterpret a great body of Scripture, but they also miss the unique calling of Jews and Gentiles within the Body of Messiah, robbing both groups of the biblical richness of their identity. They lose the new covenant vision of unity in Messiah between Jews and Gentiles and replace it with a man-made rallying cry, which One Law advocate Tim Hegg has expressed as "One people, One Messiah, One Torah." [1]

Several streams teach such views, including Ephraimite groups that believe that Gentiles who have come to faith in Yeshua in some way fulfill the prophecies concerning the regathering of the Northern Tribes and their reunion with Judah. Generally, they teach that all believers are called to follow the same Torah instructions, with the exception of circumcision.

Other groups teach that Gentiles are both called to live the same Torah as Jews (except for circumcision), without teaching that they are in any way descended from the so-called "lost tribes" of Israel. These groups see all believers as grafted into the Olive tree, and therefore called to obey the same Torah as Israel. Perhaps the best-known proponents of this view are the writers of *First Fruits of Zion*, including Tim Hegg.

The Continuing Value of the Torah

Hegg and others make some good and important points about the Torah, which we should recognize before correcting what we believe is wrong.

Judaism, of course, always speaks of the Torah in the most positive terms. Torah as a whole - the 613 commandments identified in rabbinic literature - is the unique responsibility and privilege of the Jewish people, although many aspects of Torah apply to all people. It will be more relevant to this discussion to compare the "One Law" view of Torah with views in the Christian world.

The best One Law arguments on the value of the Torah resemble those within classical Reformed (Calvinist) Christian thought. Reformed theologians throughout history have put forth a clear doctrine of the Law. They see the will of God described by his Law, not only as taught in the New Testament, but also as taught in the Torah of Moses. Those who teach that we only need to love and can forget the Law of God are badly mistaken. Why? Because without the Law to tell us what love looks like, we will fall into sentimental indulgence. True love is always according to God's Law. Therefore, the true believer, saved by grace, keeps God's law, and the mark of the saved is obedience of the Law of God.

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Comment by Avram

If 'True love is always according to God's Law' then why would they want to exclude the Gentile from it? For the Gentile has been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11), and is part of Israel.

Also, there is no classical Reformed Christian doctrine that took the Law and say, kept the Sabbath day holy. They applied that to Sunday. And of course, there were no food laws that they kept, etc. So it seems that while in general, 'the law' was uplifted, it wasn't walked out properly. By 'Law' they must mean the Ten Commandments (only)?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Starting in the late 19th century, Dispensational Theology overturned much of this view in popular Christianity in the United States and even in world missions. It taught that the Mosaic Law had no claim at all on the believer. Since the Christian is saved by grace, he may continue to live in sin while being assured of heaven. Such a life would not be a happy one, so believers should be exhorted to commitment and holiness. The committed disciple, however, should be instructed mostly by the epistles, not Torah and not primarily even the teaching of Yeshua, which is an application of Torah.

Many of today's Dispensationalists have abandoned this severe anti-law position, but many Christians are still influenced by it. It is reflected in popular Christian speech and is prevalent in much Christian culture. One Law teachings can be seen as a reaction to this anti-law culture, and a return to a sounder understanding of grace and law, such as is taught by Reformation theology. So why are One Law people not simply conservative Presbyterians?

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Comment by Avram

Keeping Torah (the Law), is not a reaction to any 'severe anti-law position' but in obedience to God's Word, the Holy Spirit having opened our eyes to God's Truth for all believers.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Most of Reformed Theology was replacement theology, declaring that the Church has replaced Israel in the plan of God. It treated Israel, the Jewish people, like all other peoples, except that until they receive Yeshua, they may show special marks of both preservation and judgment. Reformed thought divided the law into the ceremonial and the moral-social. The latter is a guide for personal life and for the laws and practices of society. The former related only to the practices of ancient Israel and the Temple. Such theology is alive and well today.

Comment by Avram

God never distinguishes between so called, 'ceremonial' and 'moral' laws. This is Man (Reformed Christianity, etc.) dissecting His Word. So much for them keeping the Mosaic Law.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One Law people would see the deficiency in this sort of theology. If Israel has not been replaced, but is still the covenant people of God, then the division of the Torah into an easy moral-ceremonial dyad cannot be sustained. For example, the festivals not only involved sacrifices, but also are memorials of the history of God's grace and deliverance in the life of Israel, and the fulfillment of his promises to Abraham. Because of these non-sacrificial aspects of the festivals, they must still have validity. Indeed, why isn't the entire Torah still valid where it does not depend on the presence of the Temple sacrificial system?

These issues and questions could serve as a healthy balance to some of the traditional teaching of the churches. But One Law teachers take another, crucial, step, which brings them into error. They argue that since Gentiles are grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel, both Jew and Gentile are now called to keep the same Law (except for circumcision). They would apply the Law in the same way to both groups, so that Gentiles in the Messiah are to keep the Sabbath, festivals, food laws, and much else that has not been common in Christian practice.

Comment by Avram

And if we are one people now, one Flock as Yeshua would say (John 10:16), wouldn't it stand to reason that we should both have one Law that guides us? How is this an 'error'?

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

The Exegetical Case for One Law

Most of the case for One Law is taken from the Hebrew Scriptures, such as Exodus 12:49: "The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you." The alien (ger in Hebrew) is viewed as the prototype of the Gentile who comes to Messiah. Several Torah passages apply the same law to native born and alien, for example, Leviticus 24:22, or Numbers 15:16. The New Testament in contrast puts forth passages that seem to say that Gentiles are not called to keep the same application of Torah.

Comment by Avram

Not 'most' but some of the case for the Hebraic Perspective is taken from the Mosaic Covenant, but much more is taken from the New Covenant (please see Law 102 on the Main Page, for a number of places in the New Covenant where the Law is validated).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Acts 15 specifically declares that nothing should be required of the Gentiles but four laws, three of them related to blood. Galatians 5 warns Gentiles not to receive circumcision or they will be required to keep the whole Torah. The clear implication here is that without circumcision, Gentiles are not required to keep the whole Torah. Colossians 2 warns that no one is to judge the Colossians with regard to Sabbath, New Moons or festivals. These are a shadow; the substance is Messiah. In Galatians 4:10 Paul writes that he fears that he labored over the Galatian Gentile congregations in vain because they were now observing "special days, months, seasons and years."

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Comment by Avram

Acts 15 does not 'specifically' declare 'that nothing should be required of the Gentile but four laws'. This is a grave blind spot in traditional Messianic Judaism, as expressed by Rev. Dan Juster and Rabbi Russ Resnik. For instance, if the four laws they speak of were 'required' by the Apostles for salvation, we would have a salvation that was by faith plus the keeping of these four laws. But we know that this isn't the proper interpretation, so what could these four rules mean?

They are the mandatory filter through which every Gentile believer had to pass in order for his faith in Yeshua to be recognized as genuine. The four laws, contrary to Christian and Messianic commentators, don't have to do with table fellowship between the Jew and the Gentile. That's not an issue in Acts 15. Salvation is the issue (what must a Gentile do to be saved?, v. 1, 11). The four laws are a unit that deals with idolatry and cult prostitution. No Gentile continuing to practice that would be seen as a believer, no matter how much he said he believed.

How could a Gentile even think such a thing? When we realize that the whole world, except for Israel, was pagan through and through, we can appreciate why James felt it necessary to implement rules that would negate idolatry. A new Gentile believer could naturally think that he could just 'add' Jesus to his pantheon of gods and goddesses. This would not necessarily be seen as wrong by him. That's why James presents his four rules on idolatry that would negate faith in Yeshua if a Gentile continued to practice such.

Paul also had to deal with this issue (1st Cor. 10:14-21; 2nd Cor. 6:11-18, etc.), as well as John (1st John 5:20-21), and Yeshua (in Pergamum and Thyatira; Rev. 2:14, 20). (Please see Set My People Free! Acts 15:20, on the Main Page, for a more detailed explanation.) The four rules were the floor, not the ceiling. The four rules were the most important things that the Gentile had to understand immediately upon professing faith in Yeshua. The rest he would learn as he learned the Law of Moses (Acts 15:21).

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick take Galatians out of context, as most do. Galatians is summed up very nicely by Paul when he states in 5:4 that anyone thinking that salvation comes by faith in Yeshua PLUS circumcision (i.e. with the keeping of the Law), has just negated his faith in Yeshua. Salvation is by God's grace and by our faith in Yeshua, not the keeping of any laws. The Gentiles in Galatia had been deceived into thinking otherwise.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick's statement that the 'clear implication here is that without circumcision, Gentiles are not required to keep the whole Torah' is false. The Gentiles weren't required to keep the Law for salvation. And of course, neither are the Jewish believers. But the Gentiles needed to know how to love their new God and Messiah, and the Law was the vehicle that showed them. They just weren't supposed to keep it for justification.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick's reference to Col. 2 leaves out that the items mentioned (Sabbath, New Moons, etc.), are shadows of 'things to come', presented in the future tense. Why would the Apostle use the future tense if they were done away with? Now we don't literally see Messiah Yeshua, the substance, but the shadow (the Feasts, Sabbath, etc.), remains, that we might have some kind of God given picture to see who our God and Messiah are, and what They have done for us. A shadow reveals the form or outline of something, and as such, shows us many things that we wouldn't know if we couldn't see it. The lack of this shadow is extremely plain to see in the Church. When people come to see 'the shadow' say, of Passover and it's significance, they are filled with awe and thankful for what God has given to them, and ask, why hadn't they been told that before? This is the Law of Moses, the very Words of God. And His Words reflect to us His Character, and show us the Way of Life. That's why He tells Israel to walk in them (Ex. 16:4; 18:20; Lev. 26:3-13, etc.).

As for no one judging us in these things, note well that Sunday, Easter and Christmas are not mentioned, as these three don't come into the Church till after the death of the Apostles, and have no Scriptural authority. The Apostle is telling us not to let anyone come and tell us that unless we say, fast on Sabbath (as is implied in vv. 20-23), we would lose our salvation. Their judgmental eyes were what Paul was coming against, and their Gnostic-ascetic ways, not the Torah. The use of 'nomos' (Greek for 'law'), is not mentioned once in all of Colossians. These were Gentile converts who must have been steeped in Gnosticism before they 'accepted Christ', and or were being influenced by those among them who were steeped in Gnosticism.

And as for Gal. 4:10, it seems to relate to Gnostic 'special days', not the holy days of Yahveh.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One Law interpreters argue that these passages are only rebuking those who want to keep the Law from wrong motives, as a means of salvation. Thus, in Acts 15, the circumcision party taught that unless a man was circumcised he could not be saved. One Law teachers agree that salvation is by grace, not based on observance of Torah.

Likewise, the One Law teacher says that Galatians is speaking against Torah as a requirement for entry into the Kingdom of God. After acceptance into the body of Messiah through faith, however, everyone should be disciplined to keep the whole Torah as the way of a blessed life. But Paul never qualifies his argument this way. He never writes anything like "for a disciplined life of blessing, you all need to keep the whole Torah." If that had been his view, he had plenty of opportunity to make it clear. If that had been his view, the context would seem to demand that he express it. But he did not, either in Galatians or elsewhere.

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Comment by Avram

This argument is their strongest one. Unfortunately for them, it carries no weight for it's an argument 'from silence.' Why Paul didn't write what they suggest is wide open to interpretation. But as for Paul not directing his people to follow the Law, we have much in Paul's greatest theological letter that does tell us

that the Law is still in force for believers. He states,

‘Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law’ (Rom. 3:31; also see 7:7, 12, 14).

Was Paul saying ‘no Law’ in his letter to the Galatians, but that ‘the Law is established for us’ in Romans? Romans was written less than two years after Galatians (Unger’s Bible Dictionary, 1976, pp. 486-487). Was Paul schizophrenic? Did he change his mind about the Law in that short time? Or is it possible that Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick’s theology isn’t correct about Galatians?

And in 1st Corinthians (5:6-8; 7:17-19, etc.), the Apostle Paul expressly declares Torah (the Commandments) to be for all believers. How is it that Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick miss these? (1st Cor. was written the same year as Galatians, Ibid.)

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One Law teachers respond to this by claiming that Paul is not speaking to this issue, but that the Jerusalem council did speak to it when they said, "Moses is read every Shabbat in the synagogue" (Acts 15:21). They take this to mean that, while Gentiles have easy entry requirements, simply faith in the Messiah, they will gradually adopt the Torah way of life through continual exposure to the Law of Moses in the Synagogue.

This is the gist of the argument, repeated in article after article. All the passages on the goodness of the Law (Torah, the instruction of God) throughout the Bible are used to support this point of view.

Responding to the Doctrine

"One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you" (Exodus 12:49). In context, it is clear that this "one law" does not apply to every stranger within Israel. Torah instructs that the native born must eat the Passover, but the stranger must not eat it, unless he is circumcised. Only through circumcision can he be incorporated into the people of Israel and their Torah. Without it, he remains an outsider and is banned from the Passover (Ex. 12:38, 43-48).

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Comment by Avram

While it’s true that not everything applied to the stranger in the midst of Israel, once this stranger was circumcised, they were part of Israel and all the Law was required of them (Ex. 12:49). Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick fail to see that the Gentile is no longer a stranger in Israel but as Romans states, they have been grafted into the Olive Tree of Israel (Rom. 11:11-12:2), and Ephesians tells us that they are no longer strangers, but part of the Family of Israel:

‘Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua, you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the Blood of Christ’ (Eph. 2:11-13).

The Gentile’s status, like the stranger in ancient Israel who was circumcised, has changed. He is just as much a part of Israel as though he were born into one of the Twelve Tribes. He is no longer a stranger. It’s interesting to understand that at the very beginning of Israel’s national history, just after the Exodus,

Yahveh tells us who is who in Israel. In the short span of six verses (Ex. 12:43-48), there are five different words for the different peoples that would be in the land of Israel among the Israelis. Three cannot partake of the Passover. This is the foreigner (nayhar, v. 43), the temporary resident (toshav, v. 45), and the hired worker (shahir, v. 45).

Once the stranger or alien (ger, v. 48), is circumcised, he can eat the Passover and becomes a part of Israel with the same Torah applying to him as to the native born Israeli (v. 49). Interestingly enough, the only other person who can claim citizenship in Israel is the slave (ehved, v. 44) who was bought for money. He would walk in the religion of his Hebrew master.

Both Jew and Gentile are now slaves to Messiah Yeshua, having been bought with something much more precious than gold, Messiah's own Blood. And we all have been circumcised with the circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11). So, there should be no problem with the Gentile becoming part of Israel whichever way one looks at it, whether a stranger or a slave. Torah applies to all believers. As Paul says, 'for we are the true circumcision,' (Phil. 3:3).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

In Leviticus 24:22, both the alien and the native Israelite are under the same prohibition against murder and both are to suffer the same penalty. Numbers 15:16 instructs an alien who decides to bring a free will offering to offer it in the same way as the native born. However, there is no requirement for him to bring a free will offering. Other mandated offerings are not assigned to the alien.

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Comment by Avram

While this was true of the stranger under Moses, who wasn't circumcised, the Gentile, by his faith in Messiah, is no longer a stranger, as he is one with Israel and circumcised in a greater sense. The argument is invalid.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One Law advocates often cite the "mixed multitude" that joined the Israelites in their departure from Egypt (Ex. 12:38). In Joshua 5, however, all males who are to enter the Land of Israel undergo circumcision. Before the "one law" can go into effect within the Land of Israel, all those who cross the Jordan with Joshua, both native-born and sojourners from the mixed multitude, must be circumcised. Circumcision marks the boundary between those who have the fullness of Torah given to Israel and those who have the more general connection to Torah common to all nations.

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Comment by Avram

The circumcision made by hands made any Gentile part of Israel, and required to keep the Gift of Torah that applied to them. How much more the circumcision made without hands?

Phil. 3:3: 'for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Messiah Yeshua and put no confidence in the flesh'.

Col. 2:11: 'and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah'.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Uncircumcised aliens were allowed to live in the midst of Israel as long as they accepted the requirements of not undercutting life in the land of Israel, submitted to the governing authorities, did not spread idolatry, and did not commit crimes punishable by the civil magistrates. It is unclear how long such aliens were able to stay within Israel. The Torah does not tell us.

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Comment by Avram

The implication is that they could live there as long as they wanted, as long as they weren't hostile to the Sons of Israel.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

With the coming of the New Covenant, there is a change of relationship between the circumcised and the uncircumcised. Since the New Testament teaches specifically on the relationship of Jew and Gentile in the new reality of the body of believers, we cannot simply transfer the practices of pre-Yeshua times into the New Covenant period.

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Comment by Avram

And what is the theological reason for this? Why can't we transfer the practices of pre-Yeshua times into the New Covenant? The Apostles clearly show us otherwise (Acts 15:20-21; 21:20). In the New Covenant, do we not serve the same Living God?

If they are speaking of Temple rites, this is only a technicality for while the Gentile believer couldn't go to the Temple and sacrifice in Paul's day, he will be able to in the days of Ezekiel's Temple, when Yeshua reigns for a thousand years (Ezk. 40-48; Rev. 20:1-6). Why was the Gentile believer barred from sacrifice in Paul's day? The Temple was in the hands of a ruthless priesthood that murdered Messiah Yeshua. They weren't about to recognize any Gentile believer as being able to sacrifice there.

Today, outside of circumcision, whatever Torah applies to the Jewish believer should also apply to the Gentile believer.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

By the time of Yeshua, an interpretative tradition was developing concerning the requirements for Gentiles. These later became formulated as the Noahide laws, binding on all people and rooted in the covenant with Noah. Already in the first century, Judaism made a distinction between universal requirements and requirements that were the particular responsibility of Jews.

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Comment by Avram

That might be good for Judaism ('an interpretive tradition'; Noahide laws), but this has nothing to do with the followers of Yeshua. The Apostles wrote what was required for the Gentiles (Acts 15:20-21). See 1st Cor. 7:17-19, where Paul tells the Gentiles to keep 'the Commandments of God.' He doesn't say that it's

only for the Jew. He's writing to Gentile believers. He also tells them to keep the Passover (5:6-8).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Torah itself makes it clear that the Law has different applications for different groups. For example, purity laws and requirements for priests were different than purity laws for other Israelites. There were laws for men and laws for women, laws for widows, children, and so on. The Torah is not one homogenous whole, but is filled with diversity. Only as each group fulfilled its own destiny in Torah (men and women, for example) could there be true unity in the nation. Likewise, unity of Jew and Gentile does not require that there be one set of commandments for both, but that each group fulfill its own identity and destiny (1 Cor. 7:17-20).

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Comment by Avram

The above paragraph is a false application of Torah. All the diversity that they speak of, that the men and women, priests and widows practiced, was within the dimension of Torah. There are laws that only apply to women (the menstrual cycle). Does that mean that men are sinning when they don't keep the menstrual cycle?

What unity can there be if the Gentile is keeping Christmas and Sunday, and the Jew, Passover and Sabbath? There is no Scripture to support two different theological communities in the New Testament. If anything, Messiah came to break down the wall, the theological wall, between the two groups by dying for both so that the Gentile could become part of Israel, and the Jew could be 'one' with him, in Messiah. When both Jew and Gentile die in Messiah, they are both raised up as a new creation in Yeshua. Are there two different new creations?

Should we reinforce our difference (e.g. circumcision), or does the New Covenant teach us that this difference doesn't matter at the point of salvation (the new creation)? The context is within Paul's teaching on marriage: 'What does the believing Gentile man do who is married to the believing Jewish woman? Does he become circumcised?'

Gentile men will do the laws that apply to Jewish men (minus circumcision as this was the sign of the Covenant between God and Abraham). The sign of the Covenant between God and Israel, with the Gentiles included (Is. 49:6, etc.), is the circumcision made without hands, the Holy Spirit. Each covenant had its own sign: Noah, the rainbow; Abraham, circumcision; Moses, the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12-17); the Yeshuic Covenant, the Immersion into His Spirit. That's one reason why the Gentile man doesn't have to be circumcised. There are others. But now that this theological wall has been broken down between the two (for God commanded Israel to have nothing to do with the pagan nations around them), the Gentile man walks alongside the Jewish man, and the Gentile woman walks alongside the Jewish woman. The Gentile doesn't have to eat Gefilta fish or do 'Jewish things', but he walks out the Commandments of Yahveh, as interpreted by Yeshua (not the anti-Yeshua Rabbis). The Gentile is not a Jew but part of the Seed that Father Abraham was promised, and also, part of the Kingdom of Israel, Yeshua's Kingdom. How could Sabbath observance be an option to him? Is he allowed to make up his own laws or rules? Can he make a day holy? Can he make Sunday holy when God hasn't declared it as such? If he could, it would be written in the Word. The Church has usurped God's authority (as did the Pharisees who seated themselves in the Seat of Moses; Mt. 23:2-3). But this doesn't mean that Sunday is any more holy than the traditions of the Pharisees that negated God's Word (Mt. 15:1-20).

You can have different laws in any country or kingdom that effect different classes of people in their

country (laws for men, laws for women, laws for those who make over a million dollars a year, etc.). But you cannot have two different conceptual sets of laws based on race. One law for the black man and one law for the white man. The same holds true in the Kingdom of Yeshua; you cannot have one for the Jew, and a different law for the Gentile. It's based on race (and we know that now, in Messiah, there is no conceptual distinction between a Jew or a Gentile, a male or a female, a slave or a free person (Gal. 3:28, for 'There is neither Jew nor Greek', 'we are all one in Messiah').

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick's position is not only unfair to one group, but totally impractical (on what day are they all to assemble?). And it's theologically absurd (it's a sin for a Jew to not keep the Sabbath day holy, but it's alright for a Gentile to do whatever he wants on that day?). If the Sabbath is holy to Yahveh (Gen. 2:1-3), and holy to Yeshua (Mt. 5:17-19; 12:8; 22:40), and holy to the Apostles (Acts 21:20), and holy to Paul (Acts 24:17-18; 25:8; Rom. 7:12), then how can it not be holy for the Gentile? It seems that Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick would have the Gentile to be a second class citizen in the Kingdom of Yeshua, sinning in ignorance and thinking it divine.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Yeshua in Matthew 5:17-18 teaches obedience to the least of the commandments. He was speaking to Jews in period when the Temple was still standing and it was possible to keep the Torah to a much greater degree than now. To teach people to obey the least of the commandments, however, assumes that they keep them according to the intent of the commandment. It does not mean that Gentiles should be taught to keep all the details of law given to Israelites.

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Comment by Avram

This is a fallacious argument. Why? Because in v. 18 Yeshua speaks of the Law (for His followers no doubt, if not, why would He even bring this up?), that the Law would be here till Heaven and Earth pass away. And in v. 19 Yeshua specifically speaks of His (coming) Kingdom in relation to His followers keeping the least of the Commandments.

The laws that deal with the Temple not being able to be kept now are irrelevant. Just ask any Orthodox Jew who keeps the Law, if the Temple not being here negates the keeping of the Law for him. We keep all the laws that apply to us, just as Yeshua did. Yeshua, contrary to popular understanding, didn't keep every law though. For instance, when He was here in Judah, He never offered up the Day of Atonement sacrifices in the Temple. He wasn't the earthly High Priest. The Law didn't require it of Him. And as Heb. 7:14 and 8:4 state, He wasn't eligible to be a priest at all. He came from the Tribe of Judah, not Levy. Does this mean that Yeshua sinned? Hardly. We know Him to be a sinless Sacrifice (Heb. 4:15). Yeshua walked in all the laws of Torah that did apply to Him, and that's exactly what we should do too.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Yeshua teaches mostly on those parts of Torah considered to be universal in accordance with Jewish teaching of that period. The Gospels give little space to the primary concerns of the Pharisees concerning Torah's purity laws. From how to pray, to loving enemies, from lust in the heart to hatred in the heart, Yeshua teaches Torah that applies to all. There is no evidence that the Apostles ever taught Gentiles to keep the whole Torah, but only the Torah that was perceived as universal, just as Yeshua himself had done.

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Comment by Avram

Their statement again aligns Yeshua with what the Rabbis may have assigned to Gentiles in the so called Noahide laws. But this means that Yeshua was following them in that, and there is nothing in the Gospels or anywhere else that assigns His teachings to the Noahide laws. And never once in the rest of the New Testament do we see Paul or anyone else speaking of the Noahide laws. If the Gentiles were to walk in them and them only, why isn't that mentioned? (1st Jn. 1:3-6)

While it's true that Yeshua taught many 'universal' Torah laws, one would be hard pressed to assign homosexuality in Greece to anything but 'loving one's neighbor'. The Greeks saw homosexual 'love' between two men as higher than marriage. This is the glory that was Greece.

Where can Paul possibly take an authoritative stand against homosexuality, as he does in Romans 1:18-27? How could homosexual 'love' be wrong if two believers chose to love one another that way? The only place that prohibited homosexuality was the Law of Moses (Lev. 20:13, etc.). And what if a man wanted to have sex with a sheep? Why not? Is it really hurting the animal? But God expressly comes against this also in Torah (Lev. 20:15). Morality is defined by Torah. It's not subjective. If it were, the Greek Christians could well tell Paul to leave them alone because they were 'only loving their fellow man' as they saw fit.

Yeshua also teaches on Sabbath keeping by example and word, and never once intimates that it's going to drop out of sight after He leaves. If anything, He reinforces His position on the Sabbath, after the Resurrection, by saying that fleeing from the coming destruction would be a hardship on the Sabbath (Mt. 24:20).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Significant passages that speak to Gentile practice in the New Covenant provide clear evidence that the One Law view is not correct.

Let us first return to Acts 15, which discusses the assertion by some believers that a man must be circumcised in order to be saved. The conclusion of the Apostles and Elders (Acts 15:20), under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was to lay upon the Gentiles only four requirements:

a.. to avoid fornication b.. to avoid idolatry c.. to avoid eating blood d.. to avoid eating that which is strangled.

As has been noted, these are very similar to the Noahide laws. This does not mean that Gentiles are free to murder, steal, and dishonor their parents. The passage assumes a universal morality, as do Paul, Peter, and James (who were present that day), and John in their writings. As Romans 2 notes, Gentiles can perceive the law of God, even without the revelation of Moses, and are responsible for many standards that are also expressed in the Bible. For example, classic Roman moral law taught the ideals of monogamous marriage, honoring parents, honesty and much more. The essential and unique addition of New Covenant ethics is the sacrificial example of Yeshua.

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Comment by Avram

Seeing the four rules as similar to the Noahide laws is false. If they are the Noahide laws, why didn't the Apostles just give all the rules of Noah to them if they wanted them to know what 'universally' applied to

the Gentile? For this is what the Noahide Law was supposed to be for. Actually, one can place all four rules, as they interpret them, into just two of the seven rules of Noah. For more on this, see The Lifting of the Veil: Acts 15:20-21 <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Lifting-of-the-Veil.pdf>.

While the admonition to love God and neighbor as self can be seen as ‘universal’, nowhere in Acts 15 do we find it ‘assuming’ a universal morality’.

Where do these so called Noahide laws form from? Where are they plainly written in Scripture, as the Law of Moses is? Whose ‘authority’ are we speaking about here? Under whose teaching then would the new Gentile believers be following? It is purely rabbinic and as such, we must be very careful for God did not send His Son to die that horrible death on the tree for us, so that we should send the Gentiles to learn from the very Rabbis who debated with Him over the Word (Mt. 15:1-20).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Acts 15 clearly addresses issues beyond basic morality, issues that would not have been readily perceived in the Roman world. These added requirements were also necessary for Jewish-Gentile fellowship. Acts 15 emphasizes reverence for blood (which is reverence for life), a standard that goes back to Noah. Meat strangled has far too much blood in it. Roman ethicists rejected fornication, but an exception was made for cult prostitution. Idolatry was indeed the way of life in the Roman world and was part of good citizenship. In this command, the Gentile believer had to make a radical break with Roman culture.

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Comment by Avram

Acts 15 is not about Jewish-Gentile fellowship. Those who think this fail to understand both the import of the rules, and the problem with Gentile salvation in a pagan-idol infested world.

If ‘blood’ spoke of reverence for life, and strangled about not eating the meat of it, the Apostles fail to tell the Gentiles which meats were unclean. Or are Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick saying that they could eat pig, as long as it was slaughtered properly? It’s not about blood representing life or eating meat from a strangled.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One Law teachers make a big point of James's statement that "Moses has been read every week in the Synagogue" (Acts 15:21). This is taken to imply that Gentile believers will, in the normal course of their new life, attend synagogue and adopt more and more of the whole Torah. Since Torah life is good and beautiful, why wouldn't he? On this basis, the verse is taken as an exhortation to further learning and the adoption of the whole Torah. Thus, One Law teachers transform an ambiguous statement into a strong and unambiguous exhortation.

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Comment by Avram

If Torah were not for the Gentile, why is James saying this? The Jews certainly didn’t need to be admonished about Torah or going to the synagogue (Acts 21:20). If James is just laying down ‘only’ four rules for the Gentile, why does He ‘ambiguously’ add the rest of Torah (Acts 15:21)?

On the contrary, Paul in 2nd Tim. 3:10-17, esp. v. 15, tells us that the ‘Old Testament’ will make us ‘wise for salvation through faith which is in Messiah Yeshua’ and that with this knowledge, we may be ‘com-

plete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.’

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

They apparently overlook, however, the fact that these words spoken in the council were not included in the apostolic letter that was circulated among the congregations. If this were such a crucial exhortation to Gentiles, it is amazing indeed that the apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, did not think it important enough to put in their letter!

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Comment by Avram

It's interesting that Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick overlook that fact that not only were Paul and Barnabas there, and returning to tell the folks in Antioch of the Council's ruling, debate and words (including v. 21), but James specifically sent along two members of the Jerusalem congregation to tell the believers in Antioch exactly what transpired:

‘Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth’ (Acts 15:27).

Also, we see in the following verses (15:30-35), that they stayed to teach and to preach the Word of the Lord for quite a while.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

It is most telling that in all the epistles to congregations there is not a single word commanding Gentiles to adopt the whole Torah, and no direct statement of hope that they will eventually adopt a fully Torah-keeping life in the same way as the Jews. There is no word of such an exhortation or even mild encouragement throughout the whole book of Acts, which is written in part to show the relationship of Jewish-Gentile fellowship!

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Comment by Avram

It's not true that ‘there is not a single word commanding Gentiles to adopt the whole Torah’. For just a few specific examples, see Rom. 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14; 1st Cor. 5:6-8; 7:17-19; Heb. 8:10; James 4:12; Rev. 12:17.

If we're now having to deal with theological positions ‘from silence’ (what Paul didn't write), why doesn't he ever write to any congregations and say, ‘To you Jewish believers I say, keep Torah! And to you Gentile believers, well, just keep the moral laws’?!

For we know that all Jewish believers, including Paul, kept Torah (Acts 21:20; 16:1, 3; 18:18; 21:23-26; 23:1-5; 24:17-18; 25:8; 28:17). And in every congregation that Paul set up, there were both Jewish and Gentile believers (Acts 13:43; 14:1; 16:1, 5; 17:4, 11; 18:2-4, 8, 19-20; 24-28; 19:1-7, 8, 18, 33-34; 28:24, 30). Paul never tells us to assemble on Sunday, keep Easter or Christmas or eat ham and shrimp. If the Law was done away with, why didn't he ever break it? In Acts 22:30-23:5, note well that Paul submits to an unrighteous act and quotes the Law (Ex. 22:28), as to why he backs down against an unrighteous High Priest. Paul constantly uses the Law to make his points (1st Cor. 9:9; 1st Tim. 5:4, etc.).

Acts 26:29 has Paul saying, ‘For I wish that all of you were like me, except for these chains.’ Now obviously, there were both Jews (King Agrippa), and Gentiles (Gov. Festus and many of the assembled

leaders of Caesarea), but Paul makes no distinction to them about the Law.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Even were we to say that Gentiles are free to embrace Torah, the calendar of Israel, and more, there is no word that there is any covenant responsibility for Gentiles to do so. Acts 21 reinforces this impression. Here James tells Paul of the rumor that he teaches Jews who embrace Yeshua to forsake Torah. This of course is not true. So, Paul demonstrates this to be a false rumor by his Temple involvement. James reminds Paul that Gentiles were freed from responsibility for the full weight of Torah. Neither Paul nor James gives the slightest hint that they were encouraging full Torah observance among Gentiles. Paul could have said, "Not only do I not teach Jews to forsake Moses, but I even encourage Gentiles to embrace more and more of the Torah as they come to understand and appreciate it." This is the emphasis of the One Law teachers, but there is not one word in the New Testament that explicitly encourages Gentiles to grow in keeping the whole Torah.

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Comment by Avram

James doesn't tell Paul that 'Gentiles were freed from responsibility for the full weight of Torah.' What James is referring to, that the Gentile doesn't have to do, is to take on the Nazarite Vow (or do any sacrificing), like Paul had done. Why not, if the Gentile were to keep Torah and it all applied to him? Because the Temple was in the hands of the very priests who murdered Yeshua and beat and imprisoned the Apostles (Acts 4:1-3, 17-18, 21; 5:17-18, 27-28, 33, 40; 7:1, 54, 57-58; 8:1, 3; 9:1-2). If a Gentile were to come and proclaim his family ties to Israel because of Messiah Yeshua, and want to sacrifice in the Temple, you can see the problems there would have been. For more on this, please see Set My People Free! Acts 15:20, and Mosaic Sacrifice and the Blood of Jesus and also, Sacrifice in the New Testament, all on the Main Page.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Galatians 5 is a watershed passage. Here Paul in the strongest terms exhorts Gentiles not to receive circumcision. Some One Law teachers want to allow a legitimate option of circumcision, so they add the proviso that it should not be done for the wrong reasons. Yet, this is not in the text. The New Covenant offers the fullness of God's blessing upon Gentiles without the necessity of circumcision. This was not the case in the Mosaic order.

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Comment by Avram

Gal. 5 certainly is a watershed passage but Paul isn't telling the Gentiles 'not to receive circumcision.' He is plainly telling them that if they receive circumcision, thinking that they will (make sure), that they are saved; justified, and part of Israel, they have just made their so called faith in Yeshua, invalid. Behold the Word:

Gal. 5:4: 'You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by Law; you have fallen from grace.' (NASB)

Gal. 5:4: 'Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace.' (KJV)

Circumcision is not what Paul was speaking about. He was speaking about those who circumcised themselves in order to 'make sure' that they were saved. This 'added to' the finished Work of Messiah for salvation. And this was wrong. But does that mean that the holy Law (Rom. 7:12), is no longer valid because some used it perversely? Of course not. Perversion of a valid law doesn't invalidate the law.

We're speaking about Torah for the Gentile as a way of life, not as a means of obtaining salvation. Once this understanding is seen, the New Covenant can be rightly discerned.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

When Paul writes, "Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law" (v. 3), it is impossible to escape the implications of this verse. If one is circumcised, he is obligated to keep the whole law; if one is not circumcised, he is not obligated to obey the whole law. Paul's statement would make no sense if Gentiles were already obligated to keep the whole law! Again, there is no qualification here. Paul does not write, "of course, I would like you to be able to keep the whole law as I do, but this should be gradual as you understand and not by the requirement that would come from circumcision." This is exactly the kind of qualification that Paul does make for celibacy in I Cor. 7. But he does not make it here concerning the law.

Comment by Avram

The implication of the verse is that no one can keep the Law for salvation. That's what the text is about and specifically states, in just one more verse (v. 4), as brought out above. No one can be justified or saved by the Law (symbolized in circumcision). The reverse was and still is true for the Jew who doesn't believe in Messiah Yeshua. The Law is seen today, and was back then, as a vehicle for salvation. Just ask any Orthodox Rabbi what he bases his inclusion in Heaven upon. He'll tell you, the keeping of the Law. And that's why those Gentiles wanted to be circumcised. They were receiving false information about what God required for justification.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick saying that it wouldn't make any sense 'if Gentiles were already obligated to keep the whole law (sic)!' just shows that they don't understand that Paul is coming against the keeping of the (whole) Law, symbolized in circumcision, for salvation. This is not an unusual misunderstanding; all of Christianity sees it that way too.

The Gentiles were obligated to keep the Law, but not for salvation. Because Paul fails to make any qualification about it here, doesn't mean that their conclusion is right (or that Paul doesn't more fully flush this out in his next epistle, Romans). Paul 'fails' to say a lot of things in his letters but tells us that when he 'gets there' he'll straighten everyone out (1st Cor. 4:18-19, 21; 16:5, and especially verse 8 where he tells the Corinthians that he's going to remain in Ephesus till Pentecost. Now if the Gentiles weren't informed and learning Torah, 'Pentecost' would have had absolutely no meaning to them, let alone would they know when it was).

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Finally, let us look at Colossians 2. Here we are told that no one is to be allowed to judge the Colossians for practices concerning food or drink, a new moon or a Sabbath, or special feast days. These are a shadow; the substance is the Messiah. The clear and plain meaning of the text is that no one is to judge them as to whether or not they observe these days. In an Oscar-winning performance, some One Law teachers

twist this text into an exhortation to the Colossians to keep these practices so well that no one would be able to judge them!

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Comment by Avram

The 'clear and plain meaning' is not that 'no one is to judge them as to whether or not they observe these days', but how they were to observe them; the ascetic Gnostic way, or Paul's way. Also, I think the focus is on not letting someone's perverse judgment, against them keeping these days, rob them of the reward of keeping them (Col. 2:18).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

There is no word in the New Testament that exhorts Gentiles to circumcision, feasts, purity laws, Sabbaths, fast days and more, but these practices were, and continue to be, central to Judaism.

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Comment by Avram

There's not much in the NT concerning those things for Jewish believers either, but that doesn't mean that Torah is not for them. Paul says to the Corinthians to 'imitate' him (1st Cor. 4:16, NASB); and to 'not think beyond what is written' (4:6); and to 'keep the Feast' (5:8; an explicit reference to Passover and Unleavened Bread, as is seen from the context of v. 7); and says in 4:17 that he's sending Timothy to them, to remind them of his 'ways in Messiah, just as I teach everywhere in every congregation.' Just in this short section of Corinthians is more than enough instances for Paul's view on the Law, especially when we realize that Paul kept the Law all the days of his life. How could he desire for the Corinthians to imitate him, if they weren't to keep Sabbath and Passover, and the rest of Torah that applied to them?

Acts 24:14: 'But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the prophets'.

Acts 25:8: 'While he answered for himself, Neither against the Law of the Jews, neither against the Temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.'

Here Paul shows us that he kept the Law for he couldn't say that he hadn't offended any if he broke Sabbath and or taught others to do the same.

Rom. 3:31: "Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.

This seems fairly plain that the Law is established through faith in Messiah Yeshua, not done away with. Established in that it is no longer being used 'for salvation', as Paul had previously thought, but for living in Messiah.

Rom. 7:12: 'Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.'

Again, a very plain word concerning the Law and how Paul (and the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul), understood the Law of Moses. For the Jew only? Hardly. There is nothing in the context to show us any difference between Jew and Gentile.

1st Cor. 9:8-9: 'Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the Law the same also? For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out

the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?’

In a context of Paul’s right to receive funds for his service as a minister of Yeshua, Paul speaks of the law concerning the ox. If the Law were no more, Paul couldn’t use it.

1st Cor. 14:34: ‘Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the Law.’

Again, if the Law weren’t valid for the Gentiles (and the Jews), how could Paul think to use something out of it to make his point?

James 4:11: ‘Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law: but if thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge.’

If the Law wasn’t valid, how could James say such a thing, that one who was a judge of the Law, wouldn’t be a doer of the Law?!

1st John 3:4: ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law.’

And here we see the Apostle John lining right up with the Apostle Paul (Rom. 7:7). It’s only by the Law of Moses that we have the fullest understanding of what is sin, in God’s eyes.

By these few examples, and there are many more in the New Covenant, we dispel Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick’s telling us that there ‘is no word in the New Testament that exhorts Gentiles to circumcision, feasts, purity laws, Sabbaths’, etc. The entire ‘Handbook’ doesn’t have to be replicated in the New Covenant. This is why James assumes that the Gentiles will learn from Torah (Acts 15:21). Why send Gentile believers to the synagogue if not to learn the Law? And if one truly wants to imitate Messiah Yeshua, how can they do that eating pig and desecrating God’s Sabbath? (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 31:12-17, etc. The Sabbath is always called God’s Sabbath, not the Jewish Sabbath. I only make this point to show us that it truly is God’s Sabbath, for both Jew and Gentile, not just for the Jew only.)

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One of the serious problems with One Law interpretation is that it seems to ignore the awesome change that has come through the death and resurrection of Yeshua. The eschatological Kingdom has come and Gentiles are invited into full spiritual participation without the pre-Yeshua requirements. The spiritual equality of Jew and Gentile in the Messiah is a monumental change. The Gentile in the New Covenant has a far better status than the uncircumcised alien and even the pre-Yeshua Jew, because he that is least in the Kingdom is greater (in privilege) than John the Immerser. He is even raised with Messiah and spiritually present with Him at the throne of God (Eph. 2:5). There is no higher status.

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Comment by Avram

We’re not ignoring the ‘awesome change’ that has come about because of Yeshua. Are Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick implying that salvation cannot be had for those who believe in Yeshua and keep God’s Torah?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

If such a Gentile is called into the Messianic Jewish community and its Torah-based way of life, on behalf

of the restoration of Israel, he or she is worthy of honor. But the distinctive way of life mandated in the Torah for Israel is not presented as the ideal for all peoples.

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Comment by Avram

And why not? Why isn't it as good or 'ideal' for the Gentile believer as well as for the Jewish believer? Was this not Papa God's intent from the beginning of His calling out of a special people? (Dt. 4:5-10) Wasn't it to draw all flesh that would come to Him? And if we are all to worship Him according to the way He desires, then Sabbath and New Moons, etc. will be celebrated by both Jew and Gentile who love His Son. The Torah is God's Love defined, for all believers. Why shouldn't the Gentile be allowed to walk in God's definition of love?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

The Danger of Usurping Israel's Irrevocable Calling

Paul writes that even Jews who are enemies of the Gospel have an "irrevocable calling" (Rom. 11:29). He describes aspects of this unique calling in Romans 9:1-4, which notes that certain communal privileges would forever belong to the Jewish heritage. We are an elect nation; the Word of God was given to us; the covenants are given to us and made through us; and even the ancestry of the Messiah is from us.

The festivals preserve both universal meanings and particularistic features specific to Jewish promise, life and calling. Thus, Passover achieves universal meaning in Yeshua and the idea of a universal Exodus. Shavuot is the season of the outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh. Sukkot looks toward the ultimate Kingdom, in which all nations will celebrate it (Zechariah 14). The New Covenant Scriptures provide universal meanings for the festivals. Yet, they never command Gentiles to keep them in this age. In contrast, there are specific Jewish meanings in the festivals that are unique to Israel's own identity.

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Comment by Avram

With the Gentile believer now part of the family of Israel, the Feasts of Israel, with their particular and universal meanings belong to him also. It's unfortunate that the Church, for 1,900 years, has not recognized this 'universal' meaning. As for the Gentiles 'never' being commanded in the New Testament to keep the Feasts, we find Paul not only telling them to keep Passover, but using metaphors that, without knowledge of Passover, would have absolutely no meaning to the Gentile Corinthians (1st Cor. 5:6-8, especially v. 8 where he says, 'Come, let us celebrate the Feast'. He's just been speaking of unleavened bread. There's no feast in all the world that has anything to do with unleavened bread, except Passover (Ex. 12:17). And can you imagine if the Gentiles had no knowledge of Torah, and Paul telling them that they are meant to be 'unleavened bread' (1st Cor. 5:7)?!

I find it astonishing that Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick cannot see that Torah is for all (Mt. 5:17-19; Mk. 13:31; Lk. 16:17; 1st Cor. 5:6-8; 11:1-2; Col. 2:16-19, esp. v. 18; 1st tim. 4:1-16; 2nd Tim. 3:14-17; 1st Jn. 2:3-6; Rev. 14:12, etc.). The Gentiles are not part of another nation or people, but just as say, a Frenchman or an Italian, comes to the U.S.A. and becomes a citizen of that country, don't the same laws that govern a U.S. citizen, now govern the former Frenchman or Italian? Of course they do. Why is it so hard to see that the Gentile who believes in the Messiah of Israel has been transformed into Messiah's Kingdom, and that Torah applies to both Jew and Gentile (except for circumcision)? Torah, as interpreted by Messiah Yeshua, is God's teaching on how to live this new life out.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Without making such distinctions, One Law people often have nothing to say concerning the unique calling and destiny of the Jewish people. In addition, some even say that Israel is now defined by those who have faith in Yeshua, all of whom are called to keep the whole Torah, not those who are Jewish by birth and do not believe in Yeshua. Note the following quote as a case in point.

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Comment by Avram

The 'unique calling and destiny of the Jewish people' is evident for all to see. The nation of Israel has arisen amidst the ashes of the Holocaust. The Jewish people are still in covenant with God through Abraham and Moses:

Lev. 26:44-45: 'Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am Yahveh their God. And I will remember for them the covenant with their Fathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am Yahveh.'

And those who love the Jewish people and the Land continually pray for more of the Jewish people to come to Messiah Yeshua. What else needs to be said? The Jewish people are still loved by God, in spite of their sins and rebellion and one day, as Paul says, 'all Israel will be saved' (Rom. 11:26). How does Gentile observance of Torah take anything away from the Jewish people?

On the contrary, Gentiles are to cause a 'godly jealousy' among our Jewish people. How often the Jewish people disdain Messiah Yeshua, because of what they have seen in His Gentile (and Jewish!), followers complete disregard for the Law. Christianity is too foreign and pagan. It's 'another religion'. Yeshua, and especially Paul (as the Church interprets him), are seen as apostates by the Jewish people, from God's religion. Wouldn't it be better, if for nothing other than a witness to the Jewish people that their Messiah has come in Yeshua, if all the Gentile believers walked in Torah?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

According to Paul, Messiah alone is adequate for believers to be reckoned with the people of God, and there is only one people of God. Like it or not, the advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven has broadened the definition of Israel . . . According to Paul, the criteria defining Israel is not physical descent, nor circumcision; nor Torah observance-it is faith. [2]

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Comment by Avram

It seems this argument is a point in favor of Torah observance for all, not against it. (See also James 1:22-25 for the 'Law of Liberty' being what the Psalmist is speaking of in 119:43-48.)

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

This is the old replacement theology with a new twist. The new and true Israel is said to replace the old Israel of the flesh, but the new twist is that this new Israel is still to keep the Torah. The arguments are the

same as in replacement theology but with the addition of all keeping the Torah.

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Comment by Avram

Not so. Replacement theology, as Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick have written in their article, does away with Israel. What we have here, racial, non-believing Israel, and the Kingdom of Messiah Yeshua, both run in the same direction, like parallel train tracks. No one is taking anything away from natural Israel, and no one should try and take Torah observance away from the Israel that believes in Messiah Yeshua.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

In contrast, here are features of the unique calling of Messianic Jews.

1. Covenant responsibility for the whole Torah, although it has to be applied as fitting to the New Covenant and an age without Temple or sacrifice. Circumcision is a unique marker of this call.
2. Participation in Jewish life connected to the Jewish community. We are part of our people.

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Comment by Avram

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick may believe that with all their heart but there's no Jewish community that I know of that either wants them or accepts them as Jewish anymore. They might 'put up with them' for a while, but in the eyes of the Jewish community, they are seen as Christians, and deceptive Christians at that. Why? Because they still think they're Jewish (and the Jewish community doesn't recognize them as Jewish any longer, now that they believe in Jesus).

Also, we must be very careful with the 'Jewish community', as it is full of paganism and beliefs from the Talmud and Kabbalah. Today, these things are woven into the very fabric of the overall community. We are called to walk alongside of them, but not become like them:

Jer. 15:19: 'Therefore, thus says Yahveh, 'If you return, then I will restore you, and before Me you will stand. And if you extract the precious from the worthless, you will become My spokesman. They for their part may turn to you, but as for you, you must not turn to them.'

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

3. Rooting in our language and land, and connecting to the good aspects of the culture of Israel today. This includes those who are called to live in the Diaspora.

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Comment by Avram

Are they implying that the Gentile believer cannot intermarry with a Jewish believer? This is never written in either the Tanach or the New Covenant. Any Gentile that believes in Yeshua and keeps Torah has a part in the Land of Israel (Ezk. 47:23).

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

4. Affirming the truth that our continued existence as a unique people is an essential witness to the reality

of God and his promises. It is a clearly implied command in the Bible that we are not to undercut the survival of our people. We are to not to assimilate, but are commanded to remain Jewish.

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Comment by Avram

There's no concern among the traditional Jewish community that Gentiles keeping Torah destroys their existence or uniqueness as a people. And at no time in Israel's history, either when first coming out of Egypt, when a 'multitude' of Egyptians joined them, or at any time when Gentiles converted to being part of Israel, was Israel's uniqueness compromised.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

5. We are to play a prophetic role in the last days by being that Jewish contingent that witnesses to Yeshua before our people and before the nations.

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Comment by Avram

And how does the Gentile Torah keeper shatter this? If anything, the Gentile becomes a witness per excellence to the greatness, love and forgiveness of the God of Israel, to the Jewish person who knows not Messiah Yeshua.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

6. We are to welcome Yeshua with the words "Baruch haba b'shem Adonai," "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord." This must precede his coming.

7. We are to affirm and be part of the heritage of our people where it is good and beautiful as part of our unique peoplehood. We are to avoid that which is wrong, but we cannot adequately express Jewish life if we ignore 2000 years of cultural development.

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Comment by Avram

I can't imagine any Torah observant Jew, taking a Jew who believes in Jesus seriously, if he doesn't keep the Law of Moses. And even secular Jews who don't keep Torah, know that the Jew is supposed to keep it. So how can the Messiah have come, and 'done away with Torah?'

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

8. We take on a prophetic priestly role when we engage in Biblical celebrations, for they call into being the events of the last days and the redemption of the World.

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Comment by Avram

We also remember what our God has done for us in the past, and are blessed to be with Him in the present.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

One additional aspect of One Law teaching is very confusing. The teaching advocates that Gentiles keep Biblical law, such as the festivals. One would expect that they would look into the Bible to see how to celebrate those festivals. Instead, they resort to post-Biblical Jewish practices. When One Law people practice a Passover Seder, for example, they often follow the order of traditional Jewish practice: four cups of wine, salt water, hand washings, Elijah's chair and much more.

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Comment by Avram

Separating fact from fable is part of the Torah walk. And Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick are right in addressing this issue. Too many 'Messianics' walk in things that they shouldn't be walking in, whether 'Jewish' or otherwise.

When I first began keeping Torah I wore a kipa and had a Star of David. But the Holy Spirit showed me that I wasn't to use them as both are pagan, even though they are revered in Judaism and Messianic Judaism. But there are some traditions, like the four cups of Passover, that are not wrong, and can be done. The proper context to understand this is, what traditions nullify God's Word? And what traditions enhance it?

Speaking a little more on the subject of tradition, we can see that it can't be all bad as the Church practices communion, even though some do it wrong (by taking leavened bread, when at the Passover we know that Yeshua would have passed around unleavened bread, and the symbolism is great), but that the cup that He took was Jewish tradition. Nowhere in Exodus 12, where instructions are given as to the food of the Passover (or anywhere else), is wine mentioned. Yet communion consists, and rightfully so, of both unleavened bread and wine. Wine was only a Jewish tradition but Yeshua used it. If He didn't have a problem with this tradition, we should realize that tradition in and of itself, is not wrong. If we can see tradition as a picture frame, either enhancing the picture (the Word of God), or taking away from it, we can get a grasp on how tradition can benefit us or be a tool of the Adversary that keeps us from the Word.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Instead of being truly "Biblical," the One Law teachers appropriate various aspects of these Jewish traditions. Unfortunately, there is very little in their literature that shows their followers the distinction between what is Biblical and what is from Jewish tradition.

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Comment by Avram

I agree. And that's why I don't align myself with others who walk that way. (See, Goodbye Messianic Judaism! on the Main Page) Unfortunately, Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick don't go far enough. The kipa, for instance, shouldn't be worn by Jewish believers either. In fact, I try and teach what is biblical and what is not, especially when many traditions, both Christian and Jewish, are pagan and perverse, and nullify God's Word.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Even more, the One Law teachers often use non-Biblical Jewish symbols. One article on Biblical law was illustrated by a photograph of a family of four, the father and son wearing kippot (Jewish skullcaps) and

looking at a Menorah. Neither kippot nor the Menorah is part of Biblical Torah. Another article in the same magazine mentioned Jewish liturgical directions, not found in the Bible, as somehow applying to "us," that is the Gentile readers of the magazine. [3]

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Comment by Avram

Kippot (plural for *kipa*; or *yarmulka* the Yiddish equivalent) are pagan, even though revered in the Jewish and Messianic Jewish community. But the Menorah, not 'part of Biblical Torah' (Ex. 25:31-32)? Perhaps Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick mean the Hanukia (the nine branched candlestick for Hanuka)? This would be extra-biblical, Hanuka coming about 160 years before Messiah was born, and the canon of the Tanach was closed by then. Either lampstand can be called a menorah. Not knowing the article they speak of, I imagine it was a Hanukia with nine branches.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

This mixture of post-Biblical symbols is found throughout One Law literature. All this gives the impression that One Law teachers either do not understand the difference between Biblical and post-Biblical practices or they are trying to appropriate Jewish identity for themselves

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Comment by Avram

A good point by Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick. Given time, many are coming to see their point and leaving behind 'Jewish things' that don't agree with the Word. Of course, many more are still immersed in it and that is unfortunate, but this is one reason why the Lord has raised up The Seed of Abraham, to help those who are wanting to know the difference. And I know there are many more whom our Messiah is using in this area.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

It is good for Gentile believers to understand the practice of the Jewish people and to appreciate Jewish culture. Yet, when one combines One Law interpretation with the appropriation of extra-Biblical Jewish practice, and then models this as an example for everyone, we are very close to replacement theology and practice. The refrain "One people, One Messiah, One Torah" must be balanced with the affirmation of God's continuing election of the Jewish people alongside his election of the Messiah-believing community. Without this balance, such a refrain resembles the language Christian theology used for centuries to argue for the replacement of Israel by the church.

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Comment by Avram

Just as salt looks identical to sugar, there is no desire among One Law people that they have now taken the place of natural Israel. It seems to be just the opposite. Many love the Jew and pray for Israel. This seems to be a pseudo-concern for Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick. Are they crying, 'Wolf!' when none exists?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

Paradoxically, One Law people undermine their own vision for "One People," by basing unity on a common response to Torah. In other words, they hope to achieve unity by producing unified Torah-based behavior among all believers. Scripture, however, portrays our unity as accomplished in Messiah himself.

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Comment by Avram

Ahh...nothing like spiritualizing our unity in Messiah. How unified can we be if one eats pork and thinks nothing of it, but to another, it's sin? So much for unity and respect, for what will the pig eater think of the one who doesn't? 'Poor thing, he doesn't realize he's been set free from that nasty Law.' And what will the one who keeps the Sabbath think of the one who doesn't? 'How could his eyes be so blind to God's Word?' Unity? It certainly won't make for a happy congregation.

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

The letter to the Ephesians, which includes some of the strongest statements of unity within the Body of believers, never posits the idea of One Law. Instead, it calls us to maintain "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," for "there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (4:4-6).

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Comment by Avram

Again, how can there be unity among the Body when most of the Body is going in the wrong direction? As for Ephesians never mentioning the idea of 'One Law', I think the argument really needs to be turned around. Where does it say that the Gentile doesn't have to keep Torah? Why do I say this? Because we know for a fact that all the Jews kept Torah (Acts 21:20, etc.), and so how can a Gentile come and keep Sunday and eat pig? These things are detestable to God Almighty. The one is pagan and the other destroys the human body. Any pagan nutritionist knows the latter fact about pigs. Why doesn't the Church know that one cannot baptize pagan Sunday, Easter and Christmas, and glorify the God of Israel with it? If God doesn't give us authority in His Word to negate and change His holy days, how can the Church continue in it's pagan holy days, and how can Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick wink at this?

Also, with the Gentile believer being brought into the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2), we see a tremendous unity and oneness. How can there be different laws for the Gentile?

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

The beauty of this God-given unity is that it honors and preserves biblical distinctions between diverse groups, particularly Jews and Gentiles. Gentiles who are called to be part of the Messianic Jewish community are worthy of particular honor, not because they have finally realized that they are responsible for Torah in the same way as their Jewish brothers, but because they have voluntarily taken on a relationship to Torah out of a love for the God and people of Israel. This commitment on behalf of God's work within Israel is an act of Messiah-like love that needs to be honored within the Messianic Jewish community.

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Comment by Avram

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick seem to imply that the Messianic Jewish Community keeps Torah. But

Boaz Michael in <http://www.ffoz.org/downloads/Ephraimite-encounter.pdf> relates how this isn't true. He wrote how pork chops were served and no Messianic Jewish leader said anything about it. Why not? Isn't pig eating sin according to Torah (Lev. 11:7; Dt. 14:8)?

As a second witness (Dt. 17:6; 19:5; Mt. 18:16), I have also seen at Union of Messianic Jewish Regional conferences over the years, that Torah is not kept. Pig was served in the dining room cafeteria because 'some people might want to eat it.' And this, at a UMJC conference in Glorietta, New Mexico.

Now, just coming from a New Testament point of view, where Paul says that if any meat offends a brother, he wouldn't eat it (Rom. 14:15, 21; 15:1). And please don't get caught up in the English translation of 14:14, concerning 'unclean'. It doesn't mean unclean in Greek, but common. There's a big difference between the two, theologically. Paul wasn't speaking of unclean meats, but meats that had been offered in sacrifice to a pagan god, which some of the people had thought would make it 'common' and not fit for consumption among Christians.

It seems that the folks that want to do their thing and eat pig, even amongst a group of believing Jews and Gentiles that found it abhorrent, didn't take those brothers and sisters into account. Even if it's not a sin to eat pork, which I don't believe for one minute, Paul tells us that if our eating meat offends a brother, he won't eat meat, out of love for that brother (see also 1st Cor. 8:13).

Also, at the beginning of the conference on Friday night, the Sabbath was desecrated by the lighting of the Sabbath lamps when it had been dark for awhile, meaning that the Sabbath had begun (Ex. 35:1-3). This is not keeping Torah the way Yeshua wants us to keep Torah.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick's group has the outer trappings of Torah but their hearts are far from it. And unfortunately, most Messianic Jews are in the same boat. What is seen in the UMJC's Camp, is also seen in the MJA's Camp, only much more so concerning Torah. Sabbath and Torah are treated 'lightly' in both Camps.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick's greatest arguments are from silence ('Why didn't Paul command the Gentiles to keep Torah?'), which I have shown is not the case, and from fear (Be careful! You might have Replacement Theology here!).

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick find themselves in a Catch 22 situation. They know the value of say, Passover, for moral and prophetic purposes, and so they present Passover ceremonies. But they can't stop some people from taking it to heart, and actually keeping the Commandment for it, as well as Sabbath and dietary laws, etc. For Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick, the so called 'ceremonial' are not necessary. They fail to see the divine reality inherent in the Commandment as God's will for us today. They 'do' the Passover, but fail to see it's holiness for their own lives. And this is very sad.

Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick tell us that they do walk in Torah but as we've seen, their hearts are far from it (as seen in their paper and at UMJC's conferences). They walk in a kind of 'universal humanism' in Jewish clothes. Morality, as they see it, is the only thing necessary. If one wants to do a Passover, they can, but they don't have to. This is the problem with Messianic Judaism and why I no longer associate myself with it.

It doesn't help the Jewish community that doesn't believe in Yeshua to see the people of the UMJC giving lip service to Torah. We need to walk whole-heartedly, empowered by the Holy Spirit, in the full counsel of God's Word. We must teach people the True Way. Yeshua gave us a great commission, to seek out all peoples, to reconcile them to the Father, and His Ways. Let's examine our hearts and our teachings in the Light of His Spirit and the richness of His Word. And let's pray for Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick, that their eyes would be open to walking in Torah, as Yeshua walked in it.

Avram Yehoshua
Ramat Gan
Israel
17 October 2005

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Daniel Juster and Russ Resnick

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January 28, 2005

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Yoder, John Howard: The Jewish Christian Schism Revisited: edited by Michael G. Cartwright and Peter Ochs: Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2003. This collection of essays by Yoder was edited with comment by Cartwright and Ochs. There is clarity on the allowance of distinction in Jewish life in the New Testament.

Notes:

[1] Tim Hegg, "It is often said: 'The Torah is only for Jews.'" Bikurei Tziyon Issue 77, Vayikra/Leviticus, 2003, p. 15.

[2] Messiah Magazine p. 28, Shemot, 2004.

[3] Bikurei Tziyon issue 77, Vayikra 2003.

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The following are a series of emails between Daniel Juster, Russ Resnik and Avram Yehoshua about Avram's comments to their article, One Law Movements. First Dan Juster to Avram:

Nov. 1st, 2005

Dear Brother,

Well, you have really tried to be fair in your criticism of our position. You have been very detailed and have sometimes been persuasive. However, the main issue is that the Torah itself commands circumcision. This is so foundational. When the N. T. removes this as a requirement, it shows that the Gentile's relationship to the Torah is different. Circumcision and non-circumcision implies much more. I think that one can make much more of the N. T. from understanding the distinction of universal parts of Torah for Gentiles and those parts of the Torah that are for Jews and Bachmuel is very good on this.

You are correct in that we speak of the Chanukah Menorah as not Biblical but a Jewish tradition.

There is nothing that says that Gentiles are not to keep Torah as a whole or that it would not be enriching. We are only arguing that it is not a covenant responsibility. Also I think that the practices of the Church are much less pagan than you think.

Daniel J.

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4 Nov. 2005

Shabbat Shalom Daniel,

May the Peace of Messiah Yeshua surround you and strengthen you for the chores of the day.

Thank you for your kind and gracious comments about my writing ability, Daniel.

I think I understand your position concerning the Gentiles not being required to be physically circumcised, and therefore, Torah shouldn't be mandatory for them. It's a powerful New Testament reality that Gentile circumcision was forbidden. But properly interpreting this reality concerning Torah, is the basis of our disagreement.

We're actually dealing with two issues here, Daniel: the Union's stance on Torah for believing Jews; and believing Gentiles. How can the Union justify the breaking of the dietary laws for the Jew? How can it be that Christmas, Easter and Sunday, which have absolutely no biblical New Testament authority (especially to override God's holy days and times), as well as the eating of pig and shrimp, etc., are flaunted within Messianic Judaism, by many of its leaders? If the Jew is still to walk in Torah, at the very least, to be a witness to the unbelieving Jewish community, how can this be? What lifestyle is the Union espousing for the Jew who has been called to walk in Torah forever (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezk. 36:24-27; Mt. 5:17-19)? This reveals the cavalier way in which Torah is 'put into practice', in the Messianic Community. What is going on here, Daniel? If Torah is supposed to be for the Jew, why isn't it upheld?

As for the Gentile, physical circumcision won't bring them into Covenant with God. Circumcision is the sign of Abraham's covenant. Only spiritual circumcision can bring the Gentile into the New Covenant. Essentially, there is only one Covenant being 'unfolded' before us; Abraham's is the seed; Moses' is the stem, and Messiah is the Rose on the stem.

Spiritual circumcision makes the Gentile one with Israel. Therefore, they, like us, must keep all the Torah that applies to them. So why not have them physically circumcised after they enter the Kingdom? More on that in a moment.

The Gentile not being circumcised shows that the entry requirement has changed. That's all. Every covenant has its own sign. And now, both Gentile AND Jew need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to enter His Kingdom. This is the sign of the New Covenant. That's why circumcision 'avails nothing' but ONLY, the keeping of the Commandments of God:

' Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the congregations. Was any man called already circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the Commandments of God' (1st Cor. 7:17-19).

Can anyone intelligently argue that 'the Commandments of God' are anything less than Torah? I don't think so. If Paul would have said, 'the Commandments of Yeshua', it would have been different as then, the Two Commandments of love could be invoked. But this is the Commandments of God and as such, leaves little room for anything but Torah.

As for Torah not being mandatory for the believing Gentile, because they don't have to be circumcised, don't you find it a little strange that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, the sign of the New Covenant, is called the circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11; see also Phil. 3:3)? What could possibly be the connection between the two? The Baptism seems to not only parallel physical circumcision, but to compliment and 'fulfill' it. For it's not just the Gentile that needs the Baptism, but the Jew also. In this the Torah's requirement of circumcision is fulfilled for the Gentile, even though he is not physically circumcised. For circumcision has always been a symbol that the heart was entirely given over to the Lord (Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4, etc.).

Also, within ancient Israel at any one time, half of Israel was not circumcised. That's right. The women weren't required to be circumcised yet they were fully 'Israel'. And it seems that the Gentile, at least in relation to his new Family, is to have symbolically taken the place of the believing Jewish wife with her unbelieving Jewish husband (Rom. 11:13-14; Eph. 5:32; 1st Pet. 3:1-2ff). As the believing Jewish wife was to win her Jewish husband by her conduct and modesty, so too the believing Gentile was to win the unbelieving Jewish person. But how can this be since the Gentile believer, set free from the Law, not by the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Is. 49:6; Jn. 10:16, etc.), but by the Roman Catholic Church about 100

AD, looks more pagan than he ever did (Sunday, Easter, Christmas, pig, three gods, etc.).

This may not exhaust God's reasons for the Gentile remaining uncircumcised. He also may have wanted the physical Seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to remain as racially pure as it could, so He could deal with them as He is doing now, etc. But hopefully, as you may see, Torah for the Gentile, conceptually, would apply to him as much as for the Jew.

Daniel, you may be overly emphasizing the fact that the Gentile is not to be circumcised, and not placing enough value upon the words of our Master when He said that whomever breaks the least of Torah's Commandments, will be called least in HIS Kingdom (Mt. 5:19; see also Mt. 22:40). For Him to speak like this, of His Kingdom, means that He was looking past His death and resurrection, which would obviously include the Gentiles. Aside from the practical aspects of the Jew keeping Torah and the Gentile not, your position creates two totally different theologies and lifestyles for the Jew and the Gentile. Do you really think this should be in the 'one' Flock of the Shepherd (Jn. 10:16).

As for 'the practices of the Church being much less pagan than,' have you ever read Alexander Hislop's classic, 'The Two Babylons'? It is a 'must' read for anyone wanting to know where many 'Christian' things (e.g. Sunday, Easter and Christmas), came from, as well as baptismal regeneration, etc. If you like, you can read the book and/or download it at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Two-Babylons.pdf>.

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to reply to my article. I appreciate that, Daniel. And I believe our Messiah does too,

Avram

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The following day, Nov. 5th, 2005, Avram received this back from Daniel Juster:

Dear Brother,

Well, you have really tried to be fair in your criticism of our position. You have been very detailed and have sometimes been persuasive. However, the main issue is that the Torah itself commands circumcision. This is so foundational. When the N. T. removes this as a requirement, it shows that the Gentile's relationship to the Torah is different. Circumcision and non-circumcision implies much more. I think that one can make much more of the N. T. from understanding the distinction of universal parts of Torah for Gentiles and those parts of the Torah that are for Jews and Bachmuel is very good on this.

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Daniel J.

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Yes, it was the exact same email that he sent me (Avram), before. He re-pasted it into his email and sent it to me again. At first, I was stunned that he'd do something like that. Then I thought, 'Well, maybe he sent it by mistake', so I resent it back to him asking, 'Is this your reply or was it sent to me in error?' I never received an answer to my question, so it seems that he did mean to send the re-pasted email.

I have forgiven him for the offense and I have prayed for Daniel Juster, that Yeshua would open his eyes to both the seriousness of Torah for both the Jewish and Gentile believer, and also, to the pagan traditions of the Church that he feels aren't that bad.

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On Nov 8, 2005, Russ Resnik wrote:

Shalom Avram,

Thanks for letting us know about this. May the Lord give us all wisdom in this difficult issue.

RR

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On Nov. 9th, 2005, I wrote back to Russ:

That's very sweet of you to write that, Russ.

May His Hand continually guide you,

Avram¹

¹ Revised on 2 April 2016.