

# Returning To *His* Ways

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*Shalom!*

**May the Peace of Papa God be with you today!**

My friend, please read this article prayerfully. If you've not come across this perspective before, ask the Spirit of the Holy One to reveal to you if this is God's Truth or not.

I've come to see that some of what we have been led to believe about Jesus (the English Name for Yeshua) is not His Truth. It's anti-God and very deceptive. I've not always thought this way. In 1983 the Lord Yeshua began to open my eyes to His Truth that has been buried for 1900 years. May you also find this treasure.

When I gave my life to Jesus in October 1975, I was led to assemble on Sunday, Easter and Christmas and eat ham. These were the holy days and holy ways for Christians and I received them without reservation, 'For Christ is the end of the Law.'

In October 1983, the Holy Spirit began to lead me to reconsider these times and celebrations that I had come to consider as holy, thinking they were authorized by God's Word. I saw that Sunday, Easter and Christmas were given to Christians, *but not by God*. They were traditions that men took from pagans that actually went against what the Lord wanted us to walk in.

I also saw there were celebrations Yeshua wanted all His followers to walk in, both Jew and Gentile. The Church had thrown them out. I was shocked. I had been lied to and deceived by the Church.

## ***HELLENISM***

I came to realize that Christianity, as it has been practiced for the last 1900 years, rested on a hellenized perception of God's Word. Hellenism is the culture and thought pattern of ancient Greece. The definition of Hellenism is:

'Grecism', 'devotion to or imitation of ancient Greek thought, custom or styles.'<sup>1</sup>

Alexander the Great, in his conquest of the world 300 years before Yeshua, established this way of perception in all the countries that he conquered. It was only in the tiny country of Judah that Hellenism would be fought.

Hellenism effects Christianity in its perception of the Bible. But before it could effect it, Hellenism had to be brought into the Church. You see, Christianity from the outset, was a Jewish religion. It was Hebraic in nature and thought, not Greek. And there is a world of difference between the two...like night and day.

The reason that Hellenism had a chance to distort Christianity was because of anti-semitism in the Gentile

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Bosley Woolf, Editor in Chief, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1980), p. 527.

followers of Jesus in Rome. The Roman Empire was vast and its control of nations was great. Only little Judah would not capitulate to their demands to worship Caesar as God. There was no love lost between them.

As rebellion broke out in Jerusalem in 68 A.D., the Romans sent legions to squelch it. Two years later, 600,000 Jews had been murdered, and the Temple in Jerusalem, the heart of every Jew, was destroyed.

The effect this had upon Jews throughout the Roman Empire was to hate the Romans even more. In most major cities of the Roman Empire, riots would spring up by the Jews in protest against the destruction of the Temple. The ensuing repressive measures against the Jewish people are well documented.<sup>2</sup>

Around 100 A.D., in the city of Rome, the Gentile believers, for fear of being considered part of the Jewish people by the Roman Empire, distanced themselves from 'Jewish practices.' Till that time, *both Jew and Gentile in Jesus assembled on the Sabbath.*<sup>3</sup> *They both kept Passover.*<sup>4</sup> To the Roman Empire, the Gentiles in Jesus, were part of a Jewish sect. It was out of fear of persecution that these Gentiles in Rome began to change the holy days of the Lord,<sup>5</sup> His Law,<sup>6</sup> and the way the New Covenant would be perceived.<sup>7</sup>

This could have remained an isolated phenomenon except that the Christians in Rome would grow into the Roman Catholic Church. They would wield incredible power and influence over all the other Gentile churches in Greece, Asia Minor and Europe for the next 1600 years. With their throwing out of 'Jewish practices' (so they wouldn't be seen as 'Jewish'), they replaced them with something else. Enter hellenization, a philosophical way of perceiving Scripture and therefore Reality. This would allow Sunday, Easter and Christmas to become 'Christian.' But for 1500 years before Jesus, they were pagan holy days.

## *The Two Cars*

The difference between the Hebraic approach to the Word of God and the hellenized one, is seen if we take two Bibles that are exactly the same in every way and change them into two identical Mercedes Benz.

We give one key to Nikos the Greek and the other to Yakov the Jew. Nikos immediately raises the hood and begins to take the spark plugs out. He pulls the wheels from the car. He takes the upholstery out. In the end, Nikos will be able to tell us how much each spark plug weighs, and how much tensile strength there is in each of the springs or coils of the upholstery. He'll be able to tell us the amount of paint on each spark plug, where it came from and what year it was made in. This is what systematic theology is about. It dissects the Bible and compartmentalizes everything in it. It's great, if you like your car in parts.

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath To Sunday* (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), pp. 169-176.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 142-151. Note also Acts 15:21.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 162, 198ff. See also 1st Cor. 5:6-8.

<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 23:1-44.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel 7:25: 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in Law. And they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.' This speaks of Satan doing away with the Law (Passover, etc.), and believers being given into his hand for a season.

<sup>7</sup> Dr. David Stern, *Messianic Jewish Manifesto*, 2nd edition. (Clarksville, Maryland 21029: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1991), pp. 125-157.

Yakov the Jew, on the other hand, takes the key, puts it into the ignition and drives off. Same cars but *two totally different approaches*. It's the same Bible but one approach is Hebraic while the other is Greek. How we come to the New Covenant, what filters we see it through, determine how we think God wants us to walk out our Faith.

Why would one want to try and filter a Hebraic book, the Bible (Genesis through Revelation), through the thought patterns of the Greeks? It would be like trying to learn about the Apache Indians from an Englishman. I'd rather learn from the Apache Indian chief who lives it.

Hebraic perception of reality is totally different from Hellenistic. The Hebrews walked with the One True God for 2,000 years, before Jesus. More importantly, the Lord walked with them. God was the influence of the Hebraic perception of reality. It was His Reality. No other nation knew God as Israel did. God choose Israel, not Greece, to reveal Himself to. Hellenism is the thought pattern for Western civilization, but not God's thought pattern.

## *God's Holy Ways*

In order to do away with the 7th Day Sabbath of the Lord<sup>8</sup> and Passover<sup>9</sup> and other holy days of God, the early Roman Church replaced<sup>10</sup> them with the idolatrous 'holy' days of the pagans. Sunday, Easter and Christmas were celebrated 1500 years before Jesus. The Church would have to philosophically bar the way for anyone to return to God's holy Ways.

Enter Hellenistic thought. It has robbed every Gentile believer of their Hebraic heritage in the Lord for the past 1900 years. Have you ever wondered why you didn't assemble on the Sabbath of Scripture?<sup>11</sup> Why Sunday has 'replaced it?' The foundation rests on the assumption that the Law (of Moses) has been done away with because the New Testament is a totally different religion than the Old.

Hellenization cut the petals of the flower from the stem and the soil which nurtured it. Hellenization says that the Old and New Covenants of Moses and Jesus are two totally different realities. But in Truth, God used Abram as the Seed He planted, Moses and Israel as the Stem, and Yeshua as the Petals of the Rose. A Living Plant.

The New Covenant is the flowering of the Rose petals upon the stem and soil of the Old.<sup>12</sup> Many think that the New Covenant replaces the Old.<sup>13</sup> But this is not the correct interpretation or biblical understanding. The word new in Hebrew is 'hah-dash' which means 'to make new, to renew, restore.'<sup>14</sup> It's also used for the new moon or the new month in the Bible.<sup>15</sup> The word does not necessarily mean something that has never been. The picture given is of a dull sword being resharpened. The New Covenant actually renews or resharpenes the Mosaic. It doesn't throw it out.

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<sup>8</sup> Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Mk. 2:27-28; Acts 17:2; 18:4.

<sup>9</sup> Leviticus 23:4-11; 1st Corinthians 5:6-8.

<sup>10</sup> Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 165-270.

<sup>11</sup> Ex. 16:4-5, 22-30; Dt. 5:12-15; Isaiah 66:22-23; Luke 4:16; Acts 15:21.

<sup>12</sup> Romans 11:11-29.

<sup>13</sup> Hebrews 8:8:13 quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Davidson, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 249.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Is not this what Yeshua does in His teaching on the Mountain? He stated that if one has hate in his heart for his brother, he has already murdered him and broken the Commandment of Moses (to not murder)?<sup>16</sup> Yeshua revealed the *essence* of the Commandment not to murder. The essence of the Commandment not to murder was also intertwined with the two great Commandments to love God and man.<sup>17</sup> Yeshua was resharpening the Mosaic, showing us what was there all the time.

This is a different concept of what many believe how the word *new* is to be understood. Hebrews 8:8 (and 13), in quoting Jer. 31:31-34 uses the Greek word for new that corresponds with the meaning of the Hebrew word. The Greek word is καινην (kai-nain). Kai-nain has several meanings, one of which is ‘in contrast to something old, *with no criticism of the old implied.*’<sup>18</sup> It also carries the meaning of being ‘renovated.’<sup>19</sup> It can also mean something that never was.

The separation of the Mosaic and New Covenants, as practiced in the Church, rests on the assumption that new has to mean something completely different. There seems to be Scripture to support it, but please realize that when we have a preconceived notion of how things should be (the Mercedes Benz), we will get out of the Word of God what we are projecting into it. Rom. 10:4 is one of many great examples of this. Here are two common English translations:

‘For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.’  
(KJV, the ‘unofficial-offical’ Protestant Bible)

‘The Law has come to an end with Christ, and everyone who has faith may be justified.’ (The Jerusalem Bible, an official Catholic Bible)

As you can see from the bold, italicized words, it seems that the Law has been discarded. But if that is what the Word of God is saying, then can Christians murder, steal and be adulterous? The Apostle Paul, in this same letter states that ‘The Law is holy’ and ‘spiritual.’<sup>20</sup>

Many will say that murder, stealing, etc. are all sin and wrong for Christians to do. I agree. But they are found in the Law. If it was done away with, then we have a problem here. Many will ‘get around this’ saying that what was really done away with were the ceremonial laws. These laws regulated the Temple and sacrificial system. Notice though that it doesn’t say that in Rom. 10:4. It says ‘the Law’ not ‘some laws’ or ‘ceremonial laws.’ You might ask, ‘If the Law was done away with, then shouldn’t it mean all the Law?’

Some people will go on to explain that it is only certain laws that are done away with. The ones not found in the New Covenant. The dietary laws<sup>21</sup> and all the holy days of the Lord God of Israel, etc.<sup>22</sup> Yet can the dietary laws and the Sabbaths of the Lord be classified as ceremonial, only belonging to the Temple? Also, where does it say in the New Covenant that Temple sacrifices are not for Jewish believers? The Apostles assembling at the Temple every day.<sup>23</sup> And Paul was about to sacrifice animals for himself, and

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 5:21-22.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 22:40.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Bauer, William Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 394.

<sup>19</sup> Wesley J. Perschbacher, editor, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1990), p. 215.

<sup>20</sup> Romans 7:12, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Lev. 11; Dt. 14; Acts 10 (does Peter eat ham?).

<sup>22</sup> Lev. 23:1-44. Yet the Apostle Paul commands the Corinthians to celebrate the Passover in 1st Cor. 5:6-8! So why doesn’t the Church do it today?

pay for the expense of many sacrifices for other Jewish believers in Yeshua too.<sup>24</sup>

Returning to the Greek New Covenant text of Romans 10:4, the Greek word for end (as in ‘end of the Law’) is *τελος* (teal-los). It can mean ‘end, in the sense of termination, cessation’<sup>25</sup> as well as ‘the last part, the close, the conclusion’<sup>26</sup> which reminds me of a four act play. The fourth act is the last to come, but if you only see the fourth act, you’ve missed 75% of the play. How can you understand the fourth act without being there to see the first three? And how can one understand the New Covenant without Hebraically understanding it and all that preceded it?

Another meaning of teal-los is the ‘end or goal toward a movement which is being directed, the outcome.’<sup>27</sup> It’s like putting a cake in the oven and taking it out only when it is finished or *fulfilled* or its time has come or ended. *It doesn’t mean that the cake is no more.* Christ came to fulfill the Law, to flush out its true and deeper meaning. By revealing that the essence of the Law was not to hate, and if one did, they had already broke the Commandment to murder, Yeshua expanded the meaning of His time to show that Man’s heart was in need of a new heart. No one can stand ‘behind’ the Law and think that they have ‘kept it.’ For God wants us to realize that no one can come before Him who is holy, without Him giving us that new heart that He speaks of in Ezekiel 36:22f. Yeshua revealing the essence of the Law does not do away with the Law. It is these last two meanings of teal-los that are crucial to understanding God and His Word. (And actually, meanings two and three dove tail; conclusion and goal.)

When we try and perceive what the Lord is speaking to us in His Word, we need to realize that Scripture must be compared to other Scripture. For us to come to an understanding that is compatible with what God means, we must accurately interpret His Word, for what we come to believe, we will practice. If the 7th Day Sabbath of the Lord is still in effect then we must walk in it, in obedience to Yeshua.

The Lexicon, in relation to teal-los meaning ‘end or goal,’ says that,

‘this is the place for Romans 10:4, in the sense that Christ is the goal and the termination of the law at the same time.’<sup>28</sup>

It’s here that philosophy dramatically comes into play (the two Mercedes Benz). The Lexicon gives the word both sets of meanings. Obviously they have ‘ended’ the Law with ‘termination.’ But what if the Spirit of the Holy One means only ‘goal or aim’ and not ‘termination’?

The Messiah, by taking upon Himself our sins, our punishment, has set us free from the *condemnation* of the Law.<sup>29</sup> This doesn’t mean that the Law ends. Every time I sin, the Law condemns me. But in Messiah, I am no longer under the condemnation of the Law. The Law shows me when I am not in line with God’s Ways and that I am sinning against Him. We must look to God’s Law as our guide for not only what He sees as right and wrong, but what is pleasing to Him also. Here we have the major theological difference between the Church’s understanding of the place of the Law...and God’s. The Law has a place in God’s scheme of Salvation.

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<sup>23</sup> Acts 3:1f., 5:12, 42.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 21:24.

<sup>25</sup> Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* p. 811.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Rom 8:1-2: ‘Therefore there is now *no condemnation* for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.’

## *Man's Way*

Hellenism seeks to put everything into a compartment. 'These laws you do, but those laws you don't.' This is the tradition of Man that teaches that the Law of God can be divided up into ceremonial and moral laws, something the Bible does not do.

Christians see themselves bound to the moral laws (no stealing, etc.), but the ceremonial are ended. Included in the ceremonial are the Temple rituals, the Sabbaths, Passover, the dietary laws, etc. The problem with this is that there is no biblical platform from which to separate one from the other. In God's eyes both Sabbath and stealing revolve around moral and spiritual issues. Which is more spiritual? God declares the breaking of His Sabbath Day punishable by death.<sup>30</sup> No where in the Bible is stealing given this kind of value.<sup>31</sup> To know why, you must realize Who the Sabbath pictures: Yeshua, in all His many facets as Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier and Messiah. The Sabbath is God's repository for these foundational concepts. This is just some of the understanding that we know. The Lord calls us to honor Him, by observing His Commandments, even if we don't understand them all though.

David Stern translates the passage,

'For the goal at which the Torah (Law) aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts.'<sup>32</sup>

We see here that he translates teal-los in a way that is totally different from the Catholic and Protestant interpretations. Who is right? Stern goes on to say that, 'the goal at which the Torah (Law) aims is acknowledging and trusting the Messiah'.<sup>33</sup> He also shares this:

'An error made by all major English versions and by most commentators—and one with profound anti-semitic implications even when none are intended—is the rendering here of the Greek word 'teal-los' as 'end,' in the sense of 'termination.'

'The Messiah has not brought the Law to an end, nor is He the termination of the Law as a way of righteousness. The Law continues. It is eternal. God's Law, properly understood as the very teaching which Yeshua upholds<sup>34</sup> remains the one and only way to righteousness—although it is Yeshua the Messiah through whom the Torah's righteousness comes.'

'This truth is not peripheral but central to the Gospel, and it cannot be compromised, even if the whole of Christian theology were to oppose it!'

'Then why is 'teal-los' regularly regarded as meaning 'termination' here? Because theology gets in the way of exegesis, wrong theology that falsely understands the Mosaic Law as not offering God's righteousness through trust, wrong theology that denigrates God's Torah and thereby both the God who gave it and the Jewish people to whom He gave it.'<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Exodus 31:12-17; Numbers 15:32-36.

<sup>31</sup> Leviticus 6:1-7.

<sup>32</sup> David Stern, *Jewish New Testament* (Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1991), p. 211.

<sup>33</sup> David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, Maryland: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), p. 395f.

<sup>34</sup> Stern, *JNT & JNTC*, 1st Cor. 9:21 & notes, Gal. 6:2 & notes.

<sup>35</sup> Stern, *JNTC*, p. 395f.

Stern states that ‘teal-los’ is used 42 times in the New Covenant and only four or five times does it mean termination or cessation. Now we have two totally different understandings of the same passage. The Greek and the Hebrew; Man’s way and God’s Way.

## ***Understanding Yeshua in His Hebraic Context***

Most people interpret the words of Yeshua in the context of Paul, or what they think Paul is saying. When we go back to Yeshua Himself and let His Words speak to us, we find Scripture ‘at odds’ with the traditional Church interpretation of Paul at Rom. 10:4 and their current practice of Easter, etc. Yeshua, in beginning His teaching on the Mountain proclaims:

‘Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them.’

‘I tell you solemnly, till Heaven and Earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved.’

‘Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these Commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the Kingdom of Heaven.’<sup>36</sup>

How could one ever think that the Lord had any intention of ‘doing away with the Law’ after reading this? He emphatically declares, ‘*I have not come to abolish the Law*’. He says it will be here as long as the Heavens and the Earth are. He declares the one who keeps the least of the Commandments of God ***will be called great in His Kingdom***. What is He talking about?!

Stern says that grave damage has been done to Jews and Christians because of anti-semitic theology:

‘The Greek word for ‘to complete’ is ‘plerosai,’ literally ‘to fill;’ the usual rendering here however, is ‘to fulfill.’ Replacement Theology, which wrongly teaches that the Church has replaced the Jews as God’s people, understands this verse wrongly in two ways.’

‘First, Yeshua’s ‘fulfilling’ the Torah is thought to mean that it is unnecessary for people to fulfill it now. But there is no logic to the proposition that Yeshua’s obeying the Torah does away with our need to obey it.’<sup>37</sup>

If that were true, there would be no need for me to love God or anyone else. Has not Jesus already ‘fulfilled’ those two great Commandments? If fulfilling means ‘doing away with,’ then am I not released from having to love as Yeshua commands? How foolish is that? Stern goes on:

‘In fact Sha’ul (Paul), whose object in his letter to the Romans is to foster ‘the obedience that comes from trusting’ in Yeshua, teaches that such trusting does not abolish Torah but confirms it (Rom. 1:5; 3:31).’

‘Second, with identical lack of logic, Yeshua’s ‘fulfilling’ the Prophets is thought to imply that no prophecies from the Tanakh (the Old Testament), remain for the

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<sup>36</sup> Mt 5:17-19 is probably the most important text in which to understand Yeshua and the rest of the New Covenant from the perspective of the Torah’s place for believers today.

<sup>37</sup> Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, p. 25.

Jews. But the Hebrew Bible's promises to the Jewish People are not abolished in the name of being 'fulfilled in Yeshua.' 'It is true that Yeshua kept the Torah perfectly and fulfilled predictions of the Prophets but that is not the point here. Yeshua did not come to abolish but 'to make full' (plerosai) the meaning of what the Torah and the ethical demands of the Prophets require. Thus He came to complete our understanding of the Torah and the Prophets, of what God requires of us through them.'<sup>38</sup>

In Matthew 5-7, Yeshua explains the fuller spiritual meaning of the Mosaic Law. We come to a crossroads. What does this mean to you and me? Does God really want me to obey Him when He speaks of assembling on His Sabbath<sup>39</sup> and keeping it holy? Must I abstain from work and secular things and consecrate the 7th Day to be spent with Him and His people, and doing ministry? Or can I do anything I want? Isn't the Sabbath day done away with by Jesus? Hasn't He freed us from God's Law?

## *The Horse & the Cart*

Please do not allow the terms Law (Torah) and legalism to mean the same thing to you. If you change the word Torah or Law to its correct meaning, you have 'the *Teaching or Instruction* of God'. This Teaching is affirmed by the Apostle Paul when he states:

'All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. This is how the man who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.'<sup>40</sup>

Paul's Bible was the Tanach (Hebrew Bible or Old Testament). The New Testament was not canonized or collected together in a body as we know it until after 200 A.D. If a congregation in Paul's day had one or two of Paul's letters, that would have been a lot. And that doesn't speak to us of the congregations that Paul didn't start, that were already in existence before he became a believer, like Antioch and Rome. They all relied on the Tanach as the Word of God for how to live.

By saying that 'no one can keep the Law,' if you substitute, 'Teaching of God' for 'Law,' you have the saying, 'No one can keep the Teaching of God.' Is that what we want to tell new believers who give their life to Jesus? When they ask us if God wants us to love one another as Jesus did, we say,

'Yes, but don't worry about it, no one can keep that. Jesus already fulfilled that for us.'

A new believer comes to you and asks about loving our enemies. Must we forgive them? You reply,

'Yes, but don't worry about it. No one can keep this law. Jesus kept it for us. Besides, it's really only what's in our heart that counts, isn't it?'

The Apostle Paul though, speaks of the place of God's Law in the life of every believer:

'Do we nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.'<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Lev. 23:3: 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a Sabbath of complete rest, a holy assembly. You must not do any work; it is a Sabbath to Yahveh in all your dwellings.'

<sup>40</sup> 2nd Timothy 3:16-17.

Paul is saying that the Torah is the cart, and Yeshua is the Horse. Let's not throw out the cart. The cart has its place. It reveals our sin nature, the Holy God who is making us like His Son, and *how* He desires we live this life.

The Apostle John has a very strong understanding of the Torah. It was to show us our sin. If we don't know the Law, we sin against the Holy One, in ignorance. Yeshua came to deliver us from the bondage to the Law of God, which is condemnation, not the Law of God itself. John writes:

'Surely everyone who entertains this hope (of being like Yeshua), must purify himself, must try to be as pure as Messiah. Anyone who sins at all breaks the Law, because to sin is to break the Law.'<sup>42</sup>

We need the Torah as a guide in this life as to what is pleasing to the Lord and what is not. Can you keep Yeshua's Word? Someone who hates has already murdered. To not only abstain from adultery, but to not look with lust upon a woman (or a man as the case may be)? Of course not. The purpose of the Law is to reveal our hearts. The Law of God points to our carnal nature which is hostile to the Word of God.

'Because the carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed can be.'<sup>43</sup>

But it doesn't mean we don't strive to keep Yeshua's word. Believe me, it's much easier to abstain from pork than to love my neighbor or my enemy. But by His Blood and Spirit we can do all three.

Legalism is the perversion of the Law of God. Legalism is 'strict, literal or excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code.'<sup>44</sup> Please don't confuse God's holy Law<sup>45</sup> with legalism. Yeshua kept all of God's Law that pertained to Him, and was never legalistic about it. Because Yeshua kept the Law, does that mean that we can do whatever we want? In Him we have an example of how to live our lives by His Spirit, with His Blood cleansing us. Yeshua kept every Sabbath and Passover holy and never ate ham. He always did what pleased His Father.<sup>46</sup>

If you don't agree with me, it may be that I am wrong and you are right. When the Spirit of the Holy One began to deal with me on this issue, of how the Torah of Moses effects all followers of the Jewish Messiah, I didn't agree with the Holy Spirit either. I said, 'The Law was done away with.' The Spirit showed me some of these very things though, and one day, I looked up and said, 'You know Lord, You have a point there.' From that day on I was open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and began to see that there was another way of perceiving the Bible. It was very strange. I thought I had understood the Word of God but realized that I was conceptually wrong about the Law.

If what I am telling you is the Truth, and what you believe in this matter is not, then you are going to be in for quite a struggle. It's not easy to look at teaching that you have come to view as Scripture, as anything else. What I have come to see though, is that the Church has filled the void left by the rejection of the Word of God (the Law), with Babylonian celebrations and thought: Sunday, Christmas, Easter and

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<sup>41</sup> Romans 3:31.

<sup>42</sup> 1st John 3:4, and see also Rom. 7:7.

<sup>43</sup> Romans 8:7.

<sup>44</sup> *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, p. 650.

<sup>45</sup> Rom. 7:12-14: 'So then, *the Law is holy*, and the Commandment is holy and righteous and good. Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was *sin*, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death *through that which is good*, so that through the Commandment sin would become utterly sinful. For we know that *the Law is spiritual*, but I am of flesh, sold into slavery to sin.'

<sup>46</sup> Jn. 8:29: 'And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.'

ham, etc.

If you are really intent on finding the Truth, you will know it.<sup>47</sup> If the Sabbath was God's Day in Creation, and all mankind will come to worship Him on it in the future<sup>48</sup> then isn't it peculiar, to say the least, that the Church observes Sunday? Hellenistic understanding of the Hebrew Bible (both Mosaic and Yeshuic Covenants), reigns in the Church today. But God is changing this!

## *Salvation & the Law*

Part of the ignorance in the Church stems from an inability to disconnect Salvation from biblical lifestyle and its inherent meanings. For instance, there is no 'law' we keep in order to receive Eternal Life. God has done this in the same way for believers as He did for our Fathers in Egypt, by the Blood of the Lamb. This is the model or pattern for salvation in both the Mosaic and Yeshuic Covenants. First the death of the Lamb and the freeing of the slaves, and then the walk with God.

In the days of Peter, James and Paul, the Law had come to be the vehicle by which we Jews thought that if we kept it, we would enter Eternal Life, Heaven, or salvation. But this is nowhere found in the Law of Moses. It's a perversion. This is works righteousness. Earning salvation by keeping the Law is a perversion of God's Word. God saved us out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb.<sup>49</sup> Then He brought us to Mt. Sinai to learn His Ways, His Rules, His Law, His Torah, His Teaching. But we were already saved (from Egypt).

God does the same with those who believe in Yeshua. We are promised salvation from eternal damnation on Judgment Day because of the Blood of the Lamb. Then we are introduced to His Ways; love your enemies, pray for those who spitefully use you, etc. These are not suggestions and they don't nullify His previous Commandments given to Moses.

Let's not throw out His Sabbath because it is 'Jewish.' The only reason it is seen as 'Jewish' is because God gave His holy Sabbath day to the Hebrew nation, and the Jews obeyed Him. When a Gentile comes to the Jewish Messiah, he is grafted into Israel.<sup>50</sup> The Law of God is for our blessing and gives us God's wisdom and perspective. We know this with things like lying, stealing, adultery, loving your enemy, but when we come to the Sabbath and Holy Days, many don't realize that these celebrations were given by God to honor Him and His Son.

Many say, 'No one can keep the Law.' This implies that you should not even try. It's one thing to strive to keep the Law of God and fall short. It's quite another to say it doesn't exist or that God doesn't want us to keep it; Hebraic verses Greek thought.

I may never walk in the Sabbath day the way Yeshua did. But every week I have another opportunity to ask the Spirit of God to lead me into the Joy of His Rest.<sup>51</sup> It's quite another to say that the Sabbath has

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<sup>47</sup> Jn. 8:31-32: 'So Yeshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly students of Mine and you will know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free.''

<sup>48</sup> Is. 66:22-23: 'For just as the new Heavens and the new Earth which I make will endure before Me,' declares Yahveh, 'So your offspring and your name will endure. And it shall be from new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, *all mankind* will come to bow down before Me,' says Yahveh.'

<sup>49</sup> Exodus 12:1-51.

<sup>50</sup> Romans 11:16-29; Ephesians 2:11-22.

<sup>51</sup> Ex. 33:14; Mt. 11:28-30. The 'rest' that Yeshua is speaking of in Mt. 11:28 is displayed in the Sabbath. The Sabbath is a picture of Yeshua. When we enter into the Sabbath, we enter into Him. Heb. 4:9 reads, 'Then a *Sabbath*

been done away with and I don't have to be bothered or concerned about it. Both views cannot be from the Living God. It's very important for us to accurately understand the Scriptures in this area, for what we believe, we strive in Him to walk out.

Imagine if we applied that same thought pattern of denial of God's Law, to love and tithing and telling our brother to go in peace without feeding him, when we know he is hungry. That's what the Church does with the Sabbath, Passover and the dietary laws, etc. We don't have to keep them because no one can keep it? The Messiah died so we don't have to tithe or love one another? He kept them so therefore we don't have to? Isn't the Church then making up its own laws in opposition to God's laws?

Have you ever read in Scripture what God says about His Commandments? It's beautiful:

'Keep them, observe them, and they will demonstrate to the peoples your wisdom and understanding. When they come to know of all these laws they will exclaim, "No other people is as wise and prudent as this great nation."'

'And indeed, what great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to Him? And what great nation is there that has such righteous judgments to match this whole Torah that I put before you today?'<sup>52</sup>

'See, today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. If you obey the Commandments of the Lord your God that I enjoin on you today, if you love the Lord your God and follow His Ways, if you keep His Commandments, His Laws, His Customs, you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the Land which you are entering to make your own.'<sup>53</sup>

'I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you today: I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, that both you and your seed may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying His Voice, clinging to Him. For He is your life and the length of your days in the Land which God swore to your Fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them.'<sup>54</sup>

You might say from the Greek perspective: 'That was for the Jews!' And I would say from the Hebrew: 'The Gentile is grafted into and part of the House of Israel.' And this is Yahveh's Way for both Jew and Gentile to walk in.

The Torah applies to us. Granted, the Temple is not here and there is no Ark of the Covenant or practicing Aaronic Priesthood. But I share with you about the Way that Yeshua led His Life. Is He not our example? Of how to live while here on Earth? Did not He shed His Blood that we might be like Him? To live like He did. To keep the Torah from the inside out?

'He who says he abides in Him, ought himself also *to walk just as He walked*.'<sup>55</sup>

Yeshua always kept the Sabbath Day holy. And so did all the Jewish Apostles after the resurrection of Yeshua. But the Church, not Jesus or the Apostles or the New Testament, threw it out.

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*rest'* (literally: Sabbatismos; a technical Greek word for Sabbath observance), 'is left behind for the People of God.' It's not a *Sunday* rest. See *From Sabbath To Sunday*, pp. 63-73.

<sup>52</sup> Deuteronomy 4:6-8.

<sup>53</sup> Deuteronomy 30:15-16.

<sup>54</sup> Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

<sup>55</sup> 1st John 2:6.

Please understand that Gentiles were not permitted to sacrifice at the Temple in Jerusalem, even if they wanted to. But Paul took the Nazarite vow.<sup>56</sup> This would have entailed that Paul sacrifice three animals<sup>57</sup> and he was ready to pay for the sacrifice of animals for four other Jewish men who believed in Yeshua, who were also under the Nazarite Vow. How is it then that the Church says that no one could or should keep the Law, or that sacrifice was done away with at the Death of Jesus?

Salvation by faith doesn't negate our duty or response in love, to obey God's Commandments. If it did, then we would have anarchy; anti-nomianism—no law (or against law), which is pretty much the way it is in many churches today, even though love is espoused. People doing their own thing. It's only 'what's in your heart' that counts.

Scripture points out that our hearts are deceitful above all things.<sup>58</sup> The work of the Spirit of the Holy One in our lives reveals where we fall short of God's Glory. His Torah shows us our sin<sup>59</sup> and what pleases Him. John speaks of Law and Grace as being compatible and interwoven:

'Here is the perseverance of the saints, who keep the Commandments of God and their faith in Yeshua.'<sup>60</sup>

Did the Apostle really mean that? Please think about it the next time you eat ham or make common (profane) God's Holy 7th day Sabbath.

## *Paul...A Lawbreaker?*

The vow of the Nazarite that Paul took usually goes unnoticed. What he was trying to convey to his Jewish brethren was that he was a devout follower of the Law.<sup>61</sup> The vow of the Nazarite is, among other things, a way of publicly declaring one's desire to be as holy as the High Priest and of course, totally surrendered to the Lord and His Commandments. Paul states his commitment to the Law of Moses when in front of Governor Felix he says:

'What I do admit to you is this: it is according to the Way which they describe as a sect that I worship the God of my Fathers, retaining my belief in all points of the Law and in what is written in the Prophets; and I hold the same hope in God as they do that there will be a resurrection of good men and evil men alike. In these things, I, as much as they, do my best to keep a clear conscience at all times before God and man. After several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to make offerings; it was in connection with these that they found me in the Temple, *I had been purified*.'<sup>62</sup>

Paul reiterates the concept that he is a Jewish believer in Yeshua and that *he still observes all the Law...* that pertains to him. Paul was not an Aaronic priest. He didn't bring the blood of the goat into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). This was commanded for the High Priest only. But he

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<sup>56</sup> Acts 21:17-24.

<sup>57</sup> Numbers 6:1-21.

<sup>58</sup> Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21, etc.

<sup>59</sup> Romans 7:12-25; 1st John 3:3-6, etc.

<sup>60</sup> Revelation 14:12. See also 12:17.

<sup>61</sup> Acts 21:23-24.

<sup>62</sup> Acts 24:14-18.

could go to the Temple and offer sacrifice (offerings), as we see him explaining here, *many years after the resurrection*, and not be nullifying the grace of the Lord but exemplifying it. The Law is not for Eternal Life but for sanctification through the Spirit, to be a people set apart by God. And did you catch that he said that *he had already been purified*? If the Law of Moses was done away with by Paul, as many contend, what is Paul doing being purified, a concept found in the Law of Moses (Num. 6:1-13)?

Paul was still a Jew who believed in Yeshua as his Savior. He walked in all the laws of God that applied to him. He saw no problem with sacrifice in the Temple, and belief in Yeshua. If the Law had been done away with, then Paul was contradicting himself. Worse yet, he would be deceiving his fellow Jews. All the Jewish followers of Yeshua were zealous for the Law,<sup>63</sup> including Paul.

Paul proclaims before Festus that he had broken no Jewish law. Paul never ate ham, to be as ‘a Gentile to the Gentiles.’ This is not what that statement of his in one of his letters means.<sup>64</sup> It meant that he, a Jew, fellowshiped and ate with Gentiles.<sup>65</sup> If Paul is telling the truth, and not playing with semantics, he is still an observant Jew of the Torah, who believes in Messiah, keeps the Sabbath day holy and teaches others to do so! For him to eat ham would be a sin (as for *anyone* who follows the Jewish Messiah).

‘Paul’s defense was this, “I have committed no offense whatever, against either Jewish Law, or the Temple or Caesar.”’<sup>66</sup>

Many think that they only need the Ten Commandments. But the fourth is to keep the Sabbath day holy.<sup>67</sup> There is no biblical ‘Christian Sabbath’ (i.e. Sunday). Sunday, from the dawn of Babylon, was the day of worship for the sun god.

Sunday is never elevated as the day of assembly in the New Covenant. Or a day on which we cannot buy or sell or work, as is the Sabbath.<sup>68</sup> If one thinks that Sunday has replaced the Sabbath because of Jesus resurrecting on it, please look again at the accounts of His Resurrection. Nowhere does it say that Jesus resurrected on Sunday.<sup>69</sup> When the girls get to the Tomb, He’s not there!

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<sup>63</sup> Acts 21:20: ‘And when they heard it they began glorifying God and they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law’.’

<sup>64</sup> 1st Cor. 9:20-21: ‘To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law. To those who are without Law, as without Law, though not being without the Law of God but under the Law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without Law.’

<sup>65</sup> Gal. 2:11-14. Note well that table fellowship with Gentiles was to be avoided (Acts 10:28) in the traditional Jewish understanding which came from the Law (Dt. 7:1-3f.). This was because the Gentiles worshiped other gods and contact with them was to be avoided. See Stern’s *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, pp. 528-535.

<sup>66</sup> Acts 25:8.

<sup>67</sup> Exodus 20:8-11.

<sup>68</sup> Amos 8:5; Numbers 15:32-36.

<sup>69</sup> The only place where it’s written that Jesus rose on Sunday is not valid, and this is recognized by scholars, every Bible commentary, and by most Bibles. Check out your own Bible. The place is Mark 16:9-20. Actually, our place in question is Mark 16:9 which states, ‘Now after He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary’. In a ‘Textual note, 16:9-20’ of *The Wycliff Bible Commentary*, Charles F. Pfeiffer, Old Testament, Everett F. Harrison, New Testament, Moody Press, Chicago, 1977, page 1025, states, ‘In the two most trustworthy manuscripts of the Greek NT (the Vaticanus and Siniaticus codexes) the Gospel ends with 16:8, as it does also in several early versions. Both Eusebius and Jerome state that an ending was missing from most of the manuscripts of their day. In addition, several texts and versions offer a shorter substitute in place of 16:9-20. By far the greater number of manuscripts have the longer conclusion, but many of them are of a late date and an inferior quality. By the recognized standards of textual evaluation, both the longer and shorter endings must be rejected, and this is the judgment of almost all textual scholars. Lenski is one of the few commentators who argue

## *Understanding Paul in His Hebraic Context*

The Church presents its tradition or perspective as the Word of God. This is a tradition that invalidates God's Word though. Just as the Pharisees were rebuked by Yeshua for making null and void the Commandments of God, because of their traditions, so too the Church. The Church has deceived many people. Nowhere does the New Covenant ever proclaim that Jesus resurrected on Sunday. Or more importantly, that Sunday replaced the Sabbath of the Lord Jesus. The Lord rose on God's holy Sabbath.<sup>70</sup>

Both Jewish and Gentile believers in Yeshua must follow all the Torah that pertains to them. May the Gentile eat ham when God forbids it, or is Lev. 11 only for the Jewish believer? Is not the Passover commanded by Yahveh as an honor to Him for the People that He has freed?<sup>71</sup> Has not the Gentile believer been freed by the Blood of the Passover Lamb? Should not he also keep the Passover in honor of what the God of Israel has done for him?<sup>72</sup> Or is this something that he may overlook?

Paul's letters state that the Law, symbolized in circumcision, cannot be the means of salvation.<sup>73</sup> It was never used by God as a means of salvation, but as a sign of the covenant (circumcision). It was the sign of His Promise and relationship with Abraham and his Seed. It would be Gentiles, wanting 'to make sure' that they were really saved, that listened to those Judaizers.

Getting back to the quote of Paul: 'Retaining my belief in all points of the Law' is pretty straight forward. Was he saying only the Ten Commandments? Hardly.

The Rabbis say that if one is outside the Land of Israel, then there are many points of the Torah that do not pertain to them. For instance, the Law states that for Passover, all Jews living in the Land of Israel must come up to Jerusalem.<sup>74</sup> But going there does not pertain to Jews living outside the Land. In other words, it's not a sin for a Jew outside Israel to remain in his own land for Passover. God's people though, must celebrate this holy time in the land that they are living in, giving honor to the Lord. It's really pretty simple. What pertains to us of the Commandments, we observe. Ham is ham, in or out of the Land of Israel.

***The Sabbath is kept wherever we are.*** It must be observed out of a motivation of love for God which is

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for the longer ending (*Interpret. of Mark*, pp. 750-755). In addition, an examination of verses 9-20 cannot fail to impress the careful student with the fact that these verses differ markedly in style from the rest of the Gospel' (of Mark). 'Perhaps the most acceptable explanation is that the end of the original Gospel may have been torn off and lost before additional copies could be made. Perhaps others attempted to supple a substitute ending, the most successful of which was that which now appears in 16:9-20.' An interesting perspective is seen with the addition of a comma after the word 'rose' for the sentence in question: 'Now after He rose, early on the first day of the week He appeared first to Mary'. This maintains the biblical understanding that the Lord was first seen on Sunday, without giving any credence to a Sunday resurrection. For more on this please see *The Resurrection and Mark 16:9* at <http://seedofabraham.net/The-Resurrection-and-Mk.-16.9.pdf>.

<sup>70</sup> Mt. 28:1: 'In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.' The first day of the week (Sunday) would begin in darkness on Saturday night. This is common Jewish or biblical understanding (See Gen. 1:3-5 where the evening precedes the day.) The word for 'dawn' in this passage of Matthew does not necessarily convey light or sunrise but the *approaching* of the first day of the week. If it was approaching, then it was still the Sabbath when they came to the tomb. And He had already risen.

<sup>71</sup> Exodus 12:2-14.

<sup>72</sup> 1st Corinthians 5:6-8.

<sup>73</sup> Galatians 5:1-4.

<sup>74</sup> Deuteronomy 16:16.

the way all the Commandments should be kept. For how can we call Him Lord if we don't do what He wants? The main point is determining what pertains to us. This comes from knowing God's Torah, Genesis through Revelation.

Many things come straight through to His Kingdom; no murder, no stealing, Sabbath, etc. Some are altered (for His Kingdom is not of this world. The city you live in will charge you with murder if you carry out what was acceptable under King David, in stoning an adulterer.) Paul would tell us to put the adulterer out of our assembly and hand him over to Satan that he might repent.<sup>75</sup> We cease fellowship with them, for what we do to them has been altered by Yeshua, and the national circumstances we find ourselves in. The point here is that they are excluded from the Body of God's people, which is eternal death, unless they repent.

This is Hebraic. It is not legalistic for that is a perversion of the Torah of Yahveh. Legalism is what has happened in the Hellenistic Church with Sunday, Easter, Christmas and ham. If a Christian were to try and replace Sunday or Easter (or so-called 'Resurrection Sunday'), or Christmas in their church, they would smack up against traditional legalism, with all their rationalization and arguments for keeping everything the way it is. And this with all their talk about being 'under grace.' The theological opposition to God's Word and Way of living is very, very strong in these cases. These are traditions of men that nullify the Word of God, but are taught as though spoken by Jesus Himself. Welcome to the camp of the Gentile Pharisees.

Isn't it interesting? The 'holy days' of the Church cannot be found anywhere in the New Covenant. Where is it commanded by God to celebrate the birth of His Son (Christmas)? Or His Resurrection on Easter (Resurrection) Sunday? Or Sunday assembly that obliterates God's 7th Day Sabbath? The real question is, 'Has God given Man the authority to make holy days?' Easter and Christmas are holy days in the Church. But only God can give us holy days, not Man. Man has no authority from God to create or to make up holy days.

Perhaps the best picture of what we are dealing with here is found when Yeshua reproves some tradition laden, legalistic Pharisees:

'And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines, the commandments of men.'<sup>76</sup>

Paul declares that he had come 'to make offerings' and in the Jerusalem Bible, it says in the footnote, that these are *sacrifices*.<sup>77</sup> Now what is the one who is given the most credit for 'doing away with the Law,' and of course the Mosaic Sacrifices, coming to Jerusalem to offer a Mosaic sacrifice?! To be 'a Jew to the Jews'? Paul would've been a pretty slick character if one believes that.

He believed it was alright for him, a Jew who had known Messiah Yeshua for more than 20 years, to sacrifice. Wasn't Jesus resurrected? Didn't Paul know that the sacrifices 'had been done away with?' Then what was he doing in the Temple, of all places? It says he 'had been purified'. Was that really needed since Jesus had already purified him by His Death? From this we see that the Apostle Paul still kept the Torah of Moses, by the Spirit of the Living Messiah.

Keeping God's Commandments have always been a blessing. That's why He gave them. The same way that we as parents determine rules for our children; to keep them safe and blessed. This is a different per-

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<sup>75</sup> 1st Corinthians 5:1-5.

<sup>76</sup> Matthew 15:6, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander Jones, General Editor, *The Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 239, commenting on Acts. 21:24.

spective of understanding the Word of God. It's not Protestant or Catholic, both of which stem from a hellenized, anti-semitic view of God's Hebrew Bible. It's Hebraic, the language and conceptual basis of all the Scriptures. For even though the New Covenant is written in Greek, the concepts and the reality it portrays are deeply embedded in Hebraic thought patterns. As one professor put it, 'The only thing Greek about the New Testament are the words,'<sup>78</sup> the ideas they seek to reveal are all Hebraic.

Christianity was never meant to be a distinct entity apart from the Jewish people. It was first comprised of Jews and only Jews. Not until Cornelius in Acts 10 do we see the first Gentile convert to this Jewish sect that espoused the Messiah.

It was never meant to be transplanted unto the soil of Athens. For what does Athens have to do with Jerusalem, the Eternal City, the City of the Great King?<sup>79</sup> *God is grieved with Christians who reject His Commandments.*

Let God guide you in this. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me. I hope that I have raised some serious questions in your mind about who Yeshua is, and what Christianity was meant to be for both His Jewish and Gentile people.

***Lord, You are the Potter, we are the clay.  
Cause us to be soft when You touch us to obey...***

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<sup>78</sup> Dr. Howard Ervin, Hebrew class on Psalms, Master of Divinity Program, Oral Roberts University, 1981.

<sup>79</sup> Psalm 48:2 and Matthew 5:35.

Revised on 1 April 2016.