PAUL AND ACTS

by Avram Yehoshua

The Seed of Abraham

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The Apostle Paul is seen by the Church as the person most responsible for 'freeing us from the slavery to the Law of Moses.' This understanding is based upon some Scriptures in some of Paul's letters where he deals with the issue of salvation (justification) and the Law (sometimes symbolized in circumcision). The Church, and far too many so-called Messianic Jews, firmly believe that Paul 'did away with the Law,' but as I've to pointed out in numerous articles, papers, and my book, *The Lifting of the Veil: Acts 15:20-21*, neither Paul, nor any other writer of the New Testament, 'does away with Mosaic Law.'[1]

The Book of Acts, unlike the letters of Paul, is an historical account of approximately the first 34 years of the Holy Spirit working through the Body of Messiah,[2] both in Judah, and what is now modern day Turkey, Greece and Rome, etc. In Acts there is nothing that can even remotely be construed to suggest that Paul ever stopped observing the Law of Moses or taught others to do so. That's why liberal Christian scholarship has denigrated Luke's Book of Acts, but conservative scholarship doesn't agree, upholding Luke and his book. The following is a survey of Paul in Acts, who remained faithful to the Law of Moses all his life, as his Christian lifestyle, just like all the other Apostles of the Lord.[3]

First though, Luke begins his book by saying that the risen Lord met with the Apostles over a period of 40 days and taught them *the things pertaining to His Kingdom* (Acts 1:1-3). If the Law had been done away with by His death and resurrection, as most in the Church teach, how is it that the Apostles never taught that in Acts? How is it the the Holy Spirit, all during the book of Acts, never brings that to their attention?

WAS PAUL A JEW?

1. After his conversion and belief and the Jewish Messiah, Paul always claimed to be a Jew and was always seen as a Jew.[4] Paul didn't stop being Jewish because he had found the Jewish Messiah.

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[1] For a biblical understanding of why Gentiles are to keep the Law of Moses, see *The Lifting of the Veil* and Law 102, A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law, Seven Reasons Why The Church is Wrong, The Feasts of Israel and the Church, The Two Triangles of the NT, Why Sunday? and also, No Longer Under the Law?

[2] I. Howard Marshall, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., Author; Professor R.V.G. Tasker, M.A., B.D., General Editor, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Acts* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), pp. 46-48. Marshall argues against dating the composition of Acts later than 62 AD when the death of James, the half-brother of Yeshua is said to have occurred. As Luke makes no mention of this it seems that Acts may have been written before it.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 692 dates Acts between 68–70 AD, while *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, p. 233 suggests 58–65 AD

[3] The Apostles kept the Law all their lives. This is clearly seen in Acts 10:14, 28, 34-35; 11:18; 21:20; Rom. 3:31; 7:7, 12, 14, 16; 1st Cor. 7:17-19; James 4:11; 1st John 3:3-4; 5:2-3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12, and also Mt. 5:17-19; 19:17; 22:37-40; John 15:10-15. See Apostolic Christianity's Lifestyle, Illicit SEX and the Church, Paul and Mosaic Law at Caesarea.

[4] It's not that Paul wouldn't recognize himself as a *Christian* among Greek speakers, but this refers to his belief in Yeshua as the Messiah or the Christ, not as something separate from the Jewish people or the Law of Moses. He always referred to himself as a Jewish man (note also Rom. 11:1; Gal. 2:15; Phil. 3:5).

A. Acts 16:11: When Paul and Silas were in Philippi of Macedonia, the people there didn't call Paul and Silas Gentiles or even Christians, though both Silas and Paul were Roman citizens (16:37) and first century Christians. The Gentile Philippians called them Jews (16:20). Quite possibly it was their tassels (tzti-tziot) on their clothes (Num. 15:37-41) and their full, untrimmed beards (Lev. 19:27) that presented them as Jews. Obviously, there was something about these Christians that showed the Gentiles that these two men were (still) Jews. Conversion hadn't changed their race or ethnicity.

B. Acts 18:2: When Emperor Claudius issued his edict that all Jews should leave Rome, Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who believed in Yeshua (Jesus), also had to leave. This indicates that at the time (49 AD) 19 years after the Resurrection, Jews who believed in Jesus were still considered Jews and not Christians in the sense of a separate and totally distinct entity, as unfortunately has been the case for about 1,900 years.[5]

C. Acts 18:24: Apollo is presented as a Jew although he's a believer, a Jewish Christian or a Christian Jew.

D. Acts 19:33-34: When the Gentile mob at Ephesus realized[6] that Alexander was a Jew they would not let him speak. Alexander believed in Jesus, but was still seen as a Jew. There must have been something about him that showed them he was a Jew, and not a Gentile, even though the man lived in a Gentile country. It could have been his tassels (Num. 15:37-41) and his full beard (Lev. 19:27; 2nd Sam. 10:1-5),[7] or even the way he spoke.

E. Acts 21:39: Paul says to the commander of the Fortress of Antonia in Jerusalem: 'I am a Jew.' Yet, Paul's been a Christian for more than 20 years at this point.

F. Acts 22:3: Jerusalem—Paul says, 'I am a Jewish man' to the Jewish mob at the Temple[8] that wanted to murder him, wrongly thinking that he had brought a Gentile man into a section of the Temple area forbidden to non-Jews at the time.

G. Acts 22:25: Jerusalem—The Temple Mount, the Fortress of Antonia, the dungeon: Paul says that he is a Roman citizen, having been born into it (v. 27-28) while Lysias, the Roman commander of the troops stationed on the Temple Mount, says that he bought his Roman citizenship for a large sum of money. Yet, being a Roman citizen did not negate Paul from being a Jew and a believer in Jesus. The two are not incompatible.

H. Acts 23:6: Jerusalem—Paul shouts in the midst of the Sanhedrin, 'I am a Pharisee!' Does it get 'any more Jewish' than that?[9]

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[5] F. F. Bruce, Author; Gordon D. Fee, General Editor, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), p. 58.

[6] Walter Bauer, augmented by William F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 369: ' ἐπιγινώσκω, to have knowledge of someth. or someone, know…notice, perceive'

The Greek verb means, 'to know, look upon, recognize.'

[7] In the story of King David sending some servants to comfort the new King of Ammon upon the death of his father, David's servants are humiliated. Part of the humiliation is that their beards are shaved off from half their face (2nd Sam. 10:1-5). Interestingly enough, David doesn't tell them to shave the rest off and let it all grow back together. No, he tells them to remain in Jericho until the other half returns. Franz Delitzsch says that shaving off the beard 'was regarded as the most shameful of all' things that could be done to a man: C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament, vol. 7: Isaiah* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001; originally published by T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1866-91), pp. 145-146.

[8] I've capitalized Temple, as it should be. It's a proper noun and relates to the only temple of its kind in the world where the living God dwelt (Mt. 23:33; Lk. 2:49; Jn. 2:16).

A NEW RELIGION?

2. What is this 'new religion' that Paul was a part of? Is it the Christianity of today? It seems that this new movement was seen as a sect of the Jewish people that had found the long awaited Jewish Messiah *and* they still kept the Law of Moses. Lars Enerson writes, "In the beginning there was no separation between 'the Church' and the Jewish people. Up to the last chapter in the Book of Acts, the Church was looked upon as a sect within Judaism."[10] The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* agrees, saying that 'Christians seemed to be only another of the Jewish sects.'[11] Yeshua is The Way, the Truth and the Life' (Jn. 14:6), which are all synonyms for Mosaic Law.[12] The new sect took 'the Way' as one designation for themselves. In Acts 2:28 the Way is used in the sense of 'God's Way' of living.[13] It has nothing to do with the creation of a totally different religion called Christianity as we know it today. Christianity today doesn't resemble the original Apostolic Christians, both Jew and Gentile in terms of the keeping of Mosaic Law (also known as Torah).

A. Acts 9:2: Saul (whose other birth name was Paul; Acts 13:9), as persecutor of the Jewish Christian, asks for letters from the High Priest to arrest those of 'the Way.'

B. Acts 13:10: Paul, now a Jewish Christian, accuses a Jewish false prophet of perverting 'the Way of God.' Also, in 13:12 Paul calls it 'the Instruction (Torah) of the Lord' (from the Hebrew).

C. Acts 18:24-25: Luke says that Apollo had been instructed in 'the Way.' He didn't teach Sunday.

D. Acts 18:26: Aquila and Priscilla take Apollo and instruct him more accurately in 'the Way of God.'

E. Acts 19:9: Luke uses the Way, speaking of those who spoke evil of it.

F. Acts 19:23: When a disturbance arises because of Dimetrius the silversmith idol maker, Luke calls the Jewish sect that included Gentiles, the Way.

G. Acts 22:4: Paul, as a believer, calls the movement the Way, saying previously he had persecuted those who believed in Yeshua.[14]

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[9] Geoffrey W. Bromiley, General Editor, Everett F. Harrison, Roland K. Harrison and William Sanford LaSor, Associate Editors, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. four (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), p. 217 states that, 'Vespasian imposed the poll tax on Jewish Christians and Jews alike.' Jewish believers were still seen as Jews as late as 68-79 AD when Vespasian was Emperor of Rome.

[10] Lars Enerson, *Time to Leave Babylon*, an unpublished paper, 2005.

[11] Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. four, p. 215. *ISBE* adds, "at the end of the reign of" Roman Emperor "Gaius (AD 37-41) the 'new way' was not yet divorced from the parent faith." This meant that at least until 41 AD all believers met on the 7th day Sabbath and kept the Feasts of Israel, etc., and were seen *as part of a Jewish sect.*

[12] The words, Way, Truth and Life are synonyms for Yeshua and Mosaic Law, which is God's Word (Isaiah 1:10; 2:3; 5:24).

A. *The Way* is a synonym for Mosaic Law in Exodus 13:21; 18:20; 23:20; 32:8; Dt. 9:12, 16; 11:28; 13:5; 31:29; Ps. 25:8; 32:8; 119:1, 14, 27, 30, 33, etc.

B. *The Truth* is a synonym for Torah in Psalm 119:43, 142, 151, 160; Mal. 2:6 (cf. John 17:7) and,

C. *The Life* is a synonym for Mosaic Law in Dt. 30:15, 19-20; 32:47; Ps. 16:11; Prov. 3:1-3, 13-18; etc.

Yeshua, speaking of the three words for Mosaic Law or Torah together, is emphatically declaring that He is the Living Word of God; the Living Torah, the living embodiment of all the words or instructions of God (i.e. Mosaic Law, etc.), which emanate from God's very nature.

[13] Gen. 18:17-19; Ex. 32:8; Dt. 1:33; 5:33; 9:12, 16; 11:28; 13:5; 31:29; Psalm 32:8-9; 86:11; Prov. 22:6; Mt. 22:16, etc.

H. Acts 24:5: The Jewish authorities call it 'the sect of the Nazarenes' (those who believed in Jesus of Nazareth).

I. Acts 24:14: Paul, before Felix, again refers to it as the Way.

J. Acts 24:14: Paul says that the Jewish authorities called it 'a sect,' meaning of course, that it was seen as a sect among many other Jewish sects at that time, but with their emphasis on it being a heretical sect because it taught Yeshua as the risen Messiah; not that Jesus had done away with the Law. We don't ever see that, which would have been a grave heresy to the Pharisees, etc.

K. Acts 24:22: Felix calls it the Way.

L. Acts 28:22: The non-believing Jews of Rome call it a sect of the Jewish people (like that of the Essenes, Sadducees,[15] Pharisees, Herodians[16] and Zealots,[17] etc.). The followers of the Way were part of that stream of Jewish sects.[18]

THE TERM CHRISTIAN

3. In the New Testament the term Christian is mentioned twice (Acts 26:28; 1st Peter 4:16), while the plural is only mentioned once (Acts 11:26). It's the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word for one who believed in Yeshua and also kept the Torah.[19] This is very different from how the term Christian

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[14] See also Acts 16:17 and 18:25-26 for other references to it being called 'the Way of Yeshua' and 'the Way of God,' which reinforces the concept that it was both a proper name for the Jewish believers and a description of one's belief and lifestyle in Messiah Yeshua (i.e. they had faith in Yeshua and kept the Law of Moses).

[15] The Sadducees were made up of many priests, including the High Priest. They were Temple officials and were also part of the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:1; 5:17).

[16] The Herodians are mentioned in Mt. 22:16; Mark 3:6; 12:13.

[17] That a Zealot party existed is known to Bible scholars and is mentioned in Mt. 10:4; Mk. 3:8; Lk. 6:15, and Acts 1:13, where Simon, an Apostle, was also known as having belonged to the sect.

[18] See The Nazarene Sect. The sect of the Nazarenes was seen as a heretical sect by the Jewish authorities. Some English Bibles speak of 'Judaism' in Gal. 1:13-14, but the Greek word there is more properly translated as 'the practice of the Jewish religion;' W. Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 210. In the days of Moses and King Solomon, the Tabernacle, later replaced by the Temple, with priesthood and sacrifice spoke of the Cult of Yahveh. In the days of Yeshua and Paul, the Temple cult still existed. Note well that no sect has 'Judaism' attached to it as do the modern sects (e.g. Orthodox Judaism, Reform Judaism, Messianic Judaism, etc.). Without the Temple, modern Judaism is truly a pale religious variant from what was practiced in Yeshua's day.

[19] Marshall, *Acts*, p. 242. Marshall rightly asks, 'what evidence was there that the law (sic), *which represented the will of God for his covenant people*, had been repealed?' He goes on to say, 'We should not, however, overlook the fact that Paul believed that his teaching *established and upheld the law* (Rom. 3:31);' p. 246. Also, "According to Luke many" (no, all) "Jewish Christians continued to keep the law of Moses" (p. 250).

David J. Williams, Author; W. Ward Gasque, New Testament Editor, *New International Biblical Commentary: Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999). Williams says, "The point of view of the Jewish Christians deserves our understanding. As far as most of them could tell, *the law remained determinative for their lives*. They had no clear teaching of the Lord to the contrary (cf., e.g., Matt. 5:18; Luke 2:21; Gal. 4:4," p. 256. He also states that Paul "believed that *his own teaching upheld the law* (Rom. 3:31), and his epistles are full of exhortations *to live by the letter, no less than by the spirit of the law* (cf., e.g., Rom. 13:8-10; Eph. 5:1, 3ff., 31; 6:2f.)." He adds that there were many "who continued to live by the law and saw no reason to change (cf. 21:20)," p. 256. From these scholars it's easy to draw the conclusion that, at the very least, the Jews in Antioch and Jerusalem continued to keep Mosaic Law as their Christian lifestyle. If this is so, and it is, how can anyone imagine that the Gentiles "kept Sunday" instead of God's holy 7th day Sabbath, etc? Who was learning about this new Way of life from whom?

is seen today.[20]

A. Acts 10:28: Peter still classifies himself as a Jew, telling Cornelius how unlawful it was for him, a Jew, to be in the home or to even associate with a Gentile. He then goes on to declare that God had shown him 'not to call any man common or unclean' (v. 28). There is absolutely nothing mentioned about any unclean animals that had become clean, or the negation of the Mosaic dietary laws. Cornelius, a God fearing Gentile, is about to be the first Gentile[21] to come to the Jewish Messiah through Peter, the chief Apostle, as Peter comes to realize *the true meaning of the vision* (10:28, 34-35). No dietary laws had changed. This is evident from the chapter itself, as nowhere does anyone eat pig, for example, or say that the dietary laws are no longer valid, and also from the shock of the believing Jews in Jerusalem when Peter recounts the incident to them (Acts 11:1-18) about the first Gentiles coming into the Kingdom of the Jewish Messiah. This is 8-10 years after the Resurrection. No Gentile had come to Christ yet. There is nothing in Acts 10 or 11 that explains Peter's vision as having to do with the dietary laws being rescinded. The vision of unclean animals was *symbolic* and represented the unclean Gentiles.

1) From another perspective, the Law is also seen as intact when Peter tells God that he had *never eaten anything common or unclean*. Acts 10:14 takes place 8-10 years after the resurrection. Some Christians say that Jesus did away with the dietary laws in Mark 7, but apparently Peter didn't interpret what Jesus had said that way.[22]

B. Acts 11:26: The believers were first called 'Christians' in Greek speaking Antioch. There were both Jews and Gentiles in this assembly.[23] That these Christians met on the 7th day Sabbath and

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[20] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, pp. 203-204. Bruce says that 'the first Gentiles to hear and accept the gospel… should be worshipers of the God of Israel' and 'is the more significant for the record of Acts because…it was such God-fearers who formed the nucleus of the Christian community in one city after another in the course of Paul's missionary activity.' This is important for us because as Bruce says of Cornelius, a God-fearer, he also kept the Sabbath day holy and abstained from unclean meats. He says Cornelius 'had every qualification, short of circumcision, which could satisfy Jewish requirements' (p. 203). If many of the early Gentile converts to the Jewish Messiah *were already aware of, and walking in the things of Torah*, we have a very different form of Christianity than most Christians are familiar with today.

[21] Some might say the Samaritans (Acts 8:5-25) and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-39) were the first Gentile Christians, but the Samaritans were considered 'half-Jews,' coming from both (some northern) Israeli stock and pagans. This came about when the Assyrians devastated the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 BC and took many Israelis captive and transplanted them into other parts of their kingdom. In turn, they took other conquered pagan peoples and planted them in what used to be the northern kingdom of Israel and the two peoples *intermarried*. The Jews of Judah didn't recognize them as true Jews because of that and also the religion they followed was perverted (Jn. 4:19-22), even though they worshipped Yahveh (too), along with their other gods. They weren't considered Gentiles by the Rabbis, either.

As for the Ethiopian eunuch, we know this much about him—he came to worship the God of Israel in Jerusalem and he had a personal copy of the Septuagint of Isaiah and was reading it. Nothing is mentioned about him being a Gentile. No one in Acts says anything unusual about him coming to the Messiah. If the eunuch was a Gentile, Philip, like Peter later (Acts 11:1-3) would have been 'taken to task' for sharing the *Jewish* Messiah with a Gentile, but this wasn't the case. Also, Peter specifically states that God used him to reach out to the first Gentiles who became Christians (i.e. Cornelius and Crew; Acts 15:7). After that other Jewish believers began to bring Gentiles to Messiah (11:19-24), and then Paul and Barnabas follow in their footsteps (11:25-26; 13:1-43, etc.).

The eunuch was most likely of Jewish descent. In the days of King Solomon (960-920 BC), the Queen of Ethiopia (Sheba) was fascinated by Solomon's wisdom and wealth. Trade flourished between the two countries and emissaries from Israel were invited by the Queen to help her to rule her country after she came to Solomon. Quite possibly this is where the lineage of this treasurer came from.

[22] See Law 102, the section *Jesus and the Pig*, for why Mark's passage doesn't do away with the dietary laws.

[23] Acts 11:19-22, 26-27; 13:1.

kept Mosaic Law as their Christian lifestyle is evident from the Book of Acts and from knowing that the Gentile converts weren't teaching the Jewish Christians about faith in Messiah, but that it was the other way around. It would be foolish to think that new Gentile converts to a Jewish religion that kept Mosaic Law would begin to separate from them and keep Sunday, Easter and Christmas, and discard the Mosaic dietary laws, etc. After all, who was teaching whom about faith in Messiah and how to walk out that faith? The perversions of Sunday and Easter, etc., with the negation of Mosaic Law, don't begin until 120 AD, by Bishop Sixtus of Rome (and what is today the Roman Catholic Church).[24] There is no deviation from the Law for the Gentile believer's lifestyle, except for physical circumcision (Acts 15:1-35).[25]

C. Acts 22:12: Damascus—Ananias, a 'devout man *according to the Law,'* was obviously a believer in Yeshua as Yeshua used him to pray for Saul to receive his sight (Acts 9:10f., 22:12f.). Ananias led Saul in baptism in water for forgiveness of sin (22:16) and was the instrument whereby Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. That Paul mentions him as a 'devout' Law observer only enhances the fact that Mosaic Law is God's Way to walk out a Christian's faith in His Son.

D. Acts 26:28: King Agrippa was a Jew and used the term Christian. Agrippa spoke Greek in that forum of Roman authority. The term Christian before 120 AD always implied the keeping of the 7th day Sabbath, as Samuel Bacchiocchi adroitly points out,[26] and the Torah.

DID PAUL GO TO CHURCH?

4. In Jerusalem Paul didn't go to church, he went to the Temple, as all the Jewish Christians and Apostles did.

A. Acts 21:20-26: Paul, having been purified, was in the Temple giving notice when his days of purification would be finished. He would then offer animal sacrifices for himself and four other Jewish believers.

B. Acts 24:11-12: Paul tells Governor Felix that it was only 12 days before that he had gone up to Jerusalem to worship. He proclaims the resurrection of Yeshua as the reason why the Jewish authorities want his death, and subsequently speaks with Felix on different occasions about the resurrection of the dead, the coming judgment, righteousness and self control (Acts 24:25). *Nowhere* is it written that Paul spoke of the Law being done away with.

1) Antonius Felix[27] c. 52-60 AD, favored the Samaritans against the Jews and ruthlessly suppressed Jewish insurgents (zealots), including Eleazar ben Dinai and an Egyptian Jew who deluded many Jews into believing he would destroy the walls of Jerusalem. This is most likely the Egyptian Jew that Claudius Lysias (Acts 23:26) thought Paul was (Acts 21:38). The point is that Paul was still considered a Jew by Gentiles and he kept the Law of Moses, as is plainly evident from his taking the Nazarite Vow with its commandment to sacrifice animals (Num. 6:14; Acts 18:18; 21:20f.).[28]

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[24] See A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law.

[25] See *Gentile Circumcision?* for why the Gentile is not to be circumcised 'for the right reason' or in order to keep Gen. 17:9-14 or Ex. 12:43-49.

[26] Samuele Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath To Sunday (Rome, Italy: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), pp. 132-164f. This is the definitive work on the issue of Sabbath vs. Sunday.

[27] Geoffrey Wigoder, Editor in Chief, *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, 7th Edition (New York-Oxford: Facts on File, 1990), p. 770.

[28] I deal with this concept of the Nazarite Vow and Paul more fully at *The Law and Paul* in Acts, 6b, on p. 8f.

THE TEMPLE

5. The Temple continued to play an important role in the lives of the Jewish Christians many years after the resurrection. Did the Apostles have a church in Jerusalem that they went to?

A. Acts 2:46: 'And day by day, devoting themselves with one heart in the Temple, and eating from house to house, they shared food with joy and simplicity of heart.' The Temple was their congregational 'meeting' place for preaching, teaching and healing.[29] The Apostles *never* stopped going to the Temple and using it for their assembly. They didn't stop worshiping at the Temple. If the Law was done away with, why didn't they establish a place of their own? Why go to the Temple and 'validate' it and its animal sacrifices? Why didn't they start, The First Church of Jerusalem?

B. Acts 3:1-2f: 'Now Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer.' That day the man born lame would be healed. The 'hour of prayer' was a time that prayers and sacrifice were offered and many Jews came to worship God at that time. True worship of God is biblically synonymous with sacrifice and service.

C. Acts 5:11: The Greek word for 'church' is *ekklesia*. Properly translated it means an 'assembly' or 'congregation' and literally means, 'called out ones.' This was not a new term for Israel.[30] In the New Testament it refers to those who are being called out of the slavery and darkness of Satan's Kingdom and into the marvelous Light of the Kingdom of Yeshua (1st Peter 2:9). This concept is also seen when God takes Israel out of Egyptian slavery and darkness. The 'church' in Jerusalem refers to the Body of Jewish believers who met in the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Porch (Acts 2:46; 3:1, 11; 4:1; 5:12, 20, 25, 42). Yeshua had also 'held church' there (Jn. 10:23).[31]

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[29] Acts 2:46; 3:1, 2, 3, 8, 10; 4:1; 5:20, 21, 25, 42 (every day in the Temple, teaching and preaching); 21:26, 27, 30; 22:17; 24:12, 18; 26:21.

[30] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, pp. 107-108. Bruce writes, "In verse 11 the word 'church' (Gk. *ekklesia*) occurs for the first time in the authentic text of Acts. The Greek word has both a Gentile and a Jewish background. In its Gentile sense it denotes chiefly the citizen-assembly of a Greek city (cf. Acts 19:32, 39, 41), but its Jewish usage "denotes the community of believers in Jesus. In the Septuagint," *ekklesia* "is one of the words used to denote *the people of Israel* in their religious character as Yahweh's assembly. It's a pity that in so many English versions of the New Testament it's rendered by the term 'church,' which is absent from the *English* Old Testament. Readers of the Greek Bible can draw their own conclusions from the use of *ekklesia* in Old and New Testament alike, as could the readers of William Tyndale's English translation when they came upon the word 'congregacion' in both Testaments." Burce, note 23: "In Deuteronomy and the following OT books, except Jeremiah and Ezekiel, εκκλησια" (ekklesia) "is the regular LXX" (Septuagint) "rendering of Heb. *qahal*, 'assembly;' in the first four books of the OT, as in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, *qahal* is regularly represented in LXX by συναγωγη" (*suna'gogay*, i.e. synagogue) "which is also used throughout LXX as the rendering of *edah*, 'congregation…The Christian εκκλησια *ekklesia* was both new and old: new, because of its relation and witness to Jesus as Lord and to the epoch-making events of his death and exaltation and the sending of the Spirit; old, as the continuation of the 'congregation of the LORD' which had formerly been confined within the limits of one nation, but now, having died and risen with Christ, was to be open to all believers without distinction." Bruce calls *Israel* in the days of Moses, *the 'church* in the wilderness' (p. 130).

[31] Ibid., p. 77. Bruce writes, *'The apostles continued to live as observant Jews,* attending the set services of worship *in the Jerusalem Temple*. The two principal daily services accompanied the offering of the morning and the evening sacrifices' (Ex. 29:38-46), and this is where and why we find Peter and John going up to the Temple in Acts 3:1-10, where Peter healed the lame man from birth. It was 'at the ninth hour' or 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon, in time 'for the service of prayer which accompanied the evening sacrifice.' If the Apostles were observant Jews, which meant they kept Torah and sacrificed at the Temple (Acts 21:20-24), can we think that those who followed them in their faith were any less observant (Acts 21:20)? Were the Gentiles who met at the Jewish-

D. Acts 5:42: *'And every day, in the Temple* and from house to house, they kept right on teaching and preaching Yeshua as the Messiah.' No mention is ever made that a disturbance or riot was caused because they spoke of the Law being done away with. This is important to note because if they had preached against the Law there would certainly have been many riots in the Temple.[32]

E. Acts 21:26: 'Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the Temple giving notice of the completion of *the days of purification*, until animal sacrifice was offered for each one of them.' Really? Paul and animal sacrifice?

F. Acts 22:17: 'It happened when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the Temple,' Paul says, relating to the time after his coming to faith, that Yeshua appeared to him and told him to leave Jerusalem (v. 18).

G. Acts 24:12: 'Neither in the Temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot,' Paul tells Gov. Felix (v. 3). No mention of any 'church' attendance is made or Mosaic Law being said to have been nullified by Messiah's death and resurrection. This is important because he's speaking to a Gentile, and if it was only nullified for the Gentiles, Paul would have told him.

THE LAW AND PAUL IN ACTS

6. The Apostle Paul in the Book of Acts clearly reveals that he kept Mosaic Law all his life, and consequently, taught it to all his Gentile converts (cf. 2nd Tim. 3:16-17). For instance, Paul twice says to the Corinthian Christians to "imitate" him as he imitated Jesus:

A. 1st Cor. 11:1—"Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ!"

B. 1st Cor. 4:16-17—"Therefore I urge you, *imitate* me! For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, *who will remind you of my Ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church*."

C. Acts 16:1, 3: Paul *circumcises* Timothy. If the Law was no longer valid he would not have done that.

D. Acts 18:18: Paul takes a Nazarite Vow in Cenchrea. Because he shaves his head, theologians realize that this is a Nazarite Vow (Num. 6:1-21) because it's the only Mosaic vow where the head is shaved.[33] At the end of the Vow there is animal sacrifice! It doesn't get any more "Mosaic Law"

Gentile congregation in Antioch going to disregard the Lord's 7th day Sabbath to keep Sunday? Who was teaching whom about the faith? Who had come to faith in the 'foreign' Jewish Messiah? Who had come to be part of Israel (Rom. 11:16-12:2; Eph. 2:11-13)?

[32] Some might point to Stephen and his accusers (Acts 6:11-14; 7:1f.), as R. L. McKelvey does, and say that Stephen spoke of the demise of the Temple and the Law, but he didn't. I deal with this on p. 28f.

[33] Williams, *Acts*, pp. 321-322, states that this was a variation of the Nazarite Vow because Paul wasn't in Israel at the time. He says it appears 'to have been a common feature of Jewish piety (cf. 23:21-26; m. *Nazir*). Their conclusion was marked by the shaving of one's head and the offering of animal sacrifice in the Temple. Both acts were normally done in Jerusalem, but if the devotee was far from the city, he seems to have been allowed to trim his hair and bring it to Jerusalem to be offered with the rest of his hair when his head was shaved (cf. Josephus, *War*, 2.309-314).'

Marshall, *Acts*, p. 300, confirms this policy of being able to take the Nazarite Vow outside the Land and concluding it at the Temple in Jerusalem when he states, 'although the sacrifice had to be offered there' (in Jerusalem) 'the shaving of the hair was permissible elsewhere (M. *Nazir* 3:6; 5:4).' He states Paul's 'action is historically possible and theologically acceptable.'

than this.

E. Acts 21:23-26: Paul accepts his second recorded Nazarite Vow in Acts to prove to the thousands of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that he still kept Mosaic Law. He purifies himself according to the Temple rite and joins four other Jewish Christians to have their heads shaved to begin the Nazarite Vow. He was ready to offer animal sacrifices in the Temple for not only himself, but for four other Jewish Christians as part of his and their purification and Nazarite Vow (v. 26: NASB, NRSV).

1) The Apostle Paul is not only still a Jew, but a Jew who keeps Mosaic Law and offers animal sacrifice to God. Paul took the Vow to dispel the false accusations that he taught the Jews living outside Judah (i.e. where he did most of his ministry) to apostatize[34] from Mosaic Law and not circumcise the sons of Jewish Christians.[35] This charge was false and Paul was showing everyone then, and us today, that he still kept the Law of Moses. If this is so, and it is, how could he teach against Mosaic Law to the Gentiles?[36]

2) Are there two different theological Flocks in the One Flock of Jesus? Yeshua said, "And *other* sheep I have *which are not of this fold*" (i.e. the Jewish Fold). "Them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice, *and there will be one Flock* and one Shepherd" (John 10:16). There aren't two different theological Flocks. What the Jewish Christian had to obey, the Gentile Christian also had to obey, except physical, covenantal circumcision.[37]

F. Acts 23:1-5: Paul *rebukes* the High Priest for having him slapped, but when Paul is told that it's the High Priest of Israel, *Paul backs down*. Paul justifies his backing down, even though the High Priest was in the wrong for having him slapped, by quoting a commandment of Mosaic Law, which says, 'one must not revile a leader of' your people (Ex. 22:28). If Paul wasn't following Mosaic Law, or not recognizing an earthly, corrupt High Priest, but only 'Jesus' as his High Priest, Paul would never have backed down and he would never have used that commandment from the Law to justify refraining from questioning the legality and authority of the High Priest for having him slapped. The High Priest actually broke Mosaic Law by having Paul slapped before any court ruled against the Apostle, which only emphasizes the extremely high regard that Paul had for Mosaic Law.

G. Acts 24:17: Paul, before Gov. Felix, the Roman authority in Judah, Samaria and the Galilee, says that he was bringing alms to his Jewish people *and that he was going to sacrifice (animals)*. How much more of Mosaic Law could Paul have kept than animal sacrifice to prove that Mosaic Law was still valid for the Apostle? There isn't anything "more" Mosaic Law than animal sacrifice.

1) Paul saw animal sacrifice as still valid, and so how can the Church say that Paul did away with Mosaic Law? The Greek word for animal sacrifice is *prosforas*, the same Greek word found in Acts 21:26 where Paul was going to pay for the animal sacrifices of four other Jewish Christians and himself.

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[34] The sentence in Greek reads, 'that you teach apostasy *from Moses to the Jews* living among the Gentiles, telling *them not* to circumcise their sons, nor to walk in the Customs' (i.e. the Law; Acts 21:21).

[35] In most Bibles Acts 21:25 does not have what the KJV adds: 'that they should observe no such thing,' but all Bibles have the four rules. If the KJV phrase was originally written by Luke, and not some zealous scribe 'interpreting' the passage for us, it speaks to the Gentile *not* being circumcised, because James says that *he had already written* and concluded that circumcision wasn't for the Gentiles ('we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing;' Acts 15:22-23f.). This speaks of the decision of James that the Gentiles weren't to be circumcised (Acts 15:10-21), *not that the Gentile was 'free from the Law.'* For more on this see, The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21, section, *Acts 21:25–Observe No Such Thing!*, p. 157f.

[36] 1st Cor. 4:14-17; 11:1; 2nd Cor. 12:18; Phil. 3:15-17; 4:9; 1st Thess. 1:6-7; 2nd Thess. 3:7, 9.

[37] See Gentile Circumcision?

H. Acts 24:18: Paul tells Gov. Felix that he was *already* purified in the Temple when the disturbance against him arose. Why would Paul need to be purified in the Temple if Jesus had purified Paul and done away with Mosaic animal sacrifice? To be "a Jew to the Jews"? (1st Cor. 9:19-23)[38]

I. Acts 25:8: Paul declares before Gov. Festus, the Roman replacement for Gov. Felix, that '*Neither against Jewish Law*, nor the Temple, nor Caesar have I sinned.' Paul would not have said that if he had thought, and taught, that the Law had been done away with, or that Sunday had replaced the 7th day Sabbath. On the contrary, he affirms that he had done nothing against the Law of Moses.

1) How could he then, be telling anyone that eating pig was alright when God forbids it in the Law (Lev. 11:7; Dt. 14:8)? Of course, nowhere in his Letters does Paul ever say that one can eat pig, but scholars and commentators have interpreted some of Paul's writings as saying that the Law and therefore, the Mosaic Dietary laws, had been done away with and so, according to them, one can eat pig and not be concerned about God calling it sin.[39]

J. Acts 28:17: Paul tells the Jewish leaders in Rome, 'Nothing have I done to the (Jewish) people, or to the Customs (Law) of our Fathers.' Paul again declares that he keeps the Law. Is he lying?

1) Paul is not responsible for present day Christians thinking they can eat pig and desecrate God's holy 7th day Sabbath, etc. The Sabbath is mentioned 8 times in Acts.[40]

2) The 'first day of the week' is the biblical term for 'Sunday' that is found in the New Testament. It actually begins Saturday night at dark, when the Sabbath is over, until Sunday at dark. It's only mentioned twice in all the New Testament after the Gospels. In other words, from Acts to Revelation, "Sunday" is only seen twice (Acts 20:7; 1st Cor. 16:2), and one time it's actually Saturday night (Acts 20:7). This seems very strange if Sunday had replaced the Sabbath, which had been God's holy Day, for 14 centuries, as the Church teaches.

a) Most theologians do not use the Sunday Resurrection as proof that Sunday is the day for the Church to assemble on because even though the events in the Four Gospels took place in 30 AD, the Gospels were written a number of years after the Resurrection. Many theologians see Matthew as having been written about 44 AD, or 14 years after the Resurrection, while John wrote his Gospel about 95 AD, or 65 years after the Resurrection. Luke and Mark were written about 64 and 65 AD respectively.

b) The reason why theologians don't use the Resurrection appearances as proof of Sunday assembly (over the 7th day Sabbath) is because none of the Gospel writers speak of Sunday becoming the new day of assembly, something very disconcerting for theologians, if Sunday "became the new Sabbath" right after the Resurrection, as the Church heretically teaches. In other words, all the Gospel writers, writing from 14 to 65 years after the Resurrection, fail to say that because of the Resurrection, Sunday has become the new day of assembly, something they would have obviously commented on to their readers, if Sunday had become the new day. After all, it was a seismic shift in God's lifestyle for Jews and Christians who believed in Jesus.

c) Also, it's never mentioned once that Paul took his new converts and 'had church with

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[38] To be a Jew to the Jews meant that Paul could speak to them about their history and laws, in bringing salvation to his Jewish brethren (cf. Acts 13:14-41). He couldn't do that to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 17:23). In other words, he had to tailor his message of salvation in the Jewish Messiah to the group he was speaking to, as any good communicator does. See The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21, pp. 173-174, also note 734, for more on what Paul meant when he spoke of being a Jew to the Jews.

[39] See Law 102, section, Paul and the Pig, p. 2, for why the Church's interpretation of 2nd Tim. 4:4-5 is heretical. Also, see Peter and the Pig, pp. 3-5, and Jesus and the Pig, pp. 5-10.

[40] Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4. See the 2 page Handout, The Feasts of Israel and the Church.

them' on Sunday, or that Paul commanded them to assemble and worship on Sunday in lieu of the 7th day Sabbath. This is especially poignant when reading Acts 13:42, 44:

(1) "So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath…*On the next Sabbath* almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God." (Acts 13:42, 44)

(2) According to the Church, Luke should have written something like this:

(a) "So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. Paul told them, "You don't have to wait until next Sabbath, I'm preaching at the house of Demetrius (the Christian) tomorrow; Sunday! Come then!" And all the Gentiles came to the house church the next day."

(b) Luke doesn't write that because Sunday didn't come into the Church until 120 AD, when Pope Sixtus threw out Mosaic Law, Sabbath and Passover, and replaced it with Sunday, Easter and the eating of pig.[41] All the Apostles were dead by then and so couldn't write about that heresy.

(3) Sunday, in the days of the Apostles, was just another day of the week—the first day, as it was at Creation (Gen. 1:3–2:3). That's why Yeshua rose on Sunday. He is the First of the NEW Creation (cf. Col. 1:15-18; 1st Cor. 15:20, 23).

K. Many scholars now think the reference in Acts 20:7, to the first day of the week, pertains to the traditional meeting time of Jews as the Sabbath day is ending. Therefore, 'the first day of the week,' as Luke writes, means that the service began on Saturday late afternoon. That Paul 'continued to speak until midnight' and into the next day, confirms that it wasn't a typical Sunday morning 10 AM church service because that would have meant that Paul spoke for almost 24 hours (Acts 20:11), something no scholar would care to suggest, even for Paul.

1) Scholars have used 1st Cor. 16:2 to try and establish that the Corinthian believers were meeting weekly on Sunday (instead of Sabbath), but Paul never says this. In the passage, Paul urges the Corinthians to honor their pledge that they had previously made, to help the poor and needy Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, and to show their solidarity with them, with each Corinthian laying aside, on every Sunday, the first day of the week, what they wanted to give to Paul when he came. This he taught in all his churches (2nd Cor. 8:1-4, 7, 10-12; 9:1-5). This isn't the 'tithe and offering basket' being passed around on Sunday morning in church, but Paul telling the Corinthians to set aside this special offering in their own homes every Sunday so that when he came, they could bring it to him where their church met. In the ancient world payment for a day's work was given at the end of every day (cf. Mt. 20:1-16).

2) Paul writes and says to the Corinthians, "Now concerning *the collection for the saints:* you should *follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia*. On the first day of every week, ***each of you*** is to set aside ***and save*** whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem." (1st Cor. 16:1-3 NRSV)

a) KJV: 'let everyone of you lay by him in store.'

b) NASB: each one of you…and save.'

c) NIV: 'each of you…saving it up.'

d) Obviously, Paul wrote to the Corinthians to anticipate his arrival and not be caught empty handed on their pledge. It has nothing to do with establishing Sunday assembly over Sab-

[41] See the two page Handout, A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law.

bath assembly and holiness (cf. Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11).

3) Interestingly enough, Gentile Luke never writes 'Sunday,' but as noted above, uses the Hebrew phrase for it—the 'first day of the week' (Acts 20:7). The Jews didn't use the term 'Sunday' as this is the pagan designation for the day. It's called "Sunday" because that's the major day the sun god was worshiped on, hence Sun-day for the day of the sun god.

4) The Jews used numbers for the designation of the days; the first day of the week, the second day of the week, etc., until the seventh day of the week, which was known to them since the Manna falling from the Heavens, in Exodus 16:23, as the Lord's Sabbath.

5) If the Law had been done away with and Sabbath was not a holy day any longer, why isn't there any mention of Sunday (or the first day of the week) in all the New Testament, taking the place of the Sabbath? Or of Sunday being blessed by God as was the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:1-3)? Or of Sunday being holy as is the Sabbath day (Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:12-17)?

6) Neither in Acts, nor anywhere else in the New Testament, is Sunday ever elevated to the same blessed and holy status as the 7th day Sabbath, let alone surpasses it. This is very strange if Sunday had replaced God's Sabbath day "right after the Resurrection."

LUKE AND THE SABBATH

7. Luke's continual mention of the Sabbath in Acts is extremely important because if Sunday had become the "new Sabbath" and the day of assembly that the Apostles proclaimed for Christians, why don't we see any mention of it in relation to it overturning of the seventh day Sabbath? Of the 11 instances that Luke writes of the Sabbath in Acts, five are cursory, while six establish it as the day of the week for assembly for all Christians.

A. Acts 1:12: Luke writes that a Sabbath day's journey (about two-thirds of a mile; about a kilometer) was walked by the Apostles back to Jerusalem after Yeshua's final ascension into the Heavens. This is cursory.

B. Acts 13:14: Luke notes that it was on the Sabbath day that they went into the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (modern day central Turkey). It's called Pisidian Antioch to distinguish it from the Antioch in Syria where they were first called Christians (Acts 11:26-27; 13:1, etc.).

1) Acts 13:27 is a reference to the Prophets being read every Sabbath, which we'd expect in a traditional synagogue.

C. **Acts 13:42, 44**: Those who heard Paul preach in Pisidian Antioch begged Paul to come to them on the following Sabbath and tell them more. If Sunday was the new day, why doesn't Paul tell them to come to his Sunday church the very next day instead of having to wait another week, until the Sabbath meeting? No mention is ever made that his assemblies met on Sunday instead of the Sabbath. This is extremely revealing that the Sabbath had not been replaced by Sunday.

D. **Acts 15:21**: James the Prince (Heb. *nasi*) of all the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, in making his ruling for the Gentiles, that they didn't need to keep the Law of Moses for salvation, symbolized in physical, covenantal circumcision (vv. 1, 5, 7-11, 13-21), comments that the Gentiles had already been learning Mosaic Law every Sabbath at the synagogues, and were to continue to do so on the Sabbath day. There's no mention of any church meetings on Sunday that anyone was going to, or should go to. This too is very important because it specifically concerns the Gentile Christians assembling on the Sabbath, not Sunday. This important theological declaration took place in 48 AD or 18 years after the Resurrection.

E. Acts 16:13: On the Sabbath day, Paul and his friends went to a place outside the city by a river

where he knew that there would be Jews holding services. This and the next mention of the Sabbath is perfunctory or what we would expect of a Jewish gathering on the Sabbath day for prayer.

1) Acts 16:16: Paul returns to the same place outside the city and Ben Witherington says it was again a Sabbath day.[42]

F. **Acts 17:2**: For three Sabbaths in a row Paul taught in the synagogue of Thessalonica that Yeshua was the Messiah. This is important in its silence of Paul not meeting on Sunday or telling them that he was preaching at someone's home on Sunday and that they could come and hear him teach.

G. **Acts 18:4, 11**: For a year and six months Paul reasoned in the synagogue of Corinth on the Sabbath day declaring to everyone that Yeshua was Messiah. He convinced many Jews and Gentiles.

Of the 11 Sabbath mentions in Acts, **six** declare that the Sabbath was still the day of assembly for all Christians. Luke wrote Acts in 64 AD or 34 years after the Resurrection and never mentions anyone meeting on Sunday, let alone that Sunday had replaced God's 7th day Sabbath. The Church has revised history in teaching that Sunday came into the Church immediately after the Cross and the Resurrection, but Scripture denies and rejects that false theology.

THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL AS TIME MARKERS

8. If the Law had been done away with, why does Luke, a Gentile (Col. 4:10-14f.),[43] use the Mosaic holy days of Leviticus 23 to mark Paul's times and events by? Why does God choose to fill all the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem with His Holy Spirit on the Mosaic holy day of Shavu'ot (the Feast of Weeks, Lev. 23:15-21; otherwise known in English as Pentecost)? In God's eyes the Law is still valid.

A. Acts 2:1: The Holy Spirit was first given to 12 Jewish Christians (Acts 2:14) in Messiah Yeshua on the Jewish holy day of Shavu'ot (Pentecost, Lev. 23:15-22). An additional 3,000 Jewish men (not counting women and children, as was the typical way of counting in Scripture) came to believe in Yeshua also on that day (2:41).

1) About 1,500 years earlier, at Mt. Sinai, God spoke the Ten Commandments to all Israel (Ex. 19:6–20:21). In other words, both God's Word or Mosaic Law, symbolized in the Ten, and His Spirit, were given to Israel on the same Jewish holy day: Shavu'ot or Pentecost.[44]

B. Acts 18:21: Paul had his hair cut in Cenchrea which was the Vow of the Nazarite (v. 18). In Ephesus he reasoned with traditional Jews about Yeshua being the Messiah. They ask him to stay longer, but Paul didn't consent (vv. 19-20). He tells them, 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem' (v. 21; KJV). It wasn't Easter as Scripture never mentions Easter, let alone commands Christians to keep it.

C. Acts 20:6: Luke notes that they 'sailed from Philippi *after the days of Unleavened Bread*.' This implies that they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread (and of course Passover, which begins the Feast; Lev. 23:4-8) in Philippi. They only left after the Feast concluded.

D. Acts 20:16: Paul sails past Ephesus, and doesn't stop in there, in order to be in Jerusalem for Shavu'ot (Pentecost). Luke writes, 'For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so he might not

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[42] Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), p. 493.

[43] See Luke the Jew? and The Feasts of Israel and the Church and Apostolic Christianity's Lifestyle.

[44] See Pentecost—Shavu'ot.

have to spend time in Asia. He was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for Pentecost' (20:16). This Mosaic holy day that scholars tell us that Paul did away with, seems to have been very important to the Apostle. Yes, it has tremendous significance for Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, but the point is that it's part of Mosaic Law.

E. Acts 27:9: 'The Fast' (Yom Kipor, the Day of Atonement, the only biblical fast in Scripture and an annual Sabbath; Lev. 23:26-32) is used by Luke to declare that it was unsafe to travel by ship from Fair Havens, Crete (vv. 7-8) after that day.

1) This Mosaic holy day occurs from late September to early October, according to the Gregorian calendar, but always on the 10th day of the 7th Hebrew month. Most likely, it was late October or early November when they sailed, both from the way Luke writes ('because the Fast was already past'), and because mid to late November would begin the time when it was dangerous to sail in the Mediterranean Sea.[45]

2) The mentioning of the Fast, as a way of alerting the reader to the inadvisability of travel by sea after it, as well as Luke's use of the Sabbath day, is particularly significant because Luke doesn't even give his reader (Gentile Theophilus)[46] the actual biblical name of the Fast (the Day of Atonement), and Luke is a Gentile.[47] This unusual way of determining that it wasn't safe to travel by sea reinforces that Paul, Luke and Theophilus kept not only the Fast, but the other Jewish holy days as well. Luke could just as easily have written that it was getting into late autumn and it was unsafe to travel. His Gentile audience would certainly have understood that.[48] Why would a Gentile Christian such as Luke, reckon time in his book for Gentiles, by specific Jewish terms and holy days unless he too was keeping the Law of Moses?

PAUL—PERSECUTED FOR MESSIAH

9. Paul's times of suffering and persecution for his Messiah reveal a man who was totally dedicated for his Lord:

A. Acts 9:3-19: Saul meets Messiah Yeshua on the road to Damascus. He's blinded by the Light and realizes that he was very wrong about Yeshua.

B. Acts 9:29: Jerusalem—Hellenist Jews want to murder Paul. Perhaps these are some of the very same men who had stoned Stephen and who thought that Saul was betraying them?

C. Acts 13:50: Antioch in Pisidia (13:14) modern day central Turkey (not the Antioch of Acts 15:22, which is in modern day Syria). Paul and his friends are driven out.

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[45] James B. Pritchard, *The Harper Atlas of the Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987), p. 172. "Uncertain weather made sea travel risky" (from) "15 September" (to) "10 November," but from "11 November" (to) "10 March, because of short days, dense cloud cover, poor visibility and strong winds" was also dangerous "and the seas were closed."

[46] Theophilus is a Gentile, which reveals that all Gentile Christians were keeping the Feasts of Israel in the days of the Apostles. Some Christians, desperate to understand how Luke could write to Theophilus about a Jewish or Mosaic Law holy day, say that Theophilus was a Jew and that's why Luke could "kept time" by the Feasts of Israel. Theophilus wasn't a Jew though, which reveals that all Christians were keeping the Feasts of Israel, and not Easter or Xmas. See Theophilus—High Priest of Israel?

[47] In Col. 4:11 Paul writes of those who were with him "of the circumcision" who believed, and then he speaks of Gentile Christians in vv. 12-14, in which he includes Luke. See Luke the Jew?

[48] Both the book by his name (*Luke*), and Acts, are written to Theophilus, a Gentile (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). Some think Theophilus to be a Jew, but he's not. See Theophilus—High Priest of Israel?

1) Acts 14:5: Iconium, about 120 miles (195 kilometers) southeast of Antioch in Pisidia. Some men planned to stone Paul there.

2) Acts 14:19: Lystra, a town about 10 miles (16 kilometers) south of Iconium: Paul was stoned and left for dead.

3) Acts 14:21: Iconium, Lystra and Antioch: Paul returns to the very places where he was stoned and persecuted, to strengthen the disciples there.

D. Acts 15:39: Antioch, north of present day Lebanon—Paul and Barnabas have a sharp disagreement about taking John Mark with them. Paul takes Silas and Barnabas takes John Mark and they both go on their separate ways.

E. Acts 16:19-20: Philippi, in ancient Macedonia, present day northeastern Greece—Paul and Silas (seen as Jews) were dragged by a Gentile crowd to the marketplace, stripped of their clothes (v. 22), beaten up (v. 23),[49] jailed and put in stocks (v. 25). All this because Paul had cast out a python spirit from a Gentile slave girl.[50]

F. Acts 17:13: Berea, west of Philippi in modern Greece—Some unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica (17:1, 5-6, 8, 10) follow Paul to Berea and stir up the crowds against him there.

G. Acts 18:12: Corinth, Greece—Unbelieving Jews led by Sosthenes bring Paul before Gallio, proconsul of Achaia.

H. Acts 19:24: Ephesus, in present day western Turkey close to the Aegean Sea—Silversmith Dimetrius stirs up trouble, and Gaius and Aristarchus, traveling companions of Paul's (v. 29), are grabbed and the city is in an uproar for two hours.

I. Acts 20:1-3: Greece—Some unbelieving Jews plot to harm Paul after he had spent three months in Greece.

J. Acts 20:22-24: Miletus, a city on the western coast of modern day Turkey, just south of Ephesus—Having sent for the Elders of Ephesus (20:17) Paul tells them that 'the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that bonds and tribulations are waiting for me' (v. 23) in Jerusalem.[51]

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[49] Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 497. He states that 'they were given a severe flogging.'

[50] Delitzsch, *Commentary On The Old Testament, vol. 7: Isaiah*, p. 156, note 1: 'The *Mishna* Sanhedrin 65a gives this definition: "*Baal'ob* is a python, i.e. a soothsayer ('with a spirit of divination') who speaks from his arm-pit' (i.e. a ventriloquist), '*yidd'oni*, a man who speaks with his mouth."' Delitzsch says that *yidd'oni* was 'a prophesying or soothsaying spirit' (*puthone*, or *numa tu puthonos*; python or spirit of a python). This is similar to what is written in Acts 16:16 (spirit of a python; *numah puthona*). Many Bibles also translate it as a spirit of divination (NKJV, KJV, NASB, NRSV).

The Torah condemns to death any Hebrew with this spirit (Lev. 20:27). The Jewish Sages called this spirit, 'the much knowing' and Plato called it a demon (p. 156). 'These people…designated by the LXX' as 'ventriloquists, imitated the chirping of bats, which was supposed to proceed from the shadows of Hades, and uttered their magical formulas in a whispering tone.' Evidently, with this python spirit, the slave girl was able to communicate with the dead (as a necromancer) and was also able 'to prophesy,' making her masters much money.

Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons—The Full Hislop, 2nd American edition (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959; originally written about 1862, see p. 267), p. 311. Hislop says that the term 'python' comes from the word which means, 'to beguile' and that *Python* was seen as a powerful god among the gods; fighting, but losing to Apollo in Greece (and to Osiris in Egypt under the name of Typho (pp. 175-176).

Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 493-494, also writes that the 'Python spirit' was one of prophetic fortune telling or soothsaying, along with ventriloquism. He states that Apollo was believed to be 'embodied at Delphi in a snake, the Python' and that the slave girl 'was inspired by Apollo, the Pythian deity.' Here the two gods 'merge' into one. He also brings out that indeed, she was a slave girl (p. 493, note 104) as does the NKJV, NRSV and NASB. The KJV wrongly calls her 'a damsel.'

K. Acts 21:4: Tyre, a city on the western coast of modern day Lebanon—Jewish and Gentile Christians plead with Paul not to go to Jerusalem, sensing from the Holy Spirit that persecution awaits him there.

L. Acts 21:8-14: Caesarea, a city on the western coast of modern day Israel—In the home of the Jewish Christian Philip, one of the Seven (Acts 6:5; 8:5-12, 26-40), a Jewish Christian prophet by the name of Agabus (Acts 11:27-28) comes down from Jerusalem, takes Paul's belt, ties his own hands and feet up with it and prophesies that Paul would thus be bound by the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem who would deliver him to the Gentiles. Paul's friends beg him not to go, but Paul is undeterred and declares that he is ready to lay down his life for his precious Messiah.

M. Acts 21:27: Jerusalem—Having entered the Temple to notify the Temple authorities (the priests) that his time of purification was almost over, some Jewish men from Asia grabbed him and began to beat him, stirring up a crowd of worshippers against Paul. They dragged Paul out of the Temple area (v. 30) and were punching him, and most probably kicking him and spitting on him, intent on murdering him. Claudius Lysias (22:26), the commander of the Roman troops stationed on the Temple Mount (v. 31), at the Fortress of Antonia in the northwest corner of the Temple Mount, heard the commotion, and running out with soldiers, he took Paul from the mob. (See also 23:27 for another account of this.)

1) Acts 22:24-25: Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the dungeon in the Fortress of Antonia—Paul is prepared by the guards to be whipped so the centurion can know what the Jews were beating up on him. It's stopped when Paul asks, 'Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen and not condemned?' They stop and report it to the centurion.

2) Acts 23:12: Jerusalem—More than forty Jewish men (v. 21) take an oath not to eat or drink anything until they murder Paul, who is being held by the Roman commander in Antonia on the Temple Mount. In full cooperation with the chief priests (v. 14) their plan is overheard by a nephew of Paul's (v. 16) who tells the commander Lysias (vv. 19-22). He immediately orders Paul to be taken to Gov. Felix (v. 26) at Caesarea (v. 23), the Roman administrative capital for Judah, Galilee and Samaria.

3) Acts 24:24: Caesarea, the city where the first Gentile, Cornelius (about 39-40 AD), came to Messiah Yeshua through Peter (Acts 10) about 40 AD—Now, 20 years later (about 60 AD) Paul is in prison. He will be 'bound' for two years under Gov. Felix, who will give way to Gov. Porcius Festus.

4) Acts 26:1-21: Caesarea—before Festus, King Agrippa and other notables Paul relates how the Jewish mob at the Temple (21:27-34) had tried to murder him, but that he hadn't done anything worthy of death.

5) Acts 27:13-34, 33-36: Somewhere lost in the Mediterranean Sea—Paul and his friends, along with other prisoners, sailors and soldiers, are driven by a gale force wind for 14 days with no way to determine where they are or if they'll even survive (v. 20).

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[51] With the Elders from Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38) Paul tells them that he spoke the whole counsel of God to them, not holding back anything and so, spoke to them in a similar manner as Moses did with Korah (Num. 16:15), and Samuel had done with Israel (1st Sam. 12:3). Paul tells them that he is free from their blood. This is also an echo of what Yahveh tells Ezekiel, that if the prophet didn't tell the people all that God spoke to him concerning an evil man, God would hold Ezekiel responsible for the man's death, but if Ezekiel obeyed God and told him, he would be free of guilt in the man's death (Ezk. 33:1-9). Paul also tells them that vicious wolves will ravage the Flock and *false teachers will arise from within their very ranks* to deceive and lead away the Flock (Acts 20:29; see also 1st Tim. 4:1-2; 2nd Peter 2:1-3). Here we have an insight or prophetic word into what would happen to the Flock of God concerning the Roman Catholic Church's deception, that the Law of Moses had been done away with (cf. Daniel 7:25).

a) No one eats during that time (v. 21, 33-34).

b) The Apostle stands up and reprimands them for not listening to him and staying in Fair Havens for the winter (vv. 1-4; 8-12; 21). He then says that God will save them, an angel of God having told Paul that none would die and Paul relating that to them (vv. 22-24).

c) The storm had driven them directly west in what appears to be a straight line on the map, to the island of Malta (28:1). If it had been perfect sailing weather they couldn't have gotten there any faster.

d) Once on the island, a viper bites and attaches itself to Paul who shakes the deadly snake off his hand. Paul suffers no ill side effects and everyone is amazed.

e) After three days under the care of an influential citizen named Publius, Paul prays for, and saves the life of, Publius' father, who was dying (vv. 7-8).

f) Malta is just south of Sicily and Italy, the place the ship was destined for. Paul had to be in Rome to witness to Caesar and many others (19:21; 23:11). The Lord's hand had divinely guided the ship through the storm. What a lesson for us in trusting Him in the storms of our lives.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST PAUL

10. The accusations leveled against the Apostle Paul reveal that anyone who is consecrated to Yeshua and "on Fire" for Him, will eventually have slanderous lies spoken about them:

A. Acts 16:21: Philippi, Macedonia, present day northern Greece—Having just cast out a python demon spirit from a slave woman who brought much profit to her masters (v. 16), Paul and Silas are seized by a mob, instigated by her masters. They are brought before the chief magistrates as Jews who were turning the city upside down (v. 20) with the charges of 'proclaiming customs which are not permitted for' the Philippians to 'accept nor do' as Romans. Proclaiming Jesus as the Savior and King of Israel would have gotten him in trouble because there was only one king in the Roman Empire and that was Caesar.

B. Acts 17:7: Thessalonica, Greece—Both Jews and Gentiles accuse Paul of coming against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Yeshua.

C. Acts 18:13: Corinth, a city in central Greece—Before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, Sosthenes, an unbelieving Jewish man of prominence, accuses Paul, saying 'This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the Law.'[52] It's a general catch-all ambiguous charge with no way of knowing what Sosthenes was really speaking about, but most likely, that Jesus was God the Son and Jews didn't see God as having a Son, and that would have been considered blasphemy.

D. Acts 19:23-27: Ephesus—Dimetrius the silversmith accuses Paul of preaching against his gods in all Asia (19:26, modern day Turkey), especially the great goddess Artemis (sometimes written as Diana). In 17:29 Paul spoke to the Athenians that gods of gold and silver, etc., aren't befitting for the God who made the Heavens and the Earth. They must have loved that :) All the world was pagan and worshipped many gods and goddesses.

E. Acts 21:21-26: Jerusalem—James (Jacob or Yakov in Hebrew), the half brother of Yeshua, and now the Nasi or Prince of all the Jews in Jerusalem (not president, as most English translation

[52] What could this mean? Was Paul saying that the Law of Moses was no longer in effect? What they said was that Paul was allegedly wanting Jews to worship God in a manner that went against what *they* thought about the Law. This could be something like Yeshua being the Messiah, the Son of God. See Yeshua—God the Son.

have) who believe in Yeshua, relates to Paul the false accusations they had heard about Paul. What had they heard?

1) He said that Paul had apostatized from the Law of Moses. Apostasy is the Greek word for v. 21, and means Paul had fallen away from God and Mosaic Law. It was a false accusation.

2) That Paul was teaching the Jews outside the Land of Judah not to circumcise their sons or to follow the Law. Another false accusation.

3) Yakov suggested to Paul that he take the Nazarite Vow to dispel the falsehood of the accusations. Note well, Paul's willingness to follow Yakov's suggestion: "Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the Temple to announce the expiration of the Days of Purification, at which time an animal sacrifice should be made for each one of the five men" (including Paul; Acts 21:26).

a) The taking of the Nazarite Vow by any Jew was the epitome of declaring that the God of Israel *and* His Law were their chief desire. The accusations against Paul, that he broke the Law and taught others to do so, is refuted by Luke every chance he gets (at least eight times in the Book of Acts) as was brought out in section 6 (*The Law and Paul in Acts*, p. 8f.).

F. Acts 21:28: Jerusalem, the Temple Mount—Accusations by Jews from Asia (present day Turkey where Paul did much of his ministry in cities like Ephesus, Lystra, Iconium, Derbe). They accuse Paul of 'teaching all men everywhere against the (Jewish) people, the Law (of Moses), and this Place (i.e. the Temple)' and that Paul had brought a Gentile into the Temple area that was reserved for only Jewish men, thus defiling the Temple (in their eyes).[53]

1) Paul hadn't brought any Gentile into the forbidden area, and this charge, as well as all the others, were insidious lies. It was designed to enrage the emotions of the Jewish people at the Temple who would, of course, be very offended.[54]

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[53] The accusations against Paul (that he said things against the Jewish people, the Law and the Temple, and that he had brought a Gentile into an area of the Temple where only Jews could go), is similar to the false and contrived charges against Stephen (Acts 6:13), that he spoke, 'against this Holy Place (i.e. the Temple) and against the Law.' That these charges were inherently false is seen in that the men from the Synagogue of the Freedmen (6:9-11), made up of Alexandrian and Asian Jews, etc., '*secretly induced men*' to 'witness' against Stephen. The charges were generalizations; there were no specific charges that were brought that pertained to breaking Mosaic Law. It seems that they all stemmed from the teaching that Yeshua was the Messiah.

It's interesting to note that the false charges against Paul were also brought by Jewish men from Asia, perhaps some of the same ones that had accused and murdered Stephen? In Paul's defense before King Agrippa and Tertullus, who represented the High Priest of Israel, Tertullus, accuses Paul of desecrating the Temple (24:6). It seems that this was a common accusation designed to arouse the anger of the ones who heard it. Paul, *in rebuking the falsehood of the charge*, states that the real reason they were angry was because he proclaimed Yeshua, *whom they had crucified* (26:21), but who had risen. Interestingly enough, the false charge against Paul *didn't* speak of Paul 'doing away with the Law.' which is astounding in its absence if Paul taught "No Law!" Also, the High Priest was given many chances by God to change his mind, as Peter and John also brought Yeshua the Messiah to him (and the other chief priests), and they too, were enraged against Peter and John for proclaiming Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah; Acts 5:30-33).

[54] There are some who raise the theological conundrum that the Jewish believers (Acts 21:20) kept the Law, but that the Gentile Christians didn't have to. This foolish position builds an insurmountable theological wall between Jewish and Gentile Christians for both belief and practice in the same Christ. If breaking the Sabbath was a sin for the Jewish Christian, but not for the Gentile Christian; if eating pork was a sin for the Jewish believer, but not for the Gentile believer; if not keeping Passover was a sin for the Jew, but not for the Gentile, how could they even assemble together or meet for fellowship meals or assemble for holy days? The Law is either for all of us, or it's for none of us. The Law, in Acts, is *always* upheld by Luke (see Acts 21:20, and also section 6, *The*

G. Acts 24:5: Caesarea, before Gov. Felix—by the High Priest, some Jewish Elders and a Jewish orator-lawyer named Tertullus (vv. 1-2, 9). Tertullus said that Paul was 'troublesome and inciting riots among all the Jews throughout the world, and was a leader of the' (heretical) 'Jewish sect of Nazarenes.[55] Also, he tried to desecrate the Temple.' It's interesting that nothing is said about an alleged nullification of the Law of Moses, a very serious charge that would have readily been brought up, if Paul had been teaching that, either in Jerusalem, Corinth, or Antioch, etc.

H. Acts 25:2-3: Jerusalem—the Chief Priests and leaders of the Jewish people speak to Gov. Festus and beg him to let Paul be brought to Jerusalem. They lie and say that they want to question him, but intend to have him murdered along the way.

1) Acts 25:7: Caesarea—the Jewish leadership before Gov. Festus brings many 'serious charges against Paul.'

I. Acts 25:18-19: Caesarea—Gov. Festus talks to King Agrippa (v. 14) and says that the accusation against Paul concerned 'issues about their own (Jewish) religion concerning a certain Yeshua having died, 'whom Paul said was alive.' Festus never says that Paul denied the validity of the Law of Moses, nor was it a charge against him by the Jewish authorities.

1) Acts 25:24-26: Caesarea—Gov. Festus declares to King Agrippa and the prominent men of Caesarea that the Jewish leadership in both Jerusalem and Caesarea wanted Paul's death, but that he had found nothing worthy of death. Seeing how 'unreasonable' it seemed to him to send Paul to stand trial before the Emperor, with no criminal charge against him, Festus asks King Agrippa to listen to Paul to determine what he might write to the Emperor concerning the charges against him. After listening and almost being persuaded to become a believer, Jewish King Agrippa says that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of imprisonment (26:31-32).

a) If Paul preached against the Law, as the Church teaches, King Agrippa wouldn't have said that. To preach against Mosaic Law in Judah or Lystra would have been a serious violation of Roman authority because the Law of Moses was the 'law of the land,' for the Jewish people, and Rome allowed it to be in effect for Jews (except for the administering of capital punishment).

b) In other words, if Paul had taught that the 7th day Sabbath had been done away with, he could very well have been brought up on criminal charges against Rome for fostering instability among the Jewish people, especially in Judah, which was part of the Roman Empire. Every authority though, that questioned Paul, said what Lysias thought about him—that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or chains (Acts 23:27-29). This too, reinforces that Paul didn't 'do away with the Law of Moses.'

Law and Paul in Acts, p. 8f.). The keeping of the Law is not against Paul's theology, as is also evident from his own writings (Rom. 3:20b, 31; 7:7, 12, 14, 16, 22, 25; 8:7; 1st Cor. 5:6-8; 7:17-19; 9:8-9; 14:34; 16:8). There are many who *specifically* uphold the Law in the New Testament (Mt. 5:17-19; 19:17; James 2:8-11; 4:11; 1st Jn. 3:4; 5:3; 2nd Jn. 1:6; Rev. 12:17; 14:12). The Church's position, that the Law has been done away with, is false and a disgrace to all theologians and pastors who present it as such (1st Tim. 4:1-2; 2nd Pet. 2:1-3). See Romans 3:20—The Full Knowledge of Sin, Apostolic Christianity's Lifestyle, The Feasts of Israel and the Church, A Letter to Pastors, Hebrews and the Change of the Law and Mosaic Law is Established—Romans 3:31.

[55] See The Nazarene Sect.

PAUL'S DEFENSE

11. Paul's defense against his accusers and his salvation messages reveal his love for Mosaic Law. There's nothing he says against Mosaic Law except that it cannot save anyone, which it was never intended to do. God gave the Law to Israel after they were saved, to be their divine lifestyle. It still functions that way, being amplified by Jesus (i.e. hate now equals murder, and love your enemy).

A. Acts 9:20, 22: Damascus, capital city of modern day Syria—To the Jews in the synagogues Paul demonstrates from the Tanach[56] that Yeshua is God the Son, the Messiah of Israel. This is his first proclamation and there's absolutely no hint that he spoke of the Law being done away with.

B. Acts 9:28-29: Jerusalem—Paul boldly proclaims Yeshua the Messiah among the Hellenist Jews, most likely the very ones who murdered Stephen (Acts 7).

C. Acts 13:14, 16-42: Antioch in Pisidia (central-southern Turkey), on a Sabbath day in the synagogue to many Jews—Paul gives a foundational, historical background of God's dealings with Israel: From Abraham to the Hebrews in Egypt, the Wilderness, the inheritance of the Promised Land, the Judges, King David and then, from the loins of King David, Messiah Yeshua.

1) Repentance was preached by John the Baptist and Yeshua is Israel's Messiah-Savior.

2) God raised Yeshua from the dead and He was seen by many witnesses.

3) The Promise (of the Messiah) has come!

4) There is forgiveness of sins 'in the Name of Yeshua,' even for sins not forgivable under the Law of Moses (vv. 38-39; e.g. murder and adultery).

a) One of the charges against Paul was that he said things 'against the Law of Moses.' This may well have meant what Paul just said about being able to be forgiven for sins that even the Law of Moses didn't offer forgiveness for.

5) Paul also told them not to be scoffers. Many Jews and Gentiles begged him to return the following Sabbath and speak again! Yet, nothing was said about the Law being done away with, and Paul never mentions "a Sunday meeting" the next day they could come to. Acts 13 takes place about 16 years after the Resurrection (46 AD); the Church teaching that Sabbath changed to Sunday immediately after the Resurrection. This is important because even though the event is about 16 years after the Resurrection, Luke doesn't write Acts until 64 AD, or 34 years after the Resurrection, and there's no mention in Acts of Sunday replacing the Sabbath because of the Resurrection or any other reason. Acts is the only divinely authorized history of the early Apostolic Church, and neither it nor any other Letter or Book speaks of Sunday replacing God's 7th day Sabbath (or of Easter or Xmas replacing the Feasts of Israel).

D. Acts 13:44-46: Antioch in Pisidia—The following Sabbath some unbelieving Jews blaspheme and Paul tells them that they have rejected eternal life and that he will go to the Gentiles (in Antioch) from now on.

E. Acts 14:15: Lystra in Turkey, to the Gentiles—After healing a lame man (14:8-10), the Gentiles want to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, thinking them to be the gods Hermes and Zeus 'come down to them' (14:12). To stop it, Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes (14:14) and cry out to them that they are human beings just like the Gentiles, and not deity, and that God made the Heavens and the Earth and gave them rain and food. Gentile sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as

[56] *Tanach* is an acronym for *Torah*, *Nivi'im* and *Kituvim* (Hebrew for the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Writings; i.e. the Hebrew Bible commonly called the Old Testament).

gods is narrowly averted.

F. Acts 16:13-15: Philippi, Greece/Macedonia—Paul proclaimed Yeshua to Jewish women on the Sabbath day and Lydia comes to her Messiah.

1) Acts 16:31: Philippi—To the jailer who wants to know how he can be saved, Paul and Silas tell him to believe in the Lord Yeshua and he and his whole household would be saved. They're immersed in water in the Name of Yeshua.

G. Acts 17:2-3: Thessalonica, Greece, to the Jews—Paul teaches that Yeshua was the Messiah from the Hebrew Scriptures and that He came to suffer and die and to rise from the dead, as the Jewish Scriptures proclaim.

H. Acts 17:22-31: Athens, Greece, to the Gentiles—The theme is that Yeshua was raised from the dead and will judge all men on Judgment Day.

I. Acts 18:4-5: Corinth, Greece, to Jews—Paul debated *every Sabbath* for a year and and a half, with the Jews in the synagogue that Yeshua was the Messiah.

1) Acts 18:9-11: Corinth—Yeshua the Messiah comes to Paul in a vision in the night and tells him to stay in Corinth and have no fear because He has many people in the city.

2) Paul teaches the Corinthians for one and a half years. In that time he would have taught and celebrated at least one Passover with them, and nowhere does he mention that the Gentiles didn't have to keep the Law; the Sabbath or the Passover. On the contrary, he exhorts the Corinthians to keep the Passover–the Feast of Unleavened Bread (1st Cor. 5:6-8).

J. Acts 18:18: Ephesus, Turkey, to unbelieving Jews—Paul spoke with them and they wanted him to stay longer. If Paul had been speaking of not keeping the Law, it's very doubtful those Jews would have been interested in hearing him again because the Jewish people know that God gave the Law to Moses. In other words, it's truly divine; not made made, like all other rules and laws of other religions.

K. Acts 19:1-7: Ephesus—Paul asks some men what baptism they were baptized into. After finding out it was John's, Paul proceeds to tell them of Yeshua. They believe and are filled with the Holy Spirit. Nothing about not having to keep the Law or the Sabbath here.

L. Acts 19:8-10: Ephesus, to Jews and then to Gentiles—For three months Paul argued persuasively about the Kingdom of God, and then he taught in the school of Tyrannus for two years. Luke mentions nothing about Mosaic Law being done away with.

M. Acts 22:1-23: Jerusalem, the Temple Mount—To the Jewish mob that had violently beaten him, wanting to murder him, having believed the false accusations of some Jews[57] from Asia, Paul tells them in Hebrew (v. 2; 21:40)[58] of his past, before he believed in Yeshua, and how harshly he had treated the Jewish Christians (imprisoning many of them and consenting to the death of Stephen; Acts 7:58; 8:1).

1) Then Paul speaks of his vision on the road to Damascus and how he came to know Messiah Yeshua. Every one listens to him until he speaks about going to the Gentiles. The Jewish crowd is enraged and begins to curse him, throwing dirt up into the air along with tearing

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[57] ***Acts 24:14; 25:8; 26:21-23; 28:17*** all show Paul saying that he did nothing against the Law, and that the accusations of the Jews are false. Those Christians who say that Paul did away with the Law, accuse Paul of lying.

[58] Acts 26:14: Paul relates that Yeshua spoke to him in Hebrew. Are we supposed to think that Paul answered him in Aramaic? Of course not. The everyday language of both Yeshua and the Apostles was Hebrew. This is convincingly brought out by David Bivin and Roy Blizzard in *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Destiny Image Publishers, 2001). I present their points in my book, The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21, p. 18, note 75.

their clothes (v. 23) as a sign of their rage against him. Nothing though, in Paul's words indicates that he taught against the Law of Moses. They were upset because he went to the Gentiles with the Message of Life in Jesus; not that he spoke of Gentiles (or Jews) not having to keep Mosaic Law.

N. Acts 24:10-21: In Caesarea, before Governor Felix, Paul states, 'I went up to Jerusalem to worship' (at the Temple where animal sacrifice is the central reality). 'Neither in the Temple, nor in the synagogues…did they find me stirring up the crowd, nor throughout the city…I confess this to you, according to the Way which they call a (Jewish) sect, thus I serve the God of our Fathers,

1) *believing **all** things according to the Law* and Prophets,'

2) 'a resurrection to be of both the righteous and the unrighteous (cf. Daniel 12:1-2),

3) bringing alms to my nation ***and to offer (animal) sacrifice***, having been purified in the Temple.'

4) Paul said he believed in the resurrection of the dead (v. 21). Nothing is here to incriminate him of casting off Mosaic Law. On the contrary, Paul speaks of his belief in the Law and sacrifice, and this will only get stronger as he defends himself and speaks of the Message of Life in Messiah Yeshua, many times before Felix, then Festus, and once to King Agrippa.

O. Acts 24:24: Caesarea, before Gov. Felix and his Jewish wife, Drusilla—Paul speaks of Yeshua the Messiah and faith in Him, righteousness, self-control and Judgment Day, never once mentioning that he, as a Gentile, didn't have to keep the Law.

P. Acts 25:8: Caesarea, before Gov. Festus in response to the 'many serious charges' brought against him by the Jewish leadership (v. 7), 'Paul, defending himself, said, *'Neither against the Law of the Jews*, nor against the Temple, nor against Caesar have I sinned.'' Not only hasn't Paul 'done away with the Law,' but he continually says the opposite—he hasn't done anything against the Law of Moses.

1) If Paul was proclaiming a 'law free gospel' as F. F. Bruce wrote,[59] we certainly don't find it here toward the end of Paul's life (or anywhere else in Acts, and actually, nowhere in the New Testament). Paul's words concerning the Temple also reveal that contrary to many Christian scholars, believers being 'the new Temple' didn't stop Paul and all the Apostles from attending (and thereby giving their authority and credence to), the existing physical Temple in Jerusalem and its animal sacrifices, which they never came against. In this allegiance to the Temple, they followed their Master, who said it was His Father's House.[60] No one ever says it stopped being His Father's House after the Resurrection. Yeshua said that knowing full well that His Father and the Holy Spirit dwelt within Him. He could certainly have said that the physical Temple was only stones and mortar, but He didn't.

2) Paul appeals to Caesar and will be sent to Rome, thus walking out what Messiah Yeshua had told him earlier at Jerusalem before all this began (Acts 23:11). Paul would be a witness in Rome to the Emperor of the Roman Empire, as well as many other Gentiles and Jews.

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[59] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, p. 285. For an understanding on why being "a Jew to the Jews and a Gentile to the Gentiles" doesn't mean that Paul forsook Mosaic Law among the Gentiles, or didn't teach it to them, see The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21 p. 173, note 728, and also, 1st Cor. 4:16-17; 11:1; 2nd Cor. 12:18; Phil. 3:15-17; 4:9; 1st Thess. 1:6-7; 2nd Thess. 3:7, 9, which speak of Paul following Jesus and exhorting his Gentile Christians to "imitate" him.

[60] Luke 2:49: "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in *My Father's House?'"* (NASB, NIV and NRSV all use 'house' and not 'business' as the KJV does.) John 2:16: "and to those who were selling the doves He said, 'Take these things away! Stop making *My Father's House* a place of business!'"

Q. Acts 26:1-20: Caesarea, before King Agrippa, Queen Bernice, Gov. Festus and many of the prominent Gentile men and women of Caesarea, Jews as well as Gentiles (Acts 25:23)—Paul relates to King Agrippa how he had lived as a Pharisee, the strictest sect of the Jews (v. 5) and had been taught by renowned Rabbi Gamaliel, a respected member of the Sanhedrin (5:34; 22:3).

1) Paul declares that he had attained the Promise of the Father (vv. 6-7; i.e. the Messiah, the New Covenant, forgiveness of sin, the Holy Spirit and eternal life; cf. Is. 52:13-53:12; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezk. 36:24-27). He then asks why it's so incredible to believe that God raised someone from the dead, declaring that Yeshua of Nazareth was the One he had come against initially (vv. 9-11), but that on the road to Damascus he had met the Messiah (vv. 12; 9:2, 14; 22:5, 19-20). Paul says that Messiah came in a Light that blinded him for three days. Messiah spoke of how Paul was persecuting Him by coming against His (Jewish) followers, many of which Paul had placed in prison.

2) Paul then goes on to relate how Yeshua had chosen him to 'open the eyes of many Gentiles, turning them from the Darkness to the Light, and from Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and have an inheritance among' the Jewish Christians (vv. 16-18). No mention of the Law being nullified is mentioned by Jesus or Paul.

R. Paul summarizes his teachings, saying he witnesses to 'small and great' people, *'saying nothing* but what the Prophets and Moses said would take place—that Messiah would suffer and that by being the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim Light both to our people and to the Gentiles' (vv. 22-23).

1) At no point in Acts does Yeshua tell Paul that the nullification of the Law is part of the Message of Salvation, or what Paul should include it in his message. Paul never once even so much as hints that he teaches the Law's demise. Yes, some accusations are leveled at Paul (21:21, 28),[61] but these false charges are thoroughly refuted by Paul as he enters into a purification rite that would lead to the Nazarite Vow (22:23-24, 26-27). This most certainly declares that he kept the Law of Moses.[62]

S. Acts 28:17-20: Rome—Paul, bound in chains, declares before the prominent Jews of Rome that he is innocent of any wrong doing saying that he was accused 'for the sake of the Hope of Israel' (v. 20), and that he 'had done nothing against our people or the customs (read: Law) of our Fathers.' If Paul was responsible for 'doing away with the Law,' or not keeping the Sabbath day holy, or eating pig, he could hardly have said that.

T. Acts 28:23: Rome, in Paul's prisoner guest room in his rented house (v. 20)—Many Jews listened to Paul's last recorded salvation message in Acts. In it, Luke explains that Paul spoke of the Kingdom of God (v. 23), 'telling them about Yeshua from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.' Some Jews believed while others didn't (v. 24). After admonishing the unbelieving Jews (vv. 25-27) Paul tells them that the Gentiles will come to believe in Yeshua for salvation (v. 28). It further states that Paul stayed in that place for two years (v. 30) and "preached the Kingdom of God, and taught the things concerning the Lord Yeshua the Messiah" (v. 31). Nothing is mentioned about the Law of Moses being nullified for the Gentile or the Jew, either here, or anywhere else in Acts.

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[61] Most likely, the charge against Paul, that he did something against the Law (21:28), which was also coupled with 'against our people' and the Temple, meant that Paul preached that Yeshua, *a dead man*, was the Messiah of Israel, a concept that would be hard for any people to hear. It also may have been linked with Paul's assessment of Yeshua being God the Son, another concept that would have been difficult for many Jews to accept. Declaring that Paul had come 'against the Law' is a very nebulous and frivolous accusation.

[62] See The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21, p. 157f.

THE BOOK OF ACTS AND THE LAW

Luke presents Paul as a very observant Jew, a keeper of the Law of Moses, who believed in Yeshua of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel and God the Son, but there are some scholars who disparage and count as worthless what Luke writes in Acts about Paul, specifically Paul's view of the Law and his taking of the Nazarite Vow, twice. They foolishly say that Luke 'made it up.' This is because 'Luke's Paul' is not 'their Paul' whom 'they know did away with the Law.' It's their interpretation of what the Apostle writes, in some of his letters concerning the Law and salvation, that they don't understand, but how can we blame them? The Church has taught for 1,900 years that the Law was done away with. They point to Paul, in a few of his letters, to justify their theological stance, but I believe that Paul would say to them what he said to his Jewish brethren that day in Rome:

> "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the Prophet to your Fathers, saying, 'Go to this people and say, 'You will keep on hearing, but you will not understand, and you will keep on seeing, but you will not perceive, for the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them.'" (Acts 28:25-27)

Acts is a very trustworthy document. Luke has faithfully recorded the events and the kernel of the speeches in Acts, including Paul's. Two of the greatest scholars of the last one hundred years—F. F. Bruce and I. Howard Marshall, along with notable scholar David Williams, confirm this. None of these men uphold Mosaic Law for Christians today and so, no one can accuse them of furthering their own theological agenda when they speak of the validity of Acts and specifically of Luke's Paul. F. F. Bruce writes,

> 'even if there are aspects of the real Paul at which we might scarcely guess if we did not have his letters, the picture of him that Luke gives is ineffaceable.[63] And in giving us this picture, limited though it may be, Luke has made a great, indeed, a unique contribution to the record of early Christian expansion. His narrative, in fact, is a sourcebook of the highest value for the history of civilization.'[64]

Bruce also states that without Acts we would be at the behest of those who denigrate the Jews and the God of Israel. He states that the,

> 'importance of Acts was further underlined about the middle of the second century as a result of the dispute to which Marcion and his teaching gave rise. Marcion of Sinope was an exceptionally ardent devotee of Paul who nevertheless misunderstood him. About AD 144 he promulgated at Rome what he held to be the true canon of divine scripture for the new age inaugurated by Christ. Christ, in Marcion's teaching, was the revealer *of an entirely new religion*, completely unrelated to anything that had preceded his coming (such as the faith of Israel documented in our Old Testament). God the Father, to whom Christ bore witness, had never been known on earth before: he was a superior being to the God of Israel, who created the material world and spoke through the prophets. Paul,

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[63] J. M. Sinclair, General Consultant, Diana Treffry, Editorial Director, *Collins English Dictionary*, Fourth Edition (Glasgow, Scotland: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), p. 787. Ineffaceable means, 'incapable of being effaced; indelible.' In other words, as the Mafia might say, Luke's Paul couldn't be 'rubbed out.' What Paul says in Acts reflects what the Apostle actually thought and said.

[64] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, p. 16. Bruce quotes Tertullian (p. 14, note 58) as having said of the Book of Acts that, '*Those who do not accept this volume of scripture can have nothing to do with the Holy Spirit*, for they cannot know if the Holy Spirit has yet been sent to the disciples, neither can they claim to be the church, since they cannot show when this body was established or where it was cradled' (Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 23).

> according to Marcion, was the only apostle who faithfully preserved Christ's new religion in its purity, uncontaminated by Jewish influences. The Old Testament could have no place in the Christian canon. The Christian canon, as promulgated by Marcion, comprised two parts: one called The Gospel (a suitable edited recension of the third Gospel), and the other called The Apostle (a similarly edited recension of Paul's nine letters to churches and his letter to Philemon).'[65]

It seems that many in the Church have misunderstood Paul, just like Marcion, and even if they don't faithfully adhere to every jot and tittle of Marcion's belief, they nevertheless convey in their teachings, thoughts and actions that they are a different religion than the Jews, and not just an offshoot or sect of what God gave to Israel at Mt. Sinai. Bruce goes on to comment on Marcion, saying that the leaders of the ancient congregations felt compelled to define the canon of Scripture with greater clarity, to ensure the true promulgation of God's Word:

> 'For them, The Gospel comprised not one document only but four, and those four included the full text of the one which Marcion had published in mutilated form. For, The Apostle included not ten but thirteen Pauline letters, and not Pauline letters only but letters of other 'apostolic men' as well. And, linking The Gospel and The Apostle was now seen to have greater importance than ever, for not only did it validate Paul's claims but it validated the authority of the original apostles; those whom Marcion had repudiated as false apostles and corruptors of truth as it is in Jesus. The position of Acts as the keystone in the arch of the Christian canon was confirmed.'[66]

Bruce writes that Luke's vindication of Paul as a true Apostle in Acts was not the primary purpose of his writing, but that,

> "Luke does in passing, show that Paul's commission was as valid as Peter's, and that both men were equally faithful to their commission. But these secondary aspects of his work acquired special importance in the second century, in view of the Marcionite's tendency to claim Paul peculiarly for themselves, and also in view of tendencies in other quarters to play down Paul's record in the interests of Peter's or James's. Tertullian, for example, points out the inconsistency of those sectarians (the Marcionites in particular, no doubt) who rejected the testimony of Acts but appealed so confidently to the unique authority of Paul. 'You must show us first of all who this Paul was,' he says to them. 'What was he before he became an apostle? How did he become an apostle?'"[67]
>
> 'Paul in his letters gives his own answer to such questions, but for the independent corroboration one would naturally appeal to Acts, when once that work had been published. But this the Marcionites could not do: Acts did vindicate the claims made by and for Paul, indeed, but since it simultaneously vindicated claims made by and for Peter, its testimony was unacceptable. Acts shows that Peter and the rest of the Twelve were true and faithful apostles of Jesus Christ (which the Marcionites denied).'[68]

Those who say that Acts cannot be trusted as a faithful witness to what it records about Paul are part of the family of Marcion, whether they know their distant relative or not. They deserve no special attention from us concerning their negative appraisal of Acts, especially and because Acts upholds the Law of Moses at every level and reveals the Apostle Paul walking in the Law, that they think he did away with. Bruce specifically sees Paul as Torah observant, even though Bruce doesn't understand it. He says,

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[65] Ibid., p. 4.

[66] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[67] Ibid., p. 14.

[68] Ibid.

> 'Christianity' for Luke is, 'no innovation but the proper fulfillment of Israel's religion. He is at pains to present Paul as a loyal and law-abiding Jew. This comes out particularly in the speeches made by Paul in his own defense in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome.[69] In those apologetic speeches, then, Paul claims to believe everything in the law and the prophets and to have done nothing contrary to Israel's ancestral customs.[70] The one point at issue between him and his accusers is the resurrection faith: by this he means the faith that Jesus rose from the dead…Jesus' resurrection is for him the confirmation of the Jews' national hope.'[71]

F. F. Bruce could not find the Paul of the Church in the Book of Acts and is honest enough to say what he did find. It didn't change his perception of Torah for Christians today, but he indirectly acknowledges that the Law is for every Christian. If Paul continued to walk in Torah until the end of his life, how can anyone think that it's wrong for Christians today, especially when Paul himself urged the Gentiles to 'imitate' or to 'follow' him as he followed Christ?[72]

I. Howard Marshall also believes the Book of Acts to be a trustworthy document, but first he states that Luke has taken a lot of harsh criticism because of his presentation of Paul as one who walked in the Law of Moses. In speaking of E. Haenchen's 'mammoth commentary on Acts,' Marshall writes,

> 'Anyone who may have thought that R. Bultmann represented the ultimate in historical scepticism in regards to the New Testament was in for a shock…The result was that Luke's historical accuracy was apparently torn in shreds; the narrative was claimed to have little basis in tradition, and to be full of historical inconsistencies and improbabilities, and to be basically the product of the fertile mind of a historical novelist with little or no concern for such tiresome things as facts.'[73]

Marshall, from a number of authoritative sources though, refutes Haenchen's claims and declares that Luke's historical background was extremely accurate:

> 'One of the major contributions of Ramsay to Lucan study was his demonstration that on matters of detailed historical background Luke shows remarkable accuracy.'[74]

In citing the work of A.N. Sherwin-White, Marshall again speaks of Luke's accuracy and reliability. Acts demonstrates, he says,

> 'that for the most part Luke portrays the first-century Roman scene accurately. The conclusion to be drawn is that if Luke is right about the details of the story, he is likely also to be right about the main episodes.[75]

Marshall goes on to write that although the speeches in Acts were not verbatim, as no one had tape recorders in that day, they are nevertheless accurate portrayals of what Peter, Paul, and the rest spoke:

> 'British scholarship has in general defended the view that the various speeches placed in the mouths of Peter, Paul and others were, if not verbatim accounts of what was actually said, at least compositions based on tradition and expressing the structure and the details of the earliest Christian preaching.'[76]

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[69] Acts 22:3-21; 23:6; 24:10-21; 25:8, 10-11; 26:2-23; 28:17-20.

[70] Acts 24:10-21; 25:8; 26:1-20; 28:17-20.

[71] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[72] 1st Cor. 4:14-17; 11:1; 2nd Cor. 12:18; Phil. 3:15-17; 4:9; 1st Thess. 1:6-7; 2nd Thess. 3:7, 9.

[73] Marshall, Acts, p. 35.

[74] Ibid., p. 36.

[75] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

In other words, we may not know the full extent of what was literally spoken, but we can be sure that we have the substance of what was said. In other words, what was spoken by Paul in Acts about the Law is more than enough to establish that Paul kept the Law of Moses. In zeroing in on the Church's 'problem' (Paul's Torah observance) Marshall writes:

> 'It is this point, perhaps more than any other, which has led to skeptical estimates of the historical value of Acts. The case against Luke is summarized in an essay by P. Vielhauer which argued that Luke's presentation of Paul's attitude to natural theology, to the Jewish law, to Christology and to eschatology was quite inconsistent with the picture that we get from Paul's own letters.[77] This article has had an extraordinary influence in persuading scholars of the unhistorical character of Acts. In fact, however, the case has been strongly criticized, and in our opinion convincingly destroyed, in a brief discussion by E. E. Ellis.[78] Some general observations by F. F. Bruce confirm the point.[79] This is not to say that there are no points of tension between Luke's portrait of Paul and his own writings; it is to affirm that in our opinion *they are not so substantial* as to make us dismiss Acts as unhistorical,'[80] or false when it comes to what Paul says in it.
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> 'The effect of our…comments is to show that there is a strong case for regarding Acts as an essentially reliable account of what it reports.'[81]

A third scholarly witness to the faithfulness of Acts is David Williams. He says that without Acts we would be at a tremendous loss to understand many of the things that the Holy Spirit did in Jerusalem, Israel, Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and Rome. Williams declares:

> 'Acts is the only authentic record we have of the first years of the church's history.' And, 'if Acts had been lost there is nothing to take its place…*Acts is the necessary link between the Gospels and the Epistles*. The Gospels tell of the beginnings of Christianity, up to the point of our Lord's ascension. But if that were all we had, questions would abound. What was the sequel? What did the Lord do next? What became of his followers and his cause? The answer to these questions lie in Acts. Similarly with the Epistles: We find that there are apostolic letters addressed to churches in various parts of the Roman Empire. But if these were all we had, we would want to know when these churches came into existence, how they were formed, and by whom; and without Acts…there would be no answer to many of these questions.'[82]

What Luke writes about Paul's attitude toward the Law *is very accurate*. It's a powerful *refutation* to those who claim that we cannot 'take theology' from Acts, *and that Paul did away with the Law*. There's no instance of any believer in Acts defying the Law or speaking of its demise. If Acts is the actual history of the Holy Spirit's dealings with both Jews and Gentiles, and it is, how can anyone say that the Law of Moses is no more or that Gentiles don't have to keep the Sabbath day holy, etc?

Can anyone show us in Acts where the Law or the Sabbath are said to be done away with? Do the Apostles ever declare that the Sabbath has given way to Sunday, for any reason? There are those that might

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[76] Ibid., pp. 39-40, note 1: 'C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (London, 1936); F. F. Bruce, *The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles* (London, 1943).

[77] Ibid., p. 42, note 1: P. Vielhauer, *On the 'Paulism' of Acts*, in SLA, pp. 33-50. Cf. Haenchen, pp. 112-116.

[78] Ibid., pp. 42-43, note 1: E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London, 1974), pp. 45-47.

[79] Ibid., p. 43, note 2: F. F. Bruce, *Is the Paul of Acts the Real Paul?* BJRL 58, 1976, pp. 282-305. Cf. Hanson, pp. 24-27.

[80] Ibid., p. 43.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Williams, *Acts*, pp. 1-2.

bring up the alleged abrogation of the dietary laws because of Peter's vision in Acts 10, but his vision had nothing to do with food regulations, as I bring out in my article, Law 102, *Peter and the Pig*, page 2f. God was using the chief Apostle Peter to begin reaching out to the 'unclean' Gentiles with the Message of Life. The first Gentiles were now, approximately eight to ten years after the resurrection, about to come into the Kingdom of the Jewish Messiah. This was God's will. No one eats pig in Acts 10 or in Acts 11 where the Jewish believers in Jerusalem have no concern about a supposed Mosaic Law dietary change, but with Gentiles coming to their Jewish Jesus:

> "When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, 'Well then! God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life!'" (Acts 11:18)

Gentile inclusion into the Covenant People was the thing of amazement (Acts 10:28, 34-35, 44-48; 11:15-18). No mention is made here, or any other place in Acts, of the dietary laws being rescinded because of the Vision.[83] The Church's interpretation of the Vision in Acts 10 cannot be supported from the Word of God. They interpret the Vision literally, something that is never seen in any vision or dream of the Bible. For instance, Pharaoh's dream of cows eating cows spoke of famine in Egypt, not that cows actually ate other cows (cf. Gen. 41:1-20f.). The Church has projected their anti-Law bias in Acts Ten.

There is nothing in Acts that denigrates the Law, on the contrary, there are numerous places where the Law is strongly upheld by the one whom the Church declares to have done away with it, but in Acts, Paul couldn't have been more Law abiding and Law upholding (as well as Rom. 3:31; 7:1-14; 1st Cor. 7:19, etc.). Can anyone show us from Acts where the Apostles stopped worshipping at the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem? Or that Paul thought the Temple was no longer valid as now 'we are the temple of God'?[84] Or that he was wrong for taking the Law's "most law" commandment, the Nazarite Vow, with its animal sacrifices (Num. 6:14)?

The Book of Acts upholds God's Law, His Temple and animal sacrifice in Jerusalem, with the Apostle Paul as the leader in both animal sacrifice and the Law of Moses. Can it be that the Church has misinterpreted Paul's Letters concerning his thoughts on Mosaic Law? Indeed, no doubt, is the case.

Stephen—the Temple and the Law

Most scholars and commentators though, stubbornly sticking to their distorted and false view of the matter, say that the *Apostles*, many years after the Resurrection, still didn't realize that the Law and Temple worship were no longer necessary or good! After stating that the Temple in Jerusalem would be superseded by the Body of believers, R. J. McKelvey writes,

> 'Some time elapsed, however, before the full ramifications of the work of Christ became apparent, and in Acts we find the apostles continuing to worship at the Temple of Jerusalem (Acts 2:46; 3:1ff; 5:12, 20f., 42; cf. Lk. 24:52). It appears that the Hellenistic Jewish party represented by Stephen was the first to discover that belief in Jesus as Messiah meant the abrogation of the order symbolized by the Jerusalem Temple (Acts 6:11ff.).'[85]

We should not be so quick to remonstrate the Rabbis because of their poor and false interpretations of God's Word, especially in relation to the prophetic suffering Isaiah Messiah texts. Here is a Christian scholar that is re-writing the Book of Acts to suit his theology.

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[83] See *Law 102* for other places in the New Testament that the Church uses to override the dietary laws, like what Jesus says that it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him (Mt. 15:11).

[84] 1st Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2nd Cor. 6:16 are the three cites where Paul speaks of believers being the Temple of God.

[85] J. D. Douglas, M.A., B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D., Organizing Editor, *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Part 3 (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998), pp. 1527-1528. R. J. McKelvey, author of the article on the Temple.

There's no mention in Acts, nor anywhere else for that matter, that it was wrong for the Apostles, including Paul, to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, or that animal sacrifice was wrong, or that the Apostles would later come to some 'greater understanding' that Temple worship and Torah keeping were not right.

Could it be that God's Holy Spirit forgot to have someone write that into the New Testament?[86] According to most Christian scholars like McKelvey, the answer is yes. How ironic that Church scholarship intentionally overrides God's Word on the subject. These Christian scholars are cousins of the ancient Jewish Pharisees. I call them Pharisaic Christians.

As for the alleged 'insights' of Stephen and his 'Hellenistic Jewish party,' Ben Witherington, after analyzing Acts 7, writes that Stephen *is not coming against either the Law* or the Temple. He was chastising the religious Jewish leadership *for failing to keep the Law* and the Prophets. He states,

> 'Clearly enough Stephen believes the Law, and indeed all of Scripture to be God's word, and so the ultimate indictment is that God's people have failed to keep it, including the prophetic portions which foretold the Righteous One. Stephen's speech is not Law or temple critical, it is people critical on the basis of the Law and the Prophets.'[87]

Witherington dismantles McKelvey's theology. Bruce and Marshall uphold the Law in Acts, even though they don't keep it or are even sympathetic to it. On the contrary, they believe the Law to have been done away with,[88] but this only confirms that Mosaic Law is for all Christians, by significant scholars who don't follow it. They have shown that even Paul, and of course all the other Apostles and believers, kept the Law of Moses throughout the Book of Acts.

Luke does us a tremendous service in reporting Paul's Torah observance. Most likely, this was done to help squelch the malicious rumors about Paul not keeping the Law. The inspired and authoritative Book of Acts is an incredibly reliable historical document that we must draw theology from. Those who say theology can't be taken from Acts need to reexamine Paul in the Light of the Word of God.[89]

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[86] Yeshua speaks of the Father looking for those to worship Him in Spirit and Truth, and that the time was coming when it wouldn't be possible to worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (Jn. 4:21-23), but this *doesn't negate* Temple worship, which is clear from Yeshua's words (Mt. 5:18), and the Acts of the Apostles (where they met daily in the Temple), and from Ezekiel's Millennial Temple (Ezk. 40-48), where Temple and animal sacrifice are reinstated. Yes, the Temple is gone now, but will return in the thousand year reign of Yeshua.

[87] Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 275.

[88] Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, p. 285, speaks of a 'law-free gospel.' He interprets Acts 10 as the 'abrogation of ceremonial food laws' (p. 206) saying that it actually began with Jesus declaring in Mark 7:14-19, 'all foods clean.' This is a misinterpretation of the text. The KJV rightly translates Mark 7:19, "Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, *purging*" (not cleansing) "all meats?' Just from Peter's words in Acts 10:14; 11:8 and 10:28, 34-35 we know that Peter *didn't think Yeshua had declared all food clean* in Matthew 15 or Mark 7.

Marshall, *Acts*, pp. 180-181, 198, misinterprets Peter's Vision and says that Peter would 'no longer distinguish between ritually clean and unclean foods.' For Acts 15:19-20 (p. 253) he states, 'the old rules of the Jewish religion no longer apply.' For why their understanding of the dietary laws (and the Law of Moses) is wrong, see *Law 102*.

[89] When Paul was given authority by the high priest to go to Damascus and arrest the Jewish believers, Scripture records that they were still in 'the synagogues of Damascus' (Acts 9:1-2). Acts Nine takes place about five to seven years after the resurrection and reveals that those who believed in Jesus were still going to the traditional synagogues. There are no churches mentioned. In Acts 22:19 (also 26:10-11) Paul speaks of going into every *synagogue* (in Jerusalem) and beating and imprisoning the Jewish believers.

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[90] This article was revised on Wednesday, October 22, 2025.