



MESSIANIC WORLD WIDE

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו
יהוה אחד ואהבת את
יהוה אלוהיך בכל לבבך
ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך

A Messianic Perspective

"There is nothing new under the sun" – Ecclesiastes 1:9.

Biblical Interpretation – God's Word is consistent and harmonious

Our perspective of the Bible determines how we interpret the Bible. A translator's perspective determines how he translates, and thus steers a reader's interpretation.

We submit a perspective of one unified Book of Instruction – Genesis to Revelation, from our Eternal Holy Creator. Its message is messianic from creation to the New Earth. The Torah (Pentateuch) is the foundational Word of God. The Prophets build upon the Torah with examples, applications, and clarifications. The Psalms exalt the Torah as glorious and beloved. Finally, the Apostles give further application and clarification, especially showing Yeshua to be the promised Messiah. With this perspective, we find all Scripture to be harmonious, without one portion superseding another. We further find God to be unchanging, all people to be judged equitably by their creator, salvation in all ages to be always by grace through faith that produces fruit, and one continuum of the church and its ordinances from Torah.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" – 2 Timothy 3:16.

"These (Bereans) were more noble . . . in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" – Acts 17:11-12.

At the time of these writings, "Scripture" referred to the *Tanach* – the Hebrew Bible; the Apostolic Writings were neither complete nor yet referred to as Holy "Scripture."

Modern dispensational dogma, that part of the Bible is a "New Testament" which supersedes an "Old Testament", leads to interpreting the Apostles words as new doctrine, with little regard for seeking older Biblical origins, backgrounds, and settings. Such dogma guides many translators, and thus their translations further solidify modern interpretations. The term "New Testament" was not applied to the Apostolic Writings until the Middle Ages. The New Covenant is defined in Jeremiah 31, not later by the Apostles.

Yahweh Elohim – The Eternal God of Grace and Judgment

In the Tanach (Torah, Prophets, and Holy Writings), the memorial Name of God – Yahweh, indicates His eternal nature. It is used when representing the Eternal as the Gracious-Merciful One. The name Elohim is used to represent the Almighty in His attributes of creator and judge of His creation.

"Yahweh declares, 'I will surely have mercy on him'" – Jeremiah 31:20.

"Elohim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" – Genesis 1:31.

“Elohim is a righteous judge, and a God Who has indignation every day” – Psalm 7:11.

The names are often used together – Yahweh Elohim (commonly translated “LORD God”), referring to the Creator Who is gracious and merciful in judging His creation. When man had reached his fill of corruption, then Elohim – God Who judges His creation, destroyed them; but Yahweh – God Who is gracious and merciful, granted grace to Noah.

“Yahweh Elohim made the earth and heavens” – Genesis 2:4 .

“Elohim said . . . ‘I am about to destroy them ’” – Genesis 6:13.

“Noah found grace in the eyes of Yahweh” – Genesis 6:8.

Our God has not changed from a strict law-dealing judge into a merciful savior. Rather, we may find in Him both attributes working in harmony, in the past, present, and future. He does not change. God has defined sin and righteousness, condemnation and salvation, from Adam until now, in similar terms.

Men died because of their sin from Adam to Moses, and men die because of their sin since the crucifixion of Yeshua.

“I, Yahweh, do not change” – Malachi 3:6.

“Yahweh Elohim is a sun and shield; Yahweh gives grace and glory” – Psalm 84:11.

“Sin is (present tense in the Apostles time) the transgression of Torah” – 1 John 3:4.

“Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam” – Romans 5:14.

God’s people – of all generations – are saved from their sins by the grace of Yahweh. Yeshua (Jesus) was so named because He represented the grace of Yahweh to save His people from their sins. The name “Yeshua” means Yahweh is Salvation.

“You shall call His name ‘Yeshua’, for He shall save His people from their sins”

– Matthew 1:21.

Elohim judged the earth once by water, in Noah’s day, and Elohim will judge the earth again, by fire, in the Messianic era. Sinners of our time should not think that God has changed since the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, for God will yet judge the nations.

“Elohim said (v.8) . . . never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh” – Genesis 9:15.

“By His Word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” – 2 Peter 3:7 (see also v.12).

Yeshua said, *“It will be more tolerable for the land Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you” – Matthew 11:24. “He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter” – 2 Peter 2:6.*

God’s Name “Yahweh” is also used relating to judgment of the enemy, when it is a matter of grace toward His own people. Nations fell when Yahweh gave the land of Canaan to Israel, and the nations of the world will fall when Yeshua returns to reign over the world with His chosen people.

“May Yahweh, the Judge, judge between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon”

– Judges 11:27.

Torah – God’s Instruction to man (commonly translated “Law”)

Adam walked with Yahweh Elohim in the Garden of Eden, and was given instruction (Torah) concerning God’s designed way of life, and concerning “good and evil”. But, through temptation by haSatan, man fell into sin, failing to put God’s Word above his own perceptions. Adam lost his spiritual life, and his offspring would be born spiritually dead. Adam lost Paradise, and we lost holiness: we cannot comprehend the magnitude of the loss.

“When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate” – Genesis 3:6.

Adam lost his spiritual life on that day: *“But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die” – Genesis 2:17.* He lost his physical life on that millennial day – 930 years later.

“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth” – Genesis 5:3.

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me” – Psalm 51:5.

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” – Ephesians 2:1.

God maintained a righteous line (that does not mean sinless), essentially through a priesthood of the firstborn. Adam lived almost until Noah, who later picked up the priestly line and carried it through the Great Flood. Noah’s life overlapped Abraham’s. Abraham lived through the dispersion of nations from Babel, and then God called him to begin the establishment of a people and place from which to disseminate His instruction to the nations.

Adam – AM (*Anno Mundi* / Year of the World) 1- 930

Noah – AM 1056 - (Great Flood at 1656) - 2006

Abraham – AM 1948 - (Dispersion from Babel at 1996) - 2123

The commandments were needed to define sin and righteousness, because fallen man had gotten so far away from understanding how to love Yahweh and neighbor.

“Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions” – Galatians 3:19.

“Through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” – Romans 3:20.

“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful” – Rom 7:12-13.

God’s instruction would now come in writing, because man had strayed so far from the way. Moses was chosen to receive the five books called “Torah”, though the term can refer to all of God’s instruction from Adam’s time, including the Prophets and Holy Writings. We would see Yeshua’s words as Torah also, though we are primarily using the term for the Books of Moses.

God’s instruction through Adam and the priestly line, through Moses and the Prophets, and through Yeshua and His Apostles, are not essentially different – not contradictory. This is not to deny changes for differing situations, such as changes in marriage rules as the population increased and man physically degenerated.

*“The Torah shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of Yahweh from Jerusalem”
– Isaiah 2:3, Micah 4:2.*

Salvation

From this perspective, we understand that a salvation by grace, through faith in Yeshua that produces Torah observance (good works), applies to people of every age, from Adam to Abraham to Moses to David to Paul and to us. Some looked forward and some look back to the offering of Messiah as redeemer.

The ancient Biblical character Job said, “As for me, I know that my redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth” – Job 19:25.

The Apostle Paul said to gentile converts, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” – Ephesians 2:8-10.

Animal offerings never took away sin. Properly performed, sin offerings displayed repentance and faith in the Messiah – either prophetically or as a memorial of the crucifixion and resurrection. Such ordinances display valid spiritual truths, whether before or after the crucifixion, and were always pictorial.

*“The Torah has a shadow . . .
For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” – Hebrews 10:1-4.*

Faith of some sort is the basis for every action. A professed faith in Messiah that produces no obedience to God is not real faith.

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead” – James 2:26.

The Church

Through a covenant with Abraham, God promised His people a redeemer, and a restoration to Paradise. When Abraham’s descendants were enslaved in Egypt, God delivered them, along with a multitude from the nations. God called this remnant of Abraham and the nations His church. It was set to be a light to the whole world. The faithless would be continually weeded out, and others brought in to the faith.

“I will establish My covenant between Me and you (Abraham) and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you” – Genesis 17:7.

“The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel” – Exodus 12:6.

“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness” – Acts 7:38.

“I will also make you a light of the nations, so that My Salvation may reach to the end of the earth” – Isaiah 49:6; compare Matthew 22:37-39.

“Some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them . . . they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith” – Romans 11:17, 20.

The term “church” did not originate in Apostolic times. It is a translation of (Gr.) *ekklesia*, which in turn is a translation, from the Septuagint, of (Heb.) *qahal*. The word *qahal* is commonly used in the Torah, sometimes translated “congregation”. This *qahal* is referred to in Acts as the “church in the wilderness”.

God did not forsake His covenant with Abraham to start a new religion called Christianity. Paul said that gentile believers are partakers of the Abrahamic Covenant. Yeshua said that He would build-up His church (which had long existed), and that the doors of death would never swallow it up – it will never die out, or need to be replaced.

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

“I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it” – Matthew 16:18

The Ordinances of the Church

God gave this church Torah (instruction): “love Yahweh and love your neighbor.” The instruction was subsequently presented on two tablets of stone: five commandments showing how to love Yahweh, and five showing how to love one’s neighbor.

“You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself”

– Deuteronomy 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-39.

Moses then wrote out 613 *mitzvot*, detailing how to fulfill the Ten Commandments.

The 613 *mitzvot* are Biblically divided into three groups: judgments, ordinances and statutes. The judgments are the generally understood moral laws; the ordinances are performances that display spiritual truths; and the statutes are rules for holiness with basis not inherently obvious. These were all given to the church for perpetuity.

Heb. mishpatim (judgments), edot (ordinances), and huqqot (statutes): note that these are inconsistently translated in many Bibles .

Yahweh redeemed ancient Israelites by a promised savior through faith, as they portrayed with the prophetic Passover, and Yahweh redeems us by Yeshua through faith, as we portray in remembrance with the Passover. Noah, Abraham, Job, and David were saved by grace through faith, and are used as examples throughout the Apostolic writings. Animal offerings never took away sin: they were prophetic pictures, demonstrating faith in a promised savior. The fulfilled pictures – like the Passover – have not lost their validity in showing us meaning concerning the crucifixion of Yeshua; and the yet-to-be fulfilled pictures – like the Last Trump of the Day of Trumpeting – have not lost their validity in portraying the future return of Messiah.

“The Torah . . . has a picture of things to come” . . . “It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” – Hebrews 10:1-4.

See article “Feasts and Holy Days” at www.messianic.ws .

The Holy Sabbath

Part of loving Yahweh is remembering to keep the Sabbath holy, as He declared from creation.

One of the *mitzvot*, showing an aspect of keeping the Sabbath holy, instructs the church to assemble (Leviticus 23:3) for worship on the Seventh day of the week (that is a specific day, not just one day out of seven).

See article “Sabbath is Messianic” at www.messianic.ws .

Paul’s Affirmation

Long after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Yeshua, the Apostle Paul affirmed his Torah observance. When falsely accused of teaching change from the Torah, he took a nazirite vow to show otherwise. At the completion of its time (a minimum of thirty days), he fulfilled the Torah (Numbers 6), shaving his head and bringing the required animal offerings to the Holy Temple!

“²⁰ And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; ²¹ and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. ²² What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; ²⁴ take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law . . . 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 the sacrifice was offered for each one of them” – Acts 21:20-26.

(Regarding verse 25 – see Acts 15 below.)

Common Objections Addressed

“He who turns away his ear from listening to the Torah, even his prayer is an abomination”
– Proverbs 28:9.

Matthew 5:17-20 – “Christ fulfilled the law”

“¹⁷ Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Yeshua came to “build up” the Torah – to perfectly perform and teach the *mitzvot**.

Unless our righteousness exceeds great personal attempts to “build up” the Torah – unless we have Yeshua’s righteousness imputed to us through faith, we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Yeshua fulfilled all Torah commandments that applied to Him. Commandments exclusively concerning women did not apply, and commandments and prophecies concerning His second coming as King (*Mashiach ben David*) did not apply to His first coming as suffering servant (*Mashiach ben Yosef*).

Yeshua did not come to “tear down” the Torah or the Prophets. Performing a mitzvot does not abolish it: being truthful does not abolish the commandment against lying.

Any believer who “tears down” the Torah, by practicing and teaching contrary to its least commandments, will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven.

One cannot practice and teach against its greatest commandments and be a real believer.

Not one of the smallest parts of the Torah will “pass away” or even change, until all of it is accomplished – when Yeshua returns and the present heavens and earth are “passed away”.

Not one “yod” will pass away: yod is the smallest letter, also the number ten – this could be translated: “not one of the ten will pass away”.

Not one small part of a letter will pass away – removing a small overhang on a Hebrew letter changes the letter, and thus the meaning of its word.

From ancient Hebrew and Greek texts of Matthew:

[Build up] Heb. *l’hashalom* – to make complete, whole, prosperous. Gr. *plaroo* – to make full, complete, build up.

[Tear down] Heb. *l’hafer* – to break, violate, annul. Gr. *kataluo* – to destroy, overthrow, empty, tear down.

This is the same word used in Matthew 26:61 and 27:40, referring to “tear down” the Temple, which yeshua said He would “raise up”.

[Pass away] Heb. *tbit* – ?. Gr. *Parerchomai* – pass away.

Matthew 23:1-4 – “Jews placed heavy burdens”

“¹ Then Yeshua spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, ² saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; ³ therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. ⁴ They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.’”

The “seat of Moses” is the Sanhedrin, the seat of *halachic* judgment. This refers to the court seventy-one judges of the Holy Temple, who made rulings concerning how people should walk (*halach*) to fulfill Torah, and who made civil and criminal judgments. In the first century AD, it was made up of “scribes and Pharisees”, some of whom purchased their positions – “seated themselves”, contrary to prescribed order.

“¹⁶ Yahweh therefore said to Moses, ‘Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone’”
– Numbers 11.

Yeshua did not fault their teachings, “all that they tell you do and observe”, but He faulted their hypocritical behavior, “do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them”

“¹⁰ You shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which Yahweh chooses; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. ¹¹ According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left. ¹² The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve Yahweh your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die” – Deut 17:10-12.

In matters of civil and criminal judgment, they put unbearable burdens upon those whom they found liable, but they would not grant relief for the oppressed. This is a matter frequently condemned by God through the prophets.

“⁹ Thus has Yahweh of hosts said, ‘Dispense true justice and practice kindness and compassion each to his brother; ¹⁰ and do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another’” – Zechariah 7:9-10.

“² The godly person has perished from the land, and there is no upright person among men. All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; each of them hunts the other with a net. ³ Concerning evil, both hands do it well. The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe, and a great man speaks the desire of his soul; so they weave it together” – Micah 7:2-3.

It should be noted that Torah observance is never to be considered a burden.

“⁸ And you shall again obey Yahweh, and observe all His commandments (mitzvot) which I command you today. ⁹ Then Yahweh your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for Yahweh will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰ if you obey Yahweh your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Torah, if you turn to Yahweh your God with all your heart and soul. ¹¹ For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach” – Deuteronomy 30:8-11.
“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not burdensome” – 1 John 5:3.

Acts 15 – “The four laws for gentiles”

“¹ Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ ² And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. . . . ¹⁹ ‘Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, ²⁰ but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. ²¹ For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.’”

Through a parable, Yeshua foretold that He would remove the authority of the Sanhedrin.

“⁴⁰ When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto those husbandmen?’ ⁴¹ They say unto him, ‘He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons’. ⁴² Yeshua said to them, ‘Did you never read in the scriptures, “The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?” ⁴³ Therefore say I to you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a company bringing forth the fruits thereof” – Matthew 21:40-43.

Yeshua specifically gave authority for making *halachic* judgments to His apostles. Binding and loosing is halachic judgment – judging what is disallowed and what is allowed, in order to be Torah observant.

“¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” – Matthew 16:19.

In Acts 15, we see the Apostles convening in Jerusalem, in order to make *halachic* judgments for new converts from idolatry. It was determined that such new converts should repent of their gross idolatries, and learn Torah in the synagogues every Sabbath. This was in contrast to the doctrine of the “circumcision” – a

Jewish group that tried to make total Torah observance a requirement prior to acceptance of a gentile convert (their meaning of circumcision representing observance of all of Torah).

There is no separate set of commandments for gentiles. Israel was given instruction (Torah) in order to be a light to the nations – to teach them to the world.

“The Torah will go forth from Zion, and the Word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. And He will judge the nations . . .” – Isaiah 2:3-4.

“And I will appoint you . . . as a light to the nations” – Isaiah 42:6.

This is a refutation of attempts to equate these apostolic rulings with the so-called Noachide Laws, which some perceive as a group of laws that are applicable to all men, in contrast to their view of Mosaic Laws. Noachide Laws are defined as prohibitions against idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and robbery, the positive command to establish courts of justice, and a seventh commandment, given to Noah, forbidding the eating of flesh cut from a living animal (Genesis 9:4).

Galatians – “Legalism”

This book should be viewed with the same perspective as the other Scriptures noted herein. Paul is teaching against the doctrine of salvation by works – self-righteousness (see Matthew 5 above). He does not teach antinomianism – tearing down the Torah. Rather, he says that by faith we establish the Torah!

“Do we then nullify the Torah through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Torah” – Romans 3:31.

Many commentators (even some translators) use the prejudicial terms “legalism” and “Judaizers”. These words never appear in the text. “Legalism” is commonly misapplied to Torah-observance, while “Judaizers” is commonly used to promote Christianity as a separate new religion.

In contrast, “lawlessness” is condemned throughout the Bible.

“Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness” – 1 John 3:4.

Colossians 2 – “Feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths”

“¹⁶ Therefore let no one condemn you in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day-- ¹⁷ things which are a shadow of what is to come; the substance being Messiah.”

Here is an explanatory paraphrase:

“Do not let anyone – Jew or Gentile – condemn you Gentile believers for Torah observance. Torah observance includes keeping God’s statutes (*kashrut* – food regulations). It also includes celebrating God’s ordinances – the Feasts, Biblical calendar, and Sabbath days. These observances are prophetic shadow-pictures of Yeshua; and Messiah Himself, who gave us this instruction, is the body casting the shadow.”

One popular translation reads: “for not celebrating certain holy days”, adding a negative to the Holy Writ. Another refers to “mere shadows”, denigrating God’s holy ordinances. Such translating adds to the general confusion.

Romans 10 – “Christ is the end of the Law”

“¹ Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. ² For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. ³ For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Messiah is the goal of the law, for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Again, we are dealing with the doctrine of salvation by works – establishing one’s own righteousness. This is not in accordance with Torah, which teaches salvation by grace through faith. The very goal of the Torah is Messiah, and faith in Him, to impute righteousness to everyone who believes.

Romans 14 – “All days alike”

“Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ² One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³ The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴ Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵ One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. ¹⁰ But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For it is written, "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD." ¹² So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this-- not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. ¹⁴ I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷ for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. ²⁰ Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. ²² The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.”

Firstly, this passage does not concern God's commandments; the duty to perform of God's commandments is not subject to personal whim. There was no argument in Apostolic days for eating things which God did not give for food (unkosher), or for the day set aside for worship to be changed from Sabbath to Sunday, much less making these all a matter of personal choice.

Secondly, it does not concern *halachic* judgments that are the domain of the judges; God demands that we follow these (Exodus 22:8, Matthew 23:2-3). Examples of halachic judgments are (1) determining the starting day of each month (and thus the Festival days), and (2) pronouncing penalties for criminal acts. These are not subject to personal whim.

The passage concerns matters of personal judgment. The issues have not changed much from then until now.

Some – who are weak in the faith, not being very familiar with God's Word – are vegetarians based upon their religious understandings. It is not a sin to eat meat, and it is not a sin to refrain from eating meat (excepting the Passover Lamb); we should not condemn anyone for doing things that God does not condemn. Some were concerned about eating meats from the market place, meats that might have been previously used in idol worship (1 Corinthians 10:25-29). Some people fast on various days for various reasons, some eat every day; (excepting *Yom haKippurim* / the Day of the Atonements – the only commanded fast day) fast days are a matter of personal decision, and they are not a basis for condemning anyone.

Some say that the Sabbath is a preferred day to engage in marital intimacy, some say that Sabbath is not a day to seek such personal pleasure, and still others say that every day is the same in that regard. There are no commandments concerning this issue, and Paul is saying that we should not condemn anyone for doing things that God does not condemn. Some say that marriages should be performed only on certain days of the week (like Tuesdays and Thursdays), and only in certain seasons of the year (not from Nisan 15 to Sivan 6 when reflecting upon counting the omer, or not from Tammuz 17 to Av 9 when commemorating the destruction of the Temple, or not from Elul 1 to Tishrei 10 during the days of repentance).

The issue is neither observing God's commandments, nor following halachic judgments. The issue is condemning others for their personal decisions that are properly within their realm.

Mark 7:18-19 – “Jesus declared all foods clean”

And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purging all foods?"

The statement is simply making a point of the obvious: whatever dirt is consumed with food is known to be eliminated by the digestive system.

The last clause is often mistranslated “*Thus He declared all foods clean*”. The Greek text does not say that “He declared” anything. In addition, a declaration changing *kashrut* laws would be inconsistent with the subject of the passage, which is eating things without washing: “*the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands*” – v.3-4. Peter did not know about any such supposed ‘change’ after spending years with Yeshua: “*I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean*” – Acts 10:14.

The Pharisees here were not pressing *kashrut* statutes upon Yeshua, which He would now abolish (before His crucifixion, no less?). The problem was that some Pharisees sought to publicly find fault with Yeshua, by putting their customs ahead of Biblical judgments. While hand washing is good, making it a requirement above providing necessary food was simply looking for an excuse to condemn Yeshua – which condemnation falls under the category of murder (See commentary [Y2-33](#) on Leviticus 13).

Acts 10 – Peter’s vision of Unclean Animals

⁹ On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰ But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; ¹¹ and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, ¹² and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ A voice came to him, ‘Get up, Peter, kill and eat!’ ¹⁴ But Peter said, ‘By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.’ ¹⁵ Again a voice came to him a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky. ¹⁷ Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be . . .”

No food was present here, and Peter ate nothing: it was a perplexing vision. Peter, having spent years with Yeshua, still knew of no change in *kashrut* statutes. Jews generally saw gentiles as unclean like pigs. God presented a parable-type vision to tell Peter not to avoid gentiles whom He had cleansed.

²⁸ And he said to them, ‘You yourselves know how it is disallowed for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. ²⁹ That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me’” – v.28-29.

Colossians 2 - a commentary on the chapter

This passage is often misused because of traditional preconceptions. We must not pit one Scripture against another, but place precept upon precept. Paul is contrasting “man’s religion” against Torah instruction.

(V.8) “*See to it that no one takes you captive*

*through philosophy and empty deception,
according to the tradition of men,
according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Messiah.”*

This is a warning against man’s deceptive philosophies and inventions (including Pagan celebrations?).

God’s appointed times are not “tradition of men.” Through the Holy Days, Yeshua is shown to be Messiah.

(V.11-15) Paul is writing to Gentiles (Colossians):

“When you were dead in transgressions (of the Torah), and you were uncircumcised in your flesh . . .”

When you had a “*certificate of debt*” decreed “*against*” you,

“You were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands”, the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart.

Yeshua took the death decree by being nailed on a cross. This was not to abolish the Torah (Matthew 5:17) – which is God’s eternal instruction for man – but rather confirms that it applied to us!

Here are some of the things that are “*according to Messiah*” (v.8).

(V.16) Both Jew and Gentile would condemn us for observing Sabbaths, New Moons, and Festivals. But, Paul says, “*Let no one condemn you . . . for observing a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day . . .*”. Using a common translation “judge” instead of “condemn”, some twist this verse say that we shouldn’t let anyone tell us whether or not to do these things – all the while they are using it to say that we shouldn’t do them! One popular translation actually adds the word “not”, saying that we should let no one condemn us for “not” doing these things! But, Gentiles need accept no condemnation from Jew or Gentile for keeping God’s appointments. Why?

(V.17) Because – and here is a comparison – Sabbaths and festivals “*are a shadow of that which is to come*”, but “*Messiah is the substance/body*” to come – that which is casting the shadow. In observing Sabbaths and festivals, we see a shadow picture of Yeshua: we learn about what He is doing for us! Some translations make a mockery of God’s shadow pictures, calling them such things as “mere” shadows, implying that they have no present value. It is commonly taught that, being fulfilled (they are not), these ordinances are also abolished (contrary to Yeshua’s words).

Here are some of the things that are “*empty deception*”, and “*tradition of men*” (v.8).

(V.18-19) “*Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by*

*delighting in self-abasement
and the worship of the messengers,
taking his stand on visions he has seen,
inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,*

Today we see, on every side, people who are “star-struck” with the messengers, and those who take their own intuition to be the Holy Spirit – putting it above the study of God’s Word.

not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.”

We are commanded to be part of a regular assembly (Hebrews 10:25), working together with others to learn obedience.

Paul’s conclusion:

(V.20-23) “*If you have died with Messiah, . . . why do you submit yourself to . . . self-made religion . . . of no value against fleshly indulgence?”*

(V.3:1-5) “*If then you have been raised up with Messiah, . . . set your mind on things above. . . consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”*