

למה תלמידיו של משיח  
האם שומרי תורה

WHY MESSIAH'S FOLLOWERS  
ARE TORAH OBSERVANT

PART 1



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## ✠ Introduction

Replying to a young man who had enquired how to gain eternal life, Jesus<sup>1</sup> said:

If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. (Mt 19:17)

Sometime later Jesus died, the law was abolished, and we were set free from the law; as the famous hymn goes:

Free from the law, O happy condition.<sup>2</sup>

Sixty years later, John echoes Jesus' words, saying that those who keep the *mitzvoth* will gain eternal life:

Blessed are those who keep His commandments, that they may have the right to eat of the tree of life. (Rev 22:14)

Had John not realized that Jesus' followers were free from the law? Unlikely.

### ABOLISHED OR RETAINED ?

Some Christians cut their lawns on Saturday while munching a ham sandwich, others cut their foreskins because the Hebrew Roots teacher said so. That the law is not binding for some but undiscerningly kept by others is caused by the same reason that makes Bible verses on the law appear at variance: *misinterpretation*.

The Nazarenes warn us that their writings can be easily misunderstood and misapplied since they contain “some things that are difficult to understand, which the untaught and unstable [who have fallen into error] twist and misinterpret, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Messiah's authentic Jewish name is *Yeshua* (ישוע), a variant of *Yehoshua*.

<sup>2</sup> P. Bliss, *Free from the Law, O Happy Condition*, 1871.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet 3:16.

Title page: *Mount Sinai at twilight*.

Perceiving New Testament passages on the law as contradictory is proof that they have not been understood, a shortcoming which always leads to selectivity and false doctrines.

To understand the passages on the law, we need to discern two things: **a)** when is the *Law of Sin* referenced, and **b)** when is the *Law of Moses* rejected as a vehicle for salvation.



## ב The Law of Sin

*Sin* is defined as the ‘transgression of the law’,<sup>1</sup> and the *Law of Sin*, also known as the *Law of Sin and Death*, refers to the principle that sin is always followed by death:

For the wages of sin is death. (Rom 6:23)

Sin in the long run means death. (Jam 1:15)

These verses do not merely refer to sinful deeds nor to mere physical death, but to a sinful state and to spiritual death.<sup>2</sup> The sinfulness of man is not the result of his actions. Rather, it is the inherent condition of sin from which his thoughts and actions spring. Adamic self-justification, self-management and suppression of truth are symptomatic of our fallen nature; our traits reveal that we are sinners by default:<sup>3</sup>

All people were made sinners as the result of the disobedience of one man. (Rom 5:19)

The Messiah has not changed man’s standing. We can reject him or embrace him, but if the latter does not entail a tangible spiritual rebirth, we remain in sin. Paul refers to this fact when summing up the believers’ condition *before* salvation:

You were slaves of sin. (Rom 6:20)

Had they become slaves of sin due to acquiring bad habits? Hardly. The Hebrews who left Egypt had not become slaves through bad habits; they were born as slaves and typify fallen man who is in bondage of sin.<sup>4</sup> Paul observes correctly:

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<sup>1</sup> See 1 Jn 3:4. ‘Law’ is a misleading term since *torah* (תורה) does not mean ‘law’ but ‘instruction.’

<sup>2</sup> See Rom 7:23–25; 8:2.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine’s notion that original sin means a loss of free will except to sin is not supported by Scripture, and neither is the rabbinic concept of a G-d-given *yetzer hara* (‘evil inclination’) which can be squashed through Torah observance.

<sup>4</sup> The symbolism of ‘the house of bondage’ should be obvious: Egypt = world; Pharaoh = adversary; slave drivers = demons; slaves = man; mud = sin (note: non-Hebrews were also enslaved). Cf. Isa 51:5, ***I was guilty of sin from birth, a sinner the moment my mother conceived me.***

All people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. (Rom 3:9)

People remain captive in sin unless they separate themselves from the world, to wit, unless they ‘leave Egypt.’ We can either apply the Lamb’s blood and cross the Red Sea<sup>1</sup> and be freed from sin or we can choose to stay in Egypt and serve sin. Put differently, we can choose between separation from sin and separation from G-d. Law violation results in physical and spiritual separation from G-d, and separation from G-d means death.<sup>2</sup> It was part of Adam’s punishment for ignoring the warning, “in the day that you eat of it, dying you shall die.”<sup>3</sup>

Adam did eat and his sin triggered a decay process which would eventually lead to physical death: He started dying the moment he ate of the fruit:

Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world. (Rom 5:12)

Death came into the world because of what one man did. (1 Cor 15:21)

Mortality is only one effect of sin; another one is spiritual death. In his unsaved state, natural man is classed as *dead*:

Through the sin of one, many are dead. (Rom 5:15)

You were dead in your trespasses and sins. (Eph 2:1)

You were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature. (Col 2:13)

The prodigal son was *dead* because he was separated from the father. The parable is about repentance and depicts the sinners’ state prior to salvation:<sup>4</sup>

They are separated from the life of God. (Eph 4:18)

G-d is a spirit and being separated from G-d is identical with being separated from spiritual life, the latter being a euphemism for *spiritual death*.<sup>5</sup> Since Adam, no one has ever been ‘born in Eden with access to the tree of life;’ no one is eligible to enjoy eternal bliss in the presence of G-d, and no one will ever change that, neither through works nor through religion. In G-d’s sight, sin is as repulsive as leprosy;<sup>6</sup> it is like a

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<sup>1</sup> Crossing the Red Sea typifies water and spirit baptism (see 1 Cor 10:1–2).

<sup>2</sup> The soul’s separation from the body is physical death, and its separation from G-d is spiritual death.

<sup>3</sup> Gen 2:17. Adam violated the *torah* (“instruction”) given by G-d.

<sup>4</sup> See Lk 15:11–32. The prodigal son typifies the Gentile sinner; the elder son typifies the devout Jew.

<sup>5</sup> **Let the dead bury their dead** (Mt 8:22). The NT abounds in verses which portray natural man as *dead*, e.g. Mt 23:27; Lk 9:60; Rom 7:5, 11, 13, 24; 11:15; Eph 5:14; Tit 3:5.

<sup>6</sup> The rabbis’ sarcasm alludes to the Messiah as “‘the leper scholar’ – as it is written, surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of G-d, and afflicted.”(*Sanhedrin* 98b).

chronic, progressive, and humanly incurable disease that has spread to all of mankind and demands isolation.<sup>1</sup>

Sin and death passed on to the whole human race. (Rom 5:12)

Unless remedied by the Messiah, our sinful condition will lead to irreversible separation from G-d once the body has stopped functioning.<sup>2</sup> This condemnation which came upon all of humanity due to one man's sin is summed up by the *Law of Sin and Death*.

With this in mind, we will examine a few passages which supposedly show that Mosaic Law is null and void and that we are not *under the law* of Moses.

### THE CONFINING CUSTODIAN

The Law of Moses was only given to Israel.<sup>3</sup> Paul, however, conveys to both Jews and Gentiles that they were *under the law* before they got saved:

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (Gal 3:23)

Are we really to believe that the Gentiles were terribly enslaved by all the statutes and ordinances of the law, and when Jesus came, they were delivered? In those days, Gentiles were largely ignorant of the Torah and many enjoyed themselves with cult prostitutes in sun temples.<sup>4</sup>

Others have the chutzpah to assert that Paul was only addressing Jews who had been freed from the law although one verse earlier we read about the whole world being *imprisoned in sin*. Does the whole world consist of Jews?

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<sup>1</sup> Though at times used interchangeably in the Tanakh (and denied by modern psychiatry), man has a soul and a spirit both of which make up the human heart (see 1 Thes 5:23; Heb 4:12). Attached to G-d's spirit, the human spirit originally led the soul which in turn led the body. With the expulsion from Eden, when the spiritual union of man and G-d was severed, the soul was severed from the spirit: man's heart was broken; sin raised a divide between soul and spirit aka the *foreskin of the heart*. Contrary to original design and sadly considered 'normal' today, man is merely led by his soul (and body), i.e. by his intellect, emotion, and will – a heart condition which Scripture generally refers to as 'stony', 'blind', or 'broken-hearted'. Like the knowledge of good and evil, this heart condition has been passed on through procreation.

<sup>2</sup> Called *the second death*, i.e. eternal torment in a lake of fire (see Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). Children will only be held liable from a certain age onward, depending on their maturity (see Num 14:31; Deut 1:39; cf. Isa 7:15–16; Rom 9:11).

<sup>3</sup> Exod 20:1–17. Gentiles become subject to Mosaic Law once they have become part of regenerate Israel through spiritual rebirth.

<sup>4</sup> See A. Yehoshua, *The Lifting of the Veil* (Bloomington, 2015), 18–20.

The Messiah came to set the captives free, all captives, not just the Jews and not just the Gentiles, but all men since mankind is fallen and captive in sin. That was the sole reason the 'last Adam' died and rose, to deliver man from bondage of sin and from eternal damnation, i.e. to restore man to his pre-fall state and free him from the curse of the *Law of Sin and Death*. That is the law every unsaved person is under.<sup>1</sup>

Paul then uses the trope of the *paidagōgos* (παιδαγωγός) to underline the sinner's imprisonment:

So then, the Law was our confining custodian, until the advent of Christ, in order that we should be rectified by faith. (Gal 3:24)

This pericope has nothing to do with some guide leading people to the Messiah.<sup>2</sup> It speaks about being shut up in prison and about being a prisoner of sin. Depending on one's individual decision, this kind of custody either lasts until salvation or until the court hearing on Judgment Day, followed by the sentence of damnation.<sup>3</sup>

The negative stereotype which Paul implied portrayed the pedagogue as a morose, abusive household-slave who controlled the child 24/7. His 'teaching' consisted in beatings, and his 'loving care' meant arrest. The sort of folk who were hired as confining custodians were chiefly wine-bibbers and counterproductive gluttons.<sup>4</sup> They picture sin, not G-d's holy law.<sup>5</sup>

Ultimately, the New Covenant aims at perfect, unselfish Torah observance,<sup>6</sup> and a first step towards this is to escape the *Law of Sin*, i.e. the curse for violating G-d's teaching. This law and the associated depravity of man are operative since the fall

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<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, *under the law* in Rom 3:19; 6:14–15; Gal 4:4–5 and Gal 5:18 refers solely to the *Law of Sin* and its power to condemn. Assuring Christians that they do not need to worry about G-d's Law, is a ploy of the adversary. The Torah is the written reflection of G-d's nature, and the Messiah is its perfect representation. Although Spirit-filled Christians cannot be condemned by Mosaic Law, an embrace of the 'Man of Sin' (Papal Rome) will scarcely change them into the image of a sinless, Torah-observing Messiah. The mark of Israel is the *Law* (Exod 13:9; Deut 6:8; 11:18), and the mark of Rome – Israel's archenemy – is *Lawlessness*, to wit, the *Mark of the Beast* (2 Thes 2:3, 7; Rev 13:16; 14:9; 20:4). ***On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'*** (Mt 7:22–23). ***The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will pull out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and those who continue to break the law*** (Mt 13:41).

<sup>2</sup> ***To bring to, to guide to*** or ***to lead to*** is not in the Greek; it is likely often added to help us misidentify the custodian as Mosaic Law, a view which in turn aids to dispose of the latter.

<sup>3</sup> Damnation does not apply to the Jewish people since all Israel will be saved; the Chosen People will embrace the Messiah at the Parousia and enter the New Covenant through rebirth (Rom 11:26).

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia* 4b. Gal 4:1–3 confirms the tutor to be sin.

<sup>5</sup> The Hebrew NT from Cochin refers to G-d's law as ***The Law of Joy*** (Jam 1:25), tallying with king David delighting in the law (Ps 119:16; 24; 35; 47; 70; 77; 174).

<sup>6</sup> The law was given 50 days after the killing of a lamb, and its power to condemn was taken 50 days after the killing of 'The Lamb.' In 34 CE, after the New Covenant had been confirmed to the Jews for seven years, it was extended to the Gentiles because most of Israel had rejected it (see Dan 9:27; Acts 8).

and have been causing law violations ever since, including the laws given to Noah and Moses. To flee the merciless jurisdiction of that law, one must die and rise again; one must be born again; one must be regenerate. A reborn person is no longer *under the law* of sin but under grace.<sup>1</sup>

## THE OLD HUSBAND

A person who is under grace is not being punished when they ought to be punished. This state of grace rests on the obvious truth that one cannot punish a dead man:

The Law can press its claims over a person only as long as he is alive. (Rom 7:1)

The allegory of the deceased husband expands on this concept:

A married woman, for example, is bound by law to her husband so long as he is alive. But if he dies, then his legal claim over her disappears. (Rom 7:2)

The married woman represents fallen man, i.e. ‘self’ enslaved by the cursed nature (‘the old husband’). Once the old man has died, the Adamic nature loses its grip over the person and the curse is broken. Paul continues:

This means that, if she should give herself to another man while her husband is alive, she incurs the stigma of adultery. But if, after her husband’s death, she does exactly the same thing, no one could call her an adulteress, for the legal hold over her has been dissolved by her husband’s death. (Rom 7:3)

In other words, as long as a person is held captive in sin, their law violations are imputed to them. But once their old nature has been put to death, their sins are no longer imputed to them – they are ‘dead to the law’ as an indictment. The parable is not about nullifying the *Law of Moses* but about nullifying the *Law of Sin*. The Law of Moses is as valid as it was for the fictitious woman, but it cannot condemn a corpse.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> “The purpose of Christ’s atoning work was to restore man to a position of covenant-keeping instead of covenant-breaking, to enable man to keep the law by freeing man ‘from the law of sin and death’ (Rom 8:2), ‘that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us’ (Rom 8:4). Man is restored to a position of law-keeping.” R. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, 1973), 3.

<sup>2</sup> The statutes which separated Jews from Gentiles were indeed abolished (Eph 2:15), but not the Torah as such; some aspects of the law have been renewed, others put on hold till the millennium. Regenerate believers cannot be punished by the law because they are *dead* in G-d’s sight – they are ‘dead to the law’ (Rom 7:4; Gal 2:19). They were put to death through full immersion in water in the name of Yeshua: ***Those of us who have been immersed into the Messiah Yeshua have been immersed into his death [...] our old self was put to death [...] we died with the Messiah*** (Rom 6:3, 6, 8).

## λ The Law of Moses

### WAY OF SALVATION VS. WAY OF LIFE

Sinai Law cannot, will not, and was never meant to save anyone. Torah observance, regardless how faithful, won't bridge the chasm between a holy G-d and sinful man.

G-d first saved, and then He gave the law. The prospect of entering Canaan did not arise from works but from G-d's merciful act of delivering Israel from bondage. However, the fact that the law cannot save us, does not render it useless. We do not bin a fork only because we cannot eat soup with it – we are not meant to eat soup with a fork; it has a different purpose.

Mosaic Law defines sin and provides the legal framework for righteous living; it is G-d's will for the believer and for every person on earth.

The Torah abounds in prophetic foreshadowings which find their fulfilment in Yeshua, but this fulfilment does not abrogate G-d's instructions; it rather amplifies them.<sup>1</sup> His righteousness *is* imputed to a regenerate person, but that is not a license to continue practicing unrighteousness. Sins, i.e. law violations, are not forgiven to provide a fresh start for more law violations.

*Mitzvot* for priests, Levites, farmers, women, etc. did not apply to the Messiah, a fact which underlines that he never fulfilled the law on our behalf – he set an example. His teaching and conduct completed our understanding of the *Torah & the Prophets* and we are to emulate him.

### WORKS OF THE LAW

The phrase *works of the law*<sup>2</sup> entails the observance of biblical law as well as Pharisaic law. In Yeshua's day, the latter comprised a plethora of minute regulations that defined righteous living and were held as legally binding. The works of the law include

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<sup>1</sup> The Sermon on the Mount exemplifies perfect Torah exegesis, see p. 19 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. 'works of law' (*ergōn nomou* | ἔργων νόμου).

any efforts to comply with the Written or Oral Law to attain justification. It is this approach of relying on one's own conduct which Paul condemns:<sup>1</sup>

By works of law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal 2:16)

For the Messiah is the end of works of law for righteousness [justification]. (Rom 10:4)



**Fig. 1.** The Mount *Sinai* plateau where the elders waited while Moses received the Ten Commandments

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<sup>1</sup> See Gal 3:10. A person is saved through faith given by grace (Eph 2:8), yet faith is perfected by works (Jam 2:14–26). Biblical faith implies following G-d's instructions (*torah*), to wit, G-d's will for the believer; Judaism's claim that Torah-observance will save is an illusion (Rom 9:31–32).

The improper use of the Torah was the error of the Galatians; they had relapsed into works righteousness and tradition.

Paul fully endorses the observance of G-d's holy law for a holy life, but its carnal reward-seeking observance generates bondage:

For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to the Jerusalem that exists now, for she is in bondage with her children. (Gal 4:25)<sup>1</sup>

Due to the *Law of Sin* being in full force, Israel's continuous violation of the Sinaitic Covenant had only brought curses, wrath and death, yet she never stopped viewing Torah as the way of salvation.

### SAME LAW FOR THE STRANGER

The Law of Moses was never given to the Gentiles. Our Western familiarity with the Decalogue is the result of 2,000 years of church history, but technically none of those commands are legally binding for non-Israelites.<sup>2</sup>

This changes when a Gentile joins Israel. The moment a non-Jew is reborn, he becomes part of Israel and is henceforth subject to her law.<sup>3</sup>

There shall be one law for you and for the resident stranger. (Num 15:15)<sup>4</sup>

While the Ten Commandments are entirely Jewish, the Gentile church accepts only nine since the fourth commandment is too Jewish.<sup>5</sup> The *Christian Sabbath*, i.e. Sunday observance – supposedly based on the Gospel – is a Gentile invention which marked the beginning of Greco-Roman supersessionism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Acts 15:10; Rom 8:15; Gal 2:4; 4:3, 9, 24; 5:1; Heb 2:15; 2 Pet 2:19.

<sup>2</sup> Prohibitions of murder and eating blood have been in place since the deluge and apply to all men.

<sup>3</sup> A Gentile joins *the Israel of G-d* (Gal 6:16), i.e. a body of regenerate Jews & Gentiles through spiritual circumcision and healing. Repentance is hereby the 'patient's consent to a surgery' that is supernaturally performed during water immersion: ***A circumcision performed without human hands by stripping off the corrupt nature by the circumcision performed by the Messiah*** (Col 2:11). Once the foreskin of the heart ('the old nature') has been cut away, the wound is healed with fire: ***He will immerse you with Ruach HaKodesh and will heal you with fire*** (Mt 3:11; cf. Lk 10:34 and the wound treatment with oil and wine, both symbols of the Spirit). A heart that was once broken and divided is now whole and healed – ready to love G-d wholeheartedly.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Exod 12:49; Lev 24:22; Num 9:14; 15:16.

<sup>5</sup> The Catholic Church practices only eight of them according to her catechism; the prohibition of idolatry had to be omitted to allow for idolatry (to keep the number of 10, 'You shall not covet' was split in two).

<sup>6</sup> Though he rose at the end of the Sabbath, even a Sunday resurrection wouldn't cancel an eternally valid Sabbath *mitzva* (Exod 31:17). Acts 20:7 shows the disciples having a meal on Saturday night, 1 Cor 16:2 refers to storing durable foods at home, and the 'Lord's day' is the Parousia (see Rev 1:10). For these three passages and an in-depth examination of the 2nd century rise of Sunday observance see S. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (Rome, 1977).

## 7 Favoured Texts to Encourage Lawbreaking (Sin)

The radical notion that all of the Ten Commandments are abolished is the extreme end of the spectrum. Accordingly, we will apply a top-down approach while reviewing the passages which are commonly cited to support antinomianism.

### THE OLD COVENANT

The Torah and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. (Lk 16:16)

Yeshua was referring to the Scriptures which were available in his day, to wit, the *Tanakh*. Up to the time when John began to call for repentance, only the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings were preached. The next verse confirms the validity of the law: it will only pass away at the *Parousia* when heaven and earth will vanish too.<sup>1</sup>



By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the first is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away. (Heb 8:13)

The Sinaitic Covenant was about to pass away because the Lord's return was deemed imminent.<sup>2</sup> G-d was about to write his law on the human heart, thereby completing the New Covenant and making the outward code redundant – this was the expectancy of all the Nazarenes. The New Covenant was ratified 2,000 years ago, sealed with blood and spirit to also grant Gentiles salvation, yet it hasn't been fully implemented yet.<sup>3</sup> While certain *mitzvot* cannot be applied without the Temple, until the Messiah's return the Old Covenant is fully valid.



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<sup>1</sup> See Lk 16:17; Mt 5:18; 2 Pet 3:10–13.

<sup>2</sup> See Rom 13:11–12; 16:20; 1 Thes 4:17; 1 Cor 15:51; Jam 5:9.

<sup>3</sup> When entering the New Covenant through rebirth, a person receives G-d's spirit and love in his heart. Yet the Torah will only be received at the *Parousia* (unless salvation has been lost through lawlessness).

If the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that *Bnei-Yisrael* could not look intently upon Moses' face because of its glory – although it was passing away – how will the ministry of the *Ruach* not be even more glorious? For if what is passing away is glorious, much more what remains is glorious. (2 Cor 3:7–8, 11)

The text tallies with previous passages: the written code is part of “all scripture that is useful for teaching the right way to live,”<sup>1</sup> but is a preliminary which started growing old the moment it was received.<sup>2</sup> Paul envisions the millennium when men will observe G-d's laws naturally, having them inscribed on their hearts and keeping them through the Spirit.



The Torah was given by Moshe, and the truth of it came by Yeshua. (Jn 1:17)

While our Bibles have “grace and truth” in the verse,<sup>3</sup> the above is the original reading as quoted by the Ephrem the Syrian in 360 CE.<sup>4</sup> Both Israel's misconstrual of the Written Law and her overall rejection of Yeshua were divinely ordained. The true meaning and intent of the Law of Moshe was only revealed through the Messiah – by his Torah and by his walk.



We have heard that some who went out from us confuse you and spoil your souls with words, telling you to be circumcised and keep the Torah, which we did not command them. (Acts 15:24)<sup>5</sup>

The context of the debate was Torah-keeping for salvation. Because the *Shammaites*<sup>6</sup> viewed it impossible for Gentiles to obtain eternal life, the latter had to become Jews, and they could only become Jews through ritual proselyte circumcision.<sup>7</sup> Upon their conversion to Judaism, Torah-keeping would be their only way of salvation. The Jerusalem Council rejected the Pharisaic demand: grace would save the newly con-

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim 3:16, paraphrased. Paul's statement should settle the question whether the Old Testament is still relevant, particularly since the New Testament was not extant at the time.

<sup>2</sup> Since the law can't enable us to keep it, it can only provide condemnation (Gal 3:21). G-d's Spirit, however, provides a new nature, thereby disables condemnation, and allows for his laws to be kept.

<sup>3</sup> Many versions contrast *the law* with *grace and truth*, adding *but* though the latter is not in the Greek. The fact that the law is truth and exemplifies grace underlines the spuriousness of the passage (see Psa 119:142; Gen 6:8).

<sup>4</sup> J. Hamlyn Hill, *The Earliest Life of Christ* (Edinburgh, 1894), 337, fn. 5. The Gospel of John was heavily edited. Our synoptics, which were only compiled in 170 CE, are the result of copying, dissecting, and paganizing the original Hebrew Gospel – *Divide et Impera*, the Roman way of conquest.

<sup>5</sup> יַעַן וּבִיעַן שִׁמְעֵנוּ כִּי יֵצְאוּ מֵאֵתָנוּ מִבְּלִבַּיִם אֲתֶכֶם וּמִקְלָקְלִים נִפְשֵׁיכֶם בְּדַבְרֵיכֶם בְּאִמְרָם לָכֵן לְהַמּוֹל וּלְשַׁמֵּר אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוִּינוּ אוֹתָם. Delitzsch

<sup>6</sup> A strict Pharisaic school of thought in the 1st century that followed the sage Shammai (50 BCE – 30 CE). Rabbi Eliezer wrote: “None of the gentiles have a share in the world to come” (*Sanhedrin* 105a).

<sup>7</sup> See Acts 15:1, 5, 10–11; Gal 2:3–4; 5:3–4; 6:12–13.

verted Gentiles; yet to retain their salvation, they had to forbear any sacrificial-sexual idolatry instantly.<sup>1</sup>

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

He has abolished the law, the commandments [expressed] in statutes. (Eph 2:15)

The context of a partition wall that had been removed intimates which statutes were abolished: the ones that partitioned Jews from Gentiles. The Torah contains various statutes that prohibited Israel from associating with foreigners, particularly through matrimonial and other covenantal relations.<sup>2</sup> These laws were annulled to allow for the Gospel to be spread; the verse does not relate to the Ten Commandments.<sup>3</sup>



He has also cancelled a bill of indictment against us which indicted us with legal charges. (Col 2:14)

The bill of indictment is a record of sins which, unless cancelled, will result in eternal damnation. This record is sometimes translated as *the handwriting of ordinances* or even as *the law*, however, it was not the Torah which was crucified but the Messiah.<sup>4</sup> The innocent was executed to let the criminal go free, and hence the latter was expected to keep the law instead of continuing his criminal career.<sup>5</sup>

## THE SABBATH

Do not let anyone make rules for you about eating and drinking<sup>6</sup> or about a feast or how you should observe a new moon or Sabbath days. (Col 2:16)

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<sup>1</sup> As per Acts 15:20 they had to **(a)** stop eating the meat of a pagan sacrifice *at the sacrifice*, **(b)** stop copulating with cult prostitutes after eating of the animal sacrifice, **(c)** stop partaking in pagan sacrifices, i.e. in rituals where the victim – usually a bird – was strangled, and **(d)** stop drinking of the sacrificial animal's fresh, raw blood (see Yehoshua, op. cit. 11). Through attending the weekly synagogue readings, the Gentiles would gradually become familiar with the Torah (see Acts 15:21).

<sup>2</sup> Naturally, the rabbis had perverted these decrees, but their essence is found in the law: Exod 23:32; 34:12–16; Lev 20:22–26; Deut 7:2–3 (cf. Josh 23:7, 12–13; Ezra 9–10; Neh 13:23–27; Acts 10:28, 34–35; 11:2–3, 18; Jn 4:9).

<sup>3</sup> The verse is sometimes cited to show that the supposed *Ceremonial Law* has been abolished. However, the artificial distinction between 'Moral Law', 'Ceremonial Law', and 'Civil Law' is a mere divide-and-conquer approach: segregating the Torah into distinct categories aids to dissolve it.

<sup>4</sup> While Rome prefers to sustain the murderer and remove the law, the initial idea was to remove the murderer and sustain the law.

<sup>5</sup> Due to Adam's Torah violation, Gentiles are transgressors, albeit not subject to Mosaic Law by nature.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Rom 14:3; 1 Tim 4:3.

False teachers had introduced syncretistic food and festival regulations advocating ascetism and ritualism to reach spiritual perfection.<sup>1</sup> The feasts which foreshadow the time of perfection<sup>2</sup> are not to become auxiliary aids to salvation; they are not to become a substitute for the substance, namely the all-sufficient Messiah.<sup>3</sup> Paul condemns the wrong motive for observing the Sabbath, not the observance itself.



Some make a difference between one day and another; others esteem every day alike. The one who observes a set day, observes it for the Lord, the one who does not observe a set day, does not observe it for the Lord. (Rom 14:5–6)

Some of the Roman believers fasted on certain days while others did not. Though neither group was sinning, some tension had emerged, and Paul was trying to accommodate the difference; the passage does not relate to the Sabbath.<sup>4</sup>

## THE DIETARY LAWS

One man has faith to eat everything, but the man who is weak eats only vegetables. Nothing is defiled in itself; everything is indeed clean. (Rom 14:2, 14, 20)

Certain brethren ate both vegetables and meat including the leftovers from pagan sacrifices. The vegetarians viewed such meat as ceremonially defiled and judged their brethren while the latter were entirely insensitive about the matter. Paul settled the quarrel by stating that it is permissible to eat such meat, but not in front of weaker brethren if it offends them or poses a temptation against their conscience;<sup>5</sup> the chapter has nothing to do with biblical food laws.

“Never have I eaten anything defiled or unclean.” And the voice spoke again to him, the second time: “You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.” (Acts 10:14–15)

After being told in a vision to slaughter and eat unclean animals, the *shaliach* Kefa refuses to do so, replying that he has never eaten any defiled or unclean food.<sup>6</sup> He had

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<sup>1</sup> See Col 2:8, 18, 20–23. The verse relates to food abstinence, not to dietary laws.

<sup>2</sup> ***There is still a future Sabbath rest for God's people*** (Heb 4:9).

<sup>3</sup> See Col 2:17.

<sup>4</sup> Verses regarding Sabbath observance are: Mt 12:1–13; Mk 1:21; 2:23–28; 3:1–5; 6:2; Lk 4:16, 31; 6:1–10; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 23:56; Jn 5:8–9; 7:23; 9:14. Jewish and Gentile Nazarenes followed the example of the Messiah: Acts 13:14, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4. Cf. the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, logion 27b: ***If you do not keep the Sabbath as a Sabbath, you will not see the Father.***

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 10:25–28.

<sup>6</sup> His confession ten years after the resurrection confirms the validity of the dietary laws. Had Yeshua declared all foods clean (as frequently added to Mk 7:19), Kefa wouldn't have been shocked at the vision. The heart cannot be defiled through food or by eating with unwashed hands; that was Yeshua's point.

not understood what G-d was showing: the different beasts symbolised the nations that were to be converted, not slaughtered and eaten.<sup>1</sup> The New Covenant includes Gentiles, not reptiles – it does not include unclean animals for food.



They forbid marriage, forbid eating foods. These are things that God created to be shared with thanksgiving [...] because every creature of God is good. Nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is made holy by God's word and by prayer.

(1 Tim 4:3–5)

Paul certainly does not class G-d's food laws as *demonic* (v. 1). Instead he is reaching forth to the diabolic reign of the papists when hypocrisy would fully bloom. Celibacy for the clergy was enforced and the consumption of meat during certain times was prohibited.<sup>2</sup> Both marriage and food are sanctified through Scripture and are blessings that ought to be appreciated.<sup>3</sup> Again, the pericope does not address dietary laws.

## THE FEASTS

How can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elements? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? You are observing special days, months, seasons, and years.

(Gal 4:9–10)

The 'weak and worthless elements' do not refer to the law which King David deemed worth more than millions in gold and silver. Neither do the observed times refer to G-d's *moedim*,<sup>4</sup> but to Jewish traditions and Pharisaic timekeeping.<sup>5</sup> Prior to their conversion, the Gentiles had followed Roman customs that originated in Babylon, and now they were following Jewish customs that came from Babylon; they were observing commandments of men.



Do not let anyone make rules for you about eating and drinking or about a feast. (Col 2:16)

As with the Sabbath, the caution to the Colossians regarding gnostic feast regulations proves that they celebrated the festivals as followers of Yeshua – the issue was not

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<sup>1</sup> Kefa later understood: **God has shown me I should call no man defiled or unclean** (Acts 10:28).

<sup>2</sup> The *First Lateran Council* (1123) forbade the Western clergy to marry and ordered all those already married to renounce their wives and do penance. "Abstinence means we do not eat meat. Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence." *Handbook for Today's Catholic* (Barnhart, 2004), 74.

<sup>3</sup> See Heb 13:4; Eccl 5:18. All food, as defined in Lev 11 and Deut 14:3–21, is to be enjoyed.

<sup>4</sup> 'Appointed times' as summarized in Leviticus 23.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. annual fast days, the month of mourning (Tammuz), seasons of penitence and the Jewish civil year.

whether but how.<sup>1</sup> *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (Pentecost), and *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), to name a few, were kept by the Nazarenes till hundreds of years after the destruction of the Temple; God's festivals were then gradually replaced through pagan idolatry.<sup>2</sup>

## CIRCUMCISION

We have heard that some who went out from us confuse you and spoil your souls with words, telling you to be circumcised [...], which we did not command them. (Acts 15:24)<sup>3</sup>

Physical circumcision is a sign of the eternal, Abrahamic Covenant and applies only to the literal descendants of Avraham. The New Covenant wasn't provided to create proselytes or graft Gentiles into unregenerate Israel but into the *Israel of G-d*, to wit, into a body of reborn Jews and Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> Circumcising born again Gentiles is diametrically opposed to salvation since it reunites them with fallen men (in this case with Jewry outside the New Covenant).



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<sup>1</sup> For *Pesach* see: Lk 2:42; Jn 2:13; Acts 20:6; 1 Cor 5:8. *Shavuot*: Jn 5:1; Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor 16:8. *Yom Kippur*: Acts 27:9. *Sukkot*: Jn 7:2, 10; Acts 18:21. *Chanukah*: Jn 10:22–23.

<sup>2</sup> Having listed the apostles Philip and John, as well as the latter's disciple Polycarp and other martyrs, Polycrates writes in 190 CE: "All these observed the fourteenth day of the Passover according to the Gospel." Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.24.6. Epiphanius' text on the Nazarenes, written in 370 CE, certainly implies the observance of the feasts: "They have no different views but confess everything in full accord with the doctrine of the Law and like the Jews, except that they are supposedly believers in Christ." Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29.7.2. In 386 CE, Chrysostom condemns the believers in Antioch "who join the Jews in keeping the [fall] feasts." J. Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos* 1.1.5. For a detailed study of Nazarene feast observance during the centuries see S. Bacchiocchi, *God's Festivals in Scripture and History* (Berrien Springs, 1995).

<sup>3</sup> יען וביען שמענו כי יצאו מאתנו מבלבלים אתכם ומקלקלים נפשתיכם בדברים באמרם לכם להמול ולשמר את-התורה אשר לא צוינו אותם. Delitzsch

<sup>4</sup> See Gal 6:16 and footnote p. 10; ritual circumcision is the only command that a Gentile is not to emulate.



**Fig. 2.** Outcrop on the low side of the southern Horn of *Hattin*. Before the Church of the Beatitudes was built, this area was considered by most *notzrim* as the location of the Sermon on the Mount.

## ⚓ *The Law of the Messiah*

The *Torat HaMashiach*<sup>1</sup> is more suitably rendered the ‘Teaching of the Messiah.’ It is the teaching (or *torah*) of Moshe correctly applied and without the power to condemn. To base justification on Torah compliance while being under the law’s penal code, will always result in bondage. The pressure to perform correctly, whether to attain salvation or prevent sanction, puts an unbearable yoke on man and furthers selfishness, legalism, and fear while draining love and joy.

The Law of the Messiah frees man from that yoke. It can only be kept by regenerate man, but it also only applies to them. While embedded in all Nazarene writings, its clearest expression is found in the Sermon on the Mount.

### KEEPING THE WRITTEN LAW

After the *Bnei Yisrael* had witnessed healing and deliverance from bondage, Yeshua ascends a mountain and starts to teach with an authority that would leave his hearers dumbfounded. Following a list of divine character traits,<sup>2</sup> he proceeds to reveal their foundation: Sinai Law. His opening statement reads:

I came not to diminish the Torah of Moshe nor to add to the Torah of Moshe.<sup>3</sup> Verily, I say unto you: not one word will be diminished from the Torah, but every word will be performed

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<sup>1</sup> Some versions of Matthew’s Gospel bear the title *Torat HaMashiach*, e.g. the Harley MS 7637 as well as the editions of Münster (1531) and Cinquarbres (1551). The ‘Law of Christ’ in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21 is rendered by Delitzsch and Salkinson-Ginsburg as **תורת המשיח** (*Torat HaMashiach*).

<sup>2</sup> Beatitudes are attitudes intended by Torah; the blessings they bring tally with those in Deut 28:1–14.

<sup>3</sup> *Shabbat* 116b. M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judentums und seiner Sekten*, 1858; and L. Loew, *Hehalutz, Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen über Jüdische Geschichte*, 1853, cited by L. Wallach, “The Textual History of an Aramaic Proverb,” *JBL* 60 (1941), 404; as well as J. Edwards, *The Hebrew Gospel and the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids, 2009), 232, attribute the quotation in *Shabbat* 116b to the Hebrew Gospel. Cf. The Bible Society in Israel. **אל תחשבו שבאתי לבטל את התורה או את הנביאים; לא באתי לבטל כי אם לקיים.** “In his comment [on Mt 5:17] Shem-Tob says that the intention of Jesus was ‘in all these words not to add a word to the words of the law nor to subtract any.’” G. Howard, *The Gospel of Matthew According to a Primitive Hebrew Text* (Macon, 1987) 169.

till the end of the world. And whoever transgresses one of the smallest *mitzvot* or teaches others to break them, he will be small in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever teaches and performs them, he will be great in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>1</sup> (Mt 5:17–19)

The Messiah's assurance not to augment or diminish the Torah echoes Deuteronomy 4:2 and entails the keeping of the Written Law. The supposed announcement of not wanting to destroy the Torah is unlikely since his listeners would have deemed him insane; he could as well have promised not to burn down the Temple. And the fancied messianic pledge of fulfilling G-d's Law for man is denied by context.<sup>2</sup>

If the alleged Torah fulfilment on behalf of humanity implies legal nullity, why does he state the exact opposite: legal validity till the *Parousia*? The absurdity of binding law which is not binding should be evident to the sane; the issue is not mere fulfilled prophecy but the validity of Mosaic teaching.

The Messiah removed the dust of human tradition and expounded the law afresh; he renewed the understanding of G-d's teaching:

Just as Moses went up the mountain to receive the Law, so did Jesus go up the mountain to renew the Law. Not only did Jesus fulfil prophecy, he fulfilled the Law, meaning the Law's eternal purpose. For when he laid hands on Moses' legacy, he transformed it, that it might serve not just national Israel but the entire believing world.<sup>3</sup>

In line with the above observations, we readily see that the Nazarene sayings are not antitheses but amplifications of the Written Torah.

## MURDER

That is right, – you yourselves have heard what was said to the first ones: 'You shall not murder and whoever murders is guilty of death.'<sup>4</sup> And I say unto you that whoever hates his brother is guilty of death.<sup>5</sup> (Mt 5:21–22)

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mishnah *Pirkei Avot* 2:1, "Be heedful of a light *mitzva* as of a weighty one, for you do not know the rewards of the *mitzvot*."

<sup>2</sup> If the canonical logion is genuine, then the Hebrew is distorted by the Greek terms *katalysai* ('destroy') and *plēryesai* ('fulfill'). The verse cannot possibly refer to abolition nor to a literal fulfillment of the law because in rabbinic argumentation, *levattel* ('nullify') means to 'misinterpret' while *lekayem* ('uphold') means to 'correctly interpret' (besides supporting the Torah). The Prushim had nullified the Written Law through tradition while the Messiah expounded its true import. See E. Soloveitchik, *The Bible, the Talmud, and the New Testament* (Philadelphia, 2019), 104–05; *The Delitzsch Hebrew Gospels*, Vine of David, (Marshfield, 2011), xx–xxi; D. Bivin, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus* (Shippensburg, 2001), 113–15. Cf. Rom 3:31, **Do we now nullify the Torah through faith? God forbid! We uphold the Torah.**

<sup>3</sup> H. Kailin, "A Nazarene Way Out," [Sweet Gospel Harmony](#), 18.

<sup>4</sup> As per Shem Tov and the 'Travancore Gospels,' both of which have 'judgment of death' (משפט-מות).

<sup>5</sup> Du Tillet, Shem Tov, the Judaikon, and the Sephardic Matthew omit 'without a cause;' 'brother' (*adelphos* | ἀδελφός) refers to fellow Jews and by extension to born again Nazarenes.

Even prior to Roman rule the death sentence was rarely invoked but rather served as a deterrent.<sup>1</sup> The focus here is not the penalty but the cruelty of the crime. Hatred, whether verbalized or not, is tantamount to murder and merits not only temporal but eternal death (unless followed by repentance): “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life.”<sup>2</sup>

## ADULTERY

You yourselves have heard that the old [written] Torah said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ And I say to you that every man who looks at a woman and desires her in his heart has already performed adultery. (Mt 5:27–28)

Linked to the tenth commandment not to covet, the Messiah looks again at the heart, i.e. at the human spirit. The *mitzva* is not fulfilled by avoiding extramarital sex while thinking about it. A husband who desires a woman other than his wife and entertains unclean thoughts, commits adultery. No adulterers will enter the kingdom of G-d.<sup>3</sup>

## DIVORCE

The Torah says, ‘He who dismisses his wife, must give her a writ of divorce.’ And I say to you that every man who dismisses his wife – save at the time of her adultery [*ni’uf* נאוף] – commits adultery.<sup>4</sup> (Mt 5:31–32)

*The time of her adultery* refers to a marriage process. A husband could divorce his wife if the consummation of the marriage disproved the bride’s virginity. This would apply if the wife had previously joined another man through fornication or committed adultery during her betrothal. The absent *tokens of her virginity* (a sheet with hymeneal blood) are the only legitimate reason to end wedlock.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 6 BCE, the Sanhedrin lost the right of inflicting capital punishment.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Jn 3:15. Cf. Lev 19:17; Jn 8:44; Gal 5:20–21; 1 Jn 2:9; Rev 21:8. Cf. *Bava Metzria* 58b: “Anyone who humiliates another in public, it is as though he were spilling blood.”

<sup>3</sup> In the case of the adulterous woman, Yeshua affirmed the death penalty by telling the accusers to **cast the first stone**. But since the latter had been convicted of adultery themselves, they left. For Yeshua’s use of the ‘Jealousy Ordeal’ see Rushdoony, op. cit. 702–706. Cf. Lev 20:10; Deut 5:21; Job 24:15; Prov 6:32; Mk 10:17–19; Lk 18:18–20; 1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21; Heb 13:4; 2 Pet 2:14, and 17, **Having eyes full of adultery, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever**.

<sup>4</sup> The Old Syriac defines the adulterer as **he that dismisses his wife concerning whom there has not been alleged adultery**.

<sup>5</sup> It meant the adulteress’ death through stoning. ‘Burned toast’ (Hillel) or adultery in general (Shammai) are no reasons for a divorce, and neither is cult prostitution as advocated by Yehoshua, op. cit. 77–85. Besides God’s hatred of divorce, the prohibition to dissolve one flesh, plus Israel being comprised of

## SWEARING

You heard what was said to the ancients: ‘You shall not swear falsely by My name.’<sup>1</sup> I say to you that you shall not swear by heaven which is G-d’s throne, nor by the earth which is His footstool, nor by Yerushalayim which is G-d’s city, nor by your head for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your words be, ‘No,’ ‘Yes,’ the rest is evil.<sup>2</sup> (Mt 5:33–37)

While unnecessary in G-d’s kingdom, a solemn oath in G-d’s name is not evil and may be warranted in some cases; making vain oaths which are considered non-binding is evil. If a situation justifies an oath, we are to swear *by His name* (יהוה יהוה *Yahweh*).<sup>3</sup> However, rather than giving simple affirmation or negation, people swore casually by things and places because oaths were deemed non-binding if they lacked G-d’s name. It was this practice which the Messiah condemned.<sup>4</sup>

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12 tribes, 10 of which received a *sefer ketivot* (and the trope ‘divorced wife’), Hosea proves the point: He never put away Gomer, and G-d never cut off the cult prostitute Israel but ‘chucked her out’ and took her back in 1948 after she had been ‘put to death’ through the *Shoah*. The ‘bill of divorce’ wasn’t included in the *matan torah* but added by Moshe. ***Do you think I sent my people away like a man who divorces his wife? Where, then, are the papers of divorce? The Lord God All-Powerful of Israel hates anyone who is cruel enough to divorce his wife*** (Isa 50:1 / Mal 2:16). Cf. Gen 2:24; Deut 22:13–30; 24:1–4; Jer 3:1–14; Hos 2:2; 9:15; 11:8; 13:9; 14:1; Mt 1:19; Mt 19:3–9; Mk 10:2–12; Lk 16:18; Rom 7:2–3; 11:1; 1 Cor 7:10–16, 27, 39; Heb 13:4. *Sanhedrin* 22a: “Concerning anyone who divorces his first wife, even the altar sheds tears about him.” *Gittin* 90b: “One should not divorce the wife of his youth, i.e. his first wife, as one who does so is hated by God for divorcing the woman to whom he was bound in companionship and covenant.” Though unlikely in our degenerate and promiscuous world, the modern equivalent would be filing for divorce after the wedding night (providing the conditions are met).

<sup>1</sup> Yeshua quoted Lev 19:12, which tallies with Jerome’s statement that the Hebrew Matthew cites the Tanakh, not the LXX. *On Illustrious Men* 3. Cf. Exod 20:7; Num 30:2–15; Deut 5:11; 23:21–23; Ps 76:11; Eccl 5:4–5; Zech 5:3–4; 8:17; *Shevuot* 38b–39a; *Didache* 2:2.

<sup>2</sup> *Bava Metz’ia* 49a: “Let your ‘no’ and ‘yes’ both be righteous.

<sup>3</sup> See Gen 24:3; Deut 6:13; 10:20; cf. Sir 23:9, ***Do not accustom your mouth to swearing oaths, and do not habitually use the name of the Holy One.*** Only the Greek reads “do not swear at all” but neither the Old Syriac nor the Hebrew (e.g. the versions from Catalonia, Cochin, Shem Tov, and Samuel Vivas). In the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, Yaakov swore an oath and was not rebuked by Yeshua for having done so (see Jer. *Vir. ill.* 2). Paul called a kehilla to act under oath in G-d’s name (see 1 Thess 5:27), and Gentiles who want to follow the G-d of Israel are to swear by His name (see Jer 12:16). The Messiah “has not prohibited swearing by God, but by heaven and earth and Jerusalem and by your own head [i.e. your own life].” Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 5:34. “No one should think that it is permissible to swear falsely as long as they do not do so in the name of YHWH. Therefore Yeshua said not to swear by heaven, nor by earth, nor by Jerusalem, for the name of YHWH is upon them.” Soloveitchik, op. cit. 110; cf. Jam 5:12. “Next to not swearing at all, the second-best thing is to keep one’s oath; for by the mere fact of swearing at all, the swearer shows that there is some suspicion of him not being trustworthy.” Philo, *Decalogue* 84.

<sup>4</sup> See *Sanhedrin* 24a; *Nedarim* 10b–11a; *Nazir* 3b. While considered binding as per Mishnah *Shevuoth* 4:13, only oaths using substitutes for Yahweh were permitted since ‘naming the name of the Lord’ was viewed as blasphemy and punishable by death (cf. the tendentious LXX rendering of Lev 24:16 and Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.203–08). As per YT *Sanhedrin* 50b, the Samaritans who swore by ‘Yahweh’ had lost their portion in the world to come.

## RESTITUTION

You yourselves have heard what the Torah says: ‘An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.’ And I say to you that you must not repay evil with evil, but good for evil. If a man should strike you on the right side, permit him to strike your left.<sup>1</sup> (Mt 5:38–39)

While Mosaic Law entitles to compensation, the new man is to waive that right. No one could ever pay the charges for their offenses against G-d, and those who are acquitted should not claim any from others. Instead of claiming damages, the injured party is not only to forgive but also to confound the debtor by giving him the option to generate new debt.<sup>2</sup>

## ENEMY LOVE

You yourselves have heard that the Torah says, ‘But you must love your fellow as yourself.’ It was also said: ‘You must be angry with your enemy.’ And I say to you, you must love your enemies and do good to those who do evil to you. (Mt 5:43–44)

While the Torah entails loving fellows, it also entails loving foes.<sup>3</sup> Contrary to Yeshua’s supposed claim, neither the Tanakh nor the Oral Law contains a *mitzva* which tells Jews to hate Jewish antagonists or Gentiles.<sup>4</sup> Yet, divine enemy love not only amplifies Mosaic Law but demands from us what is humanly impossible. Without regeneration neither the command to love our foes nor the Written Law as a whole

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<sup>1</sup> Verse 39b is taken from *Sefer Nestor Ha-Komer* (c. 900 CE); cf. Lev 19:18; Lk 6:29; 1 Cor 6:1–7.

<sup>2</sup> *Lex talionis* can only be enforced in a theocracy, and while it curbs the carnal impulse for undue revenge (as exemplified by Lamech, Gen 4:24), it does not regulate personal retaliation but court-administered restitution. The rabbis have limited its meaning to financial compensation (e.g. *Bava Kama* 84a; Mishnah *Bava Kama* 8:1), but the text is to be taken literally: a person who intentionally destroys someone’s eye will pay for it with his own eye (see Exod 21:22–25; Lev 24:17–21; Deut 19:16–21; cf. Lam 3:30). The punishment acts as a strong deterrent and is an effective way to restrain the evil nature of unregenerate man; reportedly, no Jewish court has ever practiced *lex talionis*. “The world exists only on account of him who restrains himself in the hour of contention [*Chullin* 89a]. The early sages said: ‘A man has never insulted me more than one time, for the first time I bore my insult so that he did not insult me a second time.’ Thus, suffer the first blow and turn the other cheek toward him also, and he will certainly not strike you again.” Soloveitchik, op. cit. 111.

<sup>3</sup> See Lev 19:18; Exod 23:4–5; 1 Sam 24:19; Prov 24:17; *Berakhot* 12b; Mishnah *Pirkei Avot* 3:14 (cf. *Berakhot* 17a; Mt 5:44–48; 7:12; 22:39–40; Lk 6:27–36; Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14; Jam 2:8). *Bava Metz’ia* 32b: “If one encounters a friend whose animal collapses and it is necessary to unload its burden, and one also encounters an enemy who needs assistance to load a burden onto his animal, the mitzva is to assist the enemy, in order to subjugate one’s evil inclination.” *Gittin* 61a: “One sustains poor Gentiles along with poor Jews, and one visits sick Gentiles along with sick Jews, and one buries dead Gentiles along with dead Jews.”

<sup>4</sup> Ps 139:21–22 refers to being grieved by the conduct of the wicked. Since disparaging G-d’s law has always been Rome’s priority, the injunction to hate one’s enemy is certainly an interpolation.

can be kept the way it is meant to be kept; put another way, without rebirth salvation is impossible.<sup>1</sup> The message of selfless enemy love aptly concludes the Messiah's legal discourse since it underlines the necessity and aim of his mission: to provide for the creation of a *new man*.

**END OF PART I**

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<sup>1</sup> See Mt 7:21–23, 26–27.

## BIBLE VERSIONS USED

Page 1:	Mt 19:17 Rev 22:14 2 Pet 3:16	NET HBFV AMP	New English Translation A Faithful Version Amplified Bible
Page 3:	Rom 6:23 Jam 1:15 Rom 5:19 Rom 6:20 Isa 51:5	DLNT PHILLIPS GNT CSB NET	Disciples' Literal New Testament J. B. Phillips New Testament Good News Translation Christian Standard Bible New English Translation
Page 4:	Rom 3:9 Gen 2:17 Rom 5:12 1 Cor 15:21 Rom 5:15 Eph 2:1 Col 2:13 Eph 4:18 Mt 8:22	NLT NIV CEV TLB NMB CSB BSB NIRV KJV	New Living Translation New International Version Contemporary English Version Living Bible New Matthew Bible Christian Standard Bible Berean Study Bible New International Reader's Version King James Version
Page 5:	Rom 5:12 Gal 3:23	PHILLIPS ESV	J. B. Phillips New Testament English Standard Version
Page 6:	Gal 3:24 Mt 7:22–23 Mt 13:41	AB ESV EHV	Anchor Bible English Standard Version Evangelical Heritage Version
Page 7:	Rom 7:1 Rom 7:2–3 Rom 6:3, 6, 8	ISV PHILLIPS CJB	International Standard Version J. B. Phillips New Testament Complete Jewish Bible
Page 9:	Gal 2:16; Rom 10:4	HBFV	A Faithful Version
Page 10:	Gal 4:25 Num 15:15 Col 2:11 Mt 3:11	WEB TIB ISV HGC	World English Bible The Israel Bible International Standard Version Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia
Page 11:	Lk 16:16 Heb 8:13	TLV CSB	Tree of Life Version Christian Standard Bible
Page 12:	2 Cor 3:7–8, 11 Jn 1:17 Acts 15:24 2 Tim 3:16	TLV SG DHNT ERV	Tree of Life Version Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament Easy-to-Read Version

## BIBLE VERSIONS USED (CONT.)

Page 13:	Eph 2:15	AB	Anchor Bible
	Col 2:14	AB	Anchor Bible
	Col 2:16	NCV/VOICE	New Century Version/The Voice
Page 14:	Rom 14:5	JUB	Jubilee Bible 2000
	Rom 14:6	AB	Anchor Bible
	Rom 14:2, 14	NWT	New World Translation
	Rom 14:20	JANT	Jewish Annotated New Testament
	Acts 10:14–15	NWT	New World Translation
	Heb 4:9	NTE	New Testament for Everyone
Page 15:	1 Tim 4:3–5	AB	Anchor Bible
	Gal 4:9–10	CSB	Christian Standard Bible
	Col 2:16	NCV/VOICE	New Century Version/The Voice
	Acts 10:28	NWT	New World Translation
Page 16:	Acts 15:24	DHNT	Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament
Page 19:	Mt 5:18–19	HGC	Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia
	Mt 5:21–22	HGC	Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia
	Rom 3:31	DHNT	Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament
Page 20:	Mt 5:27–28, 31–32	HGC	Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia
	2 Pet 2:14, 17	KJV	King James Version
Page 21:	Mt 5:33	STV	Shem Tov Version
	Mt 5:34–37	HGC	Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia
	Isa 50:1	GNT	Good News Translation
	Mal 2:16	CEV	Contemporary English Version
Page 22:	Mt 5:38–39, 43–44	HGC	Hebrew Gospels from Catalonia

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