Hebrew Roots Movement

1. Overall presupposition: We are saved by grace through faith but this means that we only enter into God's family by faith alone and grace alone. We get into the house. But in order to remain in the house we must follow the rule. The rule is Torah!
2. There is very little theological coherence even at the start. The nature of faith and grace is not discussed. At some points "following the rules" is evidence of true faith. At other points "following the rules" brings about blessings denied to those who do not "follow the rules" without consequence of salvation. At other points "not following the rules" means eviction. It is unclear if eviction means losing one's salvation. But one can get evicted and come back if one decides to follow the rules.
3. Eternal security is denied. Perseverance of the saints is denied. Continuation of suspected salvation is dependent upon (in some cases) or evidence of (in some cases) following Torah.

   Note: It is unclear whether following Torah gains salvation, maintains salvation, or has nothing to do with salvation. At least one proponent of the Hebrew Roots Movement says all of the above. We are not sure if a failure to comply to this groups Torah obedience makes one the least in the Kingdom of God (yet still in), the least in the Kingdom of God and not blessed here on earth (yet still in), or kicked out of the Kingdom of God temporarily (until one repents and starts following Torah), or permanently if one does not agree to follow Torah!

4. Exactly what is entailed in obeying Torah is elusive. Also elusive is what penalties accrue for not obeying Torah.
5. The words of Jesus in this movement are more important than the words of Paul.
6. Matthew 5:17 is a critical passage.

HRM USE OF THE BIBLE

Romans 10:4

"For Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes."

Note: If Christ is the goal of Torah then it is paramount to go to Christ and not to Torah. Verse 5 is critical. Only the Man who practices the righteousness based upon the law will live. That Man is Christ for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. It is futile to think that anyone can practice the law for justification or sanctification!

Hebrews 8:8

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. 8 For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE

LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A **NEW COVENANT** WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NASU

HRM: The new covenant is not exactly new. It is a Renewed Covenant. Citing the example of the Hebrew word *chodesh*, the HRM finds this word for new to mean renewed in reference to the "new moon" in the OT. However in the Greek New Testament it is clear that new is in contrast to old making the old obsolete. The Greek word is to make old or declare obsolete. It is not to renew!

Gal 3:15

Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. NASU

HRM wants to apply this to keeping the Torah. It is ratified by God they say and cannot be broken. However, the very next verse explains that the Torah cannot break the Abrahamic Covenant. The Torah came 430 years later! The law was added but cannot break the promise of justification by faith alone!

Acts 24:14-17

14 "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, **believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets;** 15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men. NASU

HRM takes from this that Paul had to follow everything in the Torah or he is a liar and double minded. However, to believe in the law and prophets is not the same as being under all aspects of the Torah. One can believe that God gave the Torah and still believe that he is free of Torah. Paul is not contradictory. Compare Philippians 3 and 1 Corinthians 9.

> 1 Cor. 9:19-22 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. NIV

Jer 31:33-34

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, " I will put **My law within them and on their heart I will write it**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of

them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." NASU

HRM understands that God is prophesying that he would put Torah in the hearts of His own in the New Covenant.

The assumption of HRM is that unless Christians are under the Torah they are lawless. But this is not the assumption of the NT. The NT takes into account the OT Torah and brings forth a new relationship with God whereby all Christians are in-lawed our under the Law of Christ. The "how should we then live?" question is answered in an aggregate way. The writings of the apostles along with the conviction of the Holy Spirit bring the Christian under moral persuasion. There is also room for disagreement among Christians (Romans 14) and Christian liberty (1 Corinthians 10).

> Acts 13:38-40
>
> 38 "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you NIV
>
> Acts 15:5-11
>
> 5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses." 6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." NIV

We take note that the Jews took action against Paul on the basis of one primary complaint:

> Acts 18:12-13 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. 13 "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law." NIV

2 Tim 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

HRM would have us believe that verses 16, 17 apply to the OT and therefore would refer back to the Torah. However verse15 indicates the culmination of Torah is salvation in Christ and hence brings us into the NT wherein the OT is brought into full focus.

NOTE: The premise of the **HRM** is that the commandments given at Sinai are the exact same commandments given to Christians in the NT. Hence John 14:15 ("If you love me keep My commandments") must mean Torah since God and Christ are the same God. There is an absolute failure to draw a distinction between what God prescribed for Israel and what binds the conscience of Christians. Here some objections to this line of thinking:

Gal 6:13-16

13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. 16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. NIV

Phil 3:4-9

If anyone else thinks he has reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless. 7 But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. NIV

Gal 3:2-5

2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? 4 Have you suffered so much for nothing-if it really was for nothing? 5 Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard? NIV

Rom 7:4-6

4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. NIV

FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE BIBLE

Premise # 1.

2 Cor 3:7-4:1

7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. 10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, 13 and are not like Moses,who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. 14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is,there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. NASU

HRM: It is the contention of the HRM that the Torah of Moses is only to be considered the Old Covenant as long as it is understood without Messiah. Once we are in Christ the

veil is removed about Christ but the Torah remains in force. But this is not what Paul has said. Paul does not say that the veil about Christ is removed. He says the veil that reveals the fading away of the ministry of condemnation is removed so that all can see that the ministry of death is fading away and giving way to a surpassing glory!

Premise # 2.

HRM teaches that God gave the Torah to Israel after they were already redeemed hence God gives the Torah to Christians after they are redeemed. However, we are playing fast and loose with the OT concept of redemption from Egypt (a type) and the redemption in Christ (eternal salvation). Furthermore there is not a direct correspondence between what God has done with Israel and what God has done in Christ. This is proved over and over again by the emphasis on the NC. Furthermore it is a travesty to affirm that Israel was already "saved", and needed to have commandments to keep their salvation, and then apply the same formula to Christianity.

Premise # 3.

HRM twists the Torah to save Jesus from the embarrassment of breaking the Torah. Jesus is said to have disqualified all the witnesses who wished to stone the woman taken in adultery. According to the Torah only qualified witnesses could throw the first stone. However, the Torah does not permit a liar to witness. If we were to take HRM seriously no one would be able to judge another based upon the Torah. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are disqualified (according to HRM) to accuse another.

Premise # 4.

HRM replaces the word grace with the word Torah! "Jesus purpose was to establish God's Torah among the Jews. Paul's purpose was to extend forth God's Torah to embrace non-Jews. For both Jesus and Paul, Torah was grace. The prophet Isaiah tells us that Messiah was sent to bring the Torah even to the uttermost parts of the earth" (page 50 Lancaster)

Premise # 5.

HRM teaches that the NT cannot be properly understood unless read through the eyes of the OT. The Torah is the foundation of all Scripture and cannot be broken. "If we read the Torah through the lenses of the New Testament, we are proceeding in the opposite direction. To fully understand God's Word, we must read the Gospel and Epistles through the lens of Torah." (page 54 Lancaster)

Premise #6.

HRM mis-leads those who ask, "Why not Temple Sacrifices?" by boldly saying that the Torah demands that sacrifices can only be made at the Temple. The problem is that nowhere in Leviticus or Deuteronomy does the Torah make such a demand. The only demand is that sacrifices be made in a suitable place. But all this begs the question. If the Torah cannot be broken then why not build a temple and sacrifice? Are we being disobedient in not making a suitable place? Also the hypocrisy and evasiveness of HRM is evident in finding ways to get around Torah even though HRM insists that God's Torah is eternally binding.

"Similarly the strict measures of Torah justice –stoning and the like- are not applicable unless one is in the land of Israel under the authority of a duly ordained Torah court of law like the Sanhedrin. Since there has not been a functional Sanhedrin wielding civil authority in almost 2,000 years, there has not been a capital case tried in just as long. Most of the laws of Torah that Christians do not keep are laws that do not apply to us in the modern world. This is not to say that those laws are irrelevant or done away with, but under current circumstances, they cannot be practiced." (page 76 Lancaster)

Note; The entire book of Hebrews might have something to say about sacrifices done away with!

Premise # 7.

HRM boldly states that God commands His people to cease from labor on the 7th day of the week! HRM likens the Sabbath to the supposed millennial reign of Christ by using Colossians 2:16,17. It appears that this passage works against HRM by forbidding anyone to be a judge of your Sabbath day! HRM says the Sabbath is about Messiah and therefore the Sabbath is for the followers of Messiah! Colossians 2:16 does not say that the Sabbath is the substance of Messiah. Rather the Sabbath, food, drink, new moon, and festivals are all pointing to the substance which is Christ and no one is to determine a legal usage of them for another person! To what end will HRM push its legalism?

"The original context of creation makes it clear that the work God rested from on the Sabbath is the work of creation. Therefore, on the Sabbath day, we rest from the work of creating as well. We cease from the work of shaping, creating, forming, making, ordering, structuring, organizing, mixing, and molding things to produce results." Imposing our will onto substance, and creating order from disorder, is work. Production is work. Creation is work. Making money is work. We cease from works as a remembrance of creation, and we cease from work to remember our salvation." (page 80 Lancaster)

Premise # 8.

HRM teaches that the Greek text of Acts 20:7 makes it clear that the reference is the Sabbath end (Saturday) and not to the first day of the week.

The literal Greek reads: "And on the first of the sabbaths..." There are some questions here that need to be answered. First, is Luke using Jewish reckoning or Roman reckoning for what constitutes a day? If Roman then the days start at mid-night and go to the following mid-night just like ours. If Jewish then Sunset to Sunset. Most think that Luke is using Roman time.

The second and more important question concerns the meaning of "first of the sabbaths". This construction in Matthew 28:1 means a week. So here Luke probably means the first day of the week. Matthew 28:1 is strong. I would not know how to translate it other than first day of the week. Take a look at Mark 16:9. It is the same word 'sabbaths' as found in Acts 20:7 and Matthew 28:1.

Evidently a week (7days) can be designated as a sabbath week with the first day after sabbath being Sunday and the second day Monday and so on. Evidently Paul began speaking on Sunday evening and left the next day on Monday. John 20:19 clinches it for me. Jesus appears to His disciples. John records Jesus appearing "on the first of the sabbaths" same exact construction as Acts 20:7 and Matthew 28:1.(Compare John 20:1 for same construction as well). 1 Corinthians 16:2 adds weight to meeting on the first day of the week (every first sabbatou).

Premise #9.

HRM teaches that the book of Acts shows that believers remained ***engaged*** in Temple system long after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Acts 2:45-47

. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. NIV

Acts 3:1-3

3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer-at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. NIV

Acts 5:41-6:1

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. NIV

Acts 21:26

26 The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. NIV

Acts 25:8

8 Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar." NIV

Premise # 10.

HRM plays fast and loose with the applications of their own avowed principles! The Torah teaches it is OK to have and own slaves providing they are not Israelites. Even then you can buy a slave from Israel if you let them go on the 7th year. But the laws of modern society trump the Torah when convenient. "The same passage does, however, allow for the purchase of heathens as lifelong slaves. Of course, slavery is illegal in Canada, the United States and Mexico, so even if he were to find some heathens for sale in either Canada or Mexico he would have other legal issues to deal with." (page 131 Lancaster) Since the Sanhedrin does not exist today all corporal punishment is waved off! But why not have new Christian courts?

Helpful NOTES: Mishnah ='s written form of Oral Torah. It means Repetition of the Oral Torah (similar to RC Holy Tradition, the Oral Torah was passed along the generations as the "how to do it" word of Moses)

The Gamara (or completion) is the commentary on the Mishnah. There is the Israel Gamara and the Babylonian Gamara. Both are called Talmud (study) and hence there is the Talmud Jerusalem and the Talmud Babylonian.

Matthew 5:17: Law and Prophets refer to OT. "The best interpretation of these difficult verses says that Jesus fulfills the Law and Prophets in that they point to him, and he is their fulfillment. The antithesis is not between "abolish" and "keep" but between "abolish" and fulfill." For Matthew, then, it is not the question of Jesus' relation to the law that is in doubt but rather its relation to Him!" (Carson pages 145,6)

"The law pointed forward to Jesus and His teaching; so it is properly obeyed by conforming to His word. As it points to Him, so He, in fulfilling it, establishes what continuity it has, the true direction to which it points and the way it is to be obeyed. Thus ranking in the kingdom turns on the degree of conformity to Jesus' teaching as that teaching fulfills OT revelation. His teaching, toward which the OT pointed, must be obeyed." (Carson page 146)

NOTE: Jesus proclaimed all foods clean (Mark 7:19). Compare the change in law observance in Acts 10-11 and Hebrews 7:1-9:10. Quote here the insanity of HRM pg. 36 Olive Branch F.

Subject: The "Holiness Code" used by atheists against Bible believers

From: Larry Wessels (lawessels@sbcglobal.net)

To: lawessels@sbcglobal.net;

Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2015 7:18 AM

One of the most vexing questions Christians face is what to do about the Law of Moses in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Is it still binding on the people of God or was its burden removed by Christ? Are parts of it still binding – such as moral laws like prohibitions against homosexuality – while other parts have been fulfilled? Is there value to studying it or should we spend our time in New Testament passages?

Attempting to follow the Law will run a Christian into a host of problems. Leviticus 19:19 commands us not to sow a field with two types of seed. If you have a backyard garden with peas, potatoes, and pumpkins you are in violation. The same verse commands us not to wear a garment made up of two kinds of material; polyester and nylon blends that make up much of athletic clothing would be forbidden. Deuteronomy 24:15 would turn the economy upside down since it commands God's people to pay their employees on the same day they do the work. Should we demand five pay checks a week? Leviticus 15:19-20 indicates a woman in her cycle is unclean and must not be touched for seven days. How would we practice this in our churches? Do we print a bulletin roster of all unclean ladies so we can avoid shaking their hand? The Law also forbids the eating of pigs, shellfish, rabbits, and catfish, though it does allow for the eating of locusts (Lev. 11). Leviticus 19:27, "You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard." The problems of literally following the Law were illustrated by A.J. Jacobs, an

editor at *Esquire* magazine who attempted to obey all the rules in the Bible, including the laws that command stoning. He writes:

> The most commonly mentioned punishment method in the Hebrew Bible is stoning. So I figure, at the very least, I should try to stone. But how? ...I figured my loophole would be this: the Bible doesn't specify the size of the stones. So...pebbles. Here's the thing, though: Even with pebbles, it is surprisingly hard to stone people...after a couple of failed passes, I realized it was a bad idea. A chucked pebble, no matter how small, does not go unnoticed. My revised plan: I would pretend to be clumsy and drop the pebble on [someone's] shoe. So I did. And in this way I stoned. But it was probably the most polite stoning in history – I said 'I'm sorry,' and then leaned down to pick up the pebble.

The problem is further illustrated by a popular clip from the show "West Wing" in which President Bartlett confronts a right-wing talk radio host who uses Leviticus 18:22 to condemn homosexuality. Bartlett says to the host:

> I wanted to ask you a couple questions while I have you here. I'm interested in selling my youngest daughter into slavery as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7... what would a good price for her be?... My chief of staff... insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly says he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself or is it ok to call the police? Here is one that's really important because we've got a lot of sports fans in this town.

> Touching the skin of a dead pig makes one unclean, Leviticus 11:7. If they promise to wear gloves can the Washington Redskins still play football? ...Does the whole town really have to be together to stone my brother John for planting different crops side by side? Can I burn my mother in a small family gathering for wearing garments made from two different threads? Think about those questions, will you?

Now we could answer President Bartlett by pointing out that the slavery laws in Exodus 21:7 prevented the exploitation of poor families, that Leviticus 11:7 forbids touching the carcass (not the skin) so the Redskins can play as long as they're using a football and not the body of a dead pig, and that planting different crops and wearing garments with different threads are not punishable by death. But this still puts us in the difficult position of having to explain the reasoning behind every law to modern people who cannot begin to fathom the thoughts and lives of people who lived 3,500 years ago. Even though Bartlett's little speech is riddled with errors, it still exposes the difficulties Christians face when trying to understand and live out the Law of Moses.

Many do not understand that the Old Testament Law was divided into ceremonial, civil, and moral laws & these were completely fulfilled in Christ. The Old Testament civil laws ended with Israel, and the moral laws are the only ones still binding.

Some simply pick and choose what they want to believe in the Bible. They accept the parts they like and agree with and reject the parts they dislike that offend them. This allows them to dismiss the Law and not worry about it. However, this is only crafting a religion to one's own liking. Christians who

believe the Bible to seriously be the Word of God and who desire to follow all of it cannot just dismiss the Law; they must deal with it.

In Christ, the Law is fulfilled - Paul said in Romans 7:6, "But now we are released from the Law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code." So we are free from the Law, but does it then become irrelevant to Christians? No. 9 of the 10 commandments are reaffirmed in the New Testament & thus these moral laws of God are still binding on Christians today.

Subject: Re: hebrew roots

From: Larry Wessels (lawessels@sbcglobal.net)

To: rzins@carolina.rr.com;

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2015 10:01 AM

Hello Rob,

Excellent stuff here on the HRM. You have just helped me understand how I want to set up this show for presentation. Here's how I envision it to proceed: 1. we spend the first 30 minutes or so of the show going through your outline point by point with you doing most of the talking because after all we'll using your outline 2. Next you'll proceed to have a dialogue with me throwing out HRM specific beliefs & you responding to them in kind (I'll bring up their point & you present a counterpoint to each issue). Thus, I will bring up the following to you: Hebrew Roots Movement advocates say: 1. the New Testament was first written in Hebrew & Aramaic while the Greek NT came later thus you have to use specific Jewish terminology such as a) the Sacred name only such as YHWH (Yahweh) for God & not other terms like Jehovah, Lord, etc. b) the name Jesus is a false name & really should only be called by the Hebrew name such as Yeshua or other specific Hebrew names, they say there is no one named "Jesus Christ;" c) using Hebrew phrases & terminology as much as possible is a good idea in the Christian life; 2. The Torah observant life must be part of the Christian life now (Torah observant Gentiles); 3. Jewish clothing particularly with tassels is a good idea in the Christian life; 4. Observing Torah dietary laws (no pork, etc.) & eating Kosher foods is part of the Christian life; 5. Wearing Star of David jewelry & displaying the Star of David in your home or work place is a

good idea for the Christian life; 6. Supporting the secular state of Israel in the Middle East is a very Christian thing to do; 7. Placing a mezuzah on your doorpost is the Christian thing to do (a ***mezuzah*** (Hebrew: מְזוּזָה "doorpost"; plural: מְזוּזוֹת ***mezuzot***) is a piece of parchment (often contained in a decorative case) inscribed with specified Hebrew verses from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21). These verses comprise the Jewish prayer "Shema Yisrael", beginning with the phrase: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One". A mezuzah is affixed to the doorframe in Jewish homes to fulfill the mitzvah (Biblical commandment) to inscribe the words of the Shema "on the doorposts of your house" (Deuteronomy 6:9). Some interpret Jewish law to require a mezuzah on every doorway in the home[1] apart from bathrooms and closets too small to qualify as rooms.[2] The parchment is prepared by a qualified scribe (a "*sofer stam*") who has undergone many years of meticulous training, and the verses are written in black indelible ink with a special quill pen. The parchment is then rolled up and placed inside the case.); 8. As true Christians you must observe Passover but not the heathen holidays of Easter & Christmas; 9. As true Christians you must observe Sabbath Keeping & reject worshipping on Sunday (a day worshipping the Sun god); 10. As true Christians you must observe all Hebrew feast days: Passover (Pesach), Unleavened Bread (Hag Hamatzot), First Fruits (Yom Habikkurim), Weeks (Shavout or Hag Hashavuot), Trumpets (Rosh Hashana), Day of Atonement (Yom Kipur), & Tabernacles (Sukkoth) because the Torah is still binding; 11. Christians are not allowed to touch money on the Sabbath day; 12. Christians do not celebrate birthdays because it is a pagan custom; 13. Protestant preachers & Roman Catholics are pagans because they worship on

Sundays; 14. Christians should observe the significance of "Blood Moons" in regard to end time Bible prophecies & Catastrophic Events -

A "blood moon" is the name that has often been assigned to a complete lunar eclipse, which occurs when the earth comes between the sun and the moon, putting the moon into a complete shadow. Such a moon often (but not always) appears to be red in color because of the way light bends around the earth's atmosphere, scattering short wavelength light (green through violet) and leaving longer wavelength light (red, orange and yellow). It's why sunsets and sunrises generally are red.[6]

Complete or total lunar eclipses are relatively rare. During the 20th Century, there was a total of 229 lunar eclipses of all types, but only 81 of these were total eclipses (completely obscuring the moon in the earth's shadow). The rest were partial eclipses. In this century there will be 228 lunar eclipses of all types and 85 total eclipses.[7]

What is rarer is what is called a "tetrad." This is a series of four total lunar eclipses in a row over a two year period of time. Since the time of Christ there have been a total of 87 tetrads, including the last one that occurred in 2003-2004. In this century, we are scheduled to experience 8 tetrads, the most that can occur in a century's time (some centuries have had none at all).[8]

Even rarer is a phenomenon that Mark Biltz discovered. Of the 87 tetrads that have occurred since the time of Christ, only 8 have fallen on Jewish feast days. Those eight occurred in the following years: 162-163, 795-796, 842-843, 860-861, 1428-1429, 1493-1494, 1949-1950 and 1967-1968.[9]

For an example of what is meant by a tetrad falling on Jewish feast days, consider the tetrad of 1967-1968.[10]

1. Passover, April 24, 1967 — Blood Moon
2. Feast of Tabernacles, October 18, 1967 — Blood Moon (Total Solar Eclipse, November 2, 1967)
3. Passover, April 13, 1968 — Blood Moon
4. Feast of Tabernacles, October 6, 1968 — Blood Moon

Hebrew Roots & Blood Moon conspiracy advocates make much of the fact that the last three tetrads that fell on Jewish feast days occurred at times when significant events were happening among the Jewish people:

1. 1493-1494 — This tetrad followed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.
2. 1949-1950 — This tetrad followed the re-establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.
3. 1967-1968 — The beginning of this tetrad occurred right before the beginning of the Six Day war in 1967.

Notice that two of these tetrads *followed* the significant events. Only one (1967-1968) served as a partial precursor of the event. And notice that there was no significant event in Jewish history that was related to the first five tetrads that fell on Jewish feast days. As for blood moons, the Bible refers to them several times. Some of the references only imply a blood moon when they speak of the moon being "darkened" (Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:10, Joel 3:15, and Matthew 24:29). Others specifically mention a moon "turned to blood" (Joel 2:31 and Revelation 6:12); 15. The Year of Jubilee should be observed as well as shmita rules (The **sabbath year** (*shmita* Hebrew: שמיטה, literally "release") also called the **sabbatical year** or *sheviit* (Hebrew: שביעית, literally "seventh") is the seventh year of the seven-year

agricultural cycle mandated by the Torah for the Land of Israel,[1] and still observed in contemporary Judaism. During *shmita*, the land is left to lie fallow and all agricultural activity, including plowing, planting, pruning and harvesting, is forbidden by *halakha* (Jewish law). Other cultivation techniques (such as watering, fertilizing, weeding, spraying, trimming and mowing) may be performed as a preventative measure only, not to improve the growth of trees or other plants. Additionally, any fruits which grow of their own accord are deemed *hefker* (ownerless) and may be picked by anyone. A variety of laws also apply to the sale, consumption and disposal of *shmita* produce. All debts, except those of foreigners, were to be remitted.[2]
Chapter 25 of the Book of Leviticus promises bountiful harvests to those who observe the *shmita*, and describes its observance as a test of religious faith. There is little notice of the observance of this year in Biblical history and it appears to have been much neglected.) & 16. Many in the Hebrew Roots Movement believe that the apostle Paul was a false prophet who perverted Christianity & brought in a false gospel by moving it away from its Hebrew Roots.

Rob, I'll have some other general information I'll be bring up after we get through your outline & these questions. I haven't quite finished putting all that research together yet but I think in the end we'll have a show that will Biblically help a lot of people with this Galatian Judaizing religious deception & hopefully all within an hour or so.

Blessings to you in Christ,

I'll pray for your safe arrival,

Subject: YouTube comment for "Was the Apostle Paul a False Prophet?"

From: Larry Wessels (lawessels@sbcglobal.net)

To: lawessels@sbcglobal.net;

Date: Friday, October 9, 2015 2:26 AM

Question: "Was the Apostle Paul actually a false prophet?"

Answer: The theory that the apostle Paul was a false prophet and not a true follower of Christ is usually put forth by those of the Hebrew roots movement persuasion, among others. They believe Christians should submit to the Old Testament Law, but Paul clearly disagrees with them, proclaiming that Christians are no longer under the Mosaic Law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25; Ephesians 2:15), but the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), which is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind…and to love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Rather than submitting to God's Word, the Hebrew roots movement simply dismisses Paul altogether and claims that Paul was a false apostle and that his writings should not be in the Bible.

But Paul's apostolic authority has been well documented in Scripture, beginning with his dramatic Damascus Road experience which changed him from a Christ-hating persecutor of Christians to the foremost spokesman for the faith. His astonishing change of heart is one of the clearest indications of his anointing by the Lord Jesus Himself.

Tom Tarrants, once labeled "the most dangerous man in Mississippi," was one of the top men on the FBI's most

wanted list. Tarrants was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and despised African-Americans and Jews, a people he fully believed were God's enemies and involved in a communist plot against America. Tarrants was responsible for bombing some 30 synagogues, churches and homes. He was so dangerous that the FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, sent a special team of FBI agents that were used to infiltrate the Russian KGB down into the American South to locate and apprehend Tarrants. They were successful and took Tarrants into custody after a violent shootout. Tarrants received a 30-year sentence in the Mississippi State Penitentiary.

While in prison, Tarrants one day asked for a Bible and began reading it. He got as far as Matthew 16 and was confronted with Jesus' words: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" He couldn't escape the impact of Christ's statement and got down on his knees in his cell and asked God to deliver him from his sinful life.

Word of Tarrant's conversion soon began to spread throughout the prison and ultimately made it all the way back to Hoover, who strongly doubted the story. How could such a true change in such a hardened, evil person be validated?

About 2,000 years ago, another man had nearly the identical problem. When the apostle Paul first came to Jerusalem after his conversion to Christianity, he tried to associate with the disciples, but they were all afraid of him and didn't believe he was a true convert (Acts 9:26) because of his past persecution of Christians. Today, some people feel the same way about Paul. Occasionally, a charge is made that Paul was a Pharisee who tried to corrupt the teachings of Christ

and that his writings should have no place in the Bible. This accusation can be put to rest by examining his conversion experience and his adherence to Christ and His teachings.

Paul's Persecution of Christianity

Paul first appears in Scripture as a witness to the martyrdom of Stephen: "When they had driven him [Stephen] out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (Acts 7:58). "Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death" (Acts 8:1). The words "hearty agreement" indicate active approval, not just passive consent. Why would Paul agree with the murder of Stephen?

Paul the Pharisee would have immediately recognized the statement Stephen made right before his death: "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). Stephen's words repeat the claim Christ made at His trial before the high priest (Mark 14:62). Just as Jesus' claim resulted in Him being accused of blasphemy, so also these words would bring a murderous response from Saul the Pharisee toward Stephen.

In addition, the term "Son of Man" is filled with significance. It is the last time the term is used in the New Testament and it is the only time in the Gospels and Acts when it is not spoken by Jesus. It shows that Jesus is the Messiah, and it speaks of Christ's position in the end times as the coming King. It also combines two great Messianic passages: Daniel 7:13-14 and Psalm 110:1. Daniel 7:13-14 emphasizes the universal aspect of Jesus' rule; that He is not simply a Jewish ruler, but also the Savior of the world. Psalm 110:1 presents the Messiah as being at God's right hand. Besides stressing

power and position, it also shows acceptance.

All these things would have infuriated Saul the Pharisee, who at the time did not possess the true knowledge of Christ. But it would not be long before Saul the Pharisee would become Paul the evangelist for Christ.

The Conversion of Paul

In the three versions of Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-9, 22:6-11, 26:9-20), there are repeated elements which appear to be central to his mission and commissioning. First, it marked his conversion to Christianity; second, it constituted his call to be a prophet; and third, it served as his commission to be an apostle. These three points may be broken down into the following, more intimate considerations: (1) Paul was specifically chosen, set aside, and prepared by the Lord for the work that he would do; (2) Paul was sent as a witness to not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well; (3) Paul's evangelistic mission would encounter rejection and require suffering; (4) Paul would bring light to people who were born into and currently lived in darkness; (5) Paul would preach repentance was required prior to a person's acceptance into the Christian faith; (6) Paul's witness would be grounded in space-time history and be based on his Damascus Road experience—what he had personally seen and heard in a real location that would be known to all who lived in Damascus.

Before Gamaliel's pupil came to a proper assessment of the ministry entrusted to him by God and the death of Jesus, a revolution had to take place in his life and thought. Paul would later say that he was "apprehended" by Jesus (Philippians 3:12) on the road to Damascus, a term that means to make something one's own or gain control of

someone through pursuit. In Acts 9, we clearly see miracles on display in Paul's conversion, the point of which were to make clear that God is in control and directing all the events, so that Paul will undertake certain tasks God has in mind, something the former Saul would never have had any intention of doing.

Although there are many observations that can be made about Paul's Damascus Road conversion, there are two key items of interest. First is the fact that Paul's life would become centered on Christ after his experience. After his encounter with Jesus, Paul's understanding of the Messiah had been revolutionized, and it was not long before he is proclaiming, "He [Jesus] is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20).

Second, we note that in Paul's conversion there are no positive antecedents or precursory events that led him from being a zealous opponent to a fervent proponent of Christ. One minute Paul had been an enemy of Jesus, and the next he had become a captive to the Christ he had once persecuted. Paul says, "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10), indicating he was transformed by God, became truly spiritual, and he was one whom Christ possessed and was now a Christ-bearer himself.

After the Damascus experience, Paul first went to Arabia, but whether he actually began his missionary work there is unknown. What is more likely is that he earnestly desired a time of quiet recollection. Then after a short stay in Jerusalem, he worked as a missionary in Syria and Cilicia (that is for the most part in Antioch on the Orontes and in his native city of Tarsus) and after that in company with Barnabas in Cyprus, in Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia.

The Love of Paul

Paul, the former cold aggressor and legalist, had now become a person who could write of the key attribute that witnessed above everything else in 1 Corinthians 13 – love for God and those around him. The one who was supremely educated in knowledge had come to the point of saying that knowledge devoid of love only makes one arrogant, but love edifies (1 Corinthians 8:1).

The book of Acts and Paul's letters testify to a tenderness that had come over the apostle for both the unbelieving world and those inside the Church. As to the latter, in his farewell address to the Ephesian believers in Acts 20, he tells them that "night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears" (Acts 20:31). He tells the Galatian believers they are his "little children" (Galatians 4:19). He reminds the Corinthians that whenever they experience pain, he is wounded as well (2 Corinthians 11:29). He speaks of believers in Philippi as "having them in his heart" (Philippians 1:7). He tells the Thessalonian church that he "abounds" in love for them (1 Thessalonians 3:12) and demonstrated that fact by living among them and helping build up a Christian community (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1–2). Repeatedly throughout his writings, Paul reminds his believing readers of his care and love for them.

Paul's attitude toward unbelievers is one of caring and deep concern as well, with perhaps the clearest example of this being his articulation in the letter to the Romans of the sorrow he felt for his fellow Israelites who had not come to faith in Christ: "I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have

great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:1-3).

This type of angst exhibited by Paul for unbelievers was also not restricted to his own nationality, but extended to non-Jews as well. As just one example, when he entered Athens, the text in Acts 17:16 makes clear that Paul was both repulsed and "greatly distressed" over the idolatrous situation the city was in. Yet he deeply cared about God's rightful place as well as the people who were involved in false worship, and he immediately went about trying to engage the pagan unbelievers in discourse about the gospel which had been entrusted to him (Acts 17:17-34). And at the heart of his message was Jesus.

Paul on Jesus

Some try to argue that the picture Paul paints of Jesus in his Epistles does not match the Christ portrayed in the Gospels. Such a position could not be further from the truth. From Paul's letters, we learn the following of Jesus:

- He had Jewish ancestry
- He was of Davidic descent
- He was born of a virgin
- He lived under the law
- He had brothers
- He had 12 disciples
- He had a brother named James
- He lived in poverty
- He was humble and meek
- He was abused by the Romans

- He was deity
- He taught on the subject of marriage
- He said to love one's neighbor
- He spoke of His second coming
- He instituted the Lord's Supper
- He lived a sinless life
- He died on the cross
- The Jews put Him to death
- He was buried
- He was resurrected
- He is now seated at right hand of God

Beyond these facts is Paul's testimony that he left everything to follow Christ (the true test of a disciple as outlined by Jesus in Luke 14:26-33). Paul writes, "But whatever things [his Jewish background and benefits that he had just listed] were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:7–11).

Paul's Enemies

Paul's teachings and proclamation of Jesus were not popular. If the success of an evangelistic mission were to be measured by the amount of opposition, his mission would be

regarded as a catastrophic failure. This would be in keeping with Christ's statement made to Ananias: "For I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16). The book of Acts alone chronicles more than 20 different episodes of rejection and opposition to Paul's message of salvation. We should also take seriously the litany of opposition and rejection that Paul lays out in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. In truth, such hostility and dismissal is to be expected, given his audience. A crucified deliverer was to the Greeks an absurd contradiction in terms, just as to Jews a crucified Messiah was a piece of scandalous blasphemy.

Paul's enemies comprised a trinity. First, there were the spiritual enemies indicated in his writings that he was acutely aware of (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 2:18). Next, there were his already mentioned initial target audience of both Jews and Gentiles, many of whom would mistreat and dismiss him. Lastly came the one that, it could be argued, perhaps caused him the most grief—the early Church itself.

The fact that Paul was seen as strange and questionable, not merely by fellow Jews but also by a number of fellow Jewish Christians, was no doubt hurtful to him. It would be one thing for Paul's authority and authenticity to be challenged outside the Body of Christ, but inside was a different foe with which he had to wrestle. First Corinthians 9:1-3 is an example: Paul insists to the Church that he was commissioned by Christ (others include Romans 1:5; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1). Some even believe that 2 Corinthians 11:26 suggests that there was a plot to murder Paul; a plot formed by other Christians.

Such combined opposition—lost humanity, spiritual

adversaries, and distrusting brethren—certainly must have caused the apostle to despair at times, with evidence in his writings that he carried out his missionary work with the prospect of martyrdom before his eyes (Philippians 2:17), which ultimately turned out to be true. Paul was beheaded, tradition asserts, under the persecution of Nero near the third milestone on the Ostian Way. Constantine built a small basilica in Paul's honor by AD 324, which was discovered in 1835 during excavations preceding the erection of the present basilica. On one of the floors was found the inscription *PAVLO APOSTOLO MART* – "To Paul, apostle and martyr".

Concluding Thoughts About Paul

So was Paul for real? The evidence from history and from his own writings declares that he was. Paul's 180 degree turnaround from his Pharisaic life is not disputed by any learned scholar of history, both secular and Christian. The only question is: what caused his about-face? What would cause a very learned Jewish Pharisee to suddenly embrace the very movement he violently opposed and be so committed to it that he would die a martyr's death?

The answer is contained within Paul's writings and the book of Acts. In Galatians Paul summarizes his story in this way:

"For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions. But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to

reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; but only, they kept hearing, 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.' And they were glorifying God because of me" (Galatians 1:13–24).

Paul's very life testifies to the truthfulness of what happened to him. In that respect, he was very much like Tom Tarrants. A dramatically changed life is hard to argue with. And what finally happened to Tom Tarrants? J. Edgar Hoover wouldn't believe that Tarrants had actually become a Christian so he sent an FBI agent into the prison disguised as an inmate whose job it was to befriend Tarrants and find out the truth. About a week later, that FBI agent became a Christian and reported back to Hoover that Tarrants indeed was no longer the man he used to be.

A number of people petitioned that Tarrants be released, and eight years into his sentence, Tarrants was paroled and left prison. He went to seminary, earned a doctorate of ministry degree, and went on to serve as president of the C. S. Lewis Institute for 12 years. Currently, he serves as the Institute's director of ministry.

"You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16) and the fruits of the apostle Paul leave no doubt that he was very real indeed.

Recommended Resources: Paul: A Man of Grace and Grit by Charles Swindoll.

Subject: YouTube comment for "Who were the Judaizers?" & "Do Christians have to obey Old Testament law?"

From: Larry Wessels (lawessels@sbcglobal.net)

To: lawessels@sbcglobal.net;

Date: Friday, October 9, 2015 2:35 AM

Question: "Who were the Judaizers?"

Answer: There have always been those who balk at the idea of God's salvation being offered freely to those who believe. They reason that such a grand gift as forgiveness from such a holy God *must* require some kind of payment from us. We thank God for His grace, but we understand that He expects us to somehow *earn* that grace—in other words, there must be *something* that we can do to pay off the debt we owe to God.

In the early church, those who taught a combination of God's grace and human effort were called "Judiazers." The word *Judaizer* comes from a Greek verb meaning "to live according to Jewish customs." The word appears in Galatians 2:14 where Paul describes how he confronted Peter for forcing Gentile Christians to "Judaize."

A Judiazer taught that, in order for a Christian to truly be right with God, he must conform to the Mosaic Law. Circumcision, especially, was promoted as necessary for salvation. Gentiles had to become Jewish proselytes *first*, and *then* they could come to Christ. The doctrine of the Judiazers was a mixture of grace (through Christ) and works (through the keeping of the Law). This false doctrine was dealt with in Acts 15 and strongly condemned in the book of Galatians.

At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, a group of Judaizers opposed Paul and Barnabas. Some men who belonged to the party of the Pharisees insisted that Gentiles could not be saved unless they were first circumcised and obeyed the Law of Moses. Paul made the case that, in Christ, there was no longer any distinction between Jew and Gentile, for God had purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith (Acts 15:8–9). He said it plainly in Galatians 2:16: "A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

To add anything to the work that Christ did for salvation is to negate God's grace. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, not by returning to the Law. "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing" (Galatians 2:21).

There are many groups today with beliefs/practices very similar to the Judaizers of the New Testament. The two most prominent would be the Hebrew Roots Movement and the Roman Catholic Church. The teachings of the Hebrew Roots Movement are virtually identical to those of the Judaizers whom Paul rebuked in Galatians. A primary focus of the Hebrew Roots Movement is to put followers of Christ back under the bondage of the Old Testament Law.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches a doctrine similar to that of the Judiazers of the New Testament in this way: its doctrine is a mixture of law and grace. At the Council of Trent in the 16th century, the Catholic Church explicitly denied the idea of salvation by faith alone. Catholics have always held

that certain sacraments are necessary for salvation. The issues for the 1st-century Judiazers were circumcision and Sabbath-keeping. The issues for modern-day Catholics are baptism, confession, etc. The works considered necessary may have changed, but both Judiazers and Catholics attempt to merit God's grace through the performance of ritualistic acts.

First Timothy 4:3 says that, in later times, false teachers will "forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth." This sounds suspiciously close to some of the teachings of Roman Catholicism, which requires priests to be celibate ("forbidding to marry") and proclaims some food to be off-limits during Lent ("abstaining from certain foods").The Judiazers upheld the Mosaic Law as necessary for salvation; Catholics uphold man-made tradition as necessary; both view Christ's death as being insufficient *without the active and continued cooperation of the one being saved*.

The Bible is clear that the attempt to add human works to God's grace overlooks the very meaning of *grace*, which is "undeserved blessing." As Paul says, "If by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace" (Romans 11:6). Praise the Lord, "Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1).

Recommended Resources: The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology by Jason Meyer and Logos Bible Software.

Question: "Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?"

Answer: The key to understanding the relationship between the Christian and the Law is knowing that the Old Testament law was given to the nation of Israel, not to Christians. Some of the laws were to reveal to the Israelites how to obey and please God (the Ten Commandments, for example). Some of the laws were to show the Israelites how to worship God and atone for sin (the sacrificial system). Some of the laws were intended to make the Israelites distinct from other nations (the food and clothing rules). None of the Old Testament law is binding on Christians today. When Jesus died on the cross, He put an end to the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23–25; Ephesians 2:15).

In place of the Old Testament law, Christians are under the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), which is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind…and to love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). If we obey those two commands, we will be fulfilling all that Christ requires of us: "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:40). Now, this does not mean the Old Testament law is irrelevant today. Many of the commands in the Old Testament law fall into the categories of "loving God" and "loving your neighbor." The Old Testament law can be a good guidepost for knowing how to love God and knowing what goes into loving your neighbor. At the same time, to say that the Old Testament law applies to Christians today is incorrect. The Old Testament law is a unit (James 2:10). Either all of it applies, or none of it applies. If Christ fulfilled some of it, such as the sacrificial system, He fulfilled all of it.

"This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome" (1 John 5:3). The Ten Commandments were essentially a summary of the entire Old Testament law. Nine of the Ten Commandments are clearly repeated in the New Testament (all except the command to observe the Sabbath day). Obviously, if we are loving God, we will not be worshipping false gods or bowing down before idols. If we are loving our neighbors, we will not be murdering them, lying to them, committing adultery against them, or coveting what belongs to them. The purpose of the Old Testament law is to convict people of our inability to keep the law and point us to our need for Jesus Christ as Savior (Romans 7:7-9; Galatians 3:24). The Old Testament law was never intended by God to be the universal law for all people for all of time. We are to love God and love our neighbors. If we obey those two commands faithfully, we will be upholding all that God requires of us.

Recommended Resources: The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology by Jason Meyer and Logos Bible Software.

Here is my questions for you ...

In Luke 22:20, does Jesus say that the New Covenant frees all believers from the OT Law?
Where is the New Covenant for the House of Israel/Judah defined in scripture? (Jer 31:33)
Did Jesus say He was sent only for the lost sheep of the House of Israel? (Matt 15:24)

No, Jesus did not say that the New Covenant frees all believers from the O.T. Law in Luke 22:20. He also did not say that all those in the New Covenant were bound by the O.T. Law in any way shape or form in Luke 22:20. Luke 22:20 is an explanation of the inauguration of the New Covenant which will be explained as the New Testament unfolds culminating in the inspired words of Hebrews which makes it clear that New Covenant believers are no longer under the O.T. Law.

Heb 8:6-13
6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said:

"The time is coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
9 It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,
and I turned away from them,
declares the Lord.

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
11 No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
12 For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. NIV
By the way, of course Jesus was sent to gather both Jews and Gentiles but not to put either of them under the Law of Moses.

What does Jesus say about the law? (Matt 5:18)

In summary, Jesus came to fulfill the Law. He did not destroy it. He did not cut and paste it as a condition for salvation or for holiness for New Covenant Christians. He did not re-institute it. He did not command any Christian to pick and choose which part of the law they should follow. By fulfilling the Law Jesus becomes the new "way". By subsuming the Law under Him and fulfilling the law's requirements all obedience is due to the directives of the Lord Jesus Christ. His perfect obedience to the Law and fulfilling of the Law is our righteousness gained by faith alone. The Law pointed to the words and works of Jesus thus the Law is properly obeyed by being conformed to His Word.

What caused Jesus to make this statement (Mark 2:23-26) in the first place?
Did the Pharisees add their own restrictions to the original Mosaic Law when they required hand washing before eating?

Here is the verse: Mark 2:23-28

23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" 25 He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26 In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." NIV

The Pharisees were insistent that picking heads of grain constituted reaping which was against the Law of the Sabbath (Ex. 34:21). Jesus pointed out that the stringent application of the Law was not in accordance with the general tenor of the Law. Jesus had such authority as He was Lord of the Sabbath and Sabbath Law. It is evident that the Sabbath was instituted for the joy and refreshment of man and the fence built around it by the Pharisees simply went too far. We agree that the Pharisees commonly did this sort of thing. The question for Christians is whether any part of the Sabbath is binding on our conscience. Surely Jesus did not break the intention of the Sabbath as indicated here. The New Covenant does not command Sabbath restrictions on Believers in Christ. Jesus did not violate or break the Mosaic Law. He broke the traditions of the Pharisees. If Jesus had broken the Law then He would have sinned. Jesus came to fulfill not to break!

Did Jesus and the Apostles (including Paul) observe the Sabbath?

Why would Paul chastise new believers for keeping the Sabbath and feast days if he himself kept them? (1 Cor 5:8)

Jesus was under the prescriptions of the proper prescriptions of Sabbath Law until He fulfilled the Law by His perfect obedience. But Jesus made it perfectly clear that He was the one greater than either the Law or Moses. Paul kept the Sabbath Law so as to not offend those who were convinced that they were under the Law. But Paul did not put Christians under the Sabbath Law.

1 Cor 9:19-22

19 For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. NASU

Salvation is by faith in Jesus alone. Righteousness comes from following Torah. (Rev 22:12) Did the Hebrew believers think their salvation came from following Torah?

What on earth could you mean by affirming "Righteousness comes from following Torah?" First of all what do you mean by the word "Torah"? Could you explain to me what "following Torah" means? I am with the apostle Paul who wanted nothing to do with Law righteousness:

Phil 3:7-9

7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 **and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,** NASU

The New Testament informs us that the nation of Israel in the main did indeed think their salvation came from following Torah. Here is the New Testament comment on the way the Nation of Israel tried to gain salvation.

Rom 9:30-10:4

30 What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." 33 As it is written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble

and a rock that makes them fall,
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

Romans 10

10:1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. NIV

On the contrary, God told us to choose life or death, blessings or curses. Following His commands will not cause death or a curse. If Paul is teaching something different than either there must be a translation error or we do not understand Paul correctly. Scripture cannot contradict itself.

Belinda, I think that you are promoting the idea that the Law cannot possibly justify since no one can keep it perfectly. With this I agree. But then you seem to be saying that following the Torah will sanctify. So, you begin by faith alone but end by works of the Law. Right? But what works? Remember most people have no idea what it means to "follow the Torah." You have to explain this first. In the meantime I am sticking with the apostle Paul:

Gal 3:1-5
1 You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain — if indeed it was in vain? 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? NASU

What did Peter have to say about Paul's writings?

Here is what Peter says about Paul's letters:

2 Peter 3:14-16

14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15 Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16 He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. NIV

Yes, the ignorant and unstable distort both Paul's writings and other Scriptures but who are these ignorant and unstable people.

What did Jesus say about teaching the Law?

Jesus said that keeping the Law was not necessary for justification. He also said through Peter that it was unfair to put on the neck of gentiles the yoke of the Law that the even the Israel fathers could not bear. Once again I am sticking with the apostle Paul. He explains under inspiration the intent of the law and its purpose:

Gal 3:21-25

21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! **For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.** 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. 23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 **So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law**. NIV

Belinda, do you believe the entire N.T. as we have it is a reliable translation of the Greek and Hebrew text? What translation do you use? Odd that you would not give the apostle Paul the same validity as you would Moses. Both the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God. Right?

What are "God's commands" that Paul refers to in 1 Cor 7:19?

Here is the verse:

1 Cor 7:19-20
19 Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. NIV

Circumcision is part of the Torah to be obeyed by God's people. How then can it be called "nothing" by the apostle? It has been eclipsed by the New Covenant and keeping God's commands means listening to His Son. The Holy Spirit will convict of sin and unrighteousness. Notice that Torah is not mentioned here. As the apostle Paul explains, we are under the Law of Christ.

Was circumcision commanded by God? (Gen 17:9)

Did God say that only Hebrews were to be circumcised? (Gen 17:12-13)

Circumcision is nothing in the New Covenant. Perhaps you should re-read the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15?

Did Paul say that he was writing his own personal opinion in 1 Corinthians 7:12, 25, and 40?In 2 Cor 8:8-10? In 2 Cor 11:17?

Paul most assuredly did not say that he was writing his own personal opinion. The fact that Paul notes that what he is about to say was not mentioned by Jesus in His incarnation does not negate the fact that Paul is speaking with authority under inspiration.

1 Cor 14:37-38

37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. 38 But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. NASU

1 Thess 2:13-14

13 For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe. NASU

In Acts 24:14, why did Paul say he believed everything written in the Law and the Prophets ?

Here is the verse you mention in context:

Acts 24:14-16
14 "But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; 15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16 "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men. NASU

This context indicates Paul's ongoing contention that the Law and the Prophets spoke of and pointed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. What Paul believed about the Law and prophets is explained over and over again in the context of the New Covenant. Paul is not saying that Christians are responsible to obey Old Covenant restrictions placed upon the nation Israel. Circumcision being a prime example. Read verse 14 above, "According to the Way (New Covenant in Christ) which they call a sect, I do serve the God of our father…"

What are the blessings God gives us for following Torah? (Deut 28:1-14)
Did God say we would cursed by following His commands?

Why would a loving God curse us for following His commands?

I think the point is that the Lord God Almighty does not require New Covenant born again Christians to observe the Torah restrictions and follow Israel's Law codes. I am uncertain of your claims. Are you saying that blessings come in greater abundance to those who try to follow the Torah today? Or are you saying it is optional with blessings being equal from God to all Christians even those who do not try to follow the Torah? Please go back and make sure you tell me what Torah means to you and what parts of Torah you follow exactly as they are written.

Where in the Scriptures did Jesus define the "Law of Christ"?
Did Jesus say He came to put an end to the Law in Matthew 5:17?
What did Jesus say about those who teach others not to follow the least of His commandments? (Matt 5:19)
Did Jesus say He came down to start a new religion with new laws and holidays? (John 6:38)

I have already answered Matt. 5:17-19. Here then is the Law of Christ:

Matt 28:18-20
18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, " All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 " Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." NASU

John 14:25-28
25 "These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. 26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. 27 " Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful. NASU

John 15:26-27

26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning. NASU

John 16:7-11
7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. NASU

Gal 5:16-24
6 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and y1ou will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. NASU

Please show me the scriptures where Jesus said not to follow God's commandments and not to observe the Sabbath or God's appointed times..

Col 2:16-19

16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge 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 mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and 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. NASU

Rom 14:5-9
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. NASU

Acts 15:1-11
A 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. 3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. 4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "**Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?** NASU

There are 26 Bible verses that refer to being "cut off from your people". They all have to do with not following the Torah instructions.

According to the Blue Letter Bible, the New Testament contains approximately 933 direct quotes, allusions and possible allusions to the Old Testament.

How can one comprehend the New Testament without the Old Testament? How can one even define sin without the Old Testament? (1 John 3:4)

No one is putting forth the position that the Old Testament is worthless or completely useless. What we contend is that the New Testament rightly interprets and applies the Old as well as eclipsing the Old Covenant Law. The New informs us of how the Old points to Christ. The New is the flower as the Old is the seed. In the new covenant the Holy Spirit convicts of sin and unrighteousness. The law was a school master teaching us to Christ. Here again are the words of the apostle Paul:

Gal 4:1-11
Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, 2 but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. 3 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, " Abba! Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God**, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain.** NASU

This is why Christians fear for you. You want to turn back to the weak, elemental things in comparison to Jesus Christ.

Gal 3:23-26

23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. NASU

Peter warned us about Paul's writings with these words:

"....and regard the patience of our Lord *as* salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, [16] as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction. [17] You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness,

If you will truly read what Jesus says, not just Paul, you may come to a different conclusion.

Why do you continually pit Jesus against Paul? Under inspiration when we read Paul we are reading what Jesus says. God inspired all the Scripture not just the red-letter version of the Gospels.

Yes, listen to Him.
Jesus had harsh words for shepherds who lead His people astray ...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS."

Christians bear the fruit of the Spirit. They do not practice lawlessness. In my humble opinion we are free from the Law of Moses and in-lawed to Christ. The New Covenant in Christ secures my eternal salvation. The Word of God as explicated in the New Testament gives me my moral and ethical walking orders. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit guides me in the path of living for the truth and walking as I have been called.

The Law of Moses is no guard against lawlessness. Perhaps the following two passages will be of help.

Rom 3:19-20
19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, **so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;** 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. NASU

Gal 3:21-22
21 Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. 22 But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who belie NASU
Belinda I will stop here and ask a question of you that I believe the apostle Paul is asking you. It begins in Galatians Chapter 4 verse 21. Here is the start of it. You can read the rest of it by simply going to your Bible: "Gal 4:21

Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?
NASU

May the Lord give to you: "eyes to see and ears to hear"-

Sincerely, found in Him not having a righteousness of my own... Rob