

# OIM UPDATE

## November 2017

My how time flies! It is difficult for us to believe that fifteen years ago, on November 1, 2002, that Outreach Israel Ministries was born. This was a process involving a lengthy “gestation period,” which was initially conceived during a tour of Israel that Margaret and I took with Zola Levitt’s ministry in December 1994. It was there that the Holy Spirit communicated to us that our family needed to begin celebrating the Feasts of the Lord. We had each already participated in various Passover *seders* years earlier, and were acquainted with the Jewish Roots of Christianity—but this prompting was much more than just a recommendation to have some token attendance at a formalized meal for the sake of spiritual enrichment. Instead, it was a solemn invitation to learn more about our direct connection to our Savior, the Messiah Yeshua, who we both worshipped. In addition, since we had just traversed the same paths as the forefathers of the faith and gazed upon the same terrain they had during their lives, our hearts were ripe for more understanding of who we were as adopted children of the Most High (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5). Providentially, this past month, while attending a conference of various charismatic Christians, we recalled the life-changing decisions we made in 1994-1995 that have altered the direction of our lives forever.

At that recent gathering, as we reflected back over twenty years to that time, we both concluded that it was a “crossroad” moment when we had two different paths to seek God before us. By His grace, we chose the path less traveled toward Messianic Judaism. In particular, I vividly remember in November 1994 a training jog, in preparation for another marathon run, when I was contemplating all the peer group pressure from the Charismatic Church we were attending to go to Toronto to experience the “Toronto Blessing” first hand. As I mulled this over and over in my mind, I heard in my spirit an almost audible “Jerusalem!” Immediately upon receiving this word, in my mind’s eye I envisioned the “pouring out of the Spirit” everyone was talking about in Toronto, *instead* being a direct pour on Jerusalem with a significant splash going to Toronto. By the time I jogged home I greeted Margaret with these words, “We don’t need to go to Toronto to receive a blessing, but instead, let’s go to Israel!” Her direct response was simply this: “If we are going to Israel, we need to go with Zola’s ministry. If we are going to tour Israel, we might as well be guided by a Messianic Jew.” Since I knew Zola from associations in Dallas, I called his ministry to find out when their next tour was scheduled, and five weeks later we were headed to Israel.

But even upon getting this inspiration to visit Israel and the gentle nudge to celebrate the feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23), it still took nine months to be led to a Messianic Jewish congregation, where we celebrated our first Feast of Tabernacles or *Sukkot*. Even though we were not Jewish, we were certainly drawn back to the *Shabbat* services and within a few months of “triple dipping” (Friday Evening *Erev Shabbat*, Saturday morning *Shabbat*, and Sunday morning services at church), we concluded that the Holy Spirit was teaching us about the Holy One of Israel most effectively at the Messianic Jewish congregation:

**“But the Helper, the Ruach ha-Kodesh whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I said to you”** (John 14:26, TLV).

In a few months, we were taking the new member’s class and introduction to Hebrew. Before long, our family was totally integrated into the assembly with our daughters learning

Davidic dancing and John getting very interested in eschatology and other theological subjects. Needless to say, as we gaze back upon those early days and the intervening years, we are delighted that the Lord led us to what we have been doing for the Messianic community of faith ever since!

Initially upon the inception of Outreach Israel Ministries, we discerned a need to help and aid the issues being faced by evangelical Believers, like we ourselves had been, who were being led into similar understandings. We wanted to make sure that we **were all focusing on Yeshua** and His ways, in a loving, balanced, and academic manner. After John McKee's undergraduate studies were complete in 2003, he then matriculated at Asbury Theological Seminary in 2005 to hone his skills in Hebrew, Greek, and Biblical exegesis, and received a Master's in Biblical Studies in 2009. As a result, our teaching abilities were immeasurably enhanced. Today in 2017, via Messianic Apologetics, and as we survey the future of the Messianic community, we know that we have a significant calling to be a voice of stability to the diverse Jewish and non-Jewish people whom God has called into this special move of His Spirit. Our ongoing efforts are focused at making sure that the difficult questions and issues people are facing get addressed!

This month's lead article continues where last month's left off, with Part II of "**A Torah Foundation.**" It finishes by addressing many common passages that are used to claim that the Torah or Moses' Teaching has no more relevance for God's people today. You should find this a very concise and useful summary—and it should definitely also increase your interest in further studies of the Scriptures!

We want to especially thank those of you who have faithfully supported our efforts over the years. We continue to need your financial support in order to dedicate the time and energy required to continue in the work that the Lord has assigned us. We particularly need many of you to sign up for a regular monthly contribution via PayPal at [www.outreachisrael.net](http://www.outreachisrael.net). In the past month, the Messianic Apologetics website at [www.messianicapologetics.net](http://www.messianicapologetics.net) has completed its full server transfer, with all articles restored. We have also added a new Messianic Apologetics podcast, which we encourage you to subscribe to via iTunes and Google Play.

Finally, the U.S. continues to have a variety of issues that are spreading division and strife on many different levels. It is our prayer that God will use each of these circumstances to draw people unto Himself, and that hurting and confused people will turn to the Messiah for salvation, hope, and restoration. *Father, we need your love, healing, and peace!*

*"ADONAI bless you and keep you! ADONAI make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you! ADONAI turn His face toward you and grant you shalom!" (Numbers 6:24-26, TLV).*

Blessings, Mark Huey

# A TORAH FOUNDATION PART II

by J.K. McKee

*Last month's lead article, "A Torah Foundation—Part I," addressed the components of the weekly Torah portions, the Tanach as the Bible of Yeshua, and began to address common Scripture passages used to claim that the Torah is not important for born again Believers today.*

*"A Torah Foundation—Part II" finishes the list of Scripture passages, incorrectly employed to claim that God's Torah is irrelevant for His people.*

## **Romans 11:6: "Grace is no longer on the basis of works"**

It is a common misunderstanding among many contemporary evangelical people that grace was not present in the period of the "Old Testament." Paul actually references a number of Tanach passages (1 Kings 19:10, 14, 18) in emphasizing how God's gracious choice has always allowed for a remnant of righteous. The statement, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace" (NASU) should be taken as a logical argument, demonstrating how God's grace has always been present in all time periods, not that there was once a time when grace could be actually earned from human works.

## **Romans 14: "God does not care about what days people celebrate or what food they eat"**

The information in Romans ch. 14 is often applied to matters of *adiaphora* in contemporary religious settings today, such as the music people listen to or the movies people watch. In all probability, Paul's instruction to the Romans about eating and sacred days (Romans 14:2-6) involved unnecessary criticism of those who would only eat vegetables at fellowship meal times, and not "common" (Romans 14:14, LITV) meat that others would eat, Biblically clean but not ceremonially acceptable to some. These people were not to be looked down upon. There is a long-standing alternative opinion that the religious "days" in view (Romans 14:5-6) were times of traditional Jewish fasting. If one should not be criticized for fasting on a particular day—likely remembering or memorializing a tragic event in Israel's history—then one should surely not be criticized for not eating certain things at a communal fellowship meal.

## **1 Corinthians 6:12-20: "All things are now lawful"**

A correct translation of *Panta mou exestin* (Πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν) 1 Corinthians 6:12 would be "Everything is permitted for me" (TLV). Numerous versions place this clause in quotation marks "", reflecting the opinion of most scholars that this was a slogan used by a particular group in the Corinthian assembly. When Paul says, "'Everything is permitted for me'—but not everything is helpful. 'Everything is permitted for me'—but I will not be controlled by anything" (1 Corinthians 6:12, TLV), he is actually cross-examining and refuting something said by a group of Corinthians;

this is not reflective of his own personal beliefs.

### **1 Corinthians 8: "Paul permitted Gentile Christians to eat idol food, a clear violation of the Mosaic Law"**

Paul did not permit any of the Corinthians to knowingly eat meat sacrificed to idols, and was critical toward those who thought that they had the freedom to do so (1 Corinthians 8:9). He focused his admonitions heavily toward those who thought that given the supremacy of the One God, that it did not matter if they ate meat sacrificed to idols, given how idols were dead objects (1 Corinthians 8:4). Their actions could have had grossly negative consequences, as there were new Believers who once ate their meals as an act of reverence or worship to idols (1 Corinthians 8:7), and eating meat sacrificed to idols could cause them to relapse back into paganism (1 Corinthians 8:10).

### **1 Corinthians 9:19-23: "It is only necessary to keep the Old Testament law to convert Jews to Christ"**

If Paul only taught that some adherence to the Torah or Law of Moses was necessary for Jewish evangelism, then Paul could rightly be accused of violating his own words about not bringing the good news in a manner of craftiness (2 Corinthians 4:1-2). When Paul communicates "To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews" (1 Corinthians 9:20a, NASU), among the other groups he lists (1 Corinthians 9:20b-23), this is best taken as a statement of rhetoric. Paul self-identifies with the position of the diverse groups in the First Century Mediterranean, in order to best communicate the good news of salvation to them. Paul never stopped being a Jew after coming to Messiah faith. But, there were certainly aspects of the First Century Jewish experience and recent history—among other groups' experiences—that he had to be quite conscious of, in going to synagogues and declaring that Yeshua was the Messiah of Israel.

### **1 Corinthians 10:14-33: "Paul says to eat whatever is set before you"**

The specific context of Paul saying to eat what is set before you, involves the acceptance of an invitation to eat at a non-Believer's home (1 Corinthians 10:27). What is set before a Believer on his or her plate, is to be graciously received as a matter of the host's hospitality. Should it become public knowledge that any meat had been offered to idols, then it is to not be eaten (1 Corinthians 10:28), as it would be a bad witness of one's faith in the One God of Israel.

### **1 Corinthians 16:2: "The early Christians met on the first day of the week, a clear abolishment of the Jewish Sabbath."**

The reference to the Corinthians meeting "on the first of the week" has been traditionally approached as Sunday worship services replacing the seventh-day Sabbath. There have, at times, been some dissenting opinions from this, given how this meeting on the first of the week was specifically for collecting monies. This would not be a permissible activity for the Sabbath. Also, in view of the Biblical day beginning in

the evening, it has been usefully proposed that what is in view is *Motza'ei-Shabbat* (CJB/CJSB), or a special time closing off the Sabbath on Saturday evening.

### **2 Corinthians 3: "The veil of the old covenant has been removed."**

The Old Covenant is specifically labeled by Paul to be "the ministry of death" (2 Corinthians 3:7) or "condemnation" (2 Corinthians 3:9). It involves the Torah, at most, being delivered on lifeless stones, only able to condemn people as sinners. The supernatural work of "the ministry of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 3:9) involves activity of Divine principles being written onto human hearts and manifest to others (2 Corinthians 3:3). This is language taken from the New Covenant promises of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 37:15-28, which speak of the commandments of God written by His Spirit onto new hearts of flesh. The reading of the Old Covenant ministry of condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:14), the Torah operative for a non-Believer, should convict people of their sins. Unfortunately, a veil lies over the heart of many, especially Jewish non-Believers, when the Torah can only operate as Old Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:15-16). The veil that separated Moses' face from Ancient Israel (Exodus 34:34) was not unlike the curtain separating out the Holy of Holies in the Temple complex—which was split in two at the Messiah's death (Mark 15:38; Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45). The veil over a non-Believer's heart, prohibiting God's salvation and sanctification to take place, is what is removed. The Torah no longer functions in a condemnatory fashion, but in principles imbued on a redeemed psyche by the Spirit.

### **Galatians 2:11-21: "By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."**

Whether "works of the law" is approached from its traditional vantage point of being "observing the law" (Galatians 2:16, NIV)—or "works of the law" is approached in association with various sectarian deeds involving formal proselyte conversion to Judaism (cf. 4QMMT)—justification comes only through belief in Yeshua the Messiah and what He has accomplished. Who we are as redeemed human beings is to be focused around the work of Yeshua, and not any human action. We are to obey the Lord's Instructions as a result of the Divine work of Yeshua in our lives.

### **Galatians 3:12-14: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law."**

Those who disobey God's Instruction are cursed, and the Messiah's death on the tree (Deuteronomy 21:23) is what merits those who believe in Him a redemption from the effects of sin. Obedience to God's Instruction, however, is to bring with it a high quality of life lived on Earth (Leviticus 18:5).

### **Galatians 3:23-25: "The Law is our tutor to lead us to Christ."**

It is said, "Therefore the Torah became our guardian to lead us to Messiah, so that we might be made right based on trusting" (Galatians 3:24, TLV). Salvation does not come by any human actions involving the Torah. But, the Torah's Instruction is to convict people of their sins, so that they might come to a point of realizing that only the work of Yeshua can provide salvation. The Torah's pre-salvation role is one of

instruction and harsh discipline, revealing the human limitations and faults of people

**Galatians 4:8-11: "The Sabbath and Old Testament feast days are weak and worthless principles."**

Paul specifically told the Galatians, "but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits?" (Galatians 4:9, RSV). The non-Jewish Galatians, in being errantly influenced to be circumcised as proselytes to Judaism to be truly reckoned as God's own, were returning to practices they left behind in Greco-Roman paganism. Has Paul associated Biblical commandments in God's Torah, such as those involved with the appointed times, and paganism, as being quantitatively indifferent? Or, in becoming formal converts to Judaism, did the Galatians feel that they could still participate in the Roman Emperor cult as good citizens? Alternatively, were the Judaizers/Influencers who had been persuading the Galatians, practitioners of any proto-Gnostic or mystical errors, with superstitions infused into their observance of their appointed times? A variety of interpretations are available at a reader's disposal, all of which have been proposed in Galatians scholarship over the past few decades.

**Galatians 5:1-4: "Those who try to keep the Law of Moses have fallen from grace."**

It is actually stated by Paul, "You have been severed from Messiah, you who would be justified by the Torah; you have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4, PME). This specifically involved non-Jewish Believers seeking some kind of right-status before God, originating in the Torah and not the Messiah. It also involved whatever commitments they made in undergoing formal proselyte circumcision, where one would make himself "a debtor to do the whole law" (Galatians 5:3, YLT), a negative condition to be sure. Born again Believers, reliant upon the work of Yeshua of Nazareth, are not to be debtors of any kind to perform the Torah, but are rather to fulfill its righteous requirements via the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit inside of them (Romans 8:4), something resultant of the justification they have experienced.

**Ephesians 2:8-10: "We are saved by grace, not as a result of works."**

No one true to the Scriptures can deny the clear imperative, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV). Eternal salvation does not result from any human activity—be that activity general works, or actions in association with the Torah of Moses. Yet, it is also absolutely true, that "we are His workmanship—created in Messiah Yeshua for good deeds, which God prepared beforehand so we might walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, TLV). Those who have received the salvation of Yeshua, are to walk in good works of obedience, serving as definite external proof of the internal change which has occurred within them.

**Ephesians 2:14-15: "The Law was abolished in the flesh of Christ."**

The breaking down of the barrier wall (Ephesians 2:14) has frequently been interpreted by Christians, as meaning that the Torah of Moses had to be abolished in order to bring unity to Jewish and non-Jewish Believers. While there was a dividing wall present in the Second Temple, designed to keep pagans and non-proselytes out on threat of death (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.417; *Wars of the Jews* 5.194), such a wall is nowhere specified in the Torah itself. Some Protestant traditions, favorable to the moral instructions of the Law, conclude that Ephesians 2:15 is only speaking of ceremonial instructions of the Law, and not the Torah as a whole. The Greek clause *ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin* (τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν) specifies a kind of direction that has been abolished: *dogma* (δόγμα). This term appears nowhere in the Septuagint translation of the Tanach in regard to any Biblical commandments, but instead in regard to regal decrees of the Babylonians and Persians (Daniel 2:13; 6:8; Esther 3:9) or Jewish ancestral traditions (3 Maccabees 1:3; 4 Maccabees 10:2). What was abolished by Yeshua were various extra-Biblical dogmas or decrees responsible for erecting the barrier of the dividing wall in the Temple complex—passing themselves off as “Torah”—and resulted in an inappropriate spiritual culture where people from the nations were being kept out of God’s Kingdom, rather than being welcomed into it.

### **Philippians 3:2-11: “Righteousness is not derived by the Law.”**

In spite of Paul’s significant Jewish pedigree (Philippians 3:5), he recognized that his human achievements were meaningless in view of Yeshua (Philippians 3:7-8). He emphasizes how as a Believer, that he be “found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the Torah, but that which is through the faithfulness of Messiah, the righteousness which is from God on the basis of faith” (Philippians 3:9, PME). Paul’s identity is centered and focused around placing his faith or trust in what Yeshua the Messiah has accomplished in being sacrificed for human sin. Messianic Believers today, who place a high emphasis on following the Torah, do so because they want to emulate the Messiah who followed the Torah—while steadfastly recognizing that their righteousness is to be found in His atoning work.

### **Colossians 2:14: “The Law of Moses was nailed to the cross of Christ.”**

That something was nailed to the execution-stake or wooden scaffold of the Messiah, is clear enough from Colossians 2:14: “He wiped away the bill of charges against us. Because of the regulations, it stood as a testimony against us; but he removed it by nailing it to the execution-stake” (CJB/CJSB). Many have interpreted what was nailed to the execution-stake of Yeshua as the Torah of Moses in its entirety. Throughout Protestant history, though, many others have been more tempered in their conclusions. Instead of the Torah as a whole being “nailed to the cross,” the most frequent alternative has been to conclude that the capital penalties and condemnation of the Torah were absorbed onto Yeshua.

### **Colossians 2:16-23: “Christians are not to be judged**

## **for not keeping the Sabbath and Old Testament feast days.”**

Unnecessary or unfair judgment of people, for what they do or do not do, is certainly not warranted from mature Believers. However, the statement “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” (Colossians 2:16, NASU), is directly connected to a false philosophy that denigrated the Divinity of Yeshua (Colossians 2:8-9), and involved self-abasement and asceticism (Colossians 2:18, 20-22). Torah instructions involving *Shabbat* or the appointed times are supposed to reveal a significant Messianic substance to them (Colossians 2:17), something which adherents of the Colossian false teaching were not able to comprehend. Frequently, Colossians 2:16 is read out of context with what the judging actually involved per the situation being faced: What did various Torah practices mean, when caught up in association with the false teaching or false philosophy?

## **1 Timothy 1:8-9: “The Law is not made for a righteous man.”**

The verb *keimai* (κείμαι) correctly means “to lie upon,” and appears in Yeshua’s teaching about the ax that is laid at the root of the trees (Matthew 3:10; Luke 3:9). 1 Timothy 1:9 is correctly translated with “the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners” (RSV). This is speaking of the penalties and condemnation of the Torah being used against those who violate it. Those who are redeemed in the Messiah do not have such harsh condemnation used against them.

## **1 Timothy 4:1-5: “Those who observe the dietary laws have committed apostasy against Jesus.”**

The false teaching encountered in 1&2 Timothy, not only involved some kind of abstinence from eating meat, but also sexual relations (1 Timothy 4:3), as well as the errant belief that the general resurrection of the dead had already taken place (2 Timothy 2:18). True spirituality for initiates was believed to involve a return to a pre-Fall condition, where humans only ate a vegetarian diet and presumably did not engage in intercourse. The issue in 1 Timothy 4:3 involves a total abstention from eating all forms of meat, not the kosher dietary laws separating out clean and unclean meats.

## **2 Timothy 1:9: “Salvation is not according to works.”**

“He has saved us and called us with a holy calling—not because of our deeds but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Messiah Yeshua before time began” (2 Timothy 1:9, TLV). People in today’s Messianic community who give an importance to the Torah for God’s people in the post-resurrection era, do so because of the need to live a life in accordance with His holiness *resultant of* their salvation—because human actions, deeds, or works cannot merit one eternal salvation.

## **2 Timothy 2:15: “The Word of God is to be rightly divided between**



## **the Old and New Testaments, Israel and the Church.”**

While one needs to understand Holy Scripture in its ancient context(s) for sure, and recognize that Biblical books were not written directly to Twentieth and Twenty-First Century people, the KJV rendering of 2 Timothy 2:15 has led to some bad conclusions: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The idea that Holy Scripture needs to be rigidly split up, as it were, between the Tanach and Messianic Writings, is not sustainable. More modern versions correctly render the verb *orthotomeō* (ὀρθοτομέω) as “rightly handling” (RSV), “accurately handling” (NASU), “correctly handles” (NIV), or even “keep strictly” (REB).

## **Titus 1:14: “The Old Testament law is to be regarded as nothing more than Jewish myth”**

The troublemakers on Crete are said to have been pushing “Jewish myths or...merely human commands” (Titus 1:14, TNIV). Is this actually to be regarded as the Tanach Scriptures, or instead something outside the mainstream? Given the later reference to “genealogies” (Titus 3:9; cf. 1 Timothy 1:4), various exaggerations and embellishments on various minor characters in the Tanach, for which fringe branches of Ancient Judaism offered much speculation and lore, is more likely in view.

## **Titus 3:5-8: “He did not save us according to our deeds, but according to His mercy”**

God indeed does save people according to His mercy, and not according to their deeds or works. This takes place “by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5, NASU). Yet, it is also true that the promise of the New Covenant is that God will cleanse His people from their sins, and by His Spirit supernaturally empower them to keep His commandments (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

## **Titus 3:9: “We are not to be concerned about obedience to Jewish laws”**

Titus 3:9 actually says, “avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about Torah, for they are unprofitable and useless” (TLV). For the circumstances addressed in Crete, this involved an irresponsible usage of the Torah, as a responsible usage is to reveal and condemn sin (1 Timothy 1:8-11).

## **Hebrews 4:1-10: “Jesus is our Sabbath rest now”**

There is little doubting that for those who have received salvation in the Messiah, that they do experience a rest from the guilt incurred by sin. Surely, however, given the future realities to be anticipated in salvation history, the institution and significance of the seventh-day Sabbath should not be haphazardly dismissed. The complete Sabbath rest that is to be experienced by born again Believers involves nothing less than the complete establishment of the Kingdom of God in eternity. Some Protestant theological traditions, while errantly thinking that the Sabbath was transferred to Sunday, have rightly emphasized that the Messianic rest of the future can-

not be properly understood unless a Believer partakes of a day of rest once a week. The weekly Sabbath or *Shabbat* is to teach God's people important principles about the rest of the Messiah—which we already partake of now via our salvation from sins, but which we are to anticipate more of at the culmination of the age.

### **Hebrews 7:11-12, 18-19: "A change of law has taken place, because it was weak and worthless"**

Due to the sacrifice and resurrection of the Messiah, "a change of the Torah" has taken place, but this is specified to involve "the priesthood being changed" (Hebrews 7:12, PME). The overall context of Hebrews 7:11-12 and 18-19 makes it clear that it is not the ethical code of the Torah, or even institutions such as the appointed times or *moedim*, which are in view of being affected some sort of change or alteration. Changes which have been affected to the Torah involve the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices. The animal sacrifices could not provide permanent atonement and forgiveness for human sin, whereas Yeshua's sacrifice could. Yeshua's priestly service before the Father in Heaven is not Levitical, but instead is after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:11).

### **Hebrews 8: "The New Covenant makes the Old Covenant obsolete"**

No one denies that the work of Yeshua the Messiah has inaugurated the New Covenant. However, Hebrews 8:8-12, includes the longest quotation in the Messianic Scriptures from the Tanach, that of the New Covenant or *b'rit chadashah* (בְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה) from Jeremiah 31:31-34. It is a mistake to think that the New Covenant has nothing to do with the Torah, when the promise includes the explicit word, "I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10, ESV). The transcription of the Torah's commandments onto the hearts and minds of God's people, for sure, can only come about because they have received Yeshua into their lives. It is also a supernatural work that can only take place via the sanctifying activity of the Holy Spirit.

### **Hebrews 10:1: "The Law was only a shadow of good things to come"**

A Bible version like the New American Standard Update, which employs *italics* for words added, indicates how "only" has been added: "For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near." The source text of Hebrews 10:1 says *Skian gar echōn ho nomos tōn mellontōn agathōn* (Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων), "For the law having a shadow of the coming good things" (YLT). While it is true that the Torah and its ordinance do include types and shadows of the substantive reality of the Messiah, the addition of "only" is intended to downplay the importance of those types and shadows. The Torah is incomplete without the revelation of Yeshua of Nazareth, but none of us can have confirmation of who He is, without knowledge of the Torah's Instruction and expectations.

### **Hebrews 10:9: "God takes away the first covenant"**

## to establish the second”

The overall context of Hebrews 10:2-8 makes it clear that the issue in view is the limitation of the animal sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood, compared and contrasted to the final sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah. As the author of Hebrews inquires, “The Torah has a shadow of the good things to come—not the form itself of the realities. For this reason it can never, by means of the same sacrifices they offer constantly year after year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers—cleansed once and for all—would no longer have consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins year after year—for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Hebrews 10:1-4, TLV). The issue in Hebrews 10:9, “He does away with the first in order to establish the second” (ESV), is restricted to the role of animal sacrifices in the atonement of sin.

## Revelation 1:10: “The Sabbath has now been replaced with the Lord’s Day”

Various theologians have made the case, that per the subject matter of the Book of Revelation, that John did not receive his visions on “the Lord’s Day” or Sunday, as would be seen in the emerging Christianity of the Second Century. Instead, John received his visions on “the Day of the Lord” (CJB/CJSB, TLV).

## Serving the Lord as a Messianic Believer

Today’s Messianic Believers, who are convinced of the validity of the Torah from the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament, need to be consciously aware of how many of today’s Christians will look at their lives rather critically. Whether you are a Messianic Jew or non-Jew does not matter here: such people will try to find what they perceive to be weaknesses in your life or faith practice, specifically as to whether or not Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) is the central focus of your faith. ***Is the Messiah the focus of your faith?*** We have just examined many of the common verses that contemporary Christians will direct toward Messianic Believers, as self-justification for them not having to keep most, if any, of the Mosaic Law.

While we have offered some fair-minded answers for you to provide such critics, keep in mind that Messianic examination and teaching on the Apostolic Scriptures need to go *far beyond* just having answers to passages that are commonly read as being anti-Torah. Many Messianics do not spend a great deal of time considering the important message and theology that the New Testament conveys to us. We have the definite responsibility as a Messianic faith community to truly regard the Apostolic Writings as being a part of “all Scripture” (2 Timothy 3:16) too, and not *exclusively* spend our time focusing on the Torah and Tanach, as can be commonplace in some sectors. If we do not have a high regard for the value and integrity of the Messianic Scriptures, then today’s Messianic community will be neutered not only from understanding the continuing plan of salvation history—but most of all from accomplishing the Heavenly Father’s objectives in restoring a sense of sanctified obedience to the Body of Messiah.