

A Question of Interpretation and Understanding

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Recently I posted a comment on Facebook asking:

Can you please point out the exact verse where our Heavenly Father said, "I have sent Yeshua, my only begotten Son to abolish, my Laws, my Feasts and my 7th Day Sabbath?"

Quoting Psalm 111:7-8

The works of his hands are truth and justice; all his precepts can be trusted. They have been established forever and ever, to be carried out truly and honestly. (Precepts can also be translated commandments)

This is obviously a loaded question, are the commandments found in the Law still valid today for us as gentiles. It was only a short space of time before I received this comment which is a typical answer to the question posed, but is the following answer correct?

"Col 2:16-17 says we are not to judge anyone regarding what they eat, drink, or regarding the keeping (or not keeping) of festivals or Sabbaths. These are areas of Christian liberty - we are free to choose. v17 reminds us that all these type of rules and feasts are just a "shadow" of the reality we find in Jesus/Yeshua. We don't read the early Church insisted the Gentile converts kept the feasts or Sabbaths. Rather we read that when asked what parts of the law the new Gentile believers were to keep they ruled to just tell them to abstain from sexual immorality, idol pollution, eating blood and strangled animals (Acts 15:20) Romans 14:5-6 could also have insisted on all believers keeping laws and Sabbaths, but it clearly shows we have freedom in this area.

This was a quick response by a reader and what is traditionally taught in the Church, obviously, looking at the plain meaning of the text, why look for something else. The scriptures are clear in what they say as you read them. Each individual Scripture quoted does in fact support this position.

So what is the problem?

The problem arises with this interpretation when we read the entire text of the setting the verse is placed, the text cannot be removed from its context – as the saying goes “ a text out of context is a pretext”, and a pretext is not a scriptural definition but a man-made interpretation to support a man-made doctrine.

Let's examine the scriptures quoted, in their context. First let's look at Col 2:16-17 (ESV):

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

So, how can this mean anything else beyond what it says in a straightforward manner? Well as I said earlier, let us look at the context, and the first thing to note about the context is who is being spoken to, why this is being said and how we are to respond in our lives to what is being said.

So with that in mind, let us now go through all of Colossians 2 in order to find this out.

Col 2:1-23

(1)For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, (2) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, (3) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Verses 1-3 are fairly straight forward – Paul is writing to encourage them to be knit together in love, but also, to seek a full understanding of Christ. To develop a complete awareness of what Scripture declares Christ is and what hidden treasures and secrets are known by HIM and relate to us. This is very important as we will see in the next few verses – knowing the difference between what is of God and what is of man and false religions.

(4) I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. (5) For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. (6) Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, (7) rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

First important point in this discussion – MAKE SURE KNOW ONE DECIEVES YOU!!! Make sure you stay rooted in Christ and what you have been previously taught. The question that needs to be answered here is – What was previously taught? Don't forget, there was no New Testament to learn from, and also important to note that all the leaders of these fellowships were Jews, not gentiles, according to reliable historical records such as Josephus etc... Gentiles didn't take the helm until into the 2nd Century after Christ, so the only teaching these believers had and were prompted to remain steadfast to – were the Judaic way of doing things. So as verse 7 says: stay established in the faith just as you were taught, and to with thanksgiving.

Now, here comes the next warnings.

(8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Remember, this is written to people that have been taught to worship a Jewish Messiah – who commanded us – John 14:15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. – He did not say, you can now do as you please if you love me, NO He said if we love Him we will OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS – why? Because He tells us to, it is the way God provided for man to have relationship with Him. (We will look at this a bit more later).

So the warning – do not be deceived, do not let others (Pagans is the reference here) lead you captive to their philosophy or elemental spirits or by their traditions. Remember – we are to be separate from the world and not be a part of it, we are not to partake of these things, and we are warned about this time and again in Scripture.

(9) For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, (10) and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. (11) In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, (12) having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

It is only in Christ whom we will find truth and the only one we worship as it is in Him that the Deity Dwells (not in the practices of men). In v11 now the gentiles in the fellowship are being addressed specifically, we are now brought into the same promises as the Jews, the same covenants, because as Gentiles Christ was circumcised for us, so put off your old ways (leave your paganism and false religious beliefs behind) because you have been buried and raised with Christ through the profession you made with baptism. This is a powerful working of God, the one who raised Him from the dead, so don't trivialise what was done by looking back to where you came from.

(13) And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Now this is one of the most argued and contested passage of Scripture, what was nailed to the cross? The majority hold that it was the “Law” that was nailed to the cross, however, when we keep reading and examining these scriptures in context we see that it is not the Law that has been nailed to the cross but the Debt that we owe for our sin that is nailed to the cross – the Punishment we deserve and not the Law. (We will examine what Law is shortly)

So, the pagans were dead in their sin and uncircumcision of the flesh, this is what it says clearly in v 13, but we saw that Yeshua (Jesus) had that circumcision for us in verse 11. Circumcision is still apart of Gods Commandment to be circumcised on the 8th day, but for the gentiles, He did it for us, not that it has been negated.

(15) He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

We know that Yeshua shamed the rulers and proved His Lordship over them (Sanhedrin, Rome etc...) by coming back to life.

(16) Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

So, now to the crux of the matter, what food and festivals are we talking about? Well, according to the CONTEXT they were being warned NOT to follow the pagan ways anymore but the way they had been taught by the Jewish leaders – they were Torah observant and ate Kosher. We know that No Jew, including Yeshua (who ate Kosher), Paul and the other apostles did not consider anything non-kosher as food – it would be like us as gentiles saying “all things are good to eat now so go and munch down on that oak table”. (But I am talking about biblical kosher here and not the Rabbinic kosher of today – they are vastly different)

No, the warning here is not to be pulled away by the arguments of the pagans outside the fellowship, you stand fast in the festivals that you know and God decreed. If they judge you for it, ignore them; don't let them pass judgement on you. This stays in line with Leviticus 23 1-2: The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, **These are the appointed feasts of the LORD** that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are **my appointed feasts**.”

These are Gods feasts which they are to observe and not be judged by others for observing what God commanded. Remember, so far the whole context of the conversation is “DON'T BE DECIEVED AWAY FROM THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE”. In Exodus we are commanded to keep the 7th Day Holy, but as this Scripture is removed from the context of the discussion and warning Paul is sending to the Colossians, we have removed God's Holy Commands for a freedom that Scripture does not give.

(17) These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

These are a shadow of things that are coming, meaning the good things that will happen when Yeshua returns; or, alternatively, "These are a shadow of things which were yet to come," meaning the good things that happened when Yeshua came the first time but were still in the future when kashrut (kosher) and the festivals were commanded.

These are a shadow. Most English versions condemn the Jewish holidays by gratuitously adding the word "only" (or an equivalent): "These are *only* a shadow of things to come." But Paul values Jewish practices; he himself observed them all his life as we read in: Act 16:3, Act 17:2, Act 18:18, Act 20:16, Act 21:23-27, Act 25:8; Act 28:17. Neither he, nor the other apostles ever taught against observing Torah or as commonly called “Law” (Again we will examine this shortly)

So, if one is going to add to the inspired text, the word to add here should be "definitely" or "indeed": "These are definitely a shadow of things to come." The festivals do indeed have value; since God commanded the Jewish people to observe them, they remind Jews and gentile believers of God and of what he has done. They are one of God's ways of bringing His people closer to himself and as we are grafted into that body of both Jew and Gentile the same now in Gods eyes. We must comply with His rulings and commandments. After all, reading Revelations finds us in the millennium doing these very same things again – eating Kosher and observing the festivals, He said they are forever, so who are we to arrogantly say – “that was for the Jews and not for us now”. So if they were commanded in the beginning and they will be to be followed again in the end – could it be our interpretation that is awry and not the Scriptures. It is important to note that we are reading a Jewish book written in Greek, a book conveying Jewish concepts and not a Greek book.

(18) Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind,

Another warning in this continuing series of warnings! Don't be deceived away from the truth by those that would have you gain godly favour by worshipping angels, or listen to people who puff themselves up by constantly having dreams or prophecies because of emotionalism above truth.

(19) and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God. (20) If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—

We only grow in God and our relationship with the body if we reject the spiritual influences of this world. Christ died to free you, so why do again submit yourselves to the rules, traditions and eating habits of the world you left? Don't do it. God says clearly in Isa 1:12-18 "When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moons and Sabbaths and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and your solemn assemblies. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.

Interesting Scripture; God hates the new moons and festivals the people are coming with – He already ordained what His festivals are yet the people were trying to approach Him with their own festivals not ordained by Him. And what is the result – He will hide His eyes from us. What Adonai is saying in conclusion is – Obey my festivals, yours mean nothing to me, in fact I hate them, let's reason together, if you cleanse yourself from them and remove these evil deeds from before my eyes and get back to what I have told you to do, I will wash away your sins. It is by Yeshua that Adonai washes away our sins but that does not mean that we can come before however we please. Where did God decree that we follow, Easter, Christmas all Souls day etc...? He didn't and never has, He already warned us about observing our own festivals above His. Using the excuse that these festivals were for the Jews totally negates the truth and integrity of Scripture. Scripture supports Scripture, if Scripture says to observe these feasts and nowhere else says not to, then it is our opinion and attitude that needs adjusting and not Scripture to fit our desired interpretation.

(21) "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (22) (referring to things that all perish as they are used)— according to human precepts and teachings? (23) These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

How much clearer can this be – DO NOT have anything to do with these worldly practices, they may appear wise but they do not help the flesh. Only God can do that.

So in conclusion, we find that the context of the scriptures in Colossians are related to NOT being sucked back into the worlds or pagan way of doing things – don't let them mock you or coerce you with clever arguments into obeying their ways. Follow Yeshua and the ways ordained by Adonai to keep righteous. Don't be lulled away from what Scripture says is right for a man made religious practice that sounds good but has no value to the flesh.

Now we have covered the Scripture in Colossians and examined the context, let us look at the next 2 in the Facebook answer I received:

Act 15:19-20: Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

This is a simple one to answer because the context is in the very next verse which people don't read:

Act 15:21 for from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

In other words – we will tell the converts who are leaving their paganism behind to initially prove their commitment by no longer doing what the pagans were doing and what they were doing before. They were no longer to eat foods or use items that were polluted by idols, they were to refrain from sexual immorality, and again food – do not eat animals that had been strangled or eat blood in the meat (these are kosher rules we find in Leviticus).

And we can see in verse 21 that this is only the beginning because the Torah or books of Moses were preached every Shabbat (Saturday) in the Synagogues, meaning that as they attend the synagogue on Shabbat they would learn the rest as time went on. Context, Context, Context. The original way for a gentile to convert to Judaism took 3 years and a lot of training, but this burden was not to be put on believers in Yeshua as they could learn as they go how to live a righteous life. And what was the result of this statement – they were happy to move on now that that had been decided, the gentiles would learn Torah (Law, Moses) in the Synagogues on Shabbat. This is what was decided, not that we no longer obey the teachings of God through Moses but that we would learn them on Shabbat. Clearly Stated in no uncertain terms or way to be misunderstood unless ignored and left out of the equation.

Now the Food issue in Romans 14:5-6

Rom 14:1-10 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (2) One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables.

The discussion here is not whether to eat kosher but whether to be a vegetarian. The Kosher person believes he can eat all foods that are kosher yet some of the gentiles that came in were vegetarians. This was disturbing some believers despite the fact the vegetarianism is also kosher. Remember a Jew would not consider anything non-kosher as food. This cannot be read with a Greek gentile mind-set, this is a Jewish book.

(3) Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

Vegetarian or not, don't pass judgement as God has welcomed him. Notice God welcomes the Vegetarian but never welcomes the pork eater, which we learn by reading Torah or the books of Moses also called (by bad translation) the "Law" in the New Testament.

(4) Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

He will be upheld by the Lord because he is still doing what is righteous.

(5) One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

One person considers some days more holy than others. This is referring to the Jewish feasts that different sects of Judaism practiced. For instance, Passover would be celebrated on a Thursday by many of the sects within Judaism, yet the sect of the Essenes celebrated on a Wednesday – we know that Yeshua celebrated on the Wednesday with the Essenes as He was crucified on the Wednesday and arose on the Sunday allowing for 3 full days and nights in the grave.

Each should be fully convinced in his own mind. This principle for dealing with doctrinal and practical disputes applies to *adiaphora* (matters about which the Bible is indifferent) and must be balanced against 2Ti 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching the truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living." Where Scripture gives a clear word, personal opinion must give way. But where the Word of God is subject to various possible interpretations, let each be persuaded in his own mind while at the same time "outdoing one another in showing respect for each other" (Rom 12:10).

(6) The one who observes the day, observes it in honour of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honour of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

So which day we observe the biblical feast where there may be contention, let us be determined or sure in our own mind which it is and not judge our brother for using another day (Wednesday or a Thursday for Passover depending on how the dates fall etc...). Don't worry if one is a vegetarian, as long as they eat in Honour of the Lord it is not an issue.

(7) For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

We need each other and we need the Lord and right fellowship otherwise there will be dissension.

(8) For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (9) For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

In this way, whether we live or we die, we are doing the Lords will for our life because He is LORD of the Living and the Dead. Whether alive or dead we belong to Christ and we are to be walking in His statues whichever.

(10) Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

Why do we judge the day the feast falls on and he observes or whether he is a vegetarian, this is not important, what is important is that you will all stand before God together before the judgement seat, so why worry about petty issues when there is so much to be done.

I could continue through the rest of 14 but I think this has developed the picture that allows to clearly see the rest of Romans for what it is actually saying and not the Hellenised gentile version that has become tradition removing the Judaic Context and meaning.

A quick look at what "Law" is

The Word Law is a poor translation for the Hebrew Word Torah

Law gives the impression of legalism whereas Torah actually means "Teaching"

The Hebrew word, torah (תורה), is derived from a root that was used in the realm of archery, Yareh (ירה). Yareh means to shoot an arrow in order to hit a mark. The mark or target, of course, was the object at which the archer was aiming. Consequently, torah, one of the nouns derived from this root, is, therefore, the arrow aimed at the mark, The target is the truth about God and how one relates to Him. The torah is, therefore, in the strict sense instruction designed to teach us the truth about God. Torah means direction, teaching, instruction, or doctrine.

We should note that the usual translation of this word as law is not quite accurate. One of the most common ways that torah (תורה) is rendered in the Septuagint (LXX) is by using the word *nomos*.

The Greek word *nomos*, however, has a variety of uses, among which, to be sure, is law, but it is certainly not limited to law. Following the precedent set by the LXX, the Newer Covenant Scriptures consistently render the Hebrew torah by the term *nomos*. This is where things begin to become confusing. Sometimes, in the Newer Covenant Scriptures, it is appropriate to translate *nomos* as law, because the Torah does also contain laws. However, other times it is more appropriate to render it as God's teaching/instruction, or simply to transliterate the term as Torah. The context of the word is always the final determiner of its meaning.

There are at least two other related Hebrew words derived from the same root as torah. The first is the word for teacher, moreh (מורה). A moreh is one who imparts instruction to his/her students. The second important word is parent, horeh (הורה). This indicates that one of the primary roles for a parent is to teach and instruct the child.

It is interesting that Strong's only uses the definition of the word Torah as:

H8451

תורה תרה

tôrâh tôrâh

to-raw', to-raw'

From H3384; a precept or statute, especially the Decalogue or Pentateuch: - law.

And as most people reference Strong's this error is compounded. However, when we study deeper we get:

Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions, we get:

H8451

תורה / תרה

tôrâh

1) law, direction, instruction

1a) instruction, direction (human or divine)

1a1) body of prophetic teaching

1a2) instruction in Messianic age

1a3) body of priestly direction or instruction

1a4) body of legal directives

1b) law

1b1) law of the burnt offering

1b2) of special law, codes of law

1c) custom, manner

1d) the Deuteronomic or Mosaic Law

Part of Speech: noun feminine

Torah contains laws but it also contains, history, poetry, prophecy and directions for holiness.

Typically when the New Testament Refers to law, for the most part, it is referring to Torah or:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

Before we move onto what the New Testament teaches on "law" or "Torah" let's examine what Paul or as he was properly called during his adult life, Rabbi Sha'ul used.

When Paul preached the Gospel to the gentiles, what books did he use?

The New Testament? No it hadn't been written yet

How about the other books of the Old Testament such as Isaiah or Psalms? Again no, the Old Testament as we call it had not been Codified, in other words it was not completely agreed upon which books belonged and which didn't. There were in fact many more books to the Tanach or Old Testament than we have now. These books weren't agreed upon until 90AD in a place called Jamnia.

So if Paul didn't have the O.T. and he didn't have the N.T., what did he use to convict people of sin? And what did he use to explain how to live a righteous and Holy lifestyle?

The answer is of course, The Torah!

How can we be sure if this is true?

Rom 7:12 So the Torah is holy; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good.

And where did he get this theology or idea?

Psa 119:1 How happy are those whose way of life is blameless, who live by the Torah of Adonai!

Pro 6:23 For the mitzvah (Commandments) is a lamp, Torah is light, and reproofs that discipline are the way to life.

So with this in mind let's examine what the New Testament actually teaches about Torah (removing the word law except where law is meant) and see what it says.

Rom 2:13-15 For it is not merely the hearers of Torah whom God considers righteous; rather, it is the doers of what Torah says who will be made righteous in God's sight. For whenever Gentiles, who have no Torah, do naturally what the Torah requires, then these, even though they don't have Torah, for themselves are Torah! For their lives show that the conduct the Torah dictates is written in their hearts. Their consciences also bear witness to this, for their conflicting thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them

And where do we get this from?

Jer 31:33 "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says Adonai: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Rom_3:31 Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.

Rom 7:14 For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave.

Rom 10:4-5 For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts. For Moshe writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah that the person who does these things will attain life through them.

Gal 2:19 For it was through letting the Torah speak for itself that I died to its traditional legalistic misinterpretation, so that I might live in direct relationship with God.

*2Th 2:3-15 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way. For the Day will not come until after the Apostasy has come and the man who separates himself from Torah has been revealed, the one destined for doom. He will oppose himself to everything that people call a god or make an object of worship; he will put himself above them all, so that he will sit in the Temple of God and proclaim that he himself is God. Don't you remember that when I was still with you, I used to tell you these things? And now you know what is restraining, so that he may be revealed in his own time. For already this separating from Torah is at work secretly, but it will be secretly only until he who is restraining is out of the way. Then the one who embodies separation from Torah will be revealed, the one whom the Lord Yeshua will slay with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the glory of his coming. When this man who avoids Torah comes, the Adversary will give him the power to work all kinds of false miracles, signs and wonders. He will enable him to deceive, in all kinds of wicked ways, those who are headed for destruction because they would not receive the love of the truth that could have saved them. This is why God is causing them to go astray, so that they will believe the Lie. The result will be that all who have not believed the truth, but have taken their pleasure in wickedness, will be condemned. But we have to keep thanking God for you always, brothers whom the Lord loves, because God chose you as first fruits for deliverance by giving you the holiness that has its origin in the Spirit and the faithfulness that has its origin in the truth. He called you to this through our Good News, so that you could have the glory of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. **Therefore, brothers, stand firm; and hold to the traditions you were taught by us, whether we spoke them or wrote them in a letter.***

1Ti_1:8 We know that the Torah is good, provided one uses it in the way the Torah itself intends.

And in the context where Paul used it to convict of sin when preaching to gentiles:

1Ti_1:9 We are aware that Torah is not for a person who is righteous, but for those who are heedless of Torah and rebellious, ungodly and sinful, wicked and worldly, for people who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers,

If you already live a Torah lifestyle within the confines of a relationship with Yeshua you do not get convicted of sin, Torah only convicts of sin to those that are not in that righteous relationship. The Torah guides into righteousness and holy living to those that truly want to follow Yeshua. But apparently the rejecting of it has two points that we need to examine:

- 1) The anti-Christ will be someone who rejects Torah
- 2) Sinners reject Torah

In fact Scripture defines sin as “missing the Mark” and the mark is the Torah, Gods handbook on righteous living.

Romans 3:24-31 By God's grace, without earning it, all are granted the status of being considered righteous before him, through the act redeeming us from our enslavement to sin that was accomplished by the Messiah Yeshua. (25) God put Yeshua forward as the kapparrah for sin through his faithfulness in respect to his bloody sacrificial death. This vindicated God's righteousness; because, in his forbearance, he had passed over [with neither punishment nor remission] the sins people had committed in the past; (26) and it vindicates his righteousness in the present age by showing that he is righteous himself and is also the one who makes people righteous on the ground of Yeshua's faithfulness. (27) So what room is left for boasting? None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules? No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting. (28) Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with legalistic observance of Torah commands. (29) Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; (30) because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. (31) **Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.**

1Jn 3:1-8 See what love the Father has lavished on us in letting us be called God's children! For that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it has not known him. (2) Dear friends, we are God's children now; and it has not yet been made clear what we will become. We do know that when he appears, we will be like him; because we will see him as he really is. (3) And everyone who has this hope in him continues purifying himself, since God is pure. (4) **Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah — indeed, sin is violation of Torah.** (5) You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and that there is no sin in him. (6) So no one who remains united with him continues sinning; everyone who does continue sinning has neither seen him nor known him. (7) Children, don't let anyone deceive you — it is the person that keeps on doing what is right who is righteous, just as God is righteous. (8) The person who keeps on sinning is from the Adversary, because from the very beginning the Adversary has kept on sinning. It was for this very reason that the Son of God appeared, to destroy these doings of the Adversary.

Verse 4 onwards clearly define sin as violating Torah or not keeping Torah, in fact if you are not keeping Torah you are continuing to sin, don't be deceived it is those that do right (keep Torah or God's commandments on Holy Living: His instruction manual) or are you from the adversary, the Lawless one or Torahless one. This is why we are warned to:

Keep examining yourselves to see whether you are continuing in the faith. Test yourselves! You know, don't you, that Jesus the Messiah lives in you? Could it be that you are failing the test? (2Co 13:5 ISV)

We constantly read throughout the N/T. that we are to be like the Messiah and seek to do what He did and would do. Well Yeshua the Jewish Messiah was totally Torah observant, had he not been He could not be termed or classed as sinless as sin is not observing the Torah, and not what we or society perceives it to be.

We also know the other apostles were Torah observant and constantly alluded to it in order to describe what was holy and how we should live.

1Peter 1:15-16 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, (16) since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

And where do we find this written? The Torah

In fact if we read all the places in the Torah that this particular phrase is written, we read what it is that God expects from us to live a Holy life according to His standards and not our own.

Lev 11:44 For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.

Lev 11:45 For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."

Lev 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

Lev 20:7 Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.

Lev 20:26 You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

Results of Rejecting Torah

Jeremiah 6:19 Hear, oh earth! I am going to bring disaster on this people; it is the consequence of their own way of thinking; for they pay no attention to my words; and as for my Torah, they reject it.

Notice it is the whole Earth that rejects the Torah and not just the Jews, this proclamation is to the whole world.

And how do we know that as gentiles we are to learn Torah?

Act 15:20-21 Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood. (21) For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

This is quite clearly stating that once gentiles are informed of the basics, they can go to the synagogue and learn the Torah (teachings of Moses) every Shabbat.

Ok, to finish off let me read you another Scripture from Matthew:

Mat 5:12-19 Rejoice, be glad, because your reward in heaven is great — they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way. (13) "You are salt for the Land. But if salt becomes tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except being thrown out for people to trample on. (14) "You are light for the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Likewise, when people light a lamp, they don't cover it with a bowl but put it on a lampstand, so that it shines for everyone in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven. (17) "Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete. (18) Yes indeed! I tell you that until heaven and earth pass away, not so much as a yud (') or a stroke will pass from the Torah — not until everything that must happen has happened. (19) So whoever disobeys the least of these mitzvot and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever obeys them and so teaches will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

And this of course is speaking of the Torah its observance and promotion.

So, is Torah observance works?

The answer to this is NO, let me explain. In the traditions of the churches, observing the Law or Torah is seen as working your way to heaven. It is usually stated that the Jews were saved by observing these works and

commandments, however, as we have seen, this is obviously not true, just as we are saved by faith today, so to were the Jews saved by faith throughout history. It is important to not relate salvation and Torah or law together. Torah observance leads to sanctification and not salvation.

Sanctification is the holy lifestyle that we are expected to walk as believers. Torah shows the sinner what sin is to demonstrate that they need saving, but it also gives us the guidelines on how to be holy. If not observing Gods righteous lifestyle is rejecting Torah then it must be that observing Torah leads us into walking Gods righteous path.

Observing Torah IS NOT WORKS, it is our just duty to obey the commandments of our God and King of the Universe. Yeshua said – “if you love me you will obey my commandments” and as Yeshua gave the Torah to Moses and kept the Torah Himself proving His righteousness, then who are we to say we do not need it.

Repentance – this is a misunderstood word by the modern teachers of the Gospel, today it is taught by most that repentance is a change of direction from non-belief to belief, but Scripture demonstrates repentance as a change of direction in living, not in belief. Repentance is changing your life from a direction of Torah rejection (which we have already seen is what scripture declares as sin) to Torah observance. This is not only a change of mind but a change of action. We don't just think about God's commands, but we actually do them.

To finish off this article I would like to leave you with a little homework. Please examine the scriptures and find where it says that it is what we believe we are judged for, you will be surprised that it is not there; that it is because we are judged for what we do and Not what we believe. The reason for this is simple – are actions are guided by what we believe – if we believe we can eat pork then we go and eat pork, if we believe god loves us as we are – we don't change, if we believe repentance is a change of mind from unbelief to belief then we practice non-Torah observance.

Our beliefs cause our actions and it is our actions that are judged, and as the western mind-set and approach to scripture is one of Torah rejection what will our actions be and how will we be judged?

One last scripture to quote; and it is a prophecy of what will be happening in the End-Times in relation to God's judgement:

"I made myself accessible to those who didn't ask for me, I let myself be found by those who didn't seek me. I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!' to a nation not called by my name. I spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people who live in a way that is not good, who follow their own inclinations; a people who provoke me to my face all the time, sacrificing in gardens and burning incense on bricks. They sit among the graves and spend the night in caverns; they eat pig meat and their pots hold soup made from disgusting things.

If the Torah is finished with in the end days as we are taught, then why is Adonai, in a prophecy of the End Days mentioning His disgust at the eating of pork and other non-kosher food? Just a thought!

Before many of you start writing back to me with your interpretations and scriptures to justify a western mind-set, please be aware that I will answer you with the Judaic interpretation of those same scriptures which in fact prove the opposite of the Greek philosophical approach with regard Torah and kosher eating. Context, context, context.

I have covered many of the arguments you may come across in a booklet I wrote called “Biblical Interpretation and Discernment Issues In Regard To The Law or Torah: A Beginners Guide” which can be purchased through Amazon or any other reputable online book dealer.