

The New Testament Validates Torah is a study that all Messianic Believers need, especially in the current season of considerable growth and expansion in which our broad faith community finds itself. On the whole, today's Messianic movement holds that the Torah or the Law of Moses remains valid instruction for God's people, and that Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) did not come to abolish or do away with it (Matthew 5:17-19). Yet throughout much of Christian history, many theologians have argued that the Law has been rendered inoperative, and/or that it was only to be followed by those in the pre-resurrection era. Many Messianics are incapable of responding to the common arguments delivered by their Christian family members, friends, acquaintances, or even various pastors and teachers that they know, who quote verses to them from the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) which supposedly prove that the Law has been "done away."

Has Moses' Teaching been abolished? This publication is a lengthy study that analyzes and critically examines, in detail, a wide number of New Testament passages that are commonly offered as proof texts to claim that the Torah is not to be followed by those in the post-resurrection era. Statements such as not being "under the Law" (Romans 6:14-15), "Christ is the end of the Law" (Romans 10:4), "All things are lawful" (1 Corinthians 6:12), "abolishing...the Law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15), "having nailed it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14), and many more, are considered. Considerable attention is given to the Greek source text of the Apostolic Scriptures, and where translation errors into English appear to have been made by various modern versions. Cross-examination and discussion with a wide number of commentators have also been offered, as well as an exploration of important subjects present within today's Biblical Studies.

The New Testament Validates Torah is an important apologetic study that will benefit Messianic Believers and evangelical Christians alike. There is literally nothing in today's Messianic movement that has compiled as much information on Torah relevance for God's people into a single book. Also, unlike some other publications issued on the message of Torah relevance, *The New Testament Validates Torah* is highly respectful to Christian voices over the centuries who have valued what they have considered to be the "moral law" of the Old Testament, and seeks to honor those who have preceded us in the faith.

THE NEW TESTAMENT VALIDATES TORAH

Does the New Testament Really Do Away With the Law?

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R E F E R E N C E E D I T I O N

J.K. McKee

MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS

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The New Testament Validates Torah

Does the New Testament Really Do Away With the Law?

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Dedication

The New Testament Validates Torah is dedicated to my spiritual and ancestral forbearers in both the Reformed and Wesleyan theological traditions. These were men and women who have always valued the moral instructions of God from the Old Testament as a standard of Christian holiness and piety, emulating the life and faithfulness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Messiah.

The moral law doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God, the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the Gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

Westminster Standards 19.1-5

I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ: seeing I now want it as much, to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him...Indeed each is continually sending me to the other,—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me 'above gold or precious stones;' seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise, which my Lord will fulfill in its season.

John Wesley, "Properties of the Law"

*Today's Messianics have the responsibility
to build upon the positive work
of the generations of those faithful Christians
who have preceded us in faith*

Table of Contents

Preface to the Reference Editionxv

Introductionxxi

PART I

HAS THE LAW REALLY BEEN ABOLISHED?

1 Christian Misunderstanding or an Antinomian Assault? 1

2 Answering: What is the Law? 19

3 Answering: The Purpose of the Law 37

4 Answering: No One Should Keep the Law..... 55

5 Answering: The Law as a Unit 73

6 Answering: The Verses Given Against Torah Observance 85

 Answering the Claims 105

 Matthew 5:17106

 John 1:17 113

 Romans 3:20120

 Romans 3:28121

 Romans 4:5 124

 Romans 6:14126

 Romans 6:23129

 Romans 7:4.....130

 Romans 8:2 & 3136

 Romans 10:4 141

 Romans 11:6 147

 1 Corinthians 6:12 152

 1 Corinthians 10:23 158

 2 Corinthians 3:14 164

 Galatians 2:16168

 Galatians 3:13 173

 Galatians 3:24 & 25 175

 Ephesians 2:8-9185

 Ephesians 2:14-15 187

 Philippians 3:9196

 Colossians 2:14.....199

1 Timothy 1:9	205
2 Timothy 1:9	214
Titus 3:5 & 7	215
Titus 3:9	219
Hebrews 7:12 & 18-19	222
Hebrews 8:13	231
Hebrews 10:1	236
Hebrews 10:9	238

7 Answering: Under Grace	245
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PART II

THE ROLE OF GOD'S TORAH IN THE LIFE OF A BORN AGAIN BELIEVER

8 What is the New Covenant?	263
Jeremiah 31:31-34	264
Ezekiel 36:25-27	270
Romans 11:26-27	276
Hebrews 8:7-13	283
Hebrews 10:14-18	293

9 Matthew 5:17-19: Has the Law Been Fulfilled?	319
--	-----

10 What Does "Under the Law" Really Mean?	353
Galatians 3:23	362
Galatians 4:4-5	367
Galatians 4:21	371
Galatians 5:18	374
1 Corinthians 9:20-22	377
Romans 6:14-15	383
James 2:12	391
Romans 2:12	394
Romans 3:19	399
Philippians 3:6	402
Hebrews 7:11	404
Hebrews 9:22	407
Luke 2:27	408

11 What Are "Works of the Law"?	411
Galatians 2:15-16	426
Galatians 3:2, 5	430

Galatians 3:10	431
Romans 3:19-20	433
Romans 3:27-28	434
12 The Faithfulness of Yeshua the Messiah.....	441
Galatians 2:16	445
Galatians 3:21-22.....	447
Romans 3:21-22	449
Philippians 3:8-9	453
Ephesians 3:11-12.....	456
13 How Do You Become Torah Observant?	463
About the Author.....	469
Bibliography.....	471

Abbreviation Chart and Special Terms

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as *TWOT* for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	<i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)	HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	Heb: Hebrew
Ara: Aramaic	HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i>
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>
BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>	Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)
BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>	JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)	KJV: King James Version
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament</i> by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	LXX: Septuagint
ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i>	m. Mishnah
EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>	MT: Masoretic Text
eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text	NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>
exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own	NEB: New English Bible (1970)
EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
Ger: German	NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)
GNT: Greek New Testament	NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
Grk: Greek	NIGTC: <i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i>

NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*

NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*

NIV: New International Version (1984)

NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)

NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)

NKJV: New King James Version (1982)

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)

NLT: New Living Translation (1996)

NT: New Testament

orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world

OT: Old Testament

PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TEV: Today's English Version (1976)

TLV: Tree of Life Messianic Family Bible—New Covenant (2011)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*

Yid: Yiddish

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

Preface to the Reference Edition

How do many of today's Messianic Believers approach the issue of the validity of the Torah? Many feel that throughout history, the Jewish people have followed the Law, and that Christians have believed that the Law was abolished after the time of Christ. For many cases this is an accurate assessment, yet for many other cases this is not only too simplistic an approach, but it can also cause us as Messianics to foment some negative and inappropriate attitudes toward faithful Christian men and women who have preceded us in the faith. It is not difficult for us to see how not every Jewish person since the time of Yeshua has been obedient to the Torah, and so it should similarly not be too much of a stretch for us to acknowledge that there have been many Christians who have looked to follow Moses' Teaching, at least as a guide for ethics and morality.

One of the most useful and important exercises that I conducted during the completion of my M.A. in Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary (2005-2008) was to read the analysis contained in Stephen Westerholm's book *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*. While his purpose was to address a contemporary debate in terms of the Jewish background of the Apostle's letters, several of the opening chapters were most useful, as they summarized the approach that three significant figures of Protestant Christianity had in terms of the relevancy of the Mosaic Torah for Christians: Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley.ⁱ What was basically presented is that two of the three main Reformation traditions had a largely positive view of the Torah (Calvinism, Wesleyanism), as including foundational instruction and commandments that all of God's people were to follow—what is often termed to be the “moral law”—with the other tradition tending to pit God's Law and God's grace against themselves as polar opposites (Lutheranism).

It is very true that a distinction within the Torah between commandments that are classified as being moral, civil, or ceremonial is a bit artificial.ⁱⁱ It cannot be denied, though, that throughout much of post-Reformation history the two great theological traditions of both Calvinism and Wesleyanism have largely looked to the Mosaic Law and the Ten Commandments to include ethical principles that all followers of Jesus

ⁱ Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 22-87.

ⁱⁱ The division of the Torah's commandments as witnessed in the six divisions of the Mishnah (Agriculture, Appointed times, Women, Order of Damages, Holy things, Purities) seems to be more accurate. Consult the FAQ, “Torah, division of commandments.”