



# OUTREACH ISRAEL NEWS

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**MAY 2011**  
**THE ESSENCE OF TORAH**



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## STATEMENT OF BELIEF

*Outreach Israel Ministries and TNN Online*

There is One Almighty Creator God of the Universe, who has revealed Himself to us in the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came in fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies of the Scriptures and is fully God. It is mandatory for us to believe in a Divine Redeemer to be saved. Salvation is a free gift of God to all who receive Messiah Yeshua into their lives and confess of their sins. Those who reject Messiah will be consigned to eternal punishment.

The Holy Scriptures, Genesis-Revelation, are the inspired, infallible Word of God as revealed in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

There is only one assembly of chosen ones/elect, the congregation of Israel, of which all Believers in Messiah are a part. God does not have two groups of elect: Israel and "the Church."

The Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) is the foundation of all Scripture, was followed by our Messiah Yeshua, and is to still be followed and studied by Believers today.

Yeshua the Messiah is coming to gather the saints after the Tribulation period.

OIM is an *agapē* ministry, freely and benevolently giving the vast majority of its teachings and resources, without charge, to those who desire to be spiritually nourished.

*For a fuller Statement of Faith, consult the OIM website*

**Outreach Israel News** is the monthly newsletter of Outreach Israel Ministries, a non-profit organization with an emphasis on reaching, teaching, and encouraging the Messianic community. Subscription to **Outreach Israel News** is without cost and supported only by donation.

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# OIM UPDATE

May 2011

This year the entire month of May falls during the time of year between Passover and Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Weeks or *Shavuot*, which will be commemorated in early June. It is during the fifty days between these two appointed times, that the Jewish community and Messianic Believers follow the Torah instruction to Count the Omer for fifty days:

“And from the day on which you bring the sheaf of elevation offering—the day after the sabbath—you shall count off seven weeks. They must be complete: you must count until the day after the seventh week—fifty days; then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the LORD” (Leviticus 23:15-16, NJPS).

The fifty-day Counting of the Omer period is certainly one for which many edifying Jewish traditions have been developed, to get the faithful focused on the Lord, with each day steadily preparing people for *Shavuot*. Men and women in today's Messianic community can greatly benefit from these exercises, considering various Psalms or other meditations, as they ready themselves for the Father to reveal Himself at the Feast of Weeks. I pray that some of the resources we have available such as *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* and *Sayings of the Fathers*, both geared toward the seven-week Omer Count season, have been useful in enhancing your approach toward the Holy One in this time!

This month's lead article which I have written is entitled, “**The Essence of Torah.**” This will conclude our look at the Sermon on the Mount, being one of the most well-known and valued teachings of Messiah Yeshua throughout His ministry. I hope that we will each take to heart the exhortations found in His words, and become fervent doers rather than passive hearers! It has been my desire over the past number of issues of OIM News to stimulate within each of you a quest for further holiness and maturity, taking to serious heart some of the basic teachings known and appreciated by Believers the world over. This edition of OIM News also includes a rather detailed FAQ on **Romans 10:4**, with some important information on the Greek word *telos* in relation to “Christ is the end of the law” (NASU).

At this present time in world history, we are certainly all aware of how the first four months of 2011 have seen much turmoil and tribulation on the world scene, like none in recent memory. From the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown challenges in Japan; to the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the new war initiated in Libya; to some weather related events and economic uncertainty in the United States—fear inducing challenges are surfacing around the globe. Even the Palestinian enemies of Israel, once internally divided, are beginning to cooperate in order to come against Israel.

Each of us needs to surely remain vigilant and keep up with what is transpiring around our world—yet only the Sovereign One Himself knows what is really

happening, according to His predetermined plan. As Believers, it is our duty to pray that the Lord will use these uncertain times to bring many to a saving knowledge of Messiah Yeshua. We need to ask the Father to give us wisdom, discernment, and the appropriate knowledge so that we might be used by Him in opportunities which present themselves, giving answers to those who are asking the tough questions of human existence.

I would once again like to thank everyone who gave generously to our ministry during the recent Passover holiday! Your continued prayers and encouragement during this year of transition for us, as we will surely *all* be relocated from Central Florida out to Texas at the right time, are greatly valued. Please lift up our ongoing TNN Press Book Fund and Moving Fund before the Holy One. *May you be blessed for blessing us!*

Advancing His Kingdom, until the restoration of all things...



### COUNTING THE OMER

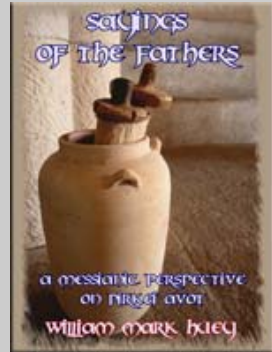
Have you ever considered the command of Leviticus 23:15-16 to Count the Omer, and wondered how this applies in the modern era? Have you ever wondered how this decree could be more meaningful and fulfilling in your Messianic walk of faith? What critical lessons can be learned in the time between the festivals of Passover and *Shavuot*?

If you can identify with these questions, then *Counting the Omer: A Daily Devotional Toward Shavuot* is just the book for you!

### SAYINGS OF THE FATHERS

A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot

*Sayings of the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective on Pirkei Avot* takes readers through not just one, but two years of fifty-day reflections—and six bonus days—of some of the ancient wisdom seen in this valuable text. You will not only be introduced to some of the key views present in the Apostolic period, but also be able to weigh the value that the Jewish Sages have in your own personal study and reflection upon the Scriptures. Be prepared to join into an ancient discussion that spans the ages as you reflect on these words. Be blessed as your faith and outlook on the world are enriched, and you have more to take to your Heavenly Father in prayer!



# THE ESSENCE OF TORAH

by Mark Huey

There should be little doubt, from any Bible reader, that Yeshua's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chs. 5-7) is one of the most analyzed of His teachings, because it not only establishes Him as being a Teacher of Teachers—but it also lays forward much of what may be considered “the law of Messiah” (Galatians 6:2), meaning “the *Torah's* true meaning, which the Messiah upholds” (CJB). In order for the Sermon on the Mount to be properly considered and applied by born again Believers, we have to each understand how the Messiah establishes the continued authority of Moses' Teaching for His followers (Matthew 5:17-19). Recognizing the importance of the Torah and Prophets, and how their instruction is expounded upon by the Word made flesh (John 1:1), is imperative if any of us are to lead blessed, happy lives, and have true peace and *shalom* between God and our fellow human beings.

After Matthew chs. 5-6 have focused on some key actions, required of God's people in order to seek piety and approach Him without anxiety, the emphasis shifts in Matthew ch. 7 to how people are to treat others and monitor their spirituality. As the august message concludes, Yeshua addresses: the critical topics of not judging others, He issues encouraging ways to pray, He directs His audience on how they should treat others, He describes the realities of the narrow way, how to avoid false prophets, and how to properly follow and implement His inspired teachings.

For us as Twenty-First Century disciples of Yeshua, the concluding admonitions of His Sermon on the Mount either amplify or expand upon some of the declarations previously issued. Some points are repeated. Consequently, any of us as saints, seeking to please the Holy One of Israel, should endeavor to incorporate these culminating instructions into our walk of faith. We should surely want to be pleasing to the Lord, because a failure to follow His instructions has negative consequences. So, what does the closing chapter of the Sermon on the Mount communicate to us, who wish to follow God's rulebook, and be effective servants for Him in the world today?

## Do Not Judge Others

Having just told His hearers not to be anxious, especially given the worries of today (Matthew 6:34), the Messiah now turns to the human tendency to judge others:

**“Do not judge so that you will not be judged.** For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and

turn and tear you to pieces” (Matthew 7:1-6).

Throughout a great deal of history, both ancient and modern, there have been various detractors to Yeshua’s statements about not judging, who are quick to quote back some of the instructions found in this passage in their defense when they feel like they are somehow being “condemned” for various actions. A flippant retort of “Do not judge, or you too will be judged” (NIV) is often a reaction to Believers who have made a decision or an evaluation about someone’s behavior or actions. Those who have only looked to Matthew 7:1 think that the Messiah prohibits us from using our wisdom or discernment to make a ruling on what someone does.

Are followers of the Messiah Yeshua allowed to judge? The verb *krinō* (κρίνω) can either mean, “to decide disputes” or “to pass sentence upon, to condemn” (LS).<sup>1</sup> Surely, the Lord does want those pursuing righteousness to correctly identify unrighteousness and avoid it wherever possible. Judging sinful behavior is something that the assembly is to do, as Paul asks, “Do you not judge those who are within *the [assembly]?*” (1 Corinthians 5:12). The issue in the Sermon on the Mount is not carefully pointing out unacceptable behavior, activity, attitudes, or lifestyle patterns to fellow brothers and sisters; it is the manner in which judgment is to take place that is carefully targeted. In far too many cases, not judging at all is to be the preferred action.

How unfair and unreasonable is it for someone to judge another person, when quite frequently the manner of judgment that people use might be more severe than that used by God (Matthew 7:2)? The Messiah asks why people tend to look at the proverbial “splinter” (Matthew 7:3, CJB) that is in someone else’s eye, when those who judge others tend to have a “plank” (Matthew 7:3, NKJV) in their own! How hypocritical is this! Yeshua points out that one should introspectively judge themselves by removing whatever large impediment is present in their own lives, not focusing on some kind of small annoyance in another person. None of us ever wants to be caught by the Lord judging someone according to a scale of *our own making*, and then be held accountable to it rather than to His own Divine Law.

The conclusion to avoid giving what is holy to dogs or pearls to swine indicates that because of a person’s limited knowledge about others, it is probably better to just remain silent rather than judge others. In many situations and circumstances we experience in life, it is best for us not to say anything, and use such moments as a matter to learn and take mental notes. Qohelet reminds us how God is the One who is Judge over all:

“I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has *so* worked that men should fear Him. That which is has been already and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what has passed by. Furthermore, I have seen under the sun *that* in the place of justice there is wickedness and in the place of righteousness there is wickedness. I said to myself, ‘**God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man,**’ for a time for every matter and for every deed is there” (Ecclesiastes 3:14-17).

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<sup>1</sup> LS, pp 450, 451.

Being a judge of other people is no easy task, but sometimes letting our Heavenly Father serve as the ultimate Judge of people who have done us wrong—as we relinquish ourselves to Him—can be even more difficult.

## Persistent Prayers of the Righteous

Yeshua the Messiah is undeniably a strong advocate of prayer (cf. Matthew 6:9-13). While praying to the Holy One each day—hopefully *multiple times* each day—is an excellent way to orient oneself toward the Creator and His will, what might be some of the more practical reasons for prayer? The Messiah directs His disciples to continually ask the Heavenly Father for their needs to be met, seeking Him and actually “knocking” on the “door” of Heaven, in order to persistently pursue His blessings.

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.** Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” (Matthew 7:7-11).

The Heavenly Father is extremely gracious to those who seek Him every day. If inherently sinful or evil people give good gifts to their children, then is it not true that a perfect God in Heaven will also do the same for His own? The only way that any human being can receive His gifts, though, is to be a persistent one who prays! Only by seeking Him each day, and setting aside moments of one-on-one interaction with the Lord, will He truly know that each of us desires His favor.

I consider this to be quite reminiscent of the parable about the widow who continues to appeal to the unrighteous judge for justice. Note that he eventually answers her pleas, even though he is ungodly:

“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, “Give me legal protection from my opponent.” For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’” And the Lord said, ‘**Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?** I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’” (Luke 18:1-8).

If an unrighteous human judge, who cares very little about God or other people, will give a widow what is due because of her persistent nagging—is it not true that our gracious God will supply our needs because of our persistent prayers in righteousness? From the testimony of Scripture, consistent prayer has its rewards. Therefore, no matter where one stands before the Holy One, fervent prayer must be used to get results!

## The Essence of the Torah and Prophets

As the Sermon on the Mount enters into its final admonitions, we find a single, most highly influential verse about the proper role of the Tanakh Scriptures or the Old Testament—the Law and the Prophets—for Messiah followers. In a rather simple but profound statement, Yeshua tells His audience to treat others in the same manner as they want to be treated:

**“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets”** (Matthew 7:12).

Elsewhere in the Gospels we see a similar word: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31, NIV). In much of common speech today, the maxims of Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 have become known as **the Golden Rule**. A similar principle was echoed a generation or so earlier by the great Jewish Sage Hillel, who said, “*What is hateful to you, to your fellow don't do.*” That's the entirety of the Torah; *everything else is elaboration. So go, study*” (b.Shabbat 31a).<sup>2</sup> The Golden Rule is **not**, as many in our dog-eat-dog world today might errantly conclude: “Whoever has the gold makes the rules.” Such an errant and ungodly view makes one out to be God, one who ultimately will be caught “speak[ing] against a brother or judg[ing] his brother, speak[ing] against the law and judg[ing] the law” (James 4:11).

Treating people the same way you want to be treated, is supposed to be the epitome of what the Torah and the Prophets communicate to men and women of faith. And what is the main baseline of the Torah and the Prophets? *It is love for God and neighbor*. As Yeshua further explains,

**“Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.** If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is *that* to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same *amount*. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil *men*” (Luke 6:31-35).

The difficulty with following the Torah and Prophets to their logical purpose, is not that it is easy to love other people who love you or who do good to you—it is loving people who do not necessarily love you. To repeat Yeshua's teaching earlier from His Sermon on the Mount, it absolutely required that born again Believers be able to love those who they consider neighbors **and** their enemies:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy. **But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” (Matthew 5:43-46).

<sup>2</sup> *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*. MS Windows XP. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005. CD-ROM.



The need to love God and one's neighbor is something deeply rooted within the Torah. Have you made sure that you are aware of how many times this is directly emphasized throughout the Holy Writ? Here is a catalogue of various references:

**"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might"** (Deuteronomy 6:5).

**"You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD"** (Leviticus 19:18).

"Yeshua answered, "The foremost is, "HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." The second is this, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

"...HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER; and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF..." (Matthew 19:19; cf. Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16).

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:36-40).

"And [Yeshua] said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'" And He said to him, 'You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE' [Leviticus 18:5]" (Luke 10:26-28).

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the* law. For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law" (Romans 13:8-10; cf. Exodus 20:13ff; Deuteronomy 5:17ff).

"For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF'" (Galatians 5:14).

"If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,' you are doing well" (James 2:8).

Probe how significant it really is that a proper “Torah observance” begins with love for our Creator God, and then love for one’s fellow human beings. *How often do we fail to demonstrate common respect and decency for people?* How frequently have we flat disobeyed the Lord when it comes to the two most basic instructions He expects all of us to keep?

## The Narrow Way

The need to treat others as you want to be treated is especially highlighted by the knowledge that many people are treading a wide and broad path toward eternal punishment. Those who follow after the Messiah are walking on a very narrow and small path:

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. **For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it**” (Matthew 7:13-14).

The whole concept of a small gate and narrow way, with few finding it, has challenged readers of the Sermon on the Mount for millennia: “The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way” (Matthew 7:13, NLT). Questions naturally arise as to who can qualify or who is worthy. The sober reality of too many walking on a road toward a God-less eternity and utter ruin, should remind each of us as children of God that we are to never take our salvation for granted (cf. Philippians 2:12)!

*Are you sure that you are on the narrow path?* Perhaps you need to make sure that you **really** are treating others in the manner that you wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12).

## Fruit Inspectors

How critical is it for followers of the Messiah Yeshua to make sure that they are walking on the narrow way? Note how the Lord warns His listeners about the presence of false prophets who will enter in among the community of Believers. They will be like wolves dressed as sheep. Their fruit will look good, but it will be internally rotten. *The admonition of the Lord is to use discernment and inspect them:*

“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **You will know them by their fruits.** Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits**” (Matthew 7:15-20).

It is upon reading this passage that Believers should always be mindful of the need to keep an eye on those who claim to be “hearing from God,” with the intention of either leading or exercising a degree of influence over His people. The easiest way to discern whether or not these people are truly of the Father, is by simply examining the fruit of their labors. Are they people who desire to instill in others a quest for holiness, maturity, and a proper knowledge of the Almighty

and His Word? I ask you to seriously consider how everyone who is seeking God should become a “fruit inspector,” in order to avoid the pitfalls of following false prophets, false teachers, and any false voices in our midst.

## Following His Way

Yeshua’s Sermon on the Mount closes with a definite challenge issued to those who have just heard its probing words. Not everyone who has called out to Him for salvation truly has it. The reason? It is because they failed to obey the Heavenly Father. While claims might be issued to the Lord about prophesying or casting out demons or performing miracles—those who are not allowed to enter into the Kingdom are regarded as practitioners of lawlessness:

“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’ [Psalm 6:8]” (Matthew 7:21-23).

We each need to be tempered by the fact that there is only One who gets to determine who enters into God’s Kingdom: **God**. The sober warning, though, is that there will be many who thought they knew the Lord and had salvation or His favor, but who were instead “workers of lawlessness” (ESV). How serious is it to disregard Yeshua’s word demonstrating good works (Matthew 5:16) via a consistent obedience to the Torah of Moses (Matthew 5:17-19)? Does such an obedience *end* at only possessing love for God and neighbor, or *begin* there? How much might some of today’s Christians be found wanting in their scope of obedience to God’s commandments? I, like many others, am of the firm conviction that the Messianic movement has been raised up in this hour to see Believers the world over return to a more steady path of obedience to Moses’ Teaching.

We can have the assurance that we serve a fair and just God. All of us need to review the life-giving words in the Holy Scriptures that can refine us for His service, and empower us to accomplish His tasks. As Yeshua closes the Matthew 5-7 Sermon on the Mount, He implores His listeners to know that those who fail to act on His teaching will be like a house built on sand—one which will be swept away when storms come:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.**’ When Yeshua had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matthew 7:24-29).

Yeshua’s words carry authority with them, and each of us living today needs to make absolutely sure that we have listened to them! For many of today’s Bible

readers, Matthew chs. 5-7 composes what they like to call “the Law of Christ.” In a way, the Sermon on the Mount certainly does help to establish not only Yeshua’s position as a Teacher and Rabbi, but it lays forth His interpretations and applications of the Law of Moses. Yeshua’s teachings, though, cannot function without the authority of the Law of Moses intact—but, to only read the Torah without Yeshua’s teachings in view would also be a serious mistake. Using the analogy of the house as seen above: Moses’ Teaching forms the foundation, the Prophets frame the Messianic expectation, and Yeshua’s teachings and actions give the house its substance for a place for God’s people to live.

*Live wisely, heed the words of Yeshua, and make sure that you have a complete house built upon the Rock of Salvation!*

## Romans 10:4

by J.K. McKee

The following has been reproduced from the forthcoming paperback edition of *The New Testament Validates Torah: Does the New Testament Really Do Away With the Law?* This publication is being significantly expanded and updated, with many of its original arguments refined, with a greater and higher level of engagement with contemporary Biblical Studies. When completed, it is expected to be around 500 pages.

Pastor: Romans 10:4: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

**“For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”**

Many people read Romans 10:4, as it appears in most English Bible versions, and view it as being definitive evidence that the Torah is no longer relevant to be followed. Our pastor’s claim that “Christ is the end of the law...” is quite frequent in discussion between Christians, Messianics, and Jews relating to the position that the Law of Moses plays, or does not play, in the lives of God’s people today. Is the claim of Romans 10:4 so absolute, meaning that the Messiah is the termination of the Torah? Or, might there be more that many Bible readers have overlooked? *Not enough probably understand that Romans 10:4 should never be read so simplistically.*

In Romans 10:1-3 we see that the larger issue at work is how the Apostle Paul is distraught over how many of his Jewish brethren have rejected the Messiah Yeshua, trying to find righteousness via their own actions and deeds:

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.”

The answer to the dilemma of establishing one’s own righteousness is undeniably Yeshua the Messiah. Romans 10:4, in an English version like the NASU, communicates, **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”**

In what way is the Savior Yeshua the answer to the problem of establishing one's own righteousness, if He is the "end," viewed as being a nullification or abolishment of the Mosaic Law? If the Messiah really is the termination of Moses' Teaching, would this not contradict His own words about the Torah not passing away (Matthew 5:17-19)?

The Contemporary English Version renders Romans 10:4 with, "But Christ makes the Law no longer necessary." Is this what the Apostle Paul is really saying? Is the man who in Romans 3:31 says that Messiah followers are to "establish" or "uphold the law" (RSV/NIV), and who in Romans 7:12 could communicate that "the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" and in Romans 7:14 that "the Law is spiritual," and who even could claim in Romans 7:22 "I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man" —suddenly saying that the Law of Moses is of no value?<sup>1</sup> If God's Torah is valid in these preceding verses, then some further examination on what Romans 10:4 actually communicates is imperative.

If one were to only examine the English text of this verse, it could seem that our pastor has a legitimate claim against those who believe that the Torah or Law of Moses should be heeded and followed as valid instruction today. Many of today's Christians will eagerly point out the word "end" in Romans 10:4 and simply say, "Jesus Christ terminated the Law of Moses." But how many English speakers are aware of the fact that this is a stretch for the English language? *Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus*, for example, does define the English word "end" with the definition "an outcome; result."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a little more elementary would be how in *Webster's Intermediate Dictionary*, designed as clearly printed on its cover "for young teenagers," appears a critical definition for "end" that can go overlooked even by some of the most well-trained seminary professors: "the goal toward which an agent acts or should act."<sup>3</sup> In the English language alone is an available definition of "end" that does not mean "termination" or "abolishment." The English sentence, "the end of all of NASA's work is the putting of a man on the moon,"<sup>4</sup> clearly does not mean that once Apollo 11 landed on the lunar surface that the existence of NASA and the exploration and study of space all of a sudden became irrelevant. Although in some popular speech the English word "end" is not always akin to "goal," it can legitimately be used this way.<sup>5</sup>

For Romans 10:4, our appeal must be principally made to the source text, which asserts *telos gar nomou Christos* (τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστός). Among Greek lexicons, we should not be surprised to see that the word *telos* (τέλος)<sup>6</sup> too has a wider connotation

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<sup>1</sup> I would clarify that even if Paul is using the rhetorical device of prosopopeia in the latter passages of Romans 7:12, 14, 22—Paul speaking as an imaginary "I"—the sentiments of the Torah being of value are still very much Paul's personal feelings.

<sup>2</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus*, second edition (Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, Inc, 2002), 209.

<sup>3</sup> *Webster's Intermediate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1977), 245.

Even the strongly fundamentalist *The Christian Student Dictionary* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1982), 240 includes the definition "A purpose; goal" for the English word "end," actually providing the explanatory sentence: "To what end are you doing all that work?"

<sup>4</sup> Tim Hegg, *Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Chapters 9-16* (Tacoma, WA: TorahResource, 2007), 317.

<sup>5</sup> The 1993 German Elberfelder Bibel has "Denn Christus ist des Gesetzes Ende." The term *Ende* primarily means "end; close; film etc.: ending; result, outcome" (*Langenscheidts New College German Dictionary*, 181), which likewise, in a language most closely related to English, does not necessarily imply termination.

of definitions not limited to “end.” A critical definition of *telos* provided by BDAG includes, “the goal toward which a movement is being directed, end, goal, outcome”<sup>7</sup>; Thayer offers us the definition, “The end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose”<sup>8</sup>; Vine says that it can mean “‘the aim or purpose’ of a thing”<sup>9</sup>; and CGEDNT provides the definition “outcome, result, goal, aim, fulfillment.”<sup>10</sup> Perhaps most importantly, AMG remarks that *telos* “does not, as is often supposed, mean the extinction, end or termination...It simply means the goal reached.”<sup>11</sup>

It would not be wrong by any means to translate Romans 10:4 as: “Christ is the goal of the Law” (Common English Bible) or “Christ is the aim of the Law” or “Christ is the purpose of the Law” or even “Christ is the fulfillment of the law” (Lattimore). The 2005 Today’s New International Version includes the much-improved rendering, “Christ is the culmination of the law.”<sup>12</sup> A footnote exists in the Contemporary English Version for Romans 10:4, which actually says, “Or ‘But Christ gives the full meaning to the Law.’”<sup>13</sup> (The Complete Jewish Bible, commonly used in today’s Messianic movement, offers the rendering: “For the goal at which the *Torah* aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts.”).

How one chooses to render the word *telos* (τέλος) is certainly dependent on one’s presuppositional bias. If one’s theological commitment is to the idea that Jesus Christ abolished the Law of Moses, then Romans 10:4 will be translated along the lines of termination. If one’s theological commitment is to the idea that Jesus Christ is the goal, purpose, or aim of the Law of Moses, then Romans 10:4 will at least be understood with “end” meaning this, and with “goal” as a preferred rendering. Recognizing the Messiah as the *telos* of the Mosaic Torah from this latter perspective has been acknowledged by many important Christian voices since the Protestant Reformation. From my own evangelical Christian background, John Wesley’s *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* offered these comments on Romans 10:4:

“For Christ is the end of the law—The scope and aim of it. It is the very design of the law, to bring men to believe in Christ to justification and salvation. And He alone gives that pardon and life which the law shows the want of, but cannot give.”<sup>14</sup>

Some might wonder, given the strong evidence in favor of *telos* (τέλος) meaning something along the lines of goal, purpose, aim, or even culmination—why more of today’s English Bibles have not represented a more pro-Torah position on Romans

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<sup>6</sup> Given the theological and spiritual importance of τέλος, not only for Messianics in Romans 10:4, but how frequently you will see *telos* used in scholastic works, please be aware that it is properly pronounced as *tēlōs*, with both a short ē and short ō sound.

<sup>7</sup> BDAG, 998.

<sup>8</sup> Thayer, 620.

<sup>9</sup> Vine, 199.

<sup>10</sup> CGEDNT, 180.

<sup>11</sup> Zodhiates, *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, 1376.

<sup>12</sup> The NIV Study Bible, 1761 while employing the 1984 New International version which uses, “Christ is the end of the law,” does say interestingly enough, “Although the Greek for ‘end’ (*telos*) can mean either (1) ‘termination,’ ‘cessation,’ or (2) ‘goal,’ ‘culmination,’ ‘fulfillment,’ it seems best here to understand it in the latter sense.” But the commentary goes even further, surprisingly stating,

“Christ is the fulfillment of the law...in the sense that he brought it to its completion by obeying perfectly its demands and by fulfilling its types and prophecies. Christians are no longer ‘under law’...since Christ has freed them from its condemnation, but the law still plays a role in their lives.”

<sup>13</sup> *Holy Bible, Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995), 971.

<sup>14</sup> Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, 561.

10:4. Not very many laypersons are aware of **the considerable amount of ink spilled in Romans commentaries and theological resources over this verse**. Surveying a small selection of publications released over the past half-century, a majority still seems to favor *telos* being some kind of a termination of the Mosaic Torah,<sup>15</sup> a minority favors *telos* as the Messiah being the goal of the Torah,<sup>16</sup> and others simply list the interpretational possibilities without necessarily favoring one or another.<sup>17</sup> Messianic commentators today, most understandably, favor *telos* to mean “goal.”<sup>18</sup>

Commentators, who are unfavorable to the continued validity of the Torah or Law of Moses in the post-resurrection era, still have to certainly recognize the possibility that *telos* (τέλος) can mean something other than “end” as akin to “termination.” Witherington indicates the dilemma for the interpreter having to choose: “for end/termination/purpose/goal of the Law [is] Christ for righteousness for all those believing.”<sup>19</sup> Some interpreters, recognizing how “end” as akin to “termination” can be seen as being a bit disrespectful to God’s (previous) revelation in the Mosaic Law, have opted for some combination of applications for the term *telos*. Moo thinks,

“[W]ith the coming of Christ the authority of the law of Moses is, in some basic sense, at an end. At the same time, a teleological nuance is also present. This is suggested not only by the contextual factors...but also by the fact that similar NT uses of *telos* generally preserve some sense of direction or goal. In other words, the ‘end’ that *telos* usually denotes is an end that is the natural or inevitable result of something else. The analogy of a race course (which many scholars think *telos* is meant to convey) is helpful: the finish line is both the ‘termination’ of the race (the race is over when it is reached) and the ‘goal’ of the race (the race is run for the sake of reaching the finish line)...The English word ‘end’ perfectly captures this nuance; but, if it is thought that it implies too temporal a meaning, we might also use the words ‘culmination,’ ‘consummation,’ or ‘climax.’”<sup>20</sup>

Moo, who does not believe in the continued validity of the Mosaic Law in the post-resurrection era, argues that *telos* regards the Messiah being the “goal” of the Torah along the lines of someone crossing the finish line of a race, which would then terminate the race. Yet the Messiah Himself actually directs those who have found Him, to uphold the continued authority of Moses’ Teaching, instructing its commandments to others (Matthew 5:19). To his credit, though, Moo offers an array of alternative translations for *telos* like culmination, consummation, and climax that those who favor the continued validity of the Torah in the post-resurrection era should welcome in modern English translations (like the TNIV), as these English terms draw the attention of the reader to how the Torah is to point to the Messiah.

The argument as to what *telos* (τέλος) means in Romans 10:4 does need to take into

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<sup>15</sup> Everett F. Harrison, “Romans,” in *EXP*, 10:110-111; James D.G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*, Vol. 38b. (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), pp 596-597; Stott, *The Message of Romans*, pp 281-282; Walter C. Kaiser, Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Branch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), pp 563-566; Witherington, *Romans*, pp 260-261.

<sup>16</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, *International Critical Commentary: Romans 9-16* (London: T&T Clark, 1979), pp 515-520; Wright, in *NIB*, 10:655-658.

<sup>17</sup> Bruce, *Romans*, 190.

<sup>18</sup> Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, pp 395-396; Hegg, *Romans 9-16*, pp 316-319.

<sup>19</sup> Witherington, *Romans*, 260.

<sup>20</sup> Moo, *Romans*, 641.

consideration various linguistic factors, the least of which concern how *telos* is used in the Epistle to the Romans. N.T. Wright describes how “The...problem with the main-stream reading is Paul’s use of the word *telos* and its cognates elsewhere, not least in Romans itself. The only other occurrences of the noun in this letter come in 6:21-22: ‘the end of those things is death<sup>21</sup>...the fruit you have is unto sanctification, and its end is eternal life<sup>22</sup>.’ By itself, we might be misled into reading the first of these as meaning ‘termination,’ but the second makes it clear what Paul means is ‘goal.’ Sanctification leads to, points toward, eternal life, and is consummated and completed thereby.”<sup>23</sup>

When the Apostle Paul communicates to his disciple Timothy about *telos tēs parangelias* (τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας), this is not at all to be understood as “the termination of our instruction,”<sup>24</sup> but instead “the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5, NASU). Other valid renderings include “the aim of our charge” (RSV), “The whole point of what we’re urging” (The Message), or even “the purpose of the commandment” (NKJV). *Telos* regards the purpose or the focus of someone’s instruction in the faith, and as it regards Romans 10:4, such an educational goal or purpose for understanding the Messiah would be most appropriate to add to the components intended by *telos*. In Wright’s valid estimation, though, he approaches *telos* in Romans 10:4 from the perspective of Yeshua being the Torah’s climax:

“I conclude that in 10:4 Paul does not intend to declare the law’s abrogation in favor of a different ‘system,’ but rather to announce that the Messiah is himself the climax of the long story of God and Israel, the story Torah tells and in which it plays a vital though puzzling part. God’s purposes in Torah, purposes both negative and positive, have reached their goal in the Messiah, and the result of that is the accessibility and availability of ‘righteousness’ for all who believe.”<sup>25</sup>

Theologically speaking, it is by far most imperative that *telos* (τέλος) in Romans 10:4 be approached from the perspective of goal, aim, purpose, or even climax—and *not* termination. What is the Apostle Paul really trying to communicate? Is he not trying to say that his own fellow Jews have largely missed the point of the Torah? Does he not express the frustration, “since they are unaware of God’s way of making people righteous and instead seek to set up their own, they have not submitted themselves to God’s way of making people righteous” (Romans 10:3, CJB)? If God’s Torah were approached properly, then whether it be First Century Jews who were unable to see Yeshua as the Deliverer or modern Christians who need greater clarification in the ways of holiness and obedience—then the Torah could rightly serve as the foundation of one’s understanding of salvation history. Without Moses’ Teaching, you cannot fully appreciate the arrival of the Messiah onto the stage of not only redemption for all humanity—but *yourself personally*. The common mortal inability to obey the commandments in the Law, for example, is to clearly point us to the need **we all have** for a Di-

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<sup>21</sup> Grk. *to gar telos ekeinōn thanatos* (τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἐκεῖνων θάνατος); “For the outcome of those things is death” (NASU).

<sup>22</sup> Grk. *to de telos zōen aiōnion* (τὸ δὲ τέλος ζωῆν αἰώνιου); “and the outcome, eternal life” (NASU).

<sup>23</sup> Wright, in *NIB*, 10:657.

<sup>24</sup> The KJV actually does have “the end of the commandment.”

<sup>25</sup> Wright, in *NIB*, 10:658.



vine Savior!

Representing a rather standard view that *telos* (τέλος) in Romans 10:4 means “goal,” we should fully concur with Cranfield’s excellent conclusions:

“[I]n this passage Paul is concerned to show that Israel has misunderstood the law. At this point a statement that Christ is the goal to which all along the law has been directed, its true intention and meaning, is altogether apposite. Israel has misunderstood the law, because it failed to recognize what it was all about...So we conclude that τέλος should be understood in the sense...Christ is the goal, the aim, the intention of the law—apart from Him it cannot be properly understood at all...We conclude that the verse as a whole means: For Christ is the goal of the law, and it follows that a status of righteousness is available to every one who believes.”<sup>26</sup>

Within Romans 10:4, the Apostle Paul is by no means communicating that Yeshua the Messiah is the abolition of the Mosaic Torah; in being the *telos nomou* (τέλος νόμου) Yeshua the Messiah is the Torah’s goal, its climax, its inevitable outcome, or even its dénouement. Arriving at saving faith in the Messiah of Israel is the *resultant end*, with Him being the consummation to whom the Torah points.

Paul does not say that Yeshua the Messiah terminated the validity and relevance of the Law of Moses, as Romans 10:4 is so commonly misinterpreted. The purpose of the Torah—and indeed all of Holy Scripture—is that it must point to our innate human need for a Savior. If we can realize how “through the Law comes the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20b), then we can also realize how “Messiah is the goal of the Torah for righteousness to everyone who believes” (my translation). Recognizing that we all fall short of His high standard (Romans 3:23), each man and woman must be convicted of sin, cry out in repentance before the Father, and receive the forgiveness that He offers in His Son. The Torah is to always show us the need for a Redeemer, and the fact that we need salvation.

<sup>26</sup> Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, pp 519-520.



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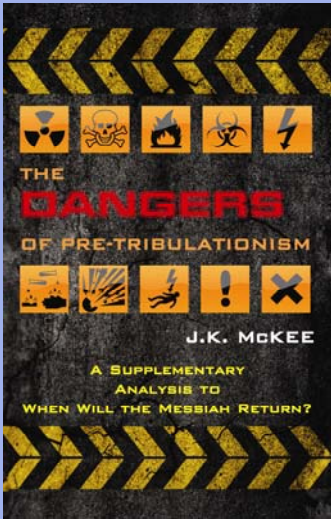
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