

# Gentiles and the Law

Vol. VIII

containing:

The Book of Acts  
The Book of Revelation  
Final Summary

by  
Dean & Susan Wheelock

Let there be no thought  
That I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets.  
I have not come for destruction, but to make complete.  
Truly I say to you,  
Till heaven and earth come to an end,  
Not the smallest letter or part of a letter will in any way  
Be taken from the law,  
Till all things are done.  
*Matthew 5:17-18 BBE*

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## ~ Introduction ~

I, the LORD [YHVH], have called You in righteousness,  
And will hold Your hand;  
I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people,  
As a light to the Gentiles,  
To open blind eyes,  
To bring out prisoners from the prison,  
Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.  
*Isaiah 42:6-7*

hen we first began to write the series of articles entitled *Gentiles and the Law* (in 2003) the scope of the project was not apparent. As the project developed it became clear that a good way to address the problem was to survey every book of the Greek Scriptures (New Testament) to see if any of them taught that the "Law" had been done away, as so many have claimed.

Six years and twenty-five articles later the project was brought to a conclusion in *Hebrew Roots*® Issue 08-3. However, it soon became obvious that it really was not at an end, for people began to express a desire to see all of the articles put into a book. The problem with a book is that *Hebrew Roots*® does not have the facilities to publish anything in perfect bound book format and it is quite expensive to have a full book printed. Such a project would necessitate that we charge for the book in order to pay the printing and binding costs, which is against our stated policy that everything we produce will be made available free of charge, based upon the availability of funds, so that all who want copies may obtain them. Therefore, the decision was made to put the articles into a series booklets which could be printed just like the regular

issues. Thus, God willing, over time all of the articles would be made available directly from *Hebrew Roots*®.

In the first seven volumes, of the series, we covered all of the General Epistles and the Epistles of Paul, including the book of *Hebrews* (which is often debated as to whether Paul actually wrote it or not). This final volume completes the Greek Scriptures (NT) by covering the books of *Acts* and *Revelation*.

As you read this material, keep in mind that these discourses are not intended to be a comprehensive commentary on everything contained within *Acts* and *Revelation*. Only those portions which pertain to the subject of the Law (*Written Torah*) will be examined in any depth.

For an excellent Hebraic roots commentary on the entire New Testament, we suggest obtaining a copy of David Stern's *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, published by Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc. of Clarksville, Maryland. ISBN 965-359-008-1 (hardcover).

It is our hope that you will find this booklet helpful in both your individual studies and in your outreach to others.

Shalom!

Dean & Susan Wheelock

Beit Shalom, 2016

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## ~ The Book of Acts ~

Now Peter and John  
Went up together to the temple  
At the hour of prayer,  
The ninth hour.  
Acts 3:1



The purpose of the *Gentiles and the Law* series is to explore the teachings found in the Greek Scriptures (New Testament) to see what basis, if any, there might be to the common Christian teaching that the "law was done away at the cross." Having already explored the teachings of *Y'shua* (as found in the Gospel accounts), the General Epistles, and the fourteen Epistles of Paul, our attention is now directed to the Book of *Acts*.

Please keep in mind that this article is not intended to be a comprehensive commentary on the book of *Acts*. Its focus is directed specifically toward those topics which either support, or seem to refute, the idea that the *Written Torah* of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament books, Genesis through Deuteronomy) is still valid for today's Messianic Believers.

### ~ Knowledge ~

It is important that our faith in God be based upon full and complete knowledge and not on half-truths, which take the pure Word of God and mix it with error. Only by uncovering the real truth of the Scriptures can Messianic Believers grow in spiritual knowledge.

It is not our claim to have all the truth, for we only know that which we have learned up to this point. What you read in *Hebrew Roots*® is our current understanding based upon many years of study. However, it is important when studying material from any source (including this one), that you search the Scriptures diligently to see if what is being taught is true:

**"These [the Bereans] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."** (Acts 17:11)

When we, as Messianic Believers in *Y'shua*, are armed with the pure word of truth, through diligent Scriptural study that is guided by the *Ruach HaKodesh* רִּיחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ (Reu-ackh' Hah Koh-dehsh' = the Holy Spirit - #7307 & #6944), it becomes more difficult for the Adversary (*HaSatan*) to deceive us into believing lies which are being taught in the name of truth, no matter what the source:

**"You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; <sup>18</sup> but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."** (II Peter 3:17-18)

There is little uncertainty about the author of the book of *Acts*. It is the second volume of a two volume work written by the same individual, and addressed to the same Theophilus, as was the book of *Luke*, the Gospel which bears the author's name in our modern Bibles:

**"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus [Y'shua] began both to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."** (Acts 1:1-3)

The "former account" mentioned there is the Gospel according to *Luke* where he begins:

**"... it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ..."** (Luke 1:3)

Exactly who Theophilus was is unknown, but most scholars believe him to have been a man of "high social standing," because Luke addresses him as "most excellent." The name Theophilus means "friend of God," which has led some to speculate that the name does not refer to an individual at all, but rather it was Luke's way of identifying all *Nazarene* Believers as being God's "friends."

In his preface to the Gospel of *Luke*, the author admitted that he was not a personal eyewitness to the works and ministry of *Y'shua*, but received his information from others who were there in person:

**"Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ..."** (Luke 1:1-2)

This same method was used for at least the first portion of the book of *Acts* (chapters 1 - 12). However, it is evident that Luke was himself an eyewitness to many of the events described in later portions of the book (13 - 28), for Luke was a constant companion of the Apostle Paul during many of his journeys:

**"Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you."** (Col. 4:14)

In a number of passages in *Acts*, Luke uses the word "we" to describe the events which were happening as he and Paul traveled together, such as their harrowing journey by boat to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome:

**"And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment."** (Acts 27:1)

Luke was Paul's most faithful companion:

**"Be diligent to come to me quickly; <sup>10</sup> for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me."** (II Tim. 4:9-11)

As for the portions of the book of *Acts* where the author was not an eyewitness, it can be assumed that he received his information directly from those who were present and who had either participated in or witnessed what was taking place.

The principle characters in the first twelve chapters, of the book of *Acts*, were the Apostles Peter and John, both of whom Luke would have met when he and Paul traveled to Jerusalem. Another contributor to Luke's writing could well have been *Ya'acov* יַעֲקֹב (Yah-ah'-cove = Jacob or James - #3290), the brother of *Y'shua* and the head of the *Nazarenes* in Jerusalem:

**"And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. <sup>18</sup> On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present."**

(Acts 21:17-18)

No doubt there were many other men and women who also contributed to Luke's two historical documents. They too would have been people who were eyewitnesses to what occurred during the ministry of *Y'shua*, as well as during the time just following *Y'shua's* ascension to heaven, when the *Nazarene Ekklesia* (congregation) was first being established.

#### ~ Who Was Luke? ~

Exactly who Luke, the author of the Gospel of *Luke* and the book of *Acts*, was is unclear. Some believe him to have been a Hellenistic Jew, while others think he was a Gentile Proselyte. Some have identified him with Lucius of Cyrene:

**"Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."**

(Acts 13:1)

It is also speculated that Luke may have been a well educated Gentile convert whom Paul proselytized at Tarsus. It was there, they say, that he studied medicine and became known as "the physician:"

**"Luke the beloved physician ..."** (Col. 4:14)

Another speculation is that he was of servant or slave origin, since the name Luke is probably an abbreviation of Lucanus, Lucius, Lucilius, or Lucianus (per *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*), all of which may have been slave names. Also, slaves were often trained in medicine to enable them to better care for their masters. This theory, in our opinion, does not really hold, since Luke's Greek is said to be the most cultured of all the Greek Scriptures, hardly what one would expect from a slave.

Many believe that Luke was the translator of the book of *Hebrews*, since the Greek syntax used in that epistle is more refined and close in style to both the Gospel of *Luke* and the book of *Acts*.

In our opinion, Luke was probably a proselyte to Judaism, who was grafted into the commonwealth of Israel through his acceptance of *Y'shua* as Messiah under the discipleship of Paul.

#### ~ The Time of Acts ~

As usual, the Bible scholars cannot agree on when the book of *Acts* was written. The dates range all the way from 62 CE to the middle of the 2nd century. In our opinion, the latter date can be excluded, since the author claims to have been an eyewitness to a great many of the events being described, all of which took place prior to 62 CE.

Another strong case for the early 60's CE, being the date *Acts* was written, is the fact that the book ends very abruptly during the time when Paul was awaiting trial in Rome. It would seem that if it had been written later, the outcome of Paul's trial, and eventual execution, would have been covered in detail. Some argue that the author intentionally left that information out so that Messianic Believers would not become discouraged by Paul's death. However, it is our opinion that would not have been in keeping with Luke's practice in other portions of the book where he "tells it like it is."

Another martyrdom not mentioned in *Acts* was that of *Ya'acov* (*Y'shua's* brother) who was put to death in Jerusalem about this same time (see Vol. VII of this series for more details on the death of *Ya'acov*). That event was extremely important, since *Ya'acov* was considered to be the head of the Messianic Movement (see Acts 15). Because mention of *Ya'acov's* death is excluded, we believe that *Acts* was written before Luke learned of it, or prior to 62 CE.

It is also possible that Luke wrote (or planned to write) a third volume which covered the events following those found in this book, and that it has been lost or was never completed. There is no written record of what became of Luke himself, so it is possible that he was martyred in Rome, along with Paul, before such a volume could be completed.

There is a strong tradition that Paul was acquitted at his first trial and traveled on to both Spain and Britain before returning to Rome and being arrested a second time. (One author suggests Paul was imprisoned a total of seven times before being killed.) If such were the case, surely Luke would have included that information in a third volume. Whatever the facts of the matter might be, the only Scripture we have today, which deals with the history of the early *Nazarene Ekklesia*, is found in the book of *Acts*, and it ends with Paul awaiting trial.

#### ~ Shaul the Pharisee ~

Rather than going through a chapter by chapter analysis of the book of *Acts*, we will explore pertinent topics concerning how the Law of God (the *Written Torah*) is treated; whether those topics be pro-Law or anti-Law. The first such topic will be Paul's personal relationship to God's Law. This will enable us to understand how *Shaul* שָׁאוּל (Shah-ool' = Saul - #7586) viewed himself in this matter:

**"But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, 'Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a**

**Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"** (Acts 23:6)

Many Christians automatically equate the term Pharisee with hypocrite, because of the passages where *Y'shua* said such things as:

**"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"** (Matt. 23:13)

Yes, there were definitely Pharisees who were hypocrites, just as *Y'shua* said. However, that does not mean that all Pharisees were hypocrites. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* makes the following comments concerning the subject of how the Pharisees were depicted in the New Testament:

While the Pharisees, as a whole, set a high ethical standard for themselves, not all lived up to it. It is mistakenly held that New Testament references to them as "hypocrites" or "offspring of vipers" (Matt. 3:7; Luke 18:9ff., etc.) are applicable to the entire group. However, the leaders were well aware of the presence of the insincere among their numbers, described by the Pharisees themselves in the Talmud as "sore spots" or "plagues of the Pharisaic party" (Sot. 3:4 and 22b). The apostle Paul himself had been a Pharisee, was a son of a Pharisee, and was taught by one of the sect's most eminent scholars, Gamaliel of Jerusalem. Pharisaic doctrines have more in common with those of Christianity than is supposed, having prepared the ground for Christianity with such concepts as Messianism, the popularization of monotheism and apocalypticism, and with such beliefs as life after death, resurrection of the dead, immortality, and angels. (CD-Rom article: Pharisees.)

Just as there are hypocrites in mainstream Christianity, so there are also hypocrites in the Messianic Movement, as well as every other religion on the face of the earth. What a person professes to believe does not always indicate how they might act in any given situation. When a person's actions regularly contradict their beliefs they become a hypocrite, no matter what they call themselves.

Paul, since he was called to service by *Y'shua* Himself, was not a hypocrite, else *Y'shua* would not have chosen him. Thus, when he was defending himself before king Agrippa, he made the following claim which we can trust as being true:

**"My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. <sup>5</sup> They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."** (Acts 26:4-5)

In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul set forth his Pharisaic credentials:

**"... If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: <sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."** (Phil. 3:4-6)

There are also two places where Paul made statements concerning his zeal for keeping the law of God (the *Written Torah*) as well as the traditions of the Jews (*Oral Torah*):

**"When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, <sup>8</sup>while he answered for himself, 'Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.'"** (Acts 25:7-8)

**"And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: 'Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, ...'"** (Acts 28:17)

*Shaul* the Pharisee (the Apostle Paul) kept the law of God (the *Written Torah*) according to the teaching of the Pharisees. He did not teach that it had been "nailed to the cross" and was no longer valid as a standard for behavior. What *Shaul* did teach (which was contrary to the Pharisaic approach) was that the Gentiles who were coming to faith in *Y'shua* did not have to observe the *Oral Torah* of the Pharisees in order to be saved. However, as we have seen time and again throughout this series of booklets, Paul did teach the Gentiles to learn and obey the *Written Torah*. (For more information on this topic please see our booklet *Which Law?* or Vol. I of this series, which contains this article.)

**~ The Sabbath and the Synagogue ~**

There is a recurring theme throughout the book of *Acts* which occurs when Luke describes the various travels of Paul. Paul always attended the local Jewish Synagogues, as his first order of business, when arriving in a new city. If his message about Messiah *Y'shua* was well received by the leadership in the Synagogue, Paul would continue teaching there. However, if the leadership of the local Synagogue rejected his message about *Y'shua*, Paul would then take his teaching to a different venue where those who had heard and believed his words could come to learn more. The first example given occurred when Paul arrived in Salamis on the island of Cyprus:

**"And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews."** (Acts 13:5)

Next came Antioch:

**"But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down. <sup>15</sup> And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, 'Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.'"** (Acts 13:14-15)

In this particular case, it was primarily the Gentile proselytes and God Fearers (those Gentiles who were in training to become proselytes) who readily accepted Paul's teaching, although some of the native born Jews did as well:

**"So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup> Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. <sup>44</sup> On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God."** (Acts 13:42-44)

However, the large response Paul and Barnabas received did not go over well with certain elements of the Synagogue leadership:

**"But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul."** (Acts 13:45)

By initially going to the Synagogue, Paul was practicing what he advised the Romans; that the message of salvation through Messiah *Y'shua* should be preached to the Jews first:

**"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ [Messiah], for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."** (Rom. 1:16)

In this particular case at Antioch, the Jewish leadership rejected the teaching of truth, so Paul responded by telling them that God was also calling the Gentiles to repentance and they too could become grafted into the commonwealth of Israel:

**"Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us:**

**"I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth."'"** [Isaiah 49:6] (Acts 13:46-47)

Iconium was the next stop mentioned:

**"Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed."** (Acts 14:1)

In all, the book of *Acts* mentions Paul teaching the message of *Y'shua HaMashiach* in Jewish synagogues a total of eight times. It can safely be assumed that this number is only the tip of the iceberg, for undoubtedly Paul went first to the Synagogue in every city he visited, whether it was specifically mentioned or not.

The point of all this is that Paul did not go out and stand on a street corner proclaiming the message of *Y'shua* to every pagan who happened to pass by. Instead, he went to the one place in the city where the law of God (*Written Torah*) was being taught and observed, and told them that the Messiah, who had been promised in the *Tanakh* (Old Testament), had now appeared for the first time in the person of *Y'shua*. Those who responded positively, both Jew and Gentile, would have already had some degree of understanding of the Scriptures, and were knowledgeable enough to understand what Paul was

saying, because they were either already well grounded in the *Torah* (as Jews) or (in the case of uncircumcised Gentiles) were in the process of learning *Torah*:

**"For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."** (Acts 15:21)

The implication here is that even Gentiles who were brand new to the faith would be taught the law of God by hearing it read every Sabbath day when they attended Synagogue.

### ~ Temple Worship ~

One clear indication, that the early Messianic Community continued to observe the *Written Torah*, is the fact that the disciples living in Jerusalem were active in the Temple on a daily basis:

**"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus [*Y'shua*] as the Christ [*Messiah*]."** (Acts 5:42)

Certainly, the disciples used some of their time at the Temple to proclaim the Good News that the promised Messiah had come as the *Suffering Servant* to take away sin and that He is going to appear a second time as the *Conquering King* to rule the earth. However, the book of *Acts* gives no indication whatsoever that the disciples ever taught that Temple worship was wrong, or that the Sabbath and/or the Festivals had been abolished. The only accusations made against them by the *Sanhedrin* (the Jewish high court) pertained to their preaching about *Y'shua* the Messiah, for they did not teach people to quit following the *Torah* instructions:

**"And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, <sup>28</sup>saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!'**

**<sup>29</sup> But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'" (Acts 5:27-29)**

The first indication the disciples were still following *Torah* and worshipping at the Temple was when they appeared there to celebrate the Festival of *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost):

**"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."** (Acts 2:1)

Most Christians believe the giving of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost occurred in the Upper Room, some distance away from the Temple itself. However, the Upper Room was where the disciples were lodging:

**"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. <sup>13</sup> And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying:"** (Acts 1:12-13)

True, the disciples did use the Upper Room as a place for prayer meetings:

**"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus [Y'shua], and with His brothers."** (Acts 1:14)

The Upper Room was a private place large enough to accommodate a party of at least 120 people for meetings:

**"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), ..."** (Acts 1:15)

It was in the Upper Room where a replacement was selected, by lot, for Judas the betrayer. However, being observant Jews, when the Festival of Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*) arrived, they would have gone, along with all of the other pilgrims, to worship at the Temple. It was only at the Temple where an audience of thousands could have heard the disciples speaking the "wonderful works of God." It was only at the southern entrance to the Temple where there were an adequate number of *mikvah* מִקְוֶה (meek-vah' = an immersion or baptismal pool) to accommodate the immersion (baptism) of 3000 new Messianic Believers in one day.

A further indication of the importance in which the Apostles held Temple service is found in the story of Peter and John going there for the "hour of prayer:"

**"Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour."** (Acts 3:1)

The ninth hour would have been mid-afternoon or about 3 p.m. This was the time when the "Evening Sacrifice" ceremony was just beginning and is today marked in the Synagogue by the *Tefilat Minchah* תְּפִילַת מִנְחָה (Teh-fee-laht' Meen'-khah = afternoon or evening prayers). Certainly, there would have been no reason at all for Luke to include the fact that Peter and John were going to the Temple at prayer time, unless they were going there to participate in the prayers which accompanied the sacrificial service.

Finally, concerning Temple worship, there is the matter of Paul himself going to the Temple, and taking four other Messianic Believers with him, so they could all purify themselves from the vows they had taken (see Num. 6):

**"On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup> When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. <sup>20</sup> And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.**

**"And they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; <sup>21</sup> but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. <sup>22</sup> What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.**

**<sup>23</sup> 'Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. <sup>24</sup> Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that**

**you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law."**

(Acts 21:18-24)

This is an extremely important passage which clearly teaches that it was normal for Messianic Jews to participate in Temple worship. However, it was also made clear that sacrificial worship at the Temple was not a requirement for Messianic Gentiles:

**"But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written *and* decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."** (Acts 21:25)

In fact, while Gentiles were permitted to bring a sacrifice to the Temple, they would have been required to find someone qualified who would bring the offering into the inner courts for the actual sacrifice ceremony. Gentiles were not even allowed to enter the Court of the Women, but were required to remain in the Court of the Gentiles when attending the Temple. This was one of the charges which was brought against Paul; that he brought Gentiles into an area of the Temple which they were forbidden to enter. Such action, if it were true, would have been punishable by death:

**"Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, <sup>28</sup> crying out, 'Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."** (Acts 21:27-28)

This was a false charge against Paul, as also was the other charge (already quoted) about him teaching the Jews to forsake Moses and not to circumcise their children (Acts 21:21). In the first century, those were very serious charges, and if they could have been proven true, would undoubtedly have gotten Paul stoned.

Paul, in recounting these events later on before Felix (the Procurator or Governor), characterized his presence at the Temple as being an act of worship and purification:

**"... because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem to worship."** (Acts 24:11)

**"Now after many years I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, <sup>18</sup> in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult."** (Acts 24:17-18)

Clearly, as long as the Temple stood in Jerusalem, it continued to be a center of worship for *Nazarene* Jews.

~ Festival Observance ~

Another key to understanding the book of *Acts*, and its relationship to keeping the law of God (*Written Torah*), is the fact that in several places mention is made about the Festivals of God which are commanded to be observed (see Leviticus



23). Some claim these references in *Acts* are merely denoting the season of the year in which the particular events mentioned took place. For example:

**"Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. <sup>2</sup> Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. <sup>3</sup> And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. <sup>4</sup> So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover."** (Acts 12:1-4)

Now the question is: was Peter (and by extension the other disciples) observing the Days of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5-8; Ex. 12 - 13) or did he "just happen" to be at the Temple in Jerusalem during that period of time? We have already seen that the disciples were regular Temple attendees:

**"So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, ..."** (Acts 2:46)

It seems evident to us that the disciples were observing Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, especially since they now knew the deeper spiritual significance of that Festival:

**"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ [*Messiah*], our Passover, was sacrificed for us. <sup>8</sup>Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth."** (1 Cor. 5:7-8)

Paul was adamant, in this letter to the Corinthians, that Messianic Believers were to keep the Feast of Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

(By the way, sometimes people get really picky about the fact that Leviticus 23 makes a clear distinction between the Day of the Passover Sacrifice (*Nisan* 14) and the Days of Unleavened Bread (*Nisan* 15-21), and get really upset if someone simply calls the entire span of eight days "Passover." However, here is a Scriptural example (*Acts* 12:4 above) where "Passover" is used, in a generic sense, to denote the entire eight day period.)

The next reference to one of the Festivals occurred when Paul was in Ephesus:

**"When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, <sup>21</sup> but took leave of them, saying, 'I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.' And he sailed from Ephesus."** (Acts 18:20-21)

Some scholars say the sentence in this passage, concerning keeping the feast in Jerusalem, was added at a later date and therefore does not count. However, another reference to the Festival of *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost) is found in a later passage:

**"For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost."** (Acts 20:16)

There would be no reason for Paul to hurry to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*) if he was not going to celebrate the Festival at the Temple. Also imbedded in this portion of *Acts* is the fact that he set sail immediately following Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread:

**"But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days."** (Acts 20:6)

It seems significant that Paul did not leave Philippi until after the Days of Unleavened Bread, probably because he was observing those days with the brethren in that city and might have found it difficult to keep the Festival days properly while traveling.

While none of these passages in *Acts* offer definitive proof that Paul and his party actually observed the Festivals, the fact remains, that because they are prominently mentioned is an indication that such was probably the case. By the same token, neither are these passages proof that the Messianic Believers did not observe the Festivals. Certainly, Paul's letter to the Corinthians about keeping the Feast, coupled with the teaching that *Y'shua* is our Passover Lamb, indicates to us that the Festivals were continuing to be kept by the early Messianic Believers as Memorials and, in the case of the Spring Festivals, with a much deeper spiritual understanding.

### ~ The Law in General ~

Another theme which runs throughout the book of *Acts* has to do with a *Nazarene* Believer's general relationship to the Law of God. In the Greek language of the book of *Acts*, all law, whether God's or man's is identified by the word *nomos* (Strong's #3551). *Nomos* is always translated into the English word "law," and is defined as:

**3551 νόμος** *nomos* {nom'-os}

**Meaning:** 1) anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law, a command 1a) of any law whatsoever 1a1) a law or rule producing a state approved of God 1a1a) by the observance of which is approved of God 1a2) a precept or injunction 1a3) the rule of action prescribed by reason 1b) of the Mosaic law, and referring, acc. to the context, either to the volume of the law or to its contents 1c) the Christian religion: the law demanding faith, the moral instruction given by Christ, esp. the precept concerning love 1d) the name of the more important part (the Pentateuch), is put for the entire collection of the sacred books of the OT

**Origin:** from a primary *nemo* (to parcel out, especially food or grazing to animals); TDNT - 4:1022,646; n m

**Usage:** AV - law 197; 197

When someone does something against the law they are said to be *anomos* or *antinomian*:

**459 ἄνομος** *anomos* {an'-om-os}

**Meaning:** 1) destitute of (the Mosaic) law 1a) of the Gentiles 2) departing from the law, a violator of the law, lawless, wicked

**Origin:** from 1 (as a negative particle) and 3551; TDNT - 4:1086,646; adj

**Usage:** AV - without law 4, transgressor 2, wicked 2, lawless 1, unlawful 1; 10

As can be seen, the Greek word *anomos* is used ten times in the New Testament and, in the *King James Version*, is translated in a variety of ways. However, its basic meaning is "lawlessness" or "without law." It could also be translated as "torahlessness," i.e. against the *Torah* or instruction of God.

The word *anomos* appears early in the book of *Acts*, during Peter's passionate sermon given to the Jews attending the Temple on *Shavu'ot*:

**"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless [*anomos*] hands, have crucified, and put to death; <sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."** (Acts 2:23-24)

Those Jewish leaders who participated in the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of *Y'shua* did so in a "lawless" or "torahless" manner. (The *King James Version* calls them "wicked hands.")

Peter's solution to the predicament these Jewish pilgrims faced was for them to do *teshuvah* תשובה (teh-shoe'vah = repent and return to God - #7725) -- seeking forgiveness for their sins through the waters of baptism in the name of *Y'shua HaMashiach*:

**"Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"** (Acts 2:38)

The idea of repentance and turning people away from their sins runs throughout the book of *Acts*, as it does also in the Gospels. However, if a person is going to repent of their sins, they need to know what constitutes sin, otherwise they will be totally unaware when they go out and sin again. The primary New Testament definition of sin is:

**"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."** (I John 3:4 KJV)

In other words, sin is disobeying or breaking the law of God as found written in the Hebrew Scriptures. Remember, when the book of *Acts* was written there was no New Testament canon yet in existence. When the Apostles mentioned the Scriptures, they were referring to the Hebrew Scriptures which we call the Old Testament. The law contained in the Hebrew Scriptures is none other than the Law of Moses -- the *Written Torah* commands.

In yet another exhortation by the Apostle Peter, he encouraged people to turn away from their sins:

**"To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus [*Y'shua*], sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."** (Acts 3:26)

There are many other examples where this principle of repentance and turning from sin is taught in the book of *Acts* including: 5:31; 13:38-39; 17:30, to mention a few.

As for Paul himself, he believed and strove to keep the entire Law of God (*Written Torah*):

**"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. <sup>15</sup> I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. <sup>16</sup> This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."** (Acts 24:14-16)

There can be found no *anomos* or anti-*Torah* in any of the Apostle's teaching or actions in the book of *Acts*.

~ Obedience ~

On the other hand, what the Apostles consistently taught is that all Messianic Believers (whether Jew or Gentile) are to be obedient to the Law of God. We have already seen how Peter said we are to obey God and not men (Acts 5:29).

Stephen, when he was on trial, told the *Sanhedrin* that God would raise up a Prophet like unto Moses (first recorded in the *Torah*) and that He should be obeyed:

**"This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD [*YHVH*] your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear [Deut. 18:15].'"** (Acts 7:37)

That Prophet was none other than *Y'shua HaMashiach*, who clearly said that nothing in the Law of God (*Written Torah*) would be changed or abolished under His authority:

**"Let there be no thought that I have come to put an end to the law or the prophets. I have not come for destruction, but to make complete."** (Matt. 5:17 BBE)

Paul taught *Y'shua* from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets even while imprisoned at Rome:

**"So when they had appointed him [*Paul*] a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus [*Y'shua*] from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening."** (Acts 28:23)

When the Apostles were before the *Sanhedrin*, Peter spoke boldly about *Y'shua*, even though they had been commanded not to do so. He concluded his remarks by telling the Council that the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Holy Spirit) had been given to the Apostles because they were obedient to God, not only in the framework of obedience to the *Torah*, but especially by accepting God's own Son *Y'shua* as their Savior:

**"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus [*Y'shua*] whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. <sup>31</sup> Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. <sup>32</sup> And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."**

(Acts 5:30-32)

There is not much use in repenting of one's sins unless one also does complete *teshuvah*; that is to turn back to God in full obedience to His Law, the *Written Torah*. It is necessary that one comes to repentance and becomes totally sorry for the sins one has committed. However, to then go back out and commit the same old sins again just does not make any rational sense.

~ Misunderstood Scriptures ~

There are a handful of Scriptures found in the book of *Acts* which are sometimes misunderstood or misinterpreted to make it look as though there have been changes to the *Written Torah* even though this is not true. We have already seen that the accusation made against Paul (that he taught the Jews to forsake the *Torah* and not to circumcise their children) was totally false (Acts 21:21). Likewise, the accusation that Paul brought uncircumcised Gentiles into the inner courts of the Temple was also false (Acts 21:28).

However, this did not stop the spread of the rumors, and those who wanted to believe the lies about Paul did so quite freely. This led to Paul being falsely accused by the High Priest and other men who came from Jerusalem to speak to Felix the governor about the matter:

**"Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul. <sup>2</sup> And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying:**

**"'Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, <sup>3</sup> we accept it always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your courtesy, a few words from us. <sup>5</sup> For we have found this man [Paul] a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. <sup>6</sup> He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.'"** (Acts 24:1-6)

What was at stake here was really not whether the Law of God had been broken -- the real issue was that the power brokers from Jerusalem wanted to stamp out the Sect of the *Nazarenes* and they recognized that Paul was one of its ringleaders. In order to escape their *Lashon Hara* לָשׁוֹן הָרָע (Lah-shone' Hah-rah' = the Evil Tongue - #3956 & #7451), and the possibility of facing the death penalty as the result of their false accusations, Paul eventually appealed to have his case heard by Caesar in Rome. This he was able to do because he was a Roman citizen:

**"'For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.'"** (Acts 25:11)

Some may want to say that Paul truly was guilty of breaking the *Written Torah* but that it did not matter, because the *Torah* had been abolished at the cross anyway. However,

the record in *Acts* is clear -- this was simply not true. The *Torah* was still in effect and Paul was faithful to it until the day he died.

Another section in *Acts* which is often used to dispute *Torah* has to do with the vision of the unclean creatures, which led Peter to Caesarea where he was instructed to baptize uncircumcised Gentiles into the Body of Messiah:

**"Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance <sup>11</sup> and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. <sup>12</sup> In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup> And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' <sup>14</sup> But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' <sup>15</sup> And a voice spoke to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' <sup>16</sup> This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again."** (Acts 10:10-16)

One thing here is apparent. Even several years after the death and resurrection of *Y'shua*, Peter was still obeying the food laws as set forth in the *Written Torah* (Lev. 11 and Deut. 14). What God was showing Peter in this vision, and through the events which followed, was that he was not to judge any man unclean:

**"Then he said to them, 'You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'"** (Acts 10:28)

The subject here was about men; Jews vs. Gentiles, and not about a change in the food laws. God used that vision to make His point to Peter. (For a more thorough explanation on this matter, please see our booklet *To Eat or Not to Eat.*)

~ Sunday Worship? ~

Finally there is a passage which seems to indicate that the Messianic Believers in Troas were holding a Sunday night service:

**"Now on the first [*mia*] day of the week [*sabbaton*], when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight."** (Acts 20:7)

There are a couple of ways to look at this verse. One is that it refers to the first Sabbath after the Days of Unleavened Bread (*mia* = first -- *sabbaton* = Sabbath) which begins the count of the seven Sabbaths which identifies the correct date to celebrate *Shavu'ot* (Pentecost):

**"'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. <sup>16</sup> Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD [*YHVH*].'"** (Lev. 23:15-16)

If this interpretation is correct, then clearly the congregation at Troas was meeting on the first Sabbath after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and the meeting went beyond sunset and far into the night. Paul was scheduled to leave the next day (the first day of the week, aka Sunday) to continue on his journey, and he wanted to teach the Messianic Believers in Troas as much as he could before departing.

On the other hand, the common interpretation of this passage is the way it is translated in verse 7, where it says it was the first *day* of the week (*mia* = first -- *sabbaton* = week [an alternate definition]). Notice the word "day" is in italics which means it is not found in the original Greek text.

If this is the case, then the Messianic Community was meeting on the first day of the week. However, since this was a Jewish based congregation (even though there were former Gentiles present) the first day of the week (Sunday) begins at sunset Saturday night. So, were they meeting on Saturday night or Sunday night as we count time?

A key to the puzzle is found in the next verse:

**"There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together."** (Acts 20:8)

Some claim that it was the smoke from the many lamps which caused Eutychus to become drowsy and fall from the balcony. However, this expression can also be a Hebrew idiom for the traditional *Havdalah* ceremony, which is used to close the Sabbath after sundown. In *Havdalah*, a multi-wick candle is extinguished in a cup or saucer of wine once three stars are visible in the sky. Then each person present lights a candle, or lamp, to create a sea of light. The fact that there were "many lamps" indicates there were a large number of people present for this evening teaching.

In either interpretation, it is clear that the meeting took place after the close of the Sabbath on what we would call Saturday night, which is the beginning of the first day of the week. Jewish Believers in *Y'shua* would not have found it at all unusual to spend Saturday night in further fellowship following the day of rest. Such Sabbath evening fellowship and study is still a part of Jewish tradition.

~ Summary ~

The book of *Acts* was intended to be a general survey of how the Gospel message of *Y'shua* was taken from Jerusalem out into the known world. However, a careful reading of the text also shows that it gives clear evidence that the Law of God (*Written Torah*) remained in effect for all *Nazarene* Believers, both Jew and Gentile.

The two central figures, in the book of *Acts*, whose ministries are explored, are Peter and Paul. In Peter's case, we see him as a regular participant in Temple worship, even, at times, on a daily basis. In fact, all of the Apostles would have been in attendance at the Temple service when the *Ruach HaKodesh* was given to the Messianic Believers on the day of Pentecost (*Shavu'ot*). Their Temple attendance at that time was in full accord with the *Written Torah*.

Paul did not spend much time in Jerusalem after he was confronted by *Y'shua* on the road to Damascus. Rather, he was sent to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. During all his travels,

Paul (by his own testimony) remained a Pharisee and strictly observed the commandments found in the *Written Torah*.

Paul made it his practice to always take the gospel message to the local Jewish Synagogue first, when entering a new city. His policy was **"to the Jew first and also to the Greek."** Those who accepted the Good News (whether Jew or Gentile) were then given further instruction. However, it is also clear that none of this instruction contradicted, in any way, the *Written Torah*.

It is also strongly implied, in the book of *Acts*, that the Apostles continued to observe not only the weekly Sabbath but the annual Festivals as well.

Finally, the Gospel message cannot be separated from the fact that *Y'shua's* offering of Himself on the stake brought Messianic Believers forgiveness for their sins. Without the forgiveness of sins, there would be no Good News at the individual level for, if that were the case, then we would all die in our sins and have no hope for eternal life. Since sin is the transgression of the *Torah*, it is clear that obedience to the commandments of the *Written Torah* are part of the "way of life" which goes with being a follower of *Y'shua* and a member of the *Nazarene* Community.

The book of *Acts* is a marvelous testimony to the consistency of the Gospel message as taught by the Apostles. That testimony can be summed up in these words from *Y'shua's* teaching at the Last Supper:

**"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. <sup>22</sup> And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."**

(John 17:20-24)

And also in the simple words *Y'shua* spoke to the woman caught in adultery:

**"... go and sin no more."**

(John 8:11)

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## ~ The Book of Revelation ~

And the dragon was enraged with the woman,  
And he went to make war with the rest of her offspring,  
Who keep the commandments of God  
And have the testimony of *Y'shua HaMashiach*.  
*Revelation 12:17*



Now we have come to the end of the *Gentiles and the Law* series with this chapter examining the book of *Revelation*. This series began after receiving a letter from a subscriber questioning whether or not he, as a Gentile, should be keeping the Festivals of God. It is a common teaching of Rabbinic Judaism that the *Torah* (including the Sabbath) must not be kept by Gentiles. In addition, some Sabbath keeping Christian denominations, who accept the seventh day Sabbath as binding, lump the Festivals under a heading called "ceremonial law," which they say was abolished at the "cross."

We do not accept either of these interpretations. Rather we believe the Scriptures teach that the *Written Torah* is for all people who have been grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel through Messiah *Y'shua* *יְשׁוּעָה* (Yeh-shoe'-ah = Jesus - #3442):

**"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh ...<sup>12</sup> ... were without Christ [Messiah], being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.<sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua] you who once were far off have been brought near [into the Commonwealth of Israel] by the blood of Christ [Messiah]."**  
(Eph. 2:11-13)

The *Written Torah* states that there shall be:

**"One law ... for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."**  
(Ex. 12:49)

Since we, as Messianic Believers, are now all part of the Commonwealth of Israel, there can be no doubt that we all come under the laws God gave to the children of Israel as found in the *Written Torah*.

This chapter will cover the very last book in the Greek Scriptures (New Testament) to see if there is anything contained therein which would indicate that the law had been "done away." Please keep in mind this examination is not intended to be a comprehensive commentary on the entire book of *Revelation*, which is primarily made up of prophetic visions. The focus here is directed specifically toward those passages which either support, or seem to refute, the idea that the *Written Torah* of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament books: *Genesis* through *Deuteronomy*) is still valid for today's Messianic Believers.

The primary purpose of the book of *Revelation* is not to teach doctrine or behavior, it is about what is to occur at the end of days. The title of this book in Greek is *Apokalypsis*, from which the English word Apocalypse stems. *Apokalypsis* means "unveiling," "disclosure," or "revelation." It is the unveiling of events that are to occur at the end of this present age, culminating in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth under the rulership of *Y'shua HaMashiach* (Jesus the Messiah).

The book of *Daniel* is also an *apocalyptic* book, the only one to be found in the Old Testament. There are a number of *apocalyptic* books found in ancient Jewish and Christian literature which are not found in the Scriptures. One *apocalyptic* book in the *Apocrypha* is the book of *2 Esdras*. (The *Apocrypha* is found in the *Septuagint* -- the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament -- and in modern Roman Catholic bibles.) It is not considered to be Scripture by Judaism nor by most Protestant churches.

*Apokalypsis* also means "disclosure," because it discloses events which would otherwise be unknown until after they had occurred. Thus, it gives the student of Scripture an end time scenario which helps to clarify some of the prophetic passages of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). In fact, the book of *Revelation* is said to contain 245 references to the Old Testament. However, even though it is supposed to be an "unveiling" or "disclosure," it is written in such visionary language as to make it susceptible for a myriad of interpretations. Perhaps, like the book of *Daniel*, the book of *Revelation* was not intended to be understood properly until the end times:

**"And he said, 'Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'<sup>10</sup> Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."**  
(Dan. 12:9-10)

### ~ A Revelation From *Y'shua* ~

While many English Bibles title this book the *Revelation of John*, the very first verse tells us that it is not John's revelation but the revelation of God to *Y'shua HaMashiach*, Who has, in turn, given it to us through the person of John:

**"The Revelation of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], which God gave Him to show His servants -- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,<sup>2</sup> who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], to all things that he saw."**  
(Rev. 1:1-2)

The book of *Revelation* contains prophecy which was revealed by *Y'shua* to someone named Jonathan, John or *Yochanan* *יוחנן* (Yo'-chah-nahn - #3110) in Hebrew. This *Yochanan* (John) has traditionally been understood to be *Yochanan* the fisherman, who was one of the twelve apostles and who also wrote the Gospel of John, plus three epistles which bear his name:

**"Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,<sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him."**  
(Matt. 4:21-22)

However, in the third century a Church "father" named *Dionysius* presented arguments against the Apostle John's authorship because the book is written in a much rougher form of Greek than John's other writings. Therefore, *Dionysius* claimed, it must be from the pen of a different author.

According to commentary found in *The Open Bible*, there are four reasons why the Apostle John might not be the author:

- ◆ "The Greek grammar of Revelation is not on par with the Fourth Gospel or the Johannine Epistles.
- ◆ "There are also differences in vocabulary and expressions used.
- ◆ "The theological content of this book differs from John's other writings in emphasis and presentation.
- ◆ "John's other writings avoid the use of his name, but his name is found four times in this book." (page 1298)

However, the same text points out two reasons why the above problems concerning authorship might not be valid:

- ◆ "There are a number of remarkable similarities between the Apocalypse and the other books traditionally associated with the Apostle John (e.g. the distinctive use of terms, such as *word*, *lamb*, and *true*, and the careful development of conflicting themes, such as light and darkness, love and hatred, good and evil).
- ◆ "Many of the differences can be explained by the unusual circumstances surrounding this book. The apocalyptic subject matter demands a different treatment, and John received the contents not by reflection but by a series of startling and ecstatic visions." (page 1298)

It is also quite probable that John, who was a fisherman from Galilee, was more versed in Hebrew and/or Aramaic, than in Greek. Some teach that he actually wrote all of his books in either of those two languages and they were subsequently translated into Greek. If that were the case, then it may well have been that a different (less skilled) person translated *Revelation* than was available for his earlier writings. This is quite possible, since the book of *Revelation* was given to John while he was a prisoner on the Isle of *Patmos*, where his normal secretary may not have been available. Then again, John may have translated *Revelation* into Greek himself, as best he could. That too, could account for its roughness:

**"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], was on the island that is called *Patmos* for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*]."**  
(Rev. 1:9)

John states, in verse 9, that his reason for being on the Isle of *Patmos*, in the Aegean Sea, was because of his testimony of *Y'shua*. In other words, the Romans were tired of him gathering a following with his testimony of *Y'shua* and therefore exiled him to *Patmos* to keep him away from the general population. The Isle of *Patmos* was a small piece of volcanic rock (8 miles long and 5 miles wide), situated about 15 miles southwest of Ephesus, where John had been living. It was one of the places where the Romans sent criminals and political offenders.

#### ~ The Date of *Revelation* ~

As to be expected, there is also disagreement among the scholars over when the book of *Revelation* was written. According to Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, there are four alternatives:

- ◆ "... in the latter part of Nero's reign (A.D. 54-68).
- ◆ "... during the days immediately preceding the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70;
- ◆ "... during the reign of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79), after the fall of Jerusalem;
- ◆ "... in the latter part of Domitian's reign (A.D. 81-96), about A.D. 95." (page 850)

Several of the early Church "Fathers" accepted the last date as the proper one. This seems to be the most probable one, because one of those men who accepted this date was *Irenaeus*, a contemporary and friend of *Polycarp*, who, in turn, had been a personal disciple of the Apostle John when he lived in Ephesus. *Irenaeus* could well have received this tradition directly from *Polycarp* who would certainly have known what had transpired in the later years of John's life, since they apparently had fairly frequent contact with each other.

Church tradition teaches that initially John, one of *Y'shua's* closest disciples, resided in Jerusalem along with *Ya'acov* (James, the brother of *Y'shua*) and Peter, until after *Ya'acov's* martyrdom (c. 62 CE). Either because of that event, or as a result of seeing Jerusalem surrounded by the Roman armies (led by Cestius Gallus Gaius) in 66 CE, John and Peter both left Jerusalem, with Peter reportedly going to Rome (Catholic tradition), and John going to Ephesus where he became the overseer of the *Ephesus Messianic Assembly*.

#### ~ The Quartodeciman Controversy ~

It was during the time John was at Ephesus that *Polycarp* became his disciple. Later on, *Polycarp* was appointed the Bishop of *Smyrna*. Under John's tutelage, *Polycarp* was able to learn pure doctrine. For this reason, many years later, *Polycarp* was able to withstand *Anicetus*, the Bishop of Rome (c. 154-167 CE), when it came to the correct dating of Passover, one of the Festivals of the LORD. This disagreement became known as the *Quartodeciman Controversy* (the Fourteenth Controversy).

*Polycarp* stood firm on the fact that the day of the Passover sacrifice (when *Y'shua* was crucified) was always to

be remembered on the 14th day of *Nisan* (or *Aviv*), which could fall on any day of the week. He claimed to have received this instruction directly from the Apostle John. This date corresponds exactly with the day of Passover as set forth in Leviticus:

**"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD's [YHVH's] Passover."** (Lev. 23:5)

*Anicetus* of Rome, on the other hand, claimed the "church" should recognize the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox, as the day of *Y'shua's* resurrection (which later was called Easter), and the Friday before that as being the day of crucifixion (Good Friday). In addition, because the Roman Church wanted nothing to do with Judaism they decreed that if Easter ever fell on the same day as Passover (a rare but possible occurrence), Easter had to be postponed one week.

*Polycarp*, however, would not back down, for he knew he was correct. They finally agreed to disagree. The church at Rome chose to follow *Anicetus'* dating, while the church in the east (which eventually became the Eastern Orthodox Church) continued to follow the Scriptures as taught by John -- at least for awhile.

### ~ The Law in Revelation ~

There are no references in the book of *Revelation* to specific *Torah* commands. However, there is an overriding attitude concerning the Word of God (the Holy Scriptures) which pervades the entire book and shows that *Revelation* is to be understood in the greater context of all Scripture, both Hebrew and Greek. For example, Rev. 1:2 tells us that John, the one who wrote down the visions was the one:

**"...who bore witness to the word of God [Old Testament], and to the testimony [New Testament] of Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], to all things that he saw."** (Rev. 1:2)

The "word of God," mentioned above, refers to the Hebrew Scriptures. The "testimony of *Y'shua HaMashiach*" refers to what is commonly called the New Testament. By the late first century (when *Revelation* was written) all of the other New Testament books had already been canonized by Peter, Paul, and John. In any event the Psalmist spoke of the entirety of God's Word which included the five books of Moses (the *Torah*):

**"The entirety of Your word is truth,  
And every one of Your righteous judgments  
endures forever."** (Psalm 119:160)

**"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."** (James 1:18)

As we proceed through this study, it should become clear that the prophecies and the context of the book of *Revelation* in no way contradicts other portions of Scripture, whether they pertain to the commandments of God, the prophecies and

writings of the Old Testament, or the other books of the New Testament.

### ~ The Lord's Day ~

Mainstream Christians sometimes use the following verse as one of their "proof texts" that the Sabbath has been "done away" and was replaced by Sunday, as the new and proper day of worship, thus negating the *Written Torah* command to keep the Sabbath:

**"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ..."** (Rev. 1:10)

They claim that the "Lord's Day," referred to here, was a Sunday, because that is supposedly the day on which *Y'shua* was resurrected from the grave. They often cite this verse as one of their "proofs."

Two points are important to understand here. First of all, *Y'shua* did not rise from the grave on Sunday morning, as most Christians believe, for the tomb was found empty shortly after dark the evening before:

**"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn [epiphosko], Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb."** (Matt. 28:1)

Many look at the English word "dawn" and conclude, without a word study in the Greek, that it automatically means early morning. However, what the Greek word *epiphosko* really means is "to draw on," or "draw near."

The only other place where this word is used can be found in the book of *Luke*, where it describes the end of the Preparation Day and the "drawing near" of the High Sabbath day. This certainly would not be early morning, as Sabbath days always begin at sunset, not sunrise:

**"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath [high day or Festival] drew near [epiphosko]."** (Luke 23:54)

Yes, the Sabbath had ended when they first went to the tomb, but as John pointed out in his Gospel, the tomb was already empty just after dark at the end of the Sabbath:

**"Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb."** (John 20:1)

Therefore, we conclude that the Resurrection of *Y'shua* took place at the end of the Sabbath day, exactly three days and three nights after He had been placed in the grave:

**"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."** (Matt. 12:40)

In our opinion, the term "Lord's Day" cannot depict Sunday. The term "Lord's Day," as it is used in verse 10, refers to events which are to occur on the great and dreadful "*Day of the Lord*," as *Y'shua* prepares to return to establish His kingdom on earth and the people of the earth rise up in rebellion against Him:

**"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,  
The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,**

**And the LORD [YHVH] alone shall be exalted  
in that day.**

**<sup>12</sup> For the day of the LORD [YHVH] of hosts  
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty,  
Upon everything lifted up --**

**And it shall be brought low --**

**<sup>13</sup> Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and  
lifted up,**

**And upon all the oaks of Bashan;**

**<sup>14</sup> Upon all the high mountains,**

**And upon all the hills that are lifted up;**

**<sup>15</sup> Upon every high tower,**

**And upon every fortified wall;**

**<sup>16</sup> Upon all the ships of Tarshish,**

**And upon all the beautiful sloops." (Isaiah 2:11-16)**

This was the "day" which John saw played out before his very eyes in vision. It may have been something like a DVD of events as they are to take place -- but in a much more realistic mode.

*The Day of the Lord* is a time period when unrepentant sinners will be destroyed:

**"Behold, the day of the LORD [YHVH] comes,  
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,  
To lay the land desolate;  
And He will destroy its sinners from it." (Isaiah 13:9)**

Certainly, Rev. 1:10 does not negate the Sabbath command of Exodus 20:8-11).

#### ~ The *Nicolaitans* ~

The *Nicolaitans* are mentioned twice in the book of *Revelation*, and both times in very negative terms:

**"But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." (Rev. 2:6)**

A few verses later the doctrine of the *Nicolaitans* is tied to idolatry and sexual sins similar to those taught by *Balaam* and *Balak* (Num. 25):

**"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. <sup>15</sup> Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."**

(Rev. 2:14-15)

There are many interpretations concerning who exactly the *Nicolaitans* might have been. Some believe they received their name from a Jewish proselyte named *Nicolas* -- one of the original seven "deacons") in the Jerusalem Assembly of Messianic Believers:

**"And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, <sup>6</sup> whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them."**

(Acts 6:5-6)

Some early Church "Fathers" taught that *Nicolas* later went astray, teaching his followers that it was permissible to indulge in sexual sins and idolatry, although there is no firm evidence to substantiate this claim.

The term *Nicolaitan* means: "destruction of people." Thus, it seems evident that, whatever their origin, this sect was leading God's people away from the truth of the *Written Torah* and (as verse 14 indicates) into idolatry. It might well have been a form of *Gnosticism*, which John was called upon to combat throughout his ministry. Since the passage indicates the *Nicolaitans* were leading Messianic Believers into idolatry and sexual sins, that would be in clear violation of the *Written Torah* (e.g. Ex. 20:3-6 & Lev. 18) and thus would substantiate the fact that the *Written Torah* was supposed to be followed.

#### ~ Turning From Sin ~

Several passages in the book of *Revelation* refer either directly, or indirectly to sin. For example:

**"As for me, I rebuke and discipline everyone I love; so exert yourselves, and turn from your sins!"**

(Rev. 3:19 CJB)

Time and again in this series we have given the primary Biblical definition of sin:

**"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John 3:4 KJV)**

Put another way:

**"Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah -- indeed, sin is violation of Torah." (I John 3:4 CJB)**

Therefore, since the book of *Revelation* condemns sin, it stands to reason that it must be supportive of the *Written Torah* which contains the "laws" that define sin.

Repentance is also linked to sin, for when one repents they turn away from their sinful deeds and walk according to the commandments of the Lord. Yet, even after great plagues of the future are brought against the earth, it is prophesied that many men and women will refuse to repent of their sinful deeds and way of life:

**"But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. <sup>21</sup> And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts."**

(Rev. 9:20-21)

**"Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. <sup>9</sup> And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory."**

**<sup>10</sup> Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. <sup>11</sup> They blasphemed the God of heaven because of**



**their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.**" (Rev. 16:8-11)

Those who do heed God's call to repentance are told to come out of Babylon and not partake of her sinful deeds:

**"And I heard another voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. <sup>5</sup> For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.'"** (Rev. 18:4-5)

It is clear that once the 7000 years allotted to mankind have come to an end and the *Olam Haba* עוֹלָם הַבָּא (Oh-lahm' Hah-bah' = the World to Come - #6759) has arrived, that those who continue sinning (breaking God's commandments) will be excluded from receiving everlasting life:

**"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."** (Rev. 21:8)

The very last admonition given in the book of *Revelation* supports keeping the commandments of God:

**"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."** (Rev. 22:14-15)

#### ~ Redeemed From Sin ~

Sin is the transgression of God's Commandments as found in the *Written Torah*. Once a person has transgressed those Commandments they are subject to the death penalty:

**"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."** (James 1:14-15)

The only way a sinful person can escape the death penalty is to have someone redeem them. Since all of mankind has come under the very same penalty of death because of their own individual sins, redemption via our fellow Messianic Believers is not possible, for they too need redemption. There is only one who is absolutely free from sin and who was willing to pay the death penalty price for all sinners. That person is *Y'shua HaMashiach*:

**"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, <sup>12</sup> teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, <sup>13</sup> looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], <sup>14</sup> who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works."** (Titus 2:11-14)

The book of *Revelation* is also clear that the only Redeemer among men is *Y'shua*:

**"And they sang a new song, saying:**

**'You are worthy to take the scroll,**

**And to open its seals;**

**For You were slain,**

**And have redeemed us to God by Your blood**

**Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,**

**<sup>10</sup> And have made us kings and priests to our God;**

**And we shall reign on the earth."** (Rev. 5:9-10)

Included among those who are to be redeemed are the 144,000 who have not allowed themselves to be defiled:

**"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.* <sup>5</sup> And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God."** (Rev. 14:4-5)

#### ~ The Accuser ~

Throughout this end time scenario stands a being called *Ha Satan* הַשָּׂטָן (Hah Sah-tahn' - #7858) -- whose name means "adversary." He is the "accuser" of the brethren. An example of his actions can be found when he accused righteous Job before God:

**"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil. ...**

**<sup>16</sup> Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD [*YHVH*], and Satan also came among them. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD [*YHVH*] said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' So Satan answered the LORD [*YHVH*] and said, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it.'**

**<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD [*YHVH*] said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?*' <sup>9</sup> So Satan answered the LORD [*YHVH*] and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? <sup>10</sup> Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. <sup>11</sup> But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!'"**

(Job 1:1, 6-11)

*HaSatan* has access to the throne of God in heaven and that is where he carries out his accusations. However, there is coming a time when he will no longer be granted that access -- when he will be cast out of heaven and no longer have God's ear:

**"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ [*Messiah*] have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down'"** (Rev. 12:10)

The only way we, as Messianic Believers, can overcome the Accuser of the brethren is through the blood of the Lamb, *Y'shua HaMashiach*:

**"And they overcame him [the accuser] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death."** (Rev. 12:11)

Once *HaSatan* has been cast out of heaven, those in heaven will rejoice. However, for those dwelling on earth it will be a time of great wrath, for *HaSatan* will use all of his power to try and destroy those who are still living:

**"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."** (Rev. 12:12)

There are still Messianic Believers on earth at this time:

**"Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. <sup>15</sup> So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth."** (Rev. 12:13-16)

The "Woman" represents those Messianic Believers (commonly called "the Church") who are to be found on earth. Apparently, a certain segment of them will be given refuge in a safe place. However, there are other Messianic Believers in other parts of the earth whom *HaSatan* will then go after to try and destroy:

**"And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ [Y'shua Ha Mashiach]."** (Rev. 12:17)

Notice the two chief characteristics of these Messianic Believers:

- ◆ They keep God's commandments (the *Written Torah*).
- ◆ They have the testimony of *Y'shua HaMashiach*. In other words, they have accepted His shed blood as payment for their sins and they are looking forward to His return to establish the Kingdom of Heaven (or Kingdom of God) on earth.

**"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name [other than Y'shua] under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."** (Acts 4:12)

Two pillars of our Faith are what give Messianic Believers the patience to wait out the terrible events that are yet to fall upon the earth:

**"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of [Y'shua] Jesus."** (Rev. 14:12)

The very next verse tells us that our "works" follow us:

**"Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, 'Write: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.'"** (Rev. 14:13)

Therefore, we are saved by grace (God's favor) through *Messiah Y'shua*, but we are rewarded according to our works:

**"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."** (Matt. 16:27)

~ Judgment ~

The last part of the book of *Revelation* deals with the judgment of all who ever lived. However, Scripture tells us that Messianic Believers are being judged right now -- at this very time and place:

**"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"**

(I Pet. 4:17)

The basis for that judgment concerns both our testimony of faith in *Y'shua* and keeping the commandments of God. To exclude either one of these two pillars gives us only one leg upon which to stand.

Those who are given the blessing of being a part of the Bride of Messiah will have already received their judgment and have been found worthy through the blood of the Lamb. They will be given "fine linen" to wear at the Wedding of the Messiah which takes place in heaven. That "fine linen" represents their "righteous acts:"

**"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."** (Rev. 19:7-8)

In other words, the individuals who constitute the Bride not only hold to the testimony of *Y'shua*, they also keep the Commandments of God -- the *Written Torah*.

The final judgment is what is known as the *Great White Throne Judgment*. It is a judgment of all those who are not part of the Bride of Messiah and, therefore, a part of the First Resurrection:

**"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."**

(Rev. 20:11-13)

Our works follow us into the judgment, whether it be during the present judgment of the Bride of Messiah, or those who will be judged at the *Great White Throne*. Works are very important, for they show how well we have responded to God's Instruction. (For more information on this important subject, please request our booklet *A Believers Guide to Complete Righteousness*.)

Following the *Great White Throne Judgment* comes the New Heavens and the New Earth, the age known in Hebrew as the *Olam Haba* -- the World to Come.

~ Summary ~

Once again, it is clear that another book of the Greek Scriptures (the New Testament) does not negate the Law of God but supports it 100 percent. While the book of *Revelation* primarily consists of prophetic visions of the end time, it also contains clear statements which support the commandments of God as found in the *Written Torah*.

One of the main themes running throughout this book is God's Judgment upon the sinful people of the earth. Yet, despite God's powerful manifestations, it appears that the majority of the earth's population will refuse to repent of their sins and turn to following God's way of life, which was given to

us through *Moshe* מֹשֶׁה (Moh-shay' = Moses - #4872) in the form of commandments.

However, there will be a remnant of God's people who not only have the "testimony of *Y'shua*," but who also "keep the commandments of God," as found in the *Written Torah*. This remnant will have their part in the first resurrection and will become kings and priests in the 1000 year *Malchut Shamayim* (Mahl-khoot' Shah-mah'-yeem = the Kingdom of Heaven):

**"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ [*Messiah*], and shall reign with Him a thousand years."** (Rev. 20:6)

Rejoice therefore and:

**"... when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."**  
(Luke 21:28)

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learn and follow, to the best of their abilities, the *Written Torah* of God as given to *Moshe* on Mount Sinai." (p. 20)

## ~ Final Summary ~

Therefore the law *is* holy,  
And the commandment holy and just and good.  
*Romans 7:12*



At the end of this lengthy series called *Gentiles and the Law*, it seems appropriate to briefly summarize the various topics so those of you who have not had the opportunity to read all of them can determine if you wish to order any of the other booklets.

### ~ Background Articles ~

The series began with two articles in Issue 03-1 (now in Vol. I) giving background information that we felt was needful for a proper understanding of the study of the New Testament books to follow.

The first article *Scriptural Background* examined the relationship of aliens, who resided in the land of Israel, to the law of God. We found there were four categories of aliens:

- ◆ "*Nokrim* or *Zarim* - those Gentiles who were in Israel on a purely temporary basis, either visiting or working. In most cases they probably were not there long enough for their idolatry to become a major problem.
- ◆ "*Ger Toshav* - those Gentiles who were in Israel, more or less permanently. They would have had to forswear idolatry and, by doing so, they became eligible to receive many of the blessings afforded to the children of Israel.
- ◆ "*Ger* - those Gentiles who were in Israel on a permanent basis and who were willing to accept all of the religious practices of Israel except circumcision. They were eligible to receive all of the blessings except the right to eat the most sacred meal of the year, Passover; plus, they had restrictions placed upon them concerning access to the Tabernacle/Temple.
- ◆ "*Proselytes* - those who went all the way and accepted circumcision, thereby becoming one with the children of Israel and therefore eligible to perform all of the rituals as though they were native born." (p. 7)

The second article, *Historical Background* (Vol. I), dealt with the situation between Jews and Gentiles as it was practiced in the 1st century Common Era (A.D.). Also included was an examination of the various Jewish sects of that time and how they related to both the *Written Torah* and the *Oral Torah*. In addition, we traced Peter's vision (Acts 10) and how that changed everything when it came to accepting Gentiles into the Messianic Assembly as full fledged members. Our conclusion was:

"... the Gentile Believers were not obligated to follow the *Oral Torah* of the Pharisees, but they were expected to

### ~ Perspectives ~

The next issue (03-2) also contained two articles -- both dealing with perspectives. The first was entitled *Y'shua's Perspective* (Vol. II). This article examined the teachings of *Y'shua* as found in the Gospels. The purpose was to see what He taught concerning the observance of *Torah* commands. A portion of the summary stated:

"One thing is abundantly clear from the teachings of *Y'shua*; He taught that the *mitzvot* (commands) of the *Torah* were still in effect and would remain in effect until heaven and earth passed away. (Matt. 5:18) He also taught that only those who were willing to keep the *Written Torah* would have a place in the millennial reign of *Y'shua*; that time which would be known as the Kingdom of God. However, exclusion from the Kingdom does not necessarily exclude non-*Torah* observant Believer's from eternal life in the *Olam Haba* (the World to Come after the Millennium). That decision will be God's alone and will be rendered at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment." (pp. 13-14)

The second article in 03-2 was *The Apostles Perspective* (Vol. II). Here we examined the seven *General Epistles* of James, Peter, John, and Jude to see if they, in any way, taught that the *Written Torah* laws had been "done away." Nothing could be found to substantiate such a claim. Perhaps it was best summed up by James (*Ya'acov*) the brother of *Y'shua*:

**"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."** (James 2:26)

### ~ Romans ~

From that beginning, the next part of the project consisted of a careful examination of the teachings of the Apostle Paul (*Shaul* or *Saul*). Issue 03-4/04-1 was dedicated entirely to the book of *Romans* -- containing three articles: *The Religious Situation; Holy, Just, and Good*; and *Pursue Peace* (Vol. III).

In the summary of *The Religious Situation* we stated the following:

"As one studies the Epistles of Paul, it is important to realize that the Messianic Gentiles were being pulled from several different directions at the same time. They had their new found faith in *Y'shua* as their Savior; the One through whom their sins were forgiven and about whom they needed to learn more, but they still had certain 'pagan' (*Gnostic*) ways of looking at things which they had to overcome. In addition, they had to deal with those of the 'circumcision faction.' They were the Messianic Jews and *Proselytes* who wanted the Gentiles to become circumcised Jews and take on the 'yoke' of the *Oral Torah* and they seemed to be teaching that all Messianic Gentiles needed to 'earn' their salvation by keeping the commandments. No doubt, the 'commandments,' which they said had to be kept, included all of the *Oral Torah* (traditional dogma)." (p. 11)

The title of the second article, *Holy, Just, and Good*, was based on this important verse:

**"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."**  
(Rom. 7:12)

The summary stated:

"Because God has chosen to forgive the Messianic Believer of their sins, those who have been forgiven are no longer under indictment because of their past transgressions. Therefore, as Paul explained, Messianic Believers are no longer 'under the law' but 'under grace.' For this reason they turn their walk into a walk of righteousness; a *Torah* observant walk. This is true for both the Messianic Jew as well as the Messianic Gentile."  
(p. 23)

The third article on the book of *Romans* addressed Paul's final assessment of how we can all get along in a fellowship when we do not all agree. While the issue of that day had to do with how strict the *kosher* food laws should be kept within the Assembly in order not to offend the non-Messianic Jews, today the issue might be any number of things:

"Paul pointed out that the issue was not whether it was permissible to eat 'common' food, but whether it was an act of love to eat it in front of someone who considered it to be a sin. Paul's clear answer was: 'Don't do it, for it might cause one of the non-Messianic Jews to blaspheme *Y'shua*.'" (p. 27)

Common food was not only slaughtered according to kosher standards, it was also food upon which tithes had been paid.

#### ~ Which Law? ~

After considering what had been written up to that point, there seemed to be a need to clarify the differences between the two sets of laws as found in both 1st century Judaism and in Modern Rabbinic Judaism. The two sets of laws in question were the *Written Torah* -- those laws which are recorded in Scripture -- and the *Oral Torah* -- those laws which have come about as a result of Rabbinic tradition and decisions over the centuries. This resulted in the article, entitled *Which Law?*, which is now found in Vol. I of this series.

Because this article proved valuable to so many people, it was subsequently put into a separate booklet (available upon request) to help people understand that the *Written Torah* has not been "done away."

#### ~ Thessalonians ~

Issue 04-3 contained one article that covered both of the epistles which Paul wrote to the Messianic Assembly at Thessalonica (Vol. II).

"Once again, there is no evidence in either *I* or *II Thessalonians* that the *Written Torah* had been abolished for Messianic Believers, whether Jew or Gentile. In fact, quite the contrary, for the *Written Torah* is supported by the statement that the '**man of sin,**' (the '**son of**

**perdition,**') will have one chief characteristic; he will be the '**lawless one.**' (II Thess. 2). In other words, he will have no regard for the *Torah* at all. In addition, he will set himself up in direct opposition to God.

"Our conclusion: Paul has upheld the teachings of the *Written Torah* in both of his letters to the Thessalonians."  
(p. 17)

#### ~ Corinthians ~

The two epistles written to the *Corinthians* (Vol. IV) were next on the agenda. This examination took two articles to cover, both found in Issue 04-4. Again, we could find no evidence that Paul taught against the keeping of the *Written Torah* for either Jewish or Gentile Messianic Believers. The summary to the second article stated:

"What is most revealing about Paul's faithful adherence to the *Written Torah* in these particular epistles, is the fact that they were composed specifically for a Church which was located in one of the most pagan cities of the ancient world. If the Law had truly been 'done away,' Paul would have not been concerned about the persistence of the Corinthian's pagan practices. But this is not the case. Paul consistently taught the *Corinthians Torah* principles as opposed to letting them continue on in those pagan practices which, some might say, were not 'all that bad.'

"Paul taught the Corinthians to build the structure of their spiritual life on a foundation of the *Torah*, the *Prophets*, and the *Writings*. He told them to imitate him as he imitated the perfect *Torah* keeper, *Y'shua*." (p. 24)

#### ~ Ephesians ~

Issue 05-1 contained one article on the book of *Ephesians* (Vol. IV):

"The Apostle Paul's Epistle to the *Ephesians* gives every indication that Paul held the *Written Torah* in the highest esteem. The two passages which some people use to claim Paul taught against *Torah*, (Eph. 2:8-9 & 2:14-16) show that he upheld it.

"Perhaps the reason why some read *Ephesians* as an antinomian (against *Torah*) book is because Paul's main emphasis is on God's grace. Paul wanted the Gentiles to know they were not second class citizens. Because of God's grace, the Gentile Believers were full fledged members of the Commonwealth of Israel. They had all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities which came with their new citizenship. Now they could hold up their heads." (p. 19)

#### ~ Colossians and Philemon ~

These two books were combined into one article because they are directly linked to each other, for they are believed to have been written and delivered at the same time. This article is found in Issue 05-2 (Vol. IV). *Colossians* does contain some controversial passages, especially Col. 2:13-14 because it contains the words: "**having nailed it to the cross.**"

This passage is explored fully in the article. In summary we stated:

"The core subject of this epistle was not whether the law (*Written Torah*) should be kept, for that is assumed. The core subject was that Messianic Believers should not allow manmade traditions, which were not derived from a correct knowledge of the Scriptures, to dominate their religious practices.

"Paul urged the *Colossians* to cease their worship of angels and to realize that the sacrifice of *Y'shua* was totally sufficient to bring them forgiveness for their sins and bestow upon them a place, as beloved children, in the Family of God, having nailed all of the charges against them to the execution stake." (p. 21)

#### ~ Philippians ~

Next came the book of *Philippians* in Issue 05-3 (Vol. V). One of the key issues here was circumcision for Gentile Believers. Also, Paul addressed the difference between Work's Righteousness and Faith Righteousness. While Faith Righteousness comes out on top in this discussion, because it affords the Messianic Believer forgiveness for sins which have already occurred, Work's Righteousness is also taught as being good.

"Nevertheless, Paul does not even hint that a Messianic Believer should cease to follow the *Written Torah* commands. That idea is something people read into this passage because they have been taught that the 'law has been done away.'" (p. 28)

#### ~ Pastoral Epistles ~

Issue 06-1 covered the three pastoral epistles of the Apostle Paul: *I & II Timothy* and *Titus* (Vol. V). The primary purpose of these epistles was not to deal with doctrine per se, but to give encouragement and instruction to Timothy and Titus concerning their ministries, and to warn them against certain false teachings and people who wanted to take to themselves power and authority to which they had no right.

Actually, *II Timothy* turns out to be one of Paul's strongest affirmations for keeping the *Written Torah* commands as a way of life. Paul warned against those who might try to turn Grace into License and thereby lead Messianic Believers into *antinomian* (against law) teachings.

#### ~ Galatians ~

Even though the book of *Galatians* was one of the very first of Paul's epistles to be written, we postponed an examination of it so that a firm foundation for *Written Torah* observance could be laid in some of his other works. This study is found in Issue 06-4 (Vol. VI).

Needless to say, the book of *Galatians* has been the primary vehicle through which the false teaching, that the law has been "done away," is expounded. Because of the importance of this book in understanding Paul's position on the Law of God, the entire 06-4 Issue was devoted to this book.

Once one understands the difference between the *Written Torah* of Scripture and the *Oral Torah* of tradition, the book of

*Galatians* begins to make sense. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the booklet *Which Law?* be read and studied before approaching this teaching on the book of *Galatians*. As stated in the summary:

"What muddies the water of our understanding in the 21st century, is a general lack of understanding about the difference between the pure *Written Torah*, given as an integral part of the Word of God, and the added fences (traditions and customs of the *Oral Torah*). In the commentary, we have used the analogy that the *Written Torah* is like a spiritual mirror which reflects our Spiritual Condition. If we are living within the framework of the *Written Torah* commands, our spiritual reflection will come back clean, and we will rejoice as we live within the physical, moral, and spiritual parameters established by God. However, if our spiritual reflection comes back sullied by sin, then the spiritual mirror (the *Written Torah*) will reflect where we need to make changes in our life. Any lifestyle changes the *Written Torah* (instructions) cause us to make, stand as a testimony to the fact that we are doing our best to live in the center of God's will." (p. 26)

#### ~ Hebrews ~

One of the most difficult, but also most rewarding, studies we ever undertook was on the book of *Hebrews*, and was first printed in Issue 08-1 (Vol. VII).

Some Messianic Believers have taught that the book of *Hebrews* should be stricken from the Bible -- that it contains discrepancies concerning the furniture found in the Temple and in certain Temple practices. All of these allegations are addressed and resolved (at least to our satisfaction) within the pages of the five separate chapters which make up this study.

"Paul also spent time showing how Messianic Believers have been brought into a New Covenant Relationship -- a covenant where God has written the Terms and Conditions (laws) on our hearts of flesh and put a new Spirit in us. Thus, through all of this great work which *Y'shua* accomplished, Messianic Believers are now able to receive the greatest gift of all -- Eternal Redemption.

"Paul taught that the Law (*Torah*) has been transformed by means of *Y'shua's Chatah* (Sin) Offering.

"The book of *Hebrews*, in our opinion, is one of the most inspiring books found in Scripture. It clearly tells us about the great work *Y'shua* accomplished during His brief life here on earth." (p. 35)

#### ~ Acts ~

The next to last article in the *Gentiles and the Law* series, examined the book of *Acts*. It is found in Issue 08-2 (now found in this Volume).

The two central figures in the book of *Acts* are Peter and Paul. According to what we read in this book, Peter spent a considerable amount of time worshipping at the Temple. That would certainly not be the practice of one who taught that the *Written Torah* had been abolished at the cross.

Paul, on the other hand, spent most of his time in Asia Minor, where he brought the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God primarily to Gentiles. However, Paul always made it a practice to go first to the Synagogue and present Messiah *Y'shua* to his Jewish brethren. Many of them heard his message and became Believers in *Y'shua*, however his main ministry was to the Gentiles with whom he came in contact while visiting the Synagogues.

A careful reading of the text of the book of Acts shows that the Law of God (*Written Torah*) remained in effect for all *Nazarene* Believers, both Jew and Gentile.

~ Finally ~

That brings us back to the very last book of the Bible, the book of *Revelation*. That concluding article can be found in this booklet, so we will not attempt to summarize it here.

When all is said and done, the purpose of the Law (*Written Torah*) is to show us where we fall short of what God desires of us. However, there is an even greater purpose -- that is to learn how to love God and how to love our fellow man. As *Y'shua* stated when asked what was the Greatest of the Commandments:

**"Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'Which is the first commandment of all?'**

**"<sup>29</sup> Jesus [*Y'shua*] answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup> And the second, like it, is this: "You shall**

**love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these."** (Mark 12:28-31)

The Apostle Paul also told us what the end purpose of the Law should be as exemplified in our individual and collective lives:

**"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, <sup>6</sup>from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, <sup>7</sup> desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm. <sup>8</sup>But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, <sup>9</sup>knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, <sup>10</sup> for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, <sup>11</sup> according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust."** (I Tim. 1:5-11)

We hope you have gained as much spiritual insight from studying the *Gentiles and the Law Series* as we have from researching and writing it.

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