

Gentiles and the Law

(From the Perspective of Paul)

Vol. V
Philippians
I Timothy
Titus
II Timothy

by
Dean & Susan Wheelock

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:
God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.
I Timothy 3:16

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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



When 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 will be made available for order directly from *Hebrew Roots*.

The first volume contains three articles: *Scriptural Background*, *Historical Background*, and *Which Law?* These

articles form the background information needed to more fully understand the other books of the New Testament.

The second volume begins with two articles: *Y'shua's Perspective* and *The Apostle's Perspective*. In addition there are two articles which deal with the Apostle Paul (the "apostle to the Gentiles") and his perspective of the role which the law (*Torah*) should play in the lives of Gentile Messianic Believers. They are *Paul the Pharisee*, and a survey of *The Epistles to the Thessalonians* from Issue 04-3. Volume three is dedicated entirely to Paul's epistle to the Romans. Volume four continues with the epistles of Paul and includes *First & Second Corinthians*, *Ephesians*, and a single chapter which covers both *Colossians* and *Philemon*.

This booklet (Volume V) contains Paul's epistle to the *Philippians* and his three *Pastoral Epistles* -- *I & II Timothy* and *Titus*.

As you read this material, keep in mind that these discourses are not intended to be comprehensive commentaries on everything contained within the Greek Scriptures (NT) for the books being investigated. Only those portions which pertain to the subject of the Law (*Written Torah*) will be examined in any depth.

For an excellent comprehensive 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, 2011

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Paul's Epistle ~ ~ to the Philippians ~

Concerning the righteousness
Which is in the law,
Blameless.
Philippians 3:6

The city of *Philippi* was located in *Macedonia* (modern Greece) and its original name was *Crenides*. It was first settled by people called *Thasians*, whose primary activity was to mine the gold which was once plentiful in that region.

In 358 BCE, King Philip II of Macedon (the father of Alexander the Great) seized the mines and the city, and renamed it after himself (hence *Philippi*). King Philip proceeded to fortify the city in order to protect the gold mines. It is believed the mines rendered 1000 talents per year to his treasury.

In 168 BCE, *Philippi*, along with all of Macedonia, came into the hands of the Romans. All of the citizens of the Roman colony in which *Philippi* was located were given Roman citizenship, which granted them a number of special privileges.

~ The Jews of Philippi ~

Because *Philippi* was primarily a military city (for protection of the mines), rather than a commercial center, it did not attract a Jewish population large enough to support a local Synagogue building. That is why, when Paul first came there, he did not go to the Synagogue, as was his custom when entering a city for the first time. Instead, the few Jews who lived there met by the riverside:

"And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there."

(Acts 16:13)

This verse tells us that the group Paul first met with was the local Jewish community. In the first century, if a Jewish community did not have enough money to even build a *mikveh* (meek'-veh = immersion pool), much less a Synagogue, they would meet near a body of "Living Water," such as a river. That way, those who needed to be immersed for ritual purity could do so in the vicinity of where they were gathering. This passage also shows that it was common practice, in Jewish worship, to participate in liturgical prayers on the Sabbath day.

One should not assume that only women met there to pray, for in actual fact, according to Jewish tradition, the women were not required to go to Synagogue for prayer. What this verse is saying is that Paul and his party first addressed their message about *Y'shua* to a group of women.

It was on Paul's *Second Missionary Journey* (c. 49-52 CE) that he first received "the call" to go into Macedonia where *Philippi* was located:

"Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. ⁷ After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. ⁸ So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' ¹⁰ Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them."

(Acts 16:6-10)

It was in connection with the Sabbath day service at the *Riverside Synagogue* that Paul met a woman from *Thyatira* named Lydia. She immediately accepted Paul's teaching about Messiah *Y'shua*:

"Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God [*Lydia may have been a Gentile 'God Fearer'*]. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵ And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' So she persuaded us."

(Acts 16:14-15)

While Paul was staying at the house of Lydia he had an encounter with a demon-possessed slave girl. Apparently this girl encountered Paul and his party as they went to their daily prayers at the *Riverside Synagogue*:

"Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.' ¹⁸ And this she did for many days. ..."

(Acts 16:16-18)

It is clear from this passage that demons can speak the truth (and will do so) if, in any way, the truth aids their attempts to disturb the spreading of the Gospel, which was the apparent intent of this particular demon. By constantly speaking out in this manner, the demon may have been bringing ridicule upon Paul in the eyes of the pagan Gentile community.

Finally, Paul became exasperated with her and commanded the demon to come out in the name of *Y'shua*. The demon had no choice but to obey:

"... But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] to come out of her.' And he came out that very hour."

(Acts 16:18)

This was all well and good (for both Paul and the girl) until her masters heard what had happened. They were quite

unhappy because this slave girl had been a good source of revenue for them:

"But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities." (Acts 16:19)

The reason the masters were upset with Paul was purely economic. However, the charge they levied against Paul and his party was religious in nature. They did this because the city of *Philippi* was totally pagan, (except for a few Jews). The men understood that bringing a religious charge would carry more weight than to complain that Paul had caused them to lose income:

"And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, 'These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; ²¹ and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.'" (Acts 16:20-21)

The trial was not really a trial, it was a mob scene:

"Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks." (Acts 16:22-24)

There is an old saying: "If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade." That is exactly what Paul and his companions did. Instead of crying or complaining about the injustice meted out to them, they praised God in both prayer and song, and the result was quite amazing, for it resulted in the conversion of the pagan Gentile jailor:

"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.' ²⁹ Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' ³¹ So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], and you will be saved, you and your household.' ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household." (Acts 16:25-34)

Even though their "trial" had been illegal, Paul and Silas could have just walked out of the jail and escaped. However, they chose to remain in prison rather than become fugitives, thus saving the life of the jailer who would have been executed

for allowing anyone to escape. Their righteous behavior was rewarded, for when the officials of *Philippi* heard what had happened, they ordered their release:

"And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, 'Let those men go.' ³⁶ So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace.'" (Acts 16:35-36)

Here is one lesson we can learn from the example of Paul. Do not try and escape your punishment, even if it is unfair. However, (on the other hand) there is also another lesson to be learned from this story; it is acceptable for a Messianic Believer to use the law of the land to defend himself:

"But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.'

³⁸ And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. ³⁹ Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed." (Acts 16:37-40)

As Roman citizens, Paul and his party had the right to a "fair" trial, not the type of "kangaroo court" which had condemned them to an unjust beating and imprisonment. Later in Paul's life, he would play the Roman citizen card once more, in order to get himself transferred to Rome and receive a hearing before Caesar, rather than being tried at Caesarea.

One other positive outcome of this encounter was that the city magistrates apparently left the congregation of Messianic Believers at *Philippi* alone after Paul's release. There is no record of any follow up persecution after this time. Apparently, the magistrates did not want Paul reporting their abuse of Roman citizens to higher Roman authorities.

Paul made one other visit to *Philippi*. This occurred during his Third Missionary Journey (c. 53-57 CE):

"After the uproar [*at Ephesus*] had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia [*where Philippi was located*]. ... ⁶ ... 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 20:1, 6)

It is clear from this passage that Paul and the Messianic Congregation at *Philippi* observed the entire Festival of Passover. In other words, they were following the *Written Torah* commands to keep the Festival.

~ A Prison Epistle ~

It is evident that Paul was a prisoner when this letter was written:

" ... I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. ...

¹² But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, ¹³ so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ [Messiah]; ¹⁴ and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear."

(Phil. 1:7, 12-14)

The majority of scholars believe this Epistle was written while Paul was imprisoned at Rome. However, a minority opinion believes that, while Paul was a prisoner when he wrote *Philippians*, he was actually incarcerated in either *Caesarea* or *Ephesus*.

As for the assumed *Ephesus* imprisonment, there is no Scriptural basis to believe that Paul was ever imprisoned there. That opinion is primarily based upon the following passage, in which Paul relates the severe problems which he faced while in Asia:

"For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, ..."

(II Cor. 1:8-9)

However, Scripture does state that Paul was imprisoned at *Caesarea* prior to his transfer to Rome. He may have been in custody there for up to two years, so there certainly was sufficient time for him to write to the *Philippian* Congregation while there:

"When they came to Caesarea and had delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. ³⁴ And when the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, 'I will hear you when your accusers also have come.' And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium."

(Acts 23:33-35)

Despite these two alternate claims, it is our opinion this Epistle to the *Philippians* was written from Rome about the same time as were the Epistles to the *Ephesians* and *Colossians*. This would place the writing of this Epistle at about 62 CE.

~ The Epistle to the Philippians ~

Paul's Epistle to the *Philippians* has a number of themes. For one thing, it was a thank you note for their help in Paul's time of need. The *Philippian* congregation had been most generous in giving Paul physical sustenance:

"Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. ¹⁶ For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. ¹⁸ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And

my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua]." (Phil. 4:15-19)

~ Unity in Y'shua ~

In the course of this letter Paul made a plea for unity within their Messianic Community. Paul told them that the unity he desired for them could only be achieved through that inherent unity which they all shared as Believers in Messiah Y'shua:

"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ [Messiah], if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

(Phil. 2:1-4)

This special unity required everyone in the Messianic Community to strive to have the same mind as Y'shua:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus [Messiah Y'shua], ..."

(Phil. 2:5)

Unity was a major problem in the Messianic Community during the first century, and it is a major problem facing the Messianic Community in the twenty-first century. Paul's advice is as appropriate today as it was when it was written:

²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ [Messiah], so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, ..."

(Phil. 1:27)

There are two essential ingredients to unity: obedience and love; neither, of which, can be fully achieved unless both are centered around Messiah Y'shua.

~ Obedience ~

In Paul's eyes, how a Believer behaves is extremely important, for righteous behavior is the direct and visible application of love. However, unless there is a standard for proper behavior that comes from an external source, there will never be unity within a group. The external standard for the Messianic Community is the holy Scriptures, which, of course, does include the *Written Torah* (the first five books of the Bible). It is *God's Instruction Book for Mankind*.

Several years prior to the writing of this letter, Paul told the Messianic Community in Rome that sin must be avoided because it leads to death, while obedience (to the way of life found in the *Written Torah*) leads to righteousness:

"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?"

(Rom. 6:16)

What is righteousness?

**"My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments are righteousness."**
(Psalm 119:172)

We have already seen, many times, that sin (which leads to death) results from:

"... the transgression of the law [Torah]."
(1 John 3:4 KJV)

This being true, it stands to reason that the "obedience," of which Paul was speaking, must refer to the proper keeping of the law (*Torah*). In fact, it was *Y'shua's* unfailing and loving obedience to the *Torah*, as well as to the special *Salvation Mission* He had been given by the Father, that allows us to be forgiven for our sins and made righteous in the sight of God:

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."
(Rom. 5:19)

~ The Love of Messiah ~

Obedience by itself can bring about a certain unity if everyone can agree on a standard for obedient behavior, and then only if all involved stick to that standard. However, when disagreements arise (as they always do), those disagreements can only be resolved if there is an overwhelming attitude of love for one another within the group; a true love that does not want to harm or condemn. So then, the other ingredient needed for a unified congregation is to be like-minded in love:

"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ [Messiah], if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."
(Phil. 2:1-2)

True love, within a fellowship, does not condemn; it unites. When a loving brother or sister sees someone heading down a wrong path, they should not immediately condemn the person. Rather, they should do all they can to bring that person into obedience to the *Torah* standard. Such action must always be done with an attitude of love, not condemnation:

"Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."
(1 Cor. 13:4-7)

However, we must remember that love, by itself, is also not enough. Love must be combined with obedience in order for the "Righteous Believer" to become fully developed. When love is not joined with obedience, love can be used as a cover for sinful behavior. Paul expresses this concept by joining love with knowledge and discernment. This tri-part combination implies a correct understanding of the Scriptures, so that the Messianic Community will approve what is right:

"And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ that you

may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ [Messiah], ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], to the glory and praise of God."
(Phil. 1:9-11)

In other words, it is not "OK" to excuse sin under the cover of loving one another. The love of a true Follower of *Y'shua* must not be void of the knowledge of the truth found within the Scriptures. (Remember please, at that time the Scriptures consisted only of the *Torah*, the *Prophets*, and the *Writings*; what we call the "Old Testament." The "New Testament" was then only in the process of being written.) It is by knowing what the Scriptures teach that one can truly discern if someone is a Follower of Messiah, for as *Y'shua* said:

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits."
(Matt. 7:15-16)

John brought love and obedience together when he wrote about the need for both righteousness (obedience to the *Torah*) and love for one another:

"Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, ..."
(1 John 3:10-11)

~ Circumcision ~

Other than those rather indirect references to the Law just mentioned, there is only one passage where Paul directly addresses a "law" issue. That involves one of his favorite themes, the circumcision of Gentile Believers:

"Beware of dogs [a euphemism for pagan Gentiles], beware of evil workers [within the community], beware of the mutilation!"
(Phil. 3:2)

By "mutilation" Paul is referring to those who taught that Gentiles had to be physically circumcised in order to be saved. Even though that issue had been resolved many years before by the *Jerusalem Council* it seems to have kept coming up:

"But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses [both the Written and Oral Torah].' ⁶ Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter."
(Acts 15:5-6)

After much discussion the *Council* determined that Gentile Believers did not have to be circumcised or follow the *Oral Torah* in order to be saved. *Ya'acov* (Yah' ah'-cove = Jacob a.k.a. James) indicated there were four things (in addition to their faith in *Y'shua*) which were minimum requirements for fellowship within the Messianic Community:

"Therefore I [Ya'acov] judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰ but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood."
(Acts 15:19-20)

In giving this decree, it was assumed that the Gentile Believers were to learn and follow the *Written Torah* which was taught every Sabbath in the Synagogues:

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

This verse directly indicates that Gentile Believers were expected to keep the Sabbath (a *Written Torah* command) by attending Synagogue. There they could learn more about the *Written Torah*, since "Moses" was read there every week.

~ Spiritual Circumcision ~

In this Epistle, Paul did not dwell on the circumcision issue in a physical sense, rather, he immediately took his teaching to the spiritual level:

"For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*], and have no confidence in the flesh, ..." (Phil. 3:3)

In other words, those (whether male or female) who have truly circumcised hearts and ears, and have come to worship God in spirit and in truth through Messiah *Y'shua*, are the ones who are of the true circumcision. The concept of spiritual circumcision was not original with Paul, it comes directly from the *Tanakh*:

**"Circumcise yourselves to the LORD [*YHVH*],
And take away the foreskins of your hearts, ..."** (Jer. 4:4)

**"To whom shall I speak and give warning,
That they may hear?
Indeed their ear is uncircumcised,
And they cannot give heed.
Behold, the word of the LORD [*YHVH*] is a reproach
to them;
They have no delight in it."** (Jer. 6:10)

~ Those Who Trouble ~

Who were these people who insisted that Gentile Believers needed to be physically circumcised? Dr. David Stern, in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, postulates they were:

"... not Jews by birth but fanatical Gentile proselytes preoccupied with physical circumcision, in which they took inordinate pride, regarding it as the necessary means of initiation into the people of God." (p. 598)

Others contend they were non-Messianic Jews, for at that time both Messianic and non-Messianic Jews (along with Messianic Gentiles) still met together in Synagogue (or at the riverside in the case of the *Philippians*).

Whoever they were, Paul proceeded to show them that he was the most "Jewish" of them all. He wrote this in order that his concept of what was truly important might carry added weight with those who wanted to "mutilate the flesh:"

"... ⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel,

of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Phil. 3:4-6)

According to Dr. Stern, Paul's Jewish credentials were powerful (p.600):

- ◆ Paul was circumcised on the eighth day according to the *Torah*.
- ◆ Paul was an Israelite by birth, he was not a "naturalized" citizen who had been 'grafted in.'
- ◆ Paul was not descended from proselytes, he knew he was from the tribe of Benjamin.
- ◆ Paul spoke Hebrew, as did his parents.
- ◆ Paul was from one of the strictest sects; the Pharisees.
- ◆ Paul had been such a zealous Pharisee that he had persecuted the Messianic Community before being called to faith in *Y'shua*.
- ◆ Paul had kept the commands of both the *Written* and *Oral Torah* "blamelessly."

~ All of No Value ~

Paul had excellent Jewish credentials, and except for the fact that he had persecuted the Messianic Community, he was not to be faulted for his life prior to becoming a "Completed Jew" in *Y'shua*. In fact, as he said, he had kept the law "blamelessly."

However, in retrospect, Paul realized that all of those good deeds which he had done in the past, by keeping the *Torah*, had no value when examined against the big picture. This was because his "legalistic" approach to keeping the *Torah* (both Written and Oral) was not capable of gaining him salvation, for no one has ever lived a perfectly sinless life, except *Y'shua*. The bottom line was, that despite all of the "works" that Paul had done, he was still a sinner who deserved death:

"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*] our Lord." (Rom. 6:23)

Therefore, Paul's only hope for salvation was for God to forgive him for his sins. Paul knew that kind of forgiveness was available only through the shed blood of *Y'shua*:

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ..." (Eph. 1:7)

Now, because of his great debt to *Y'shua*, for making the way possible for his sins to be forgiven, Paul looked upon his past "legalistic" accomplishments as being worthless, not because they were wrong to do, for surely Paul's observance of the *Torah* commands was a "good" thing to do. However, Paul now counted those efforts as "worthless" only because his faithful observance of the law could not earn him salvation. Therefore, in comparison, Paul's unswerving faith in Messiah

Y'shua was far more important than all of his "law keeping" (whether past, present, or future) could ever be:

"But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ [*Messiah*]. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*] my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ [*Messiah*] ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ [*Messiah*] -- the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith."
(Phil. 3:7-9 NIV)

This is not to say that Paul's "righteousness" from properly keeping the *Torah* was bad, evil, or wrong for Paul himself said:

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

What was wrong was the pride which Paul had previously felt in his heart concerning those accomplishments. Keeping the *Torah* should not engender pride, for keeping the *Torah* is what everyone is supposed to do! Now Paul was no longer looking back with pride at his accomplishments as a Pharisee, he was looking forward, in faith, to being resurrected from the grave and gaining eternal life in the Kingdom of God:

"I want to know Christ [*Messiah*] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*] took hold of me." (Phil. 3:10-12 NIV)

~ Those Who Reject ~

One of the problems we find today in modern Christianity is the tendency to "throw out the baby with the bath water." A typical example is the belief that just because the *Torah* (Law) cannot save a person, therefore one should not make any attempt to observe it, for by so doing one is attempting to "earn their salvation."

That is sheer nonsense. The fact of the matter is that we all sin and we all must be forgiven for our sins in order for us to gain eternal life. As has been shown, forgiveness comes only through faith in the blood of *Y'shua*:

"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."
(Col. 1:13-14)

As we have already seen, the primary definition of sin in the Greek Scriptures is the transgression of the *Torah* (law):

"Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. ⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."
(1 John 3:4-5 KJV)

The Hebrew Scriptures also teach the same concept:

"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a person sins unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD [*YHVH*] ...'"
(Lev. 4:2)

Just because Paul told the *Philippians* that keeping the Law cannot save them, and that the life and sacrifice of *Y'shua* is far better because that is the real vehicle to eternal life, does not mean that the *Written Torah* is useless. In fact, the *Torah* serves a very important role in our salvation, for it defines sin:

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [*Torah*] is the knowledge of sin."
(Rom. 3:20)

Without the *Written Torah* we would not know what is permissible and what is sin. When a Believer does not know what constitutes sin, he is destined to commit sin inadvertently. A person walking without a knowledge of *Written Torah* can be sinning without even knowing it.

It is very important for a Messianic Believer to learn and understand the *Written Torah* commands so that he can identify sin when it confronts him. One cannot confess a sin unless they know it is a sin. Ignorance of the law is no excuse.

~ Identifying Sin ~

It is time for all Messianic Believers to learn how to identify sin so it can be avoided if at all possible, or recognize it after the fact so we can confess it and be forgiven:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."
(1 John 1:9-10)

The vehicle God has given us to identify sin begins with the 613 commandments of the *Written Torah*. However, it does not stop there. The *Prophets* help by clarifying God's true intentions by pointing out the sins of the nation of Israel, the sins of Israel's neighbors, and the sins of certain individuals. Likewise, the *Writings* (especially the *Psalms* and *Proverbs*) give additional instruction on how to live a truly righteous life. But let us not stop there. *Y'shua* came to "complete" the "law" by showing us God's true intent:

"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." (Matthew 5:17 BBE)

In addition, the other New Testament writers have also included instruction and clarification on matters concerning righteous living. Thus we see, the entirety of the Bible is a handbook for righteous living and the sole standard by which the Messianic Community must live.

~ Summary ~

To summarize, we see that Paul made the following points concerning the "law" in his Epistle to the *Philippians*:

- ◆ He taught against physical circumcision for adult Gentiles because that act could be taken to mean they

were placing themselves in submission to the *Pharisees*. He did not condemn circumcision for eight day old boys.

- ◆ He showed how the Righteousness that accrues to a person when they keep the *Written Torah* commands (while good in itself), is inferior to the righteousness that comes from the forgiveness of sins through the blood of *Y'shua*.
 - 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."
- ◆ Sin is the breaking of God's Law and it is to be avoided if at all possible. However, when a Believer inadvertently sins, their sin can still be forgiven if they confess it, turn from it (thus returning to observance of the law), and accept the blood of Messiah *Y'shua* as sufficient payment for it.

"And this is the message which we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him -- none!"

"If we claim to have fellowship with him while we are walking in the darkness, we are lying and not living out the truth. But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of his Son Yeshua purifies us from all sin."

"If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since he is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing."

"If we claim we have not been sinning, we are making him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us."

(I John 1:5-10 CJB)

We, as Messianic Believers, are to walk a righteous walk in this life. To do anything less would make us unworthy of the high calling we have been given. Therefore, Paul urged the *Philippians* to use him as an example of how they were to conduct their lives:

"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern."

(Phil. 3:17)

We are not to live our lives the way the people of this world live theirs:

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."

(Phil. 3:20-21)

While we await that glorious time, let us truly take to heart Paul's admonition to the *Philippians* on how to live a peaceful and righteous life:

"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things."

(Phil. 4:8)

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~ Introduction to Paul's ~ ~ Pastoral Epistles ~

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,
And is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,
For instruction in righteousness,
That the man of God may be complete,
Thoroughly equipped for every good work.
II Timothy 3:16-17

The *Gentiles and the Law* Series began when a Gentile subscriber to *Hebrew Roots* wrote to us saying that he did not believe the Festivals of Leviticus 23 applied to him because he is not Jewish. This letter, coupled with numerous others (over the years) accusing us of teaching a "salvation by works" message, led to an in-depth study of what the Greek Scriptures (New Testament) really teach concerning to whom the *Written Torah* applies.

For many Christians, the idea that *Y'shua's* "cross" did away with the *Written Torah* (Old Testament Law) is appealing. If such a claim were true, one could pick and choose which commandments to obey. This attitude might be compared to that of many automobile drivers, who seem to believe the laws governing the highways have been "done away" for them personally. The problem with this philosophy of driving is that many fatalities are a direct result of drivers ignoring various traffic laws.

The same is true with the *antinomian* (against law) attitude toward the *Written Torah*. If the *Written Torah* had been "done away" (nailed to the cross), there would no longer exist any Scriptural laws against adultery, murder, incest, stealing, etc. Many moral, spiritual, and emotional sins occur everyday, because the very basic precepts of God's Law (the *Written Torah*) are violated.

~ The Pastoral Epistles ~

This chapter focuses on Paul's letters to *Timothy*, and *Titus*. These three letters were not written because of specific problems in specific churches (which was the primary motive behind Paul's epistles to the churches). While certain problems are addressed, the primary purpose of the *Pastoral Epistles* was 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.

Generally, these Epistles focus on how to oversee local congregations. Their message is essentially timeless and is as valid today as it was in the 1st century.

~ Timothy the Man ~

Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). Both his mother, Eunice, and his

grandmother Lois, at some point in time, had become *Messianic Believers*:

"... I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."

(II Tim. 1:5)

Eunice was married to a non-Jew, so it is possible that she had initially been a culturally assimilated Hellenistic Jew, one who spoke Greek and adopted some of the customs of Greek culture.

Timothy had not been circumcised on the eighth day according to *Torah*. Non-circumcision would have been the norm for any male born into a pagan Greek family, and it may also have been the norm for sons born to Hellenistic Jewish parents, because an important part of Hellenistic (Greek) culture was admiration for the human body. For this reason, the Greeks were adamantly opposed to circumcision, which they considered to be a form of mutilation of the perfect human body. Since the Greek games at the *Gymnasium* (such as the ancient Olympic games played in Athens) were performed in the nude, any circumcised male participating in them would have been subject to great ridicule and scorn. This type of public humiliation provided motivation for some circumcised Hellenistic Jews to go to the extreme of having a very painful operation performed to restore their foreskin.

There is also the possibility that Lois and Eunice might have actually been practicing "Hebrew" Jews when Timothy was born, with their wishes concerning circumcision ignored by Timothy's father, since circumcision is, by tradition, the father's prerogative. If that were the case, Lois and Eunice would have been a part of the Orthodox Jews; those who used Hebrew in the Synagogue, as opposed to the Hellenists who conducted Synagogue service in the Greek language.

In either case, we know that Timothy had been taught the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament a.k.a. *Tanakh*) from childhood:

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*]."
(II Tim. 3:14-15)

This passage reveals the possibility that Timothy may have actually been raised as a *Messianic Believer*. Certainly there was adequate time for that to have been the case, especially if Lois and Eunice had received knowledge of *Messiah Y'shua* during the early years (30 - 40 CE) of the movement, considering the fact that on the day of *Shavu'ot* (Shaw-voo-oat' = Pentecost) when the *Ruach HaKodesh* (Rue'-ahkh Hah Koh-dehsh' = Holy Spirit) was given, there were men present from the area in Asia Minor where *Lystra* (their home town) was located:

"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors

from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:8-11)

Whatever the case, the "Holy Scriptures," in which Timothy was instructed from childhood, were certainly the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), for there were no official "New Testament" Scriptures during that time. (Further comments concerning canonization are included in the chapter on *II Timothy*.)

It appears that Timothy was an apt student, with an outgoing personality, whom Paul seemed to have been immediately impressed with:

"Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. ² He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. ³ Paul wanted to have him go on with him. ..." (Acts 16:1-3)

As a result of this encounter, plus Timothy's recommendation from the brethren at *Lystra*, Timothy became Paul's traveling companion and assistant. The fact that they spent much time together is attested to by the mention of Timothy's name a total of 24 times in both the book of *Acts* and in various Epistles of Paul.

Before leaving on their first trip together, Paul insisted that Timothy be circumcised:

"And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek." (Acts 16:3)

Why did Paul insist that Timothy be circumcised? Because Timothy had a Jewish mother and was apparently considered to be Jewish. Being Jewish and not having received the mark of the covenant (circumcision) would have made him suspect among the Jews with whom they would have contact during their travels. This could have greatly impeded their preaching of the Gospel, since they always went first to the Jewish Synagogues:

"But when they [*Paul and Barnabas*] departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down." (Acts 13:14)

This raises the question of how lineage is determined when a Jew and non-Jew marry and have children. In the Scriptures we find that lineage was traced through the male line; mothers are rarely mentioned. For example, *Y'shua's* lineage (on both *Miriam's* (Mary) side and *Y'seif's* (Joseph) side) is almost exclusively traced through the fathers. Other than *Miriam*, the only women mentioned are *Ruth* and *Rahab*:

"Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, ..." (Matt. 1:5)

However today, according to modern Rabbinic Judaism, one is only considered to be a natural born Jew if one's mother is Jewish. The offspring of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother are not considered Jewish unless the mother converts to Judaism prior to the birth of the child.

In regard to this matter, there is a passage to be found in the book of *Ezra* that must be considered, for it is entirely possible that by the 1st century CE matrilineal descent was a common practice, just as it is today in Rabbinic Judaism. If that were the case, Paul's circumcision of Timothy would have been the perfectly natural thing to do, because Timothy would have been considered Jewish, even though he had a Greek father:

"When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, 'The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. ² For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass.'" (Ezra 9:1-2)

This is a complex subject which the present chapter is not prepared to explore in depth. However, the outcome of this charge was that the men who had taken non-Jewish wives divorced them and rejected the children who had been born from those unions:

"And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, 'We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. ³ Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.'" (Ezra 10:2-3)

This passage seems to indicate that the practice of determining Jewish lineage from the mother goes as far back as the time of Ezra and the building of the Second Temple (5th century BCE).

With this in mind, let us turn to a survey of Paul's *Pastoral Epistles*.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

returning to the eastern Mediterranean where he was arrested a second time. (See Rom. 15:24, 28)

~ Paul's First Epistle ~ ~ to Timothy ~

Now the purpose of the commandment
Is love from a pure heart,
From a good conscience,
And from sincere faith.
I Timothy 1:5

The setting for the writing of *I Timothy* was *Ephesus*

where Timothy was left in charge of the *Messianic Congregation*, a daunting task for a man as young as Timothy must have been, especially given the heavily pagan nature of the city of *Ephesus* which was the worship center for the goddess *Diana* (*Artemis* in the Greek). Previously, Paul had encountered some unpleasant experiences in *Ephesus*. Timothy, no doubt, had his hands full:

"And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: 'Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Zeus?'"
(Acts 19:35)

The purpose of this particular letter from Paul was to give Timothy guidance on how to deal with the various problems which he encountered within the local congregation, and to provide him with much needed moral support. Some call this Epistle a *Leadership Manual for Church Organization*.

There are a number of places in *I Timothy* which either directly or indirectly reference the "Law." The most important question to keep in mind when studying these passages is *Which Law?* Is Paul referring to the *Written Torah* as found in Genesis through Deuteronomy or the *Oral Torah* of the *Pharisees*? If it is the former, we would expect to find Paul in complete agreement with its precepts (given what we have learned in our previous studies on this topic). If it is the latter, we would expect to find Paul in disagreement that the Gentiles needed to follow those rules.

It is generally believed that Paul wrote this letter from Macedonia about 62 or 63 CE., after his first imprisonment in Rome. During this interim time of freedom, Paul and Timothy apparently went to *Ephesus* where Paul left Timothy in charge of the *Ephesian* congregation, before traveling on to Macedonia. Being delayed on his return, Paul wrote Timothy this letter of encouragement and instruction, probably from the city of *Philippi*:

"As I urged you when I went into Macedonia -- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ..."
(I Tim. 1:3)

It was also during this time, between his two imprisonments, when Paul is believed to have journeyed to Spain (some traditions say also to the British Isles), before

~ Chapter One ~

After a very brief introduction (I Tim. 1:1-2), Paul launched into a testimony concerning the need for Timothy to confront those who teach a different doctrine from what Paul had initially given them when he was in their presence. He also warned against those who give **"heed to fables and endless genealogies:"**

"... remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine, ⁴ nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith."
(I Tim. 1:3-4)

Timothy certainly knew what issues Paul was addressing. However, the exact nature of the "fables" is not clear today.

Paul followed this instruction with a positive teaching about the purpose of the commandments:

"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, ..."
(I Tim. 1:5)

This teaching clearly echoed that of *Y'shua's* **"weightier matters of the law:"**

"'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.'"
(Matt. 23:23)

Thus we see, that while obeying the law is proper in itself (as *Y'shua* pointed out), the real purpose is to bring the *Messianic Believer* to a higher spiritual level through a change in motivation. Instead of nit-picking obedience, *Messianic Believers* are expected to develop a *Way of Life* which exudes love, justice, mercy, and faith.

Paul went on to say that some had strayed from these teachings and, as a result, their teaching had degenerated into endless discussions of the law, about which they knew little:

"... from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm."
(I Tim. 1:6-7)

This was a case of the blind leading the blind, for those who were doing the false teaching did not have a proper understanding of how the *Torah* should be kept. Some may have been teaching an *antinomian* (against law) philosophy, while others may have been including the rules and traditions of the *Oral Torah* (the traditions of the Jews) in their teaching. Timothy, being versed in the Scriptures from childhood, was in a good position to clarify these conflicts for the *Ephesian* congregation.

Paul then made a very positive comment about the *Written Torah*:

"But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ..."
(I Tim. 1:8)

Yes, Paul fully supported the *Written Torah*. He clearly said it was "good." But it is only "good" if it is used properly. If someone misuses the *Written Torah* by adding or subtracting from it, then it can become a source of confusion:

"Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

(Deut. 12:32)

The purpose of the *Written Torah* is to define sin; to teach when one is "missing the mark" of righteous living:

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

(Rom. 3:20)

However, if a person has "internalized" the *Torah* of God, they know instinctively when they face sin. Therefore, Paul explained:

"... 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, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ..."

(I Tim. 1:9-10)

What is "sound doctrine?" From where does "doctrine" originate? It comes either from men or it comes from God. If it comes from men, then we must study what men have to say about doctrine. This is what so many of the church organizations have done. They have mixed the "sound doctrine" of the Scriptures (which includes the *Written Torah*) with ideas of their own. This is also what the Pharisees did in the development of the *Oral Torah*. Does that mean that all doctrine from men is bad? Or that everything found in the *Oral Torah* is suspect? No, not at all! What it does mean is that if a man's doctrine does not come from God,, it may not be completely "sound," and one must be very careful when using such doctrine as a standard for behavior.

A bit later, Paul wrote:

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus [Messiah *Y'shua*] came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

(I Tim. 1:15)

The definition of sin is the breaking of God's *Written Torah* (Law). If the "Law" had been abolished, there would be no future need for salvation of sinners," since there would no longer be any Law to break. This passage clearly indicates that the *Written Torah* (the Law of God) was still in effect in Paul's day, and therefore is still in effect today.

~ Chapter Two ~

One of the major themes found throughout all three of the *Pastoral Epistles* is the concept of "good works":

"I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; ⁹ in like manner also, that the ... women professing godliness, with good works."

(I Tim. 2:8-10)

The Apostle Paul was a *Pharisee*, and it is our opinion that his understanding of "good works" would have been based upon the common *Pharisaic* understanding of his day. In Hebrew, the words used for commandments are *mitzvah* (meets'-vah) and *mitzvot* (meets'-vote, the plural form). In Jewish teaching, to keep a commandment is to perform a *mitzvah*. However, this word has taken on an additional meaning, that of doing "good deeds" or "good works." Therefore, to do a good deed is also understood to be a *mitzvah*, just as to properly keep a commandment is a *mitzvah*. Thus "good works" and commandments are all bound up into one overall concept. From the perspective of a *Pharisee* (like Paul), when he penned "good works" in verse 10, he was including the keeping of the *Written Torah* (commandments of God).

~ Chapter Three ~

Most of chapter three is taken up with the qualifications for the bishops and deacons. The traits mentioned could all be ascribed as outcomes of keeping the *mitzvot*, the *Written Torah* commands. For example, both bishops and deacons were to be "blameless:"

"A bishop then must be blameless, ..."

(I Tim. 3:2)

"But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless."

(I Tim. 3:10)

In the case of the deacons, they were to serve without ordination for a period of time, in order for the elders and the congregation to observe if they truly were "blameless." To be blameless meant that one could not be blamed for anything wrong. What could possibly be the standard used to determine if they were blameless? It had to be the *Written Torah*, for that was the standard *Y'shua* used to identify proper behavior.

Also, a bishop must have a good reputation in the community:

"Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

(I Tim. 3:7)

Nothing can destroy a ministry faster than for the leadership to be caught in some kind of compromising situation and then have that fact made public. This is why Bishops and Deacons must be "blameless."

~ Chapter Four ~

The first five verses of chapter four deal with false teachers; those who depart from the truth of the faith and teach, what Paul called, "doctrines of demons." Oftentimes, such teachers wish to gain authoritarian control over a flock by adding to the *Written Torah* their manmade commands, which place stringent controls upon the people. Two areas which false teachers often try to control is what food their flock can eat, and their sex life. If the leaders can establish their authority in the kitchen and the bedroom of their followers lives, then it is not too long before they can take over other areas. The following is an example:

"... forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (I Tim. 4:3-5)

Some misread this passage and claim that everything God has created is now good for food whether it has been declared Biblically clean or not. However, Paul was only speaking about those foods which were "sanctified [set apart] by the word of God." Leviticus 11 contains that portion of the Word of God which gives clear instruction on which foods have been set apart for human consumption.

Some say that through prayer even unclean foods can be made clean. One might ask those people if they would be willing to drink Oleander Tea (highly poisonous) if someone said a prayer over it first? (This is absurd!)

Timothy was then admonished to be a good example for those in his congregation:

"Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (I Tim. 4:12)

Two specific areas Paul mentioned were "in word" and "in conduct." What defines proper conduct? The "word" or, simply, the *Written Torah*. This is not to imply that love, spirit, faith, and purity are unimportant. These are wonderful attributes which all *Messianic Believers* need to cultivate. However, this chapter is focusing only on the aspect of whether or not the *Written Torah* is still in effect and if it applies to Gentile Believers.

~ Chapter Five ~

In this chapter we find Paul using some examples straight from the *Written Torah* to make his point about how to treat other people. For example, Paul directly addressed the fifth commandment concerning honoring one's parents by caring for them in their old age:

"But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. ... But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." (I Tim. 5:4, 8)

Paul also addressed the problem of *Lashon Hara* (Lah-shone' Hah-rah' = the Evil Tongue):

"And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not." (I Tim. 5:13)

Paul then began quoting *mitzvot* (commandments) directly from the *Tanakh*. If Paul were teaching the Gentiles that the *Written Torah* had been abolished, he surely would not have extensively quoted from it in order to demonstrate correct behavior:

"For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' [Deut 25:4] and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages. [Lev. 19:13]'" (I Tim. 5:18)

Likewise in the next verse:

"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. [Deut. 17:6]" (I Tim. 5:19)

Paul's advice on not showing partiality was also derived from the *Written Torah*:

"I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach] and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. [Lev. 19:15]" (I Tim. 5:21)

Paul finalized this chapter with an admonition to perform *mitzvot* (good works):

"Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden." (I Tim. 5:25)

~ Chapter Six ~

Paul began chapter six by admonishing the bondservants to be loyal to their masters. This too is based upon *Written Torah* principles concerning the relationship that should exist between Masters and their Israelite slaves. (Slaves were to be loyal, and Masters were to deal kindly with them.)

Paul concluded by saying that the *Messianic Believers* should withdraw from anyone who teaches contrary to these teachings (which, as we have seen, are loaded with references to the *Written Torah* and the teachings of Y'shua):

"If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach], and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself." (I Tim. 6:3-5)

These are strong words, and rightly so, for a person's faith can be destroyed if they are subjected to false teaching.

Finally, Paul concluded with an exhortation to pursue righteousness, along with many other Godly traits:

"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness." (I Tim. 6:11)

What is righteousness? King David had the answer:

**"My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments are righteousness."** (Psalm 119:172)

~ Conclusion ~

The teachings found in *I Timothy* do not indicate that the *Written Torah* has been "done away." Although Paul had some negative things to say about adding to the *Written Torah* commands, which he characterized as "doctrines of demons," this Epistle contains no internal evidence that Paul advocated its abrogation. On the contrary, he upheld the principles of the *Written Torah* and even quoted from it on several occasions.

We will continue in the next article with Paul's letter to Titus.

~ Paul's Epistle to Titus ~

This is a faithful saying,
And these things I want you to affirm constantly,
That those who have believed in God
Should be careful to maintain good works.
Titus 3:8



Paul's Epistle to *Titus* was written (c. 63 CE) approximately one year after *I Timothy*. Since *II Timothy* was written at a later date it will be covered last.

Titus had the unenviable job of leading the *Messianic Believers* who lived on the island of *Crete*; a people of generally low repute. *Crete* is located in the Mediterranean Sea about 250 miles south of *Athens*. It is about 150 miles long and up to 30 miles wide.

Like Timothy, Titus was a trusted assistant to the Apostle Paul. After Paul was released from his first imprisonment they journeyed together to *Crete*, where Paul left Titus to carry on the work they had begun:

"For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -- ..." (Titus 1:5)

Titus had a challenging ministry, for Paul tells us that the *Cretans* had a very poor reputation. The term "To act the Cretan" was synonymous with being a liar:

"One of them, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.'¹³ This testimony is true." (Titus 1:12-13)

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This picture of *Cretan* behavior was most likely the result of *Cretan* Gentile behavior, rather than the Jews who lived there. However, it is quite common for the character of a majority population to rub off on those from other cultures who live among them. Witness the assimilation which much of Jewry has experienced by living in the nations of the West. When it comes to behavior, it is nearly impossible to tell a Jew who has assimilated into Western culture from a Gentile, unless you live next door and see them going to *Shul* (another term for Synagogue) on *Yom Kippur*.

Faith in Messiah *Y'shua* may have come to *Crete* very early, since a number of them were present at the Temple in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost:

"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:8-11)

The way this passage is phrased, it is possible the *Cretans* and *Arabians* mentioned were not Jews, but Gentiles, for these two groups are mentioned separate from the Jews and Proselytes. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles, no doubt these *Cretans* would have brought, at the very least, a rudimentary understanding of the Gospel back to their home island after that life changing experience.

This Epistle, like *I Timothy*, contains instruction on how to establish a congregation that is solidly built on the bedrock of the *Written Torah*, with its foundation in the Apostles and the Prophets, whose building (Temple) is made up of *Messianic Believers* fitly framed together on the Cornerstone of *Y'shua*:

"For through Him we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit." (Eph. 2:18-22)

~ Chapter One ~

Paul began the Epistle to *Titus* by stating the qualifications for a Bishop. Just as we saw previously, Paul again states that such a man is to be "blameless" in his conduct. Once again, we believe being "blameless" means he must be following the precepts of the *Written Torah* as his standard for behavior, so that no one can accuse him of sinning (breaking the Law):

"For a bishop must be blameless, ..." (Titus 1:7)

The Bishop is also required to be faithful to the word of God (i.e. the Scriptures as taught by the Living Word, *Y'shua*) and to have sound doctrine:

"... holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict." (Titus 1:9)

Some, but not all, of the men Paul accused of teaching against sound doctrine were from the "circumcision:"

"For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, ¹¹ whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain." (Titus 1:10-11)

Exactly what these men of the "circumcision" were teaching is unclear. However, according to Paul, their motive was quite clear, they wanted to make money from religion. It is our opinion they wanted new Gentile Believers to be circumcised so they could exercise a certain amount of control over them, possibly as a means of both prestige among their fellow Jews, as well as financial gain.

It must be remembered that the term "circumcision," as it was used in first century Judaism, meant more than the physical cutting of the flesh, it included the acceptance of the entire Oral Torah, and the traditions of the Elders, as a way of life.

Once Gentiles committed to this form of religion, it gave the *Pharisees* complete control over them, because those proselytes then had to go to the Rabbis to learn what was considered right and wrong based upon the *Oral* traditions, even if those traditions went against the teachings of the *Written Torah*:

"And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law." (Gal. 5:3)

The term "whole law" means both the *Written Torah* and the *Oral Torah*, both of which the Rabbis claimed were given to *Moshe* (Mow-shay' = Moses) on Mount Sinai.

Because, these men were teaching falsehoods, Paul admonished Titus to rebuke them:

"Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, ¹⁴ not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth." (Titus 1:13-14)

What were these Jewish fables? It is anyone's guess, but it could well have been the *Pharisaic* teaching that *Moshe* received the complete Oral Torah on Mount Sinai. This is simply not true, for it is clear that much of the *Mishnah** (*Meesh'-nah* = the *Oral Torah*) consists of what is today called "case law;" law which results from court rulings.

This idea is also born out by the latter part of verse 14 where it speaks of the **"commandments of men."** *Y'shua* attacked the problem of the *Pharisaic* teaching that oral traditions were on a par with God's commandments:

"Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? [*not practicing ceremonial hand washing*]'"

⁶ He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

"This people honors Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me.

⁷ And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men."

(cited from Isaiah 29:13)

⁸ For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men -- the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.'

⁹ He said to them, '*All too well* you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother;" and, "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death." ¹¹ But you say, "If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban'" -- (that is, a gift to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

(Mark 7:5-13)

* The *Oral Torah* was committed to writing in the early part of the 3rd century CE and is called the *Mishnah*.

The practice of adding to God's commandments was common and still exists in Rabbinic Judaism and modern Christianity, as well as in some parts of the *Messianic Movement*. Oral amplifications of the *Written Torah* are difficult to combat. Since the *Written Torah* has so few commands (only 613 command principles to cover all of man's individual behavior, the organization of society, and the rules for Tabernacle worship), the urge to add clarification rules can be very strong.

~ Chapter Two ~

This chapter begins with an admonition for Titus to teach:
"... things which are proper for sound doctrine: ..."

(Titus 2:1)

During a short discourse on what it meant to teach sound doctrine in the area of behavior for both young and old, Paul again emphasized the need to perform *mitzvot* (good deeds = commandment keeping):

"... in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; ..."

(Titus 2:7)

In verse 9, Paul again supports the *Written Torah* by emphasizing the need for servants to be obedient to their masters:

"Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, ..."

(Titus 2:9)

Next is a plea for all to live righteous lives:

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ..."

(Titus 2:11-12)

Messianic Believers need to learn how to live righteous lives in the midst of a modern culture which keeps telling us that it is acceptable to lie and cheat in order to get ahead, to indulge in casual sex instead of making a lifetime commitment to one person, and to worship whomever or whatever catches our fancy in any manner that might seem appropriate to us. All of this is, of course, in direct violation of the *Written Torah*. Paul exhorted Titus to actively work against such evils:

"... ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], ¹⁴ 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 2:13-14)

Notice please, that once again "good works" (*mitzvot*) are emphasized.

~ Chapter Three ~

Having just admonished Titus to teach his congregation to do "good works," Paul went on to emphasize that point again and to also instruct them to refrain from *Lashon Hara* (the evil tongue). These are all *Written Torah* concepts that everyone,

wishing to pursue a path of righteousness, needs to cultivate in their lives:

"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."

(Titus 3:1-2)

Paul went on to say that all *Messianic Believers* were at one time disobedient:

"For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient,..."

(Titus 3:3)

If there are no rules (if the law has been abolished), then one cannot be disobedient, for there is nothing to be disobedient against. The *Written Torah* is the yardstick by which disobedience is measured. If the *Written Torah* is abolished, then the yardstick is broken and good for nothing. This is not to say that Works Righteousness saves us from our past sins, for they do not. Nevertheless, living a righteous life is expected once one has been forgiven of their past sins through the blood of *Y'shua*:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

(Rom. 6:1-2)

Since all of us were sinners in the past, all of us are in need of someone to pay the sin penalty for us, otherwise we must pay the penalty ourselves, and that penalty is eternal death:

"The soul who sins shall die."

(Ezek. 18:20)

Y'shua has paid the death penalty; the price for our sins. For this reason, Paul said, we now have the "hope of eternal life:"

"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, ⁵ not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*] our Savior, ⁷ that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

(Titus 3:4-7)

Receiving God's Grace (favor) is a most wonderful possession. Having once gained Grace (favor) from the Creator of the Universe (through His Son *Y'shua*), it then behooves us to conduct our lives according to His Instruction Book, the *Written Torah*. To do anything less would be an action of denial of our faith. Therefore, Paul told Titus:

"... that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works."

(Titus 3:8)

Now that we have obtained Grace, Mercy, and Forgiveness for our sins, we are to live lives that are first and foremost characterized by performing the *mitzvot* (commandments and good works) of God.

Paul left Titus with one last admonition concerning the performance of *mitzvot*:

**"And let our people also learn to maintain good works,
to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful."**

(Titus 3:14)

Not living by the *Written Torah* commands (*mitzvot* or good deeds) is tantamount to being unfruitful.

~ Conclusion ~

There is no evidence that Paul taught Titus to forgo the *Written Torah* commands and teach a different gospel, which would not be a gospel (good news) at all, but would be bad news, because it would lead *Messianic Believers* down the path of lawlessness. On the contrary, Paul actually supported the *Written Torah* over and over again, especially through his emphasis on "good works," (performing *mitzvot* by keeping the commandments). In fact, Paul mentioned "good works" as an important attribute for a *Messianic Believer* to pursue, no less than six times in the three short chapters of this Epistle.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

~ Paul's Second Epistle ~
~ to Timothy ~

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God,
A worker who does not need to be ashamed,
Rightly dividing the word of truth.
II Timothy 2:15



Paul wrote the second Epistle to Timothy from prison. If we are correct, that Paul was imprisoned twice, this letter was written during his second imprisonment. The first imprisonment was more like a house arrest, for Paul was allowed to entertain visitors:

"Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him. ¹⁷ And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together." (Acts 28:16-17)

Paul's second imprisonment was much different. This time he was in a real prison and had little hope of being set free:

"Remember that Jesus Christ [*Y'shua HaMashiach*], of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, ⁹ for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained." (II Tim. 2:8-9)

It is believed this imprisonment occurred in 66 or 67 CE, after the crazed emperor *Nero* had burned the city of Rome and blamed in on the "Christians." Paul, being one of the leaders of the sect, probably became a wanted man; the idea being that if you can cut off the head, the body will die on its own. This, of course, proved not to be the case.

It is also believed that Paul was arrested at the city of Troas, on the west coast of Asia Minor, since he asked Timothy to stop there and pick up some of his belongings on his way to Rome:

"Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come -- and the books, especially the parchments." (II Tim. 4:13)

The late Dr. Ernest Martin believed this verse was very important in showing the early establishment of the New Testament canon. Dr. Martin taught that what Timothy was requested to bring were copies of Paul's writings. Once he received them, Paul went through them and submitted to Peter and John those writings he believed were most important to be included. (Peter and John were the only Apostles whom Dr. Martin believed had the authority to establish the canon, because they were the only ones left who had witnessed the Transfiguration). Dr. Martin also believed that John had the last say in all of this, because he was the last of the original

Apostles to die. (See: *Restoring the Original Bible*, by Ernest L. Martin, pp. 385 - 391)

Not only was Paul in prison a second time, many of the people he depended upon had left him, probably because they felt they too would be arrested if they tried to see him:

"This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." (II Tim. 1:15)

"Be diligent to come to me quickly; ¹⁰ for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica -- Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia." (II Tim. 4:9-10)

This letter is believed to have been written sometime in 67 CE. Since Paul was probably put to death during the reign of the emperor *Nero*, his execution would have taken place prior to June 9, 68 CE when *Nero* himself died. Church tradition teaches that Paul was beheaded west of Rome on the *Ostian Way*.

Once again, please be reminded that we are only exploring Paul's teaching concerning the relationship of the *Written Torah* to Gentile Believers. Much additional spiritual teaching in these Epistles is not being covered at this time.

~ Chapter One ~

After a brief introduction in which Paul again called to remembrance the faith of Timothy's mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois), Paul proceeded to remind him of the great responsibility which had been placed upon him through the laying on of his hands (ordination):

"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands." (II Tim. 1:6)

Paul told Timothy not to be fearful of what was happening to *Messianic Believers* at this time of intense persecution by the Roman authorities:

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:7)

Solomon, by the inspiration of God, gave instruction on how to develop the "sound mind" spoken of by Paul. It comes through the pursuit of Wisdom:

**"If you seek her [*Wisdom*] as silver,
And search for her as for hidden treasures;**

**⁵ Then you will understand the fear of
the LORD [YHVH],**

And find the knowledge of God.

**⁶ For the LORD [YHVH] gives wisdom;
From His mouth come knowledge and understanding;**

**⁷ He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
He is a shield to those who walk uprightly;**

**⁸ He guards the paths of justice,
And preserves the way of His saints."** (Prov. 2:4-8)

Ya'acov (James the half-brother of *Y'shua*) explained how to obtain the Wisdom that is needed in order to develop a "sound mind:"

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

All of this fits nicely with what Paul wrote to Timothy just a few verses later:

"Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me," (II Tim. 1:13)

What was this "pattern of sound words" which Paul had taught? Most certainly it was that *Y'shua* died for our sins and was raised from the dead; that He is the promised Messiah who will return to bring in the fullness of the Kingdom of God (Heaven) to this earth. Another part of the Wisdom of sound words would have been the understanding that the *Written Torah* was the constitution for both Ancient Israel and the coming Kingdom of God. As a result of *Y'shua's* finished work, *Messianic Believers* are able to experience some of the fruits of the future Kingdom in this present age by learning how to correctly follow God's Instruction Book (the *Written Torah*). All of this reminds us of how the Saints are identified in 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 Jesus Christ [Y'shua HaMashiach]." (Rev. 12:17)

"'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.' ⁸ 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)

~ Chapter Two ~

In chapter two Paul gave encouragement to Timothy, urging him to teach the leaders under him to be good soldiers for the Messiah and to learn how to endure all things. In this same vein, Paul urged Timothy to be diligent in study so that he would be able to correctly use the Scriptures, teaching their proper meaning rather than what some might wish to hear:

"Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵ Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:14-15)

What is the "word of truth?" King David had the right answer:

"The entirety of Your word is truth." (Psalm 119:160)

"The entirety of your word" includes the *Written Torah*! To "rightly divide" it means to interpret *Torah* correctly. We have seen time and again that the *Written Torah* identifies the commands which, if broken, constitute sin or iniquity. Now, let us look at the next verse:

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ [Messiah] depart from iniquity [sin].'" (II Tim. 2:19)

Sin is identified by the 613 commandments (*mitzvot*) of the *Written Torah*. Paul was adamant about the necessity to "keep the Law of God." However, he was opposed to those who wished to add to that law with untold numbers of additional rules.

In verses 21 and 22 Paul wrote about *Messianic Believers* "cleansing" themselves from all evil practices which would cause them to become vessels of "dishonor." By going through this cleansing process, *Believers* are able to become vessels of "honor." This teaches us that all *Messianic Believers* should be striving to accomplish works of righteousness; not to earn salvation, but in order to become vessels of honor for Him and thereby please our Father in heaven:

"Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." ²² Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

(II Tim. 2:21-22)

This is a clear admonition to follow the *Written Torah* commands.

~ Chapters Three and Four ~

The opening verses of chapter three are very well known by most Christians, for they depict the conditions which Paul prophesied would exist on earth during the "last days:"

"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: ² For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, ⁴ traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"

(II Tim. 3:1-5)

This passage is a perfect description of what happens to people when they ignore the commands of the *Written Torah* and follow their own *Yetzer Hara* (Yeht-zehr' Hah-rah' = Evil Inclination). The natural man, left to his own devices, degenerates into the sinful man, driven by his own lusts rather than by the Word of God.

What example should Timothy teach the people to follow? The example of how Paul had lived his life as Apostle to the Gentiles. However, they also needed to know that such a life could bring persecutions and suffering:

"... you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra -- what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me."

(II Tim. 3:10-11)

The great Faith Chapter, speaks about how we will be brought to the goal together:

"And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us." (Heb. 11:39-40)

The final outcome for Believers who practice righteousness will be a place in the First Resurrection:

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ [Messiah] will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words."

(I Thess. 4:16-18)

Messiah *Y'shua* kept the *Written Torah* perfectly. And who did Paul pattern his life after? He said:

"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ [Messiah]."

(I Cor. 11:1)

Even so, we should strive to keep the *Torah* as perfectly as we are able:

"For to this you were called, because Christ [Messiah] also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² **'Who committed no sin,**

Nor was deceit found in His mouth; ...'"

(I Pet. 2:21-22)

The capstone to Paul's teaching about the *Written Torah* came when he wrote that the entire purpose of Scripture is to teach the *Messianic Believer* how to live a righteous life:

"But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus [Messiah *Y'shua*]. ¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

(II Tim. 3:14-17)

This was one of Paul's strongest statements in favor of the *Written Torah*, as well as support for the *Prophets* and the *Writings*. At the time Paul wrote this letter, the New Testament canon had not yet been established (although Peter and John were working on it). Therefore, this passage points directly and only to the Hebrew Scriptures, the *Tanakh* or "Old Testament." Let us examine it a little bit closer:

- ◆ Timothy had begun learning the Scriptures from the time he was a child. (v. 15)
- ◆ Timothy received additional instruction on how to correctly apply the wisdom of the Scriptures from the Apostle Paul. (v. 14)

- ◆ Scripture (the *Tanakh*) is the basis for the wise understanding that we cannot earn salvation on our own, because we cannot keep the law perfectly. (v. 15)
- ◆ Scripture points to the *Suffering Servant Messiah* (Isa 53), who would take away the sins of the world. That *Messiah* was none other than *Y'shua*. (v. 15)
- ◆ We cannot pick and choose Scriptures (like a smorgasbord), taking only those items which are appealing. If we are going to accept any part of the Scripture we must accept all Scripture. (v. 16)
- ◆ All Scripture is profitable to the person who will use it correctly. From it we can learn:
 - Correct Doctrine.
 - Proof of what is true.
 - Which actions are not correct.
 - How to walk in righteous works. (v. 16)
- ◆ The end result is that the *Messianic Believer* becomes a "man of God," knowing how to perform Works Righteousness, and thereby becomes equipped to keep the commandments of the *Written Torah* (good works or *mitzvot*). (v. 17)

Paul concluded his instruction to Timothy by looking back on his own life, what God had accomplished through him, and what *Messianic Believers* have to look forward to in the future:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (II Tim. 4:7-8)

Apparently, Paul had no regrets about his service to God, having learned the truth of the Gospel on the road to Damascus.

~ Conclusion ~

II Timothy is one of Paul's strongest affirmations in favor of keeping the *Written Torah* commands as a way of life. This way of life will lead the *Messianic Believer* to become more like the *Messiah Y'shua*, the Righteous One who gave His life so all could receive God's gift of eternal life:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

~ Summary ~

The primary purpose of Paul's *Pastoral Epistles* was to give Timothy and Titus encouragement and instruction on how to deal with the problems inherent in leading a congregation of *Messianic Believers*. An integral part of Paul's instructions was both direct and indirect references to the *Written Torah* commands.

Included in these Epistles were Paul's warnings against those who wanted to steal the joy of the *Messianic Believers* by imposing on them the strict rules of *Oral Torah*. On the other hand, he also warned against others who might try to turn Grace into License by leading them into *antinomian* (against law) teachings.

For the sake of the elect, Paul lived a life of endurance, looking forward to eternal life together with the Elect:

"Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus [*Messiah Y'shua*] with eternal glory." (II Tim. 2:10)

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