

Warning: The Law of Moses Does Apply To Gentile Believers!

"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king...." 1 Samuel 15:22/23

The prophet Samuel spoke these words to King Saul after he disobeyed God, proving rebellion can be extremely costly - in Saul's case he lost his kingdom! Refusing to obey God is considered equal to the sin of divination, and such insubordination is also considered equal to iniquity and idolatry. The King James translation uses the word stubbornness for insubordination. It says; *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness as idolatry.* Why idolatry? Because refusing to obey God means by default placing someone else's ways before His, in other words one worships another before God's - that is idolatry. However:

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

God frequently called the early Israelites a stiff-necked people. People with stiff necks cannot (or will not) turn their heads to see things differently. The Israelites were stiff-necked by choice, not wanting to change their old ways so they rebelled. Like Saul, they too lost their place in the Promised Land. Of the 600,000 men who left Egypt, only two actually received the promise, Joshua and Caleb. All the rest perished for their iniquity in the desert. Read Exodus for the whole story.

We can dedicate our lives to 'working for the church' but miss the mark entirely by not being obedient to God – for it is our obedience to His laws, precepts and ordinances which is of importance, for we are not saved by works, but by faith. This faith is then demonstrated by our willingness to obey and pursue holiness by choosing to please our Father - out of love, not legalism. These are the works of faith James (chapter 2) speaks of.

It's why Jesus said "*seek first the kingdom of heaven,*" because the kingdom of heaven operates on entirely different sets of values and laws to earth. If we do this, God promises He will take care of our earthly needs.

So what is it we should be obeying? Well, in simple terms it is understood as: *'love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind,'* (Matt 22:37) But this saying only sums up the law said Jesus: "*the whole of the **Law** and the **Prophets** is **summed up** in these two Commandments.*" (Matt 22:40) This saying did not 'replace' the detail.

The law (teaching) Jesus is speaking of refers specifically to the law of Moses found in the first five books of the bible, also known as the Torah. He is referring the law of which He said:

"Do not think I have come to abolish the law (given to Moses) or the (words given to the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For I tell you truly, until heaven and earth pass away, not a single jot, not a stroke of a pen, will disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished." Matt 5:17.

Not one letter of the law will pass away, i.e. become null and void, until every prophetic plan God has for mankind has been accomplished. Well we're still here aren't we? So the law: the commands, ordinances and precepts of God, and the forewarnings of the prophets, are still in force and valid – like a hurricane warning!

“Ah, but the law is only for the Jewish people!” Really? In Numbers 15:15 God says:

*One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly (of Israel) and for the stranger (Gentile) who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord.” **One law and one custom shall be for you and the stranger who dwells with you.**”*

The Apostle Paul reinforces this in Romans 11 by describing Gentile disciples of Christ as wild olive branches grafted into a cultivated tree, symbolic of spiritual Israel, who must grow as the tree dictates not the other way around. Paul warns that if the Gentile branches boast against Israel such as by saying we are not expected to do as you do, then they will be cut out and thrown in the fire and the original Israelite branches re-grafted back in. Read Romans 11.

God also reaffirms this in Numbers 15:30

‘But the person who does anything presumptuously (i.e. thinking he is above the law), whether he is native born, or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off, his guilt shall be upon him.’

Further evidence for Gentile believers being cut off because of ‘despising the word of the Lord’ can be seen in Jesus’ description of certain believers who will call out to Him on judgment day:

“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord Lord have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me you who practice lawlessness (i.e. people without the law)!” Matthew 7:21-23

This is a most serious text for professing Christians. Generally, people who engage in healing the sick and casting out demons are believed to be more mature believers, yet Jesus own words say they will be rejected as ‘workers of lawlessness’ and told to ‘go away!’ How can this be?

Luke too recorded Jesus’ warning:

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door saying ‘Lord Lord open for us’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where are you from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘we ate and drank (i.e. took communion!) in Your presence and You taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, or where you are from. Depart from Me all you workers of iniquity.’ Luke 13:24-27

The word iniquity is significant. Some translations use iniquity for lawlessness and vice versa. The Hebrew root word for this is *avon*, and speaks of a moral distortion, a perversion and twisting of God's ways and laws and thus rebellion against Him. Satan was cast out of heaven because *avon* (rebellion and lawlessness) was found in him (Ezekiel 28). Paul wrote of the 'man of lawlessness' (antichrist) soon to be revealed, who sets himself up in place of God. This word *avon* is also used to describe the rejected believers in Matthew 7 & Luke 13. This rebellion/iniquity Jesus refers to is lawlessness. Jesus says He never knew them, because they didn't know Him. They knew about Him and knew the power in His name as evidenced by the works done in His name, however they did not really know Him personally, evidenced by not obeying His ways and commands.

"If you love me obey Me" - Jesus

For millennia, the church has taught that the law of Moses was for the Jews and that Gentiles are not expected to obey it. Most Christians, the author included, have grown up in Gentile lands and church cultures being taught this. But this is not so and we have been misled with consequences – willfully led even, into disobedience. Disciples grafted by God's amazing grace into spiritual Israel **are** expected to adhere to the same laws, commands, ordinances and precepts of God as the natural Israelite branches are.

"One law and one custom shall be for you and the stranger who dwells with you." - God

Evidence of willful disobedience in the church is becoming ever more clear. It is why some disciples are now distancing themselves, meeting in small groups/house church type gatherings where they can share revelation in safety and seek to be fully obedient without fear or ridicule or accusation of 'going Jewish.' Keeping God's appointed feasts is not 'going Jewish', it is doing what God commands and is a blessing and privilege.

Christian supporters of Israel have discovered anti-Semitism in the church and many have experienced open hostility. Their understanding of Israel and the Jewish people is good. But are they keeping the law? How can a Christian Zionist effectively witness to a Jew when they eat pork and all manner of unclean food and don't keep the Sabbath? Its all become very confusing and messy over the centuries, just as Satan likes it, because in this confusion and chaos his nefarious activities in the shadows go unseen and believers are deprived of blessings rightfully due for obedience (Read Deuteronomy 27 & 28).

But, God is all-powerful and all-merciful and willing to forgive a humble heart, so there is still time to repent and come back to His ways. It's never too late to acknowledge one has been misled, repent, seek forgiveness and get back on that path to the narrow gate Jesus spoke about in Luke 13.

So what does this obedience look like in 2017?

Keep God's Feasts: pagan celebrations like Easter and Christmas should be replaced with Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. In fact all the seven feasts in the three seasons should be honoured and remembered in accordance with God's commands. They are to be holy convocations where the elect gather to remember and celebrate what the Lord has - and will do.

A convocation in Hebrew is *miqra*, meaning a ‘dress rehearsal.’ The feasts that celebrate what the Lord is yet to do (eg. Tabernacles) are dress rehearsals to prepare us for the real thing so we understand what to do when it happens!

We are to obey the food laws. What is clean and unclean is clearly proscribed in the Torah and disciples of Jesus, who Himself fulfilled all the requirements of the law, must do as He did. Pork, seafood and the other items proscribed unclean are no longer options at the dinner table.

It’s ironic how many men’s breakfasts have big fry ups! Men gather, pray and ask the Lord to bless the food they are about to eat when He clearly says the smell of pork sausages and bacon (swine’s flesh) is *a stench in His nostrils!* (Isaiah 65)

Many say ‘ah but’ and quote Acts 15. But a closer reading of Acts 15 highlights a great misunderstanding. What did James say with which they all agreed? That they should not overburden the Gentiles who were turning to God, i.e. new believers, but that they should instruct them not to eat meat dedicated to idols (e.g. Halal); not to engage in sexual immorality (e.g embrace the LGBT movement in church); not to eat meat strangled and not to eat the blood, (i.e we should eat kosher meat). Significantly, read what James says in verse 21. He says the new gentile believers will hear *Moses preached every week in the synagogue*. In other words, give the new believers these basic four laws as a starting point, because by time they will hear Moses (the Torah) preached every Sabbath, then they will hear and learn the rest of what is expected of them if they continue to join themselves to spiritual Israel. *Then it pleased the Apostles and Elders...* and off went the disciples with letters to the churches with new instructions.

Even Noah understood what was clean and unclean. In Genesis 7:1-2 we read: *Then the Lord said to Noah, “come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every **clean** animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are **unclean**, a male and his female...* A few verses earlier we read that God also said to Noah; *and you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.....*

In such verses we understand that at the beginning of recorded history, pre-Abraham and pre-the Israelites, God made it clear certain things were clean or unclean.

We are expected to keep the Ten Commandments, including Sabbath observance. This is non-negotiable. From sundown Friday to sundown Saturday take a rest and spend time with God, no work, no charging about - just rest. Why is it so important? Because this observance sets you apart from others, it marks you out by your identification with God. The writer of Hebrews admonishes us to pursue holiness without which no man will see God (Hebrews 12). Holiness means being set apart for God, a special people. Sabbath observance is part of this and God both expects it of us and created the Sabbath for us, to rest and enjoy some peace after a busy week.

When you choose to obey the Torah out of love and appreciation for your Heavenly Father, watch the blessings that come for obedience. For truly it is written:

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Corinthians 2:10)

“Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates” - (Rev 22:1)

Such changes of lifestyle and observance will however come at a price. Trouble will begin both in church and at home and Jesus in fairness warned us this would happen:

*“Think not that I have come to bring peace in the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. I have come to divide a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, **and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.**” (Matt 10:34)*

“From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three.” (Luke 12:52)

Sadly you must expect hostility for its root is spiritual, a spiritual rebellion against what is true. Because man is inherently rebellious, even Christians become hostile when challenged over keeping God's commands. The flesh refuses to submit to the spirit. But the frightening truth is that rebellious believers who refuse to keep the Lords' commandments are the very ones of whom Jesus was speaking when He said *“go away, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity.”*

This has been a very tough personal journey of change for the author who only through God's grace, and by choosing to humble and repent from sinful ways, has been taught these deep things of God and in so doing can testify to the truth of God's word that:

“Good and upright is the Lord therefore he teaches sinners in the way. The humble He guides in justice and the humble He teaches His way. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies....who is the man that fears the Lord, Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.” (Psalm 25)

How can we convince the Israelites who have returned to their land, that the Messiah is Yeshua, when we behave just like pagans? If you are a Torah keeping Christian, you will make great impact on an Israelite rather than one who sends out confusing double messages loving Israel but keeping unholy practices.

In conclusion, each of us has to discover the Way for himself. The peace, security, happiness, provision, health and spiritual blessings that come with obedience are remarkable. In Deuteronomy, Moses lists the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience and says chose life! These words are so true, for God is faithful and true, and His word never comes back void.

For those in church leadership note Jesus' advice in Matthew 6:19. *“Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom!”*

Dear friends, time is short, troubles will soon engulf the world like never before. So go before God and seek His face, immerse yourself in His word and be humble, ask forgiveness and ask Him to show you what He expects of you. For when our ways please Him he can make our enemies be at peace with us.

Emmaus Group

23/09/2017 - The day of the Revelation 12 Signs, a harbinger to the tribulation.