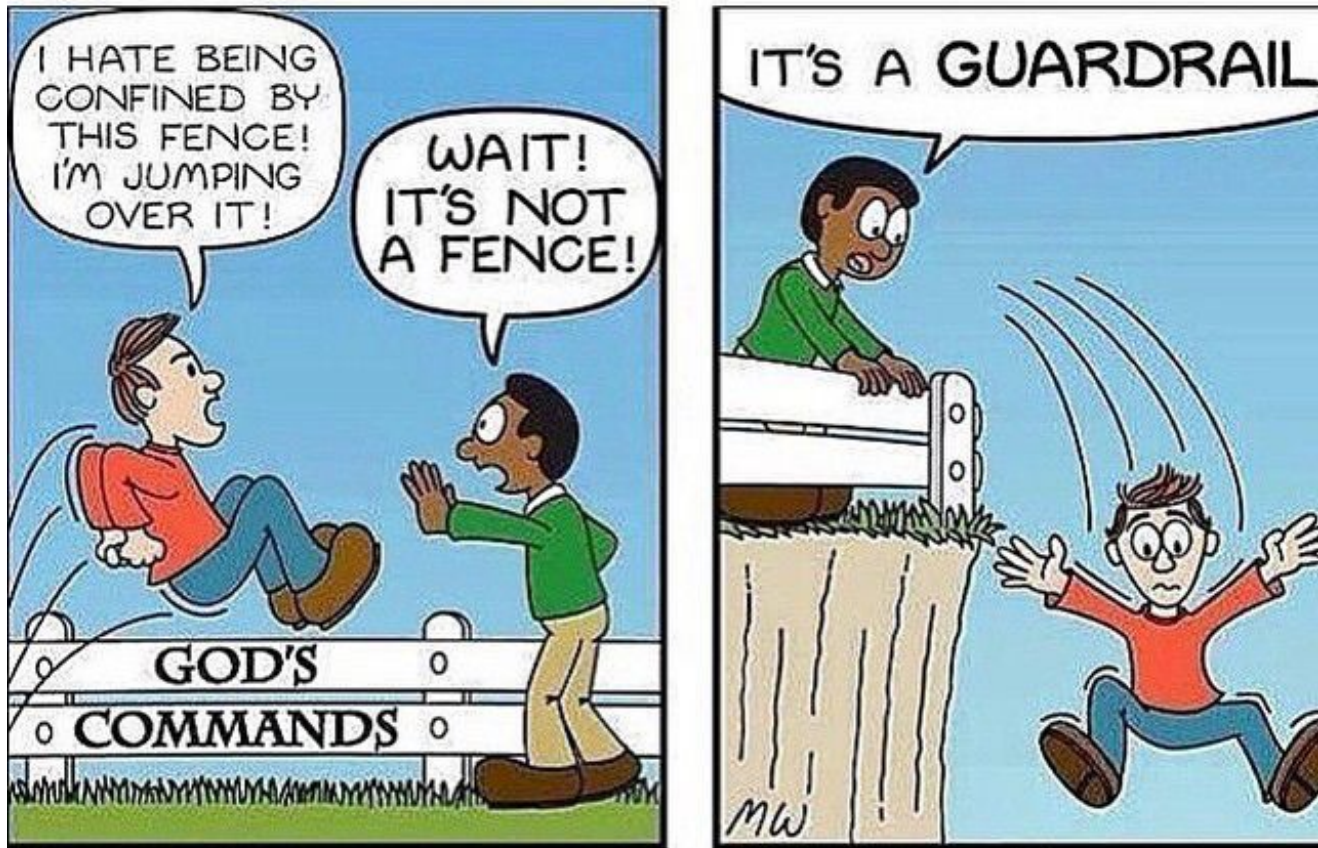


Romans Law and Grace Explained

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Whoever keeps commandments keeps their life,
but whoever shows contempt for their ways will die.

— PROVERBS 19:16

News Letter 5853-017

The 1st Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle

The 22nd year of the Jubilee Cycle

The 20th day of the 4th month 5853 years after the creation of Adam

The 4th Month in the First year of the Fourth Sabbatical Cycle

The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence

July 15, 2017

Shabbat Shalom to our Family around the world

Burundi

James has left for Burundi on Tuesday this past week. He arrived in Burundi on Wednesday and wrote me to let me know he was there and the plans Telesphore had arranged.

Thursday Morning James and Telesphore had a private meeting one-hour meeting with the Prime Minister of Burundi, where he explained the curse and how to avoid them.

Friday James and Telesphore met with the leading members of the Government. as well as the Bishops and pastors. Plans are for Monday to meet the President and First lady. More to come. We just ran out of time this week.

Here are the two reports I have from James for this week.

Burundi update 1:

Joe, I am finally home. I am going to share with you the events of the day and as much as I would like to send you an image which I have one with the Prime Minister, I doubt that it will send it. So here goes.

James with Prime Minister Gaston Sindimwo of Burundi Africa

Day two Burundi. I started off the day with a class of Bishops, Pastors, Elders and some other people, to be honest, I am not sure who they all were. Still important none the less they wanted and were fed well after this class. I don't mean food either. I had asked the Father what He wanted me to speak about the night before so as I was on the right path. Although I had once again written material it seems it is not for these people. So I started off discussing what it meant to walk according to what YHVH asks from us not what we think He says. Then I proceeded to open up the Word and show them how to study the Word expanding on some subjects. Then out of the blue, I felt like talking to them about the different levels of Torah, ie, PaRDeS. When I started to express to them the importance of study and that they should not be teachers or leaders if they themselves do not even know what the Word says or what they are expected by YHVH to understand. I gave them

examples of leadership from both the new and old Testament. I told them how to lead by example, and not to talk down to their flock like they control them but to walk beside them in love and to guide the flock in the ways of Torah.

I then went into detail giving examples of the PaRDeS understanding of course with many examples throughout and to show them that there was even more in the Word I gave them correlations of numbers and their meanings. I could tell they had never even considered that any of this was possible. They were writing so hard I had to keep stopping so they could catch up. Then when I had completed the lesson for the day, they all got into groups according to their positions and discussed what they had learned. After some time and the whole room a buzz, Teleshore came over to give me feedback.



Results: They all had to start over and go back to studying. Even the bishops were embarrassed due to their lack of understanding and what was required by YHVH to enter His Kingdom. But in the end, everyone was blown away, not by me but this message which I was blessed and very excited to be able to give. Tomorrow we continue for one more session and teaching and guiding. So far I am not sure what it is going to cover but He knows and that is Ok with me.

Then after a short break, on to the Prime Minister appointment. To be honest I was not nervous or even a bit scared. I had such a calmness going into the meeting and still do hours later after another teaching session in a small church. But first the interview. After introducing myself and the rest of the pleasantries, we sat down and spent about 30 to 45 minutes explaining what is coming in the next few years and how it is going to affect them in Africa and specifically Burundi. He, the Prime Minister agreed that something was

coming and his money was already drying up and his resources were almost gone. But he still had a plan for a small community that supported itself using solar power, wind turbines, fresh gardens, new hospital, homes, farms, and a huge conference center to draw people there as well. As a matter of fact when I mentioned to him that I grew up on a farm and that environment, he asked If I wanted to see his cows, goats, chickens and turkeys and the animal collection he had started while they worked away at the development. So next door to his compound we went and there were all the animals just walking free everywhere. The cows even came right up to us and let us pet them.

He mentioned that even though he felt that Burundi would be ok, he was going to support his Bishops in their efforts to educate the people and do what it would take to get them free of the curses. As I explained what it was going to take, his reassurance and the fact that he was very impressed that I was there to lead them and teach them how to correct the situation, that I have officially an open invitation through his office to come anytime I can to continue the work YHVH started in his country. To be honest, after that it was again just formalities as he walked us out to our cars, I got the impression that the meeting was over and our time was up.



After that meeting, we took another drive to a small church, where I spoke on what does YHVH expect of us to be heard and recognized by Him. It was a smaller crowd and the meeting did not last more than 45 minutes. Some people were eager to learn and others not so much. You get that with every crowd. No biggy. To be honest I was glad when it was over. I am still dealing with the jet-lag and I am exhausted.

Tomorrow I head back to the Bishops for one last session and then prepare for Sabbath. Not sure how I am going to do that when it comes to food but we shall see. On Sabbath, I am speaking for my first Sabbath day, not sure where yet but I am excited. Oh yeah, did I mention that Telesphere is recording all the sessions so that they can be put on DVD's and also national TV and radio to help teach those who cannot be reached during my visit? I guess I forgot. Sorry Joe...

Next week we take off to other provinces for a few days to teach in other churches. I have no idea what is going to happen I have no regrets or worries about any of it. He is in charge of what is taught and where we go, so, for now, that's it for today. Thanks for listening and reading.

James Relf
Bujumbura, Burundi

Friday, July 14, 2017

Well, another day has come and gone and the weather here thankfully has not been that bad. Today was mostly cloudy with no chance of rain, but at least it was windy which helped beat the heat. This is the middle of summer here as well and the average temp is around 30 to 35 Celcius, so it can get pretty warm in a room or small mud church with one window and a room or people. My translator from last time, Edmond Irankunda, who is a young man who studied nursing but also knows 5 languages. I will send an image soon of the two of us with one of the emails. He has a warped sense of humor and when we work together

My translator from last time, Edmond Irankunda, who is a young man who studied nursing but also knows 5 languages. I will send an image soon of the two of us with one of the emails. He has a warped sense of humor and when we work together, he is always ready to translate into whatever language is needed to keep the lesson going. Note, that last year when I was here he listened in on all my lessons, some of which he was the translator, and after I completed everything, he changed his life and spiritual walk around to follow Torah. He has been an invaluable asset to this team.

Today was the last day for the head Bishops, Pastors, and other leaders who came from far and wide to be taught. I told you yesterday that many of these leaders had done away with the Torah and after the first class yesterday, they gathered after class to change their position and realized their error. Now they are planning a whole training regimen for their pastors and teachers to correct their teachings and get back to teaching Torah and following YHVH the way He commands.



Today was no different. Here are the subjects I was led to teach on:

1. Where are we in YHVH timeline and how long do we have left
2. What does it mean to walk according to Torah and is there a way to know
3. What does the Mishkan show us and how does it reflect on us both in the natural and spiritual

I incorporated the Paleo a bit into this to give them an idea of the depth of understanding that they are missing by going straight to the end and only teaching about blessings. When I told them they have no blessings until they start walking in obedience and the commandments, it was like YHVH open the eyes and the light came on. Today's lesson went into overtime lasting more than 3 hours, and once the questions started no one wanted it to stop, not even me. As someone who gets the opportunity to teach, nothing beats the interaction between teacher and student. Their questions were well thought up and required almost an hour to get through them all. After that, they sat back in their groups and continued to review all their notes from the day. I swear some people must have taken dictation with all the notes that they had taken.



It was a great feeling to see and know that this was set up by YHVH. After the class, some of them came up to Telesphore and expressed their gratitude and of course comments about how much they all had to go back home and study more earnestly to prepare to set the example for their churches and flocks. I am pretty sure I did not have one person who walked away after who was not fed on the bread of life today. At lunch, some of them joined us and one of them was a very old pastor who I am guessing was at least close to 80. After I explained in detail the elements of the Mishkan and how they relate to us and His plan, he spoke with tears in his eyes because for all the knowledge he had and studied about the tabernacle, he never knew there was so much there in the Word. His looks made the whole day worth while as we continued to eat lunch side by side.

Then, I was asked by one of the pastors who was with us if I would come and teach his congregation this afternoon. We had not planned anything and we're going to prepare for Sabbath, but we accepted the invite. After a couple of hours resting, we left and headed out to the meeting. I had nothing prepared for this last minute meeting as like always I have to rely on YHVH to put the words into my mouth. I asked what they needed to hear and then after introductions, I started teaching on:

1. the Sabbath and what it means, what the commandments are for it and how it applies to us.
2. the Biblical Feasts in detail using the sighted moon to start the year and how that works
3. I spoke about the moon and calendar
4. sabbatical year,

5. dietary laws

Then the people came up and presented their questions. I love it when this happens. They asked and YHVH provided the answers. Totally awesome. As always we did not want to stop but we had to get back before Sabbath started and time was not on our side for this.

The drive back to town was full of compliments about the teaching. It was hard not to get full of myself, but I reminded myself that it was not me who spoke tonight and I was just there to be used by my King. What I later found out was that church split because they wanted to keep the Sabbath and the rest did not agree with them. Then YHVH comes in and confirms to them that the Sabbath is not done away with and that they were in the right. Such an honor and privilege.

Tomorrow is Sabbath and I am once again teaching for my first Sabbath. I have no idea at this point what I will be speaking on and being this late in the evening I only have a short while before the power goes down for the night. You get used to that part but I have air conditioning in my room and it only take 5 minutes for the room to go from nice and cool to a sauna, so sleeping does not come easy here. They put a mosquito net around my bed and the first night I slept here I almost killed myself getting up in the night going to the bathroom. I got all tangled up in the net and almost knocked the bed over it was attached to. Again you get used to these things.

Well that's all for tonight. I am excited about tomorrow and will relay what YHVH does after it all happens.

Signing out from Bujumbura, Burundi

James Relf

Peck, Peck, Peck

I want to share with you the many messages I received about last week's News Letter. But they are too personal, so I can't.

We opened last week with a rebuke for those who were committing Lashon Harah. We then noticed that those we spoke of stopped the comments on their site and quoted from our News Letter and then shared our Newsletter. I had expected to be thrown under the bus and attacked by others doing the Lashon Harah. So we are pleased to see this blessing taking place amongst the brethren.

I had others write about this event and agree with me about what we were saying. Lev 19:16 demands you not stand by idly while your brother is murdered. Either physically and or in slander.

This article also reminded others of their troubled past. How they were no better than Gomer in the book of Hosea whoring around. Indeed none of us are. We all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of Yehovah. So who can boast? Really, stop and think about it. Who, which of you can really boast that you are so squeaky clean that you can boast that you are more righteous than all others. Not one of us.

I have seen chickens begin to peck at one of the other chickens for no apparent reason. After a little while all the other chickens are pecking at this one poor bird until finally, it dies. This is what Lashon Harah does. This is what some do, as they gather all their friends and then all of the friends of their friends to attack this one person that they have outed for sinning. They do this at the same time covering over all of their own past sins.



We all need to be forgiven. We all want to be forgiven for our past. I know people who have murdered people in this walk. Some are still hooked on porn. Some will not talk to their parents for the way they were raised. Some were pedophiles and some were the victims of the pedophile. Why can we not forgive those who have wronged us?

Do not misunderstand me. Lev 19 tells us not to stand by idly. If you see sin being committed then you must speak out. For both the victim and the perpetrator. But you must guard against committing lashon harah against the sinner lest you be judged also. In the case of the pecking hens, you remove the bully one that leads the attacks.

We shared this last week but it deserves to be shared once again with more emphasis.

Mat 18:21-35 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

Yehovah is this King and He has forgiven you all your sins. He has removed all your debts you owed for your sins. He did that for you. He did that for you when you repent. But if you will not repent then He has not forgiven you.

Some of you act just like those chickens pecking at the one poor soul who has not yet learned what you know or does not yet comprehend that they are sinning. peck peck peck

Yehovah gets angry when we do this. Here again is that word angry that we have studied many times in recent months.

In Lev 23, we are told of how furious He gets and sends His armies to those who will not repent. We are told the same thing in the parable about the invitation to the wedding. Yehovah gets angry and sends His armies to destroy those who would not come to the wedding.

You all know and understand the teaching in The 2300 Days of Hell and you also know about the 4th curse of Lev 23 and how it lines up with the 4th Sabbatical cycle. This fourth Sabbatical cycle began in 2017 and goes to 2023. This is the cycle of war. Do you really think it wise to make Yehovah angry with you now in this Sabbatical cycle by you pecking, pecking, pecking at others over their sins when your own sins are so glaring?

No, you ought to be showing them mercy in order for you to get mercy for your past.

I am by no means saying to hide the other person's sins. Mathew 18 tells us how to go about dealing with them.

Always remember what goes around comes around. The way you treat others is how you will be treated.

Again look at Lev 19:16

You shall not go about as a talebearer among your people; nor shall you take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I am the Lord. (NKJV)

Lev 19:16 `Thou dost not go slandering among thy people; thou dost not stand against the blood of thy neighbour; I *am* Jehovah. (YLT)

Lev 19:16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD. (JPS)

Lev 19:16 Do not go about saying untrue things among your people, or take away the life of your neighbour by false witness: I am the Lord. (BBE)

Lev 19:16 “You are not to go around slandering your people. “You are not to stand idle when your neighbors life is at stake. I am the LORD. (ISV)

So we have talked to you about slandering. Now notice what it says in the ISV version about not standing by while the life of your neighbor is at stake. You are not to gossip about anyone but when you see someone harming others you must step in to prevent it or stop it before they are further harmed or killed.

This was the reason I wrote last week. I happened to see people speaking ill of one Sandy Bruce. And many were relentlessly attacking him. I did not have all the facts. After my News Letter last week one of the leaders from the Philippines contacted me to humbly ask about my news letter. In our talk he told me all the facts that I was not aware of. That I and others under the misnomer of Lashon Harah did not speak about.

This spring Sandy was in the Philippines visiting the same places I had gone to two years before.

This Pastor was the one who confronted Sandy Bruce about his adulterous relationship with a Catholic Filipino girl. Sandy lost it on him calling him many names and that he Sandy Bruce did not have to answer to him. After this the verbal attacks began against this Pastor Leo. Sandy and his promoter Yahnutan Nollara wrote to many of the groups they had visited and told lies about Pastor Leo. Again this is according to Pastor Leo.

Many of these groups were brand new to Torah. After they heard from SB and YN they stopped keeping the Sabbath and went back to their Christian church which they had recently left.

In Manila it was Bro. Aike who now confronted SB and it was Bro Aike who was then attacked, having slanderous tales spread about him. Again all lies but they were being spread by SB and YN. Bro Aike has brought a libel suit against them, and Sandy has since fled the Philippines and we do not know if he left his "wife" behind.

Again in the wake of SB and YN slandering are many new people to Torah who have now left and gone back to the churches they came from. Bro Aike and Leo are out there working hard to show the Torah to these people and many people come to keep the Torah. Whole groups at one time.

Bro Leo reminded me that I had warned them that wolves would come and decimate the flocks. Again Lev 19 demands that when we see our brethren, our neighbours lives at stake we must act. And this is exactly why we are now stating these facts to warn the brethren of this mans methods before he wreaks any more havoc on other groups or people.

You can count on him attacking me for this report today. He did so last year and many of those he contacted stopped following me. I did not defend myself and waited for someone who would. Many left me last year because of the lies Sandy told about me. Now he is doing it again to Bro Leo and Bro Aike in the Philippines. Sandy will also use various names when he attacks. So be forewarned about this man who has no problem destroying the work of others in order to gain a following after himself.

Last year Sandy Bruce began to attack me after we disagreed over Chanukah. We were in a private discussion talking nicely when he posted an attack deriding me. He then wrote to all those who supported me and caused division to the point that many of those people left our fellowship. He then prevented me from being able to talk to him or contact him to discuss the situation.

Sandy Bruce changes his name to a number of aliases and will not talk to any one about the things he has committed. Bro Aike and Bro Leo confronted Sandy about these things. And now we are bringing them to your attention as Mathew 18 tells us to. We are not adding to the gossip or slander and we are not telling you things from 2nd or third-hand parties. These are first person stories from those involved. Pray for this man.

Now....

Having warned you about Lashon Harah and now having acted on the second part of Lev 19 just as Pinchas did to stop the plague, we must also now teach you something from this mess.

How are you as an individual suppose to deal with a wolf when it comes into the flock?

Yes the shepherd will watch out for them when they can see them but sometimes they do get by just as it happened in this case.

We have been encouraging Bro Leo and Bro Aike and helping them since we met them in 2015. We are brothers with them in this work now. Each teacher is to build upon the Apostles and the Prophets of which Yehshua is the cornerstone. (Eph 2:2) Those of us who teach must build up the assembly based on these principles and not be tearing it down.

The only way you as an individual can combat the next wolf to come is by studying your Torah so that you know it. Each of you from the teen in the assembly to the Mother to the Father. Each of you individually and collectively must be Berean about everything you are being taught.

You cannot just sit there and be entertained by the music or the social atmosphere and the great teachings. You must be proving these things on your own at home and you must be studying. Other wise you will be like some who when the ill wind blows across their door they will not be able to stand up to it and or prevent it from harming others.

Each person must study to gain the Knowledge of Yehovah. each person must Study to gain the understanding of the Torah. Each person must study to gain the wisdom. And all three you gain by asking Yehovah for them.

Each person must be working towards being the next Pinchas ready to stand up and defend the Torah against any person, if they are the prince or the princess or someone claiming to be the Levitical High Priest. You must know your Torah in order to know that they are not obeying it.

I was saddened to see the attacks on Sandy Bruce. I was angered to hear that he had caused new members to stop attending, and stop learning about Yehovah because of the lies he was spreading and telling about good men who are doing a good work in the Philippines.

There are many of you who read this News Letter and share it with still more. One day I will be the one being slandered. It has happened before. People praying for my death. No matter what is said about me or any of the leaders you are learning from, you must be able to prove all things from your own Bible. We will be arrested and in jail and you will be told this or that. Know your Bible. Know your Bible and be ready to stand for the truth no matter what comes. Because more is coming and it will be much much worse.

We are drawing closer and closer to the time of trouble that is going to test all of us. Get ready. Be ready and remain ready.

We have been showing you these past few weeks about the teachings of Paul and how they were as Peter said twisted by those who know not the Torah.

2Pe 3:16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

We are showing you how many in the Christian world use grace in order not to keep the law and this is where they have erred. At the same time as we do this, this teaching will cause many in the Messianic groups to become uncomfortable. I know I am when I study this. Why? Because we too, need to be reminded that we are not saved because we keep the Torah. There is a line that some cross between keeping Torah for the Love of Yehovah and keeping all the other laws to justify themselves.

Never forget Yehovah called you while you were not keeping the Law, while you were still keeping the pagan holidays. He called you when you were doing that!. That is the grace He showed to you. Think about this as you read.

Last week we covered the controversial subject of grace and law and we focused on Galatians and we showed you that Paul did not do away with the law. What we did show you was that if you use the law to gain your salvation you are in error. We also showed you that if you throw out the law and do not obey it, and claim that you are saved by grace alone that this too, is in error.

Indeed you are saved by the grace of Yehovah and that alone, but you still need to obey the commands because you love Yehovah.

This week we will look at the controversial scriptures in Romans and show them as they should be.

I am again going to quote from Torah Rediscovered by Ariel and D'vorah Berkowitz. Pages 115-117.

The theme of Shu'al's letter to the Romans is similar to that of his epistle to the Galatians, only more comprehensive. The main topic is justification, or righteousness (the same root is used for both in Hebrew and Greek). In Romans, the rabbi is seeking to expound on the theme of Yahweh's righteousness in all its various aspects. As in Galatians, he also must deal with the concept of the Torah, for there were some in Rome as well who sought to be justified or made righteous by following the system of law that they thought was the Torah.

Since the themes are similar, the traditions of interpretation of the "law passages" are also similar. The church has consisted mostly of non-Jews throughout the centuries, most of whom have neither comprehended nor appreciated the Torah of Moses. Therefore they have

taken little care to interpret the “law passages” properly. There are two key passages in Romans which have been especially misunderstood by many exegetes, resulting in a gross anti-Torah sentiment among the people of Christianity.

The first is in Romans 10:4 ‘For Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.’ Many understand this verse to mean that Yahshua put an end to the Torah; that anyone who believes in Him no longer has any responsibility to follow the Torah, because Yahshua followed it for him.

A closer look at the Greek however reveals a different meaning. The Greek word translated “end” is the word telos. This word actually stresses the “goal” or the purpose for something. When used in this verse, we can say that Messiah is the “goal (telos) of the law”. Or, as Stern commentary translates it, “Messiah is the goal at which the Torah aims”. In other words, in the context, Sha’ul is speaking of people seeking the righteousness of Yahweh. They should seek it as revealed in the Torah and most fully realized in the Messiah. Stern writes, ‘The goal at which the Torah aims is acknowledging and trusting in the Messiah, who offers on the ground of this trusting the very righteousness they are seeking. They would see the righteousness which the Torah offers is offered through Him and only through Him.’

Thus, instead of teaching that through faith in Messiah the Torah is now done away with. This verse teaches that the Torah’s goal is to point someone to the righteousness found through faith in the Messiah. However, as a new creation in Messiah after receiving Yahshua, he is now able to live the Torah lifestyle through the power of the indwelling Spirit of Yahweh. In so doing, he is living out who he now is—the righteousness of Yahweh in Messiah. The Torah is the revealed righteousness of Yahweh. The Torah lifestyle is the living out of that righteousness. What is it that is written in the new-creation heart and mind? The very Torah of Yahweh! (Jeremiah 31:33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, ” I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.)

Now we will look at one of the passages most commonly used to demonstrate that the believer has no responsibility to follow the Torah: the seventh chapter of the book of Romans. To be sure, this is a difficult passage to understand completely. However, it can be interpreted accurately enough to confirm that it has nothing to do with eliminating a believer’s responsibility to live the Torah, to live the righteousness of Yahweh that he has become as a new creation in Messiah.

The key questions that we must ask about this passage are these: What has died? What has changed? Was it the Torah that died, or was it something else? We ask these questions because the first half of the chapter speaks about a death, a separation, a change that occurred when Messiah came into our lives.

We know from reading Mathew 5:17 that the Torah could not have died. It is Yahweh’s

eternal Word! Therefore, something else must have died. What has changed is our relationship to the Torah, because of our changed relationship to sin. Before we knew Messiah's righteousness by faith, we attempted to use the Torah as a means of earning righteousness, something it was never intended to be. Only one outcome could ever have resulted from such an illegitimate usage, and is condemnation-because such works-righteousness could never remove our sin.

When Yahweh brought us to faith in Messiah, however, everything changed. By faith, we transferred our trust from works we attempted to do ourselves to the finished work of Yahshua. Our new reality is that Messiah has atoned for our sin and made us new creations. In other words, we submitted to Yahweh's righteousness found in Yahshua instead of relying on man's righteousness through our own efforts.

Thus, our relationship to the Torah has changed. Before, because we were using it wrongly by attempting to earn our justification through following it, all the Torah could do was condemn us. Now, because we believe in Messiah and are trusting in Yahweh to justify us, the Torah has become something completely different. Just as its Author designed it to be, it is 'Holy, Righteous, and good.' (Romans 7:12).

Or relationship to the Torah can change, according to Sha'ul, because the problem was not the Torah-it was sin. "Therefore, did that which is good [Torah] become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful." (Romans 7:13)

For years, many have been hearing a different interpretation of this crucial passage. Now we want a new voice to be heard. Listen to it one more time as a summary. This passage teaches that our enemy was sin, not the Torah. Because we are new creations in Messiah, our entire relationship to sin has changed. Therefore, our entire relationship to Torah has changed. Before Messiah, sin caused the Torah to be a book which, because we followed it in an attempt to earn righteousness, largely served to condemn us. But Messiah has shown us that we cannot earn righteousness. Rather, it is a gift from Yahweh to all who trust in the sacrificial atonement and the subsequent resurrection of Messiah. Hence, after we trusted in the Messiah, the Torah became for us what it was really meant to be all along: a holy, righteous, and good book.

Torah is Yahweh's teaching to men about righteousness-what it is and how it behaves. The true believer (anyone who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb) does not do in order to become. He does because he is what Yahweh has made him-righteousness of Yahweh in Messiah. Thus James writes, "I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:18) The true Torah is the walk of faith-faith and rest in the finished work of Messiah. "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says, 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it'." (Isaiah 30:15) Instead, "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from Yahweh, and sought to establish

their own, they did not submit to Yahweh's righteousness'. Romans 10:3)

These words of Sha'ul summarize perfectly why and how man has perverted the true Torah of Yahweh into a system of works by which he believes he can establish his own righteousness. Read the rabbi's words once again, and think about them carefully:

"Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from Yahweh, and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to Yahweh's righteousness."

James, fully comprehending this, declares, "I will show you my faith by my works." (James 2:18) "The man who looks into the perfect Torah"-the what?-"the perfect Torah that gives freedom"-that gives what? Freedom! Freedom for what?-Freedom to be who we are now!-"and continues to do this, not forgetting who he is but doing who he is-he will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:25, our paraphrase)

There is a righteousness that is by the Torah (Romans 10:5). It is a righteousness that is ours in Yahweh (Romans 10:3), and it is by faith (Romans 10:6). This is the Good News of Romans 10:16. But not all the Israelites accepted the Good News. Instead they, and mankind throughout the ages, have developed the concept of "law". As we have seen, performance-based acceptance is a detrimental theological idea all in itself.

"Thus says the Lord, "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls.' But you said, 'We will not walk in it'" (Jeremiah 6:16) The true Torah is "a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold of her will be blessed. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace." (Proverbs 3:16-18)

When the words of life (true Torah) are changed into "law," they cease to be the words of life.

We will next examine some of the passages in Romans from the book Hold fast pages 137-143.

Romans 2:28-29

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.

The question from this passage is, "Who is a real Jewish person? It seems to be teaching that anyone whose heart is circumcised is a Jewish person. Thus, the thinking goes, gentile believers in Yahshua, having their hearts circumcised, are "spiritual Jews."

We do not interpret this passage to mean that gentile believers in Yahshua are “spiritual Jews”. The reason is simple. In the context, Paul is addressing the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or the physical Jewish people. Gentiles were addressed in 2:1-16, Beginning 2:17, Paul began to speak directly to Jewish people.

In that light, Paul is making an important distinction in this passage. He is saying that although he descendant of Jacob is circumcised (in the flesh) that alone does not make him the kind of Jewish person Yahweh called him to be. To prove his point, Paul makes a play on the word “Jew”. The readers understood that the word “Jew” is a derivative from the word “Judah” (Yehuda), which means “one who praises Yah.” Hence Paul is saying that a descendant of Jacob who praises Yahweh from a new creation heart is a true worshiper of Yahweh. Mere physical circumcision does not make one’s heart circumcised. It is clear from the context that Paul was saying that the only way to receive this circumcision of the heart was to submit to Yahweh and receive His righteousness as a gift of grace through faith in Yahshua the Messiah. Any Jewish person who has done this is a spiritual, as well as physical, descendant of Abraham.

Romans 3:19-31

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. 29 Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

In this section, Paul appears to say that the purpose of the Torah (rendered “law” in just about every English translation) is to give one a knowledge of sin (3:20). That is true. However, that is not the only purpose for the Torah. This is where many Bible teachers become confused. The reason that Paul says in this passage that the Torah reveals sin is because he is teaching that no one may be justified by living according to the Torah. If one were to attempt to do so, the Torah could only do two things for him: 1) help to make him aware that he is

sinful and desperately in need of Yahweh's righteousness instead of trying to establish his own, and 2) reveal the Messiah to him.

Verse 28 states the issue clearly when Paul declares that justification is a gift from Yahweh and has no connection whatsoever to what a person does, especially what a person does concerning Torah obedience.

In verse 31, Paul affirms the validity of the Torah. He says that the Torah itself teaches the principle of justification by faith and faith alone. Receiving Yahweh's gift of salvation (justification) is perfectly consistent with the Torah's teaching on the matter (see Genesis 15). Because of this, believing in Yahshua does not nullify the Torah; rather it upholds its teachings.

Romans 4:13-15

For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; 15 for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

Here is another passage that appears to teach the purpose of the Torah. Like the previous section of Romans, many Bible students read, "for the law brings about wrath" and assume that, along with revealing sin, the purpose of the Torah is to bring about wrath. Our comments for this passage are similar to those made in Romans 3. The only thing the Torah can do for the unbeliever who relies upon his adherence to a set of rules in order to earn his righteousness, is help to reveal his sin, warn him of the impending judgment of Yahweh's wrath, and point him to the Messiah.

This passage is not in a context that speaks about following the Torah as a lifestyle for believers. Like most of the passages in Romans, the context is a refutation against the attempt to use the Torah as a means of justification.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

When doing any teaching from the pages of the books of Moses is suggested to some believers in Yahshua, the usual response is something like, "Does not that make me under the law? In Yahshua I am under grace, not the law." This rather typical response is based on such passages as Romans 6:14. We think that there is a better way to understand this passage. First, let us quote a respected Bible scholar on the meaning of the phrase in question and then we will finish with our own comments.

C.E.B. Cranfield has shed some light on the meaning of these two Greek phrases, helping us to perceive what Sha'ul actually meant as well as to understand more fully his true stand on the Torah.

'It will be well to bear in mind the fact (which, as far as we know, had not received attention before it was noted) that the Greek language of Paul's day possessed no word group corresponding to our "legalism", "legalist", and "legalistic". This means that he lacked a convenient terminology for expressing a vital distinction, and so was surely seriously hampered in the work of clarifying the Christian position with regard to the law. In view of this we should always, we think, be ready to reckon with the possibility that Pauline statements, which at first sight seem to disparage the law, are really directed not against the law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of it for which we now have a convenient terminology.'

We encounter the same dilemma in the Hebrew language. There is no Hebrew word which can easily convey the concepts of "legalism" or "legalist". Thus Sha'ul, whether using his Hebrew-oriented mind or his Greek language, was hindered in his attempts to explain that legalism was not what Yahweh intended.

Based on this understanding of the Greek in Romans 6:14, we can say, then, that this verse is teaching, that because Yahweh regenerated us and caused us to believe in Yahshua, we now have an entirely new relationship to sin. We no longer rely on any legalistic efforts to earn Yahweh's righteousness. Instead, we rely on the grace of Yahweh. Legalism and grace never mix! Or, to put it in slightly different terms, law and grace never mix. But Torah and grace go hand in hand.

One of the many implications of trusting in the grace of Yahweh is that we become new creations in Messiah. This means, among other things, that we now have a new relationship to sin. It is just as 6:14 states, "sin is no longer our master". For the new creation person, this is most definitely true! Relying on legalistic methods to attain salvation could never change our relationship to sin. Only trusting in the grace of Yahweh could affect such a change. For those of us who are now a new creation by virtue of the new birth, our relationship to sin is forever changed. The Torah is not a legalistic document. It describes the lifestyle of the redeemed, and it was never Yahweh's intention that obeying it would achieve salvation.

Romans 7:1-12

Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? 2 For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. 3 So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so

that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5 For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

7 What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET ." 8 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; 10 and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; 11 for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

At first glance, this seems like a very devastating passage for those believers who desire to live by the Torah. After all, does it not say, "you were also made to die to the Law through the body of Messiah?"

Indeed this is a tricky passage. Keeping in mind two things will help to open up this passage for us in a more accurate way. First, as always, notice the context. These verses fall in the larger context of Romans 5-8. In this section of Romans, the rabbi from Tarsus is discussing some of the practical effects of being justified by grace through faith. As we stated in the previous verse, one of these effects is that a believer in Yahshua now has a completely different relationship to sin than he had before. He has died to sin and sin is no longer his master.

Secondly, verse 10-12 provide us with an insight into what Paul really thought of the Torah. As we can readily see from those verses, the Torah was not the problem. Sin was the real culprit in man. Let us see how this unfolds from this passage.

In 7:1-2, it becomes clear that before we trusted in Messiah, our problem was not the Torah, but sin! Sin is that which wrecked havoc with our lives. One of the miracles of the new birth-as this passage is pointing out-is that a believer does not relate to sin the same way any longer. Consequently, Paul says in verse 11, "for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment deceived me, and through it killed me." Sin, not Torah was the problem. Human sin is what messed Yahweh's pure word up!

Hence when Messiah comes into our lives we are released from our bondage to sin and any legalistic relationship we may have previously had with Yahweh's teaching. That is what

Paul means in verse 4 when he says that we were made to die to the law. Before Messiah came into our lives, we related to the Torah in a legalistic way. The only thing the torah could do for us in those circumstances was to condemn us by revealing our sin to us. That relationship to both the Torah and to sin had to change.

Thank Yahweh that in Messiah it did change! As far as sin is concerned, it was circumcised from us and relegated to our flesh. (Romans 7:17 Colossians 2:11-13) As far as Torah is concerned, once our relationship to sin was changed through our becoming a new creation, the real value of the Torah for the believer began to come to light. Accordingly, Paul says several positive things about the Torah in verse 10-12.

Yahweh's intention that the Torah would be real life for His people can now become fulfilled. It was our own sin that caused the life of the Torah to become death in us. Now in Messiah, Yahweh's real intention for the Torah can be fulfilled in us. Yahweh's Torah is Holy. There is nothing about it that needs to be avoided. It is not evil. It is not unhealthy for Yahweh's people. In fact the Scriptures themselves clearly declare, "These words are not just idle words for you, they are your life" (Deuteronomy 32:47) It is a covenant and a set of instructions making clear to Yahweh's people how to live out their new creation lives in the righteousness of Yahweh.

Yahweh's Torah is good. The Greek word translated "good" is *agathē* (αγαθή) . It stresses both external and moral goodness, and usefulness and perfection. It can also be rendered "useful". In other words, far from the Torah being a detriment to the believers life, it is useful and helpful to follow for our spiritual, moral, and ethical well being.

The Torah is righteous. It is the teaching about Yahweh's righteousness. Moreover, being intrinsically righteous, it was meant only for those whom Yahweh has made righteous by His grace. It is not a vehicle to attain righteousness; rather it is a book of instruction revealing what Yahweh's righteousness looks like and how to live out the righteousness that we now have become in Messiah.

We will stop here for this week Brethren and I have special teaching for you next week. Which will explain so much to many of you that your heads will hurt.