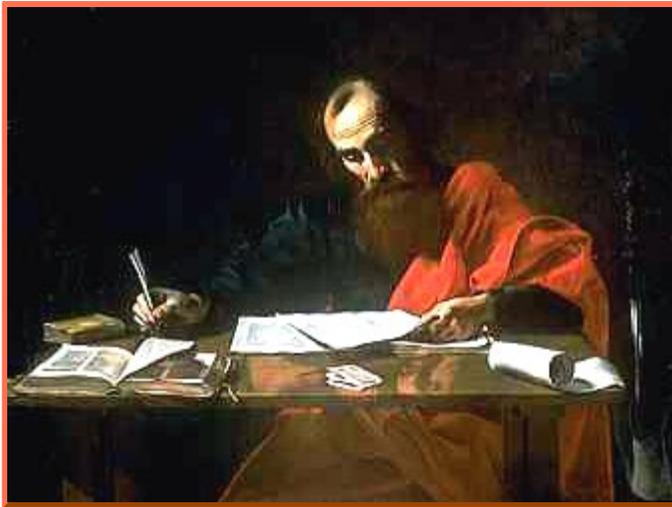


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**the Letters of Sha'ul (the Hebrew Apostle Paul)**

### What About "the Law"?

## the Curse of the Law?

by haRold Smith  
a citizen of the Commonwealth  
(Ephesians 2:19)

*"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, **believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets...**" Acts 24:14*

*"For He, Himself, is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh **the dividing wall of hostility**; by abolishing the law of commandments **expressed in ordinances...**" Ephesians 2:14-15*

*"For as many as are of the **works of the Law are under a curse**; for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to perform them'." Galatians 3:10*

Recently, a reader wrote to ask, "I hope you will prepare a dissertation on Paul's understanding of the status of the Law of Commandments in Statutes, the relevance and value of these to us today under the New Covenant and the meaning of the words 'The Cup is the New Covenant in My blood'. Please specifically address Paul's apparent contradiction in the NT scriptures of Acts 24:14 and Ephesians 2:14 that causes confusion among disciples today because of the seeming division between Paul and the teachings of Yeshua, the Prophets and Moses. Nowhere do the scriptures say that the Law would be abolished while Paul seems to say it has been."

It is only if we approach scripture from a strictly Greek/English viewpoint that we run into seeming contradictions. If we approach scripture from the Hebrew perspective they were written in with the intent of finding the continuity found throughout these words of Truth that uphold the Nature of Spirit, who is YHVH, that never changes; we will find the evidence that He is faithful to uphold His Promises and remain true to His Nature. But that approach requires a paradigm shift in our thinking from what we have traditionally been taught about the way we approach scripture. For instance, most Christians are taught that Paul converted to Christianity. This is a lie because Paul could not have possibly converted to a religion (Christianity) which can not be found historically until some 250 years after the time Paul stated in Acts 24:14 that he believed the God of his forefathers and kept everything laid down by Torah. Christianity believes that he left "the Law" behind as outmoded because the Messiah "did away with" the Law and introduced the era of grace in spite of Yeshua's statement in **Matthew 5:17 (click on highlighted words to view content)** where He specifically says He did **NOT** come to abolish Torah (mistranslated as "**the Law**"). This passage from Galatians is typically one of the proof texts used to show that no man can keep the Law, that the Law is a curse and is therefore not part of the new life in "Christ". But, since words mean things - consider how Paul's words from Galatians are perceived against what they actually say. Read this again without the filter of a predisposed theology! Paul cites **Deuteronomy 27:26** as a proof that the curse falls on those who do not keep the Law - not on those who do keep it!! Something is really strange about Paul's argument here if looked at from the traditional Christian theology. First he says that anyone under the "works of the Law" is cursed and then he immediately says that the curse applies to anyone who doesn't keep the Law. Is Paul contradicting himself?

The way most Christians read this verse makes it appear as if it is a straightforward contradiction. Step 1: Everyone under the works of the Law is cursed. This implies that the Law itself is a very bad thing. But, Step 2: Everyone who doesn't do what the Law says is cursed. This implies that those who keep the Law are doing great and the Law is a very good thing. So which is it? The answer is found in the technical phrase "works of the Law" that Sha'ul (the Hebrew apostle Paul) uses, Did you notice that Sha'ul doesn't say, "As many as are of the Law are cursed"? He uses the phrase "works of the Law." Since Sha'ul cites Deuteronomy as his authority that keeping the Law is a good thing, his phrase "works of the Law" must mean something other than "keeping the Law." Otherwise Sha'ul's words are contradictory. So we have to ask ourselves, just what does "works of the Law" really mean?

*Sha'ul* uses this phrase to describe the **Legalists**. These are men from Jerusalem who have come to Galatia to argue that in order to be a follower of YHVH, one must first become an orthodox follower of the religion, Judaism. In other words, these men are advocating the process of being a proselyte which involves **circumcision** - *before* a person is acceptable to YHVH. The "works of the Law" is *Sha'ul's* way of describing those who claim that a believer must do something before YHVH will offer grace. *Sha'ul* teaches that YHVH freely offers grace to all - Hebrew and Gentile alike. These men claim that a Gentile must become a Hebrew in order to find acceptance before YHVH. *Sha'ul* strenuously objects. Why does *Sha'ul* say that those who advocate "works of the Law" are cursed? Because, in *Sha'ul's* view, they have already broken one of the fundamental commandments of Scripture. He provides the reference for his assessment in the next verse. "*The righteous man shall live by faith*" (quoting **Habakkuk 2:4**) which tells us that anyone who imposes additional requirements for acceptability, that is, anything except faith, has violated YHVH's instructions, and as Deuteronomy 27:26 shows, is therefore cursed.



Does this mean that *Sha'ul* thinks that the Law itself is a curse? Hardly! How could he believe that the Law itself is a curse when he expects us to keep it? How could he claim that the Law is a bad thing when he clearly says, "*The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy righteous and good*" in **Romans 7:12**? It isn't the Law that is the problem. The problem is claiming that the Law is the basis of acceptance before YHVH, that keeping the Law results in **salvation**. The Legalists have confused grace and obedience. Grace is YHVH's gift. It is not earned. It doesn't require prior rituals or practices. But, contrary to popular, traditional Christian teaching, Grace did not begin with the NT. It is the Grace inherent in the Nature of YHVH that delivered the Hebrews from the bondage of the Egyptians - they did nothing to "earn" it. However, YHVH's Grace upon my life is merely the gateway to obedience. Once my life is committed to His Kingdom, I am expected to live according to His Kingdom rules, just as I would be expected to live by

the rules of any kingdom where I am a citizen. The **Ten Words** of YHVH were given after the Hebrews were delivered as instructions on how to live within YHVH's Kingdom. When I live according to YHVH's rules, I am blessed. When I don't, I am cursed. That's what Deuteronomy teaches me. Yeshua extolled this citizenry in **Matthew 7:21**. Perhaps the ESV's addition to the English translation of **Galatians 3:10** helps. It reads, "*For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.*" If we understand this to mean that there are men who claim one is saved by doing what the Law requires, then we can see why *Sha'ul* thinks these men are cursed. They have broken the first of the Ten Words of the Father with their very claim. Circumcision has never saved anyone. *Sha'ul* clearly sees that none of my rule-keeping behavior has any affect on YHVH's grace freely offered to me, whether Hebrew or Gentile. Obedience is devotion to YHVH after receiving His Grace, not before. The apparent contradiction in *Sha'ul* comes from reading "works of the Law" as if it were the equivalent of "those who live according to the Law." But *Sha'ul* never says that. So where did we get that idea anyway? Let's go ask the perpetrators of this doctrine - **Augustine** and Luther. And *Sha'ul* is not the only author of the Messianic Writings to uphold Torah - "*For this is the love of YHVH, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous*" found in **1John 5:3** is just one instance of such. Please read the scriptural research found in the article **Torah or "the Law?"** to understand the traditional discrepancy given to these words.

*"Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Yeshua. Worship YHVH.' For the testimony of the Life of Yeshua IS the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10*

Revelation 19:10b says, "...the testimony of Yeshua IS the spirit of prophecy". Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon defines the Hebrew word **nava'** (translated as the English "prophecy") as the "spoken oracles of YHVH". So, inserting the proper Hebrew definition into this passage shows that the Life of Yeshua reveals how YHVH's Words are to be construed. The words of *Sha'ul* do not override the words of Yeshua - and if you think they do, then you are reading them from a traditional religious viewpoint rather than what the words themselves actually say. Words mean things. By Yeshua's own admission in **John 14:23-24** He said His words were not His but the Words of His Father. Everything Yeshua said can be referenced back to the *Tanakh* (OT) - even His one lone "new" commandment of **John 13:34** is not found to actually be "new" but simply a narrowing of YHVH's words found in **Leviticus 19:18**. The Words of YHVH are the **perpetual illustrations** of His Nature - and Yeshua chose to manifest that Nature by His obedience to the Truth as the example for us to follow (**Matthew 16:24**). Likewise, *Sha'ul's* description of the "wall of division" found in **Ephesians 2:14** follows a similar descriptive path as that of Galatians 3:10 - which is in line with the Nature of YHVH. It is important to recognize how the very structure of our

language subtly alters how we understand the text of scripture. Hebrew does not work like English or any of the Indo-European languages of which we are familiar. First, it has no vowels. Secondly, the structure of the Hebrew letters communicates a second level of meaning impossible to translate and, third, the syntax of Hebrew is strikingly different than other languages. Even though the only documents we have of the Messianic Writings (NT) are in Greek, they were still written by Hebrews out of a Hebrew mindset influenced through Hebrew culture producing a uniquely Hebrew perspective that were addressed to, primarily, a Hebrew audience who understood the nuances of the Hebrew language. To truly grasp what these Hebrews were trying to communicate, means we must first understand the perspective these words were written from.

With the text of [Hebrews 8:13](#), the Hebraic background of the word "new" is derived from a direct quote of the passage in found in [Jeremiah 31:31](#) and cannot be taken in the sense of essentially or completely new - as from scratch. To understand why the Greek word *kainos*, meaning "to make fresh", was chosen to represent the Hebrew word *chadash* (also translated as the English "new"), we must first come to an understanding that the original Hebrew root word it is derived from means to re-new, or re-pair. It is speaking of a new element that was previously out of sight which is now coming into view - not something newly created. It is the revelation of what was always present but unperceived. It is only by divorcing *kainen* from the Hebraic influence of the word actually used in Jeremiah 31 that someone could conclude that this represents an entirely unprecedented creative act - and that is being disingenuous with the words. There is no **"NEW" covenant** - only the fulfillment of what was there before. Therefore, from the Hebraic perspective these words are presented in, what is "new" about the covenant is the manner of delivery of YHVH's Words. They are now written and renewed on the hearts of men who will receive them, instead of on tablets of stone - **BUT THEY ARE STILL THE SAME WORDS** ([John 1:12](#), [Jeremiah 31:33](#)). These Words are not altered, not done away with, as Yeshua reinforces in [Matthew 5:17-19](#), just a **better way** of having them delivered - that is, by or through Spirit. The Greek word *pleroo*, translated as "fulfill" in this passage from Matthew, means "to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to fill to the brim" - there is nothing in that definition that even remotely lends itself to something "done away with". When a cup is "filled to the brim" it means it is whole or complete so that nothing else can be added - it does not mean to throw the cup away, for then there would be no way to partake of what refreshment the cup holds. The Covenant was fulfilled when the "fiery law" of [Deuteronomy 33:2](#) appeared as "tongues of fire" within those believers waiting on the Promise at the Hebrew feast of *Yom Shavu'ot* (renamed "Pentecost") - the same earthshaking day the Words of YHVH's Nature had first been given in fire to the family of Jacob (Israel) at Sinai on tablets of stone fifty days after their Exodus from bondage and the first *Pesach* (Passover) as it is still celebrated today.



In [Matthew 26:28](#), [Mark 14:24](#), and [Luke 22:19-20](#), the word "new" in front of "testament" or "covenant" (depending on the translation) **is not found in the original manuscripts** - having been artificially inserted at a later date to reinforce a **replacement theology** embraced by the translators. The text should be read "*this is My blood of the covenant which is poured out for the many...*" - not a "new" covenant, but a promised restoration or fulfillment of what came before. Yeshua was showing His disciples the fulfillment of His Father's covenant - not initiating a "new covenant" (see [One Covenant, part 1](#) for further explanation). Yeshua said the bread IS His Body (see the difference between His Body and **the Church**) and to divide the wine among them which IS His Blood (see the distinction given His Blood to His Body in [the Inheritance](#)). Yeshua was saying to His disciples present at that supper to keep the covenant with each other in the same manner as He had exemplified in His Life toward them. Since words mean things, we must consider all the words of a passage before drawing our conclusions.

Thus, when all the words are looked at together from the Hebraic perspective they were written in, we find no contradictions within the writings of *Sha'ul*; instead, **scriptures show** Yeshua, *Sha'ul* and the rest of the disciples to be in complete alignment with Torah.

*"And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is broken for you. Each time you partake of it, **remember how I was with you.**' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup that is poured out for you **is the covenant fulfilled in my blood**'..." Luke 22:19-20*

**What About "the Law"? Series**  
**Part One - Torah or "the Law"?**  
**Part Two - the Curse of the Law?**  
**Part Three - Under the Law?**  
**Part Four - Legalism**

**a discussion of the Curse of "the Law"?**



**???Questions???**

Please feel free to email me at [harold@hethathasaneer.com](mailto:harold@hethathasaneer.com). While not claiming to have all the answers, it would be an honor to partake with you of what Spirit is uncovering.

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