

TK TORAH KEEPERS

Encouraging Believers in a Torah Observant Life

A Reasonable Argument for Keeping the Torah

By Glenn McWilliams

For centuries the Church has been teaching unsuspecting believers that Jesus came to set them free from the Law of YHWH ELOHIM. This has led many sincere Christians to believe that it is alright for them to live contrary to the very clear teaching of the scriptures. The Torah clearly teaches that the Sabbath is YHWH'S set apart day. The Torah clearly teaches that we are not to work on the Sabbath nor are we to cause any one else to work on the Sabbath. The Torah clearly states that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week. Yet the Church teaches that we do not have to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day, that we do not have to abstain from working on the Sabbath, nor is there anything wrong with believers causing other people to work on the Sabbath to accommodate our worldly dining and shopping habits. We do not have to follow the very clear instructions of the Torah because Jesus came to fulfill the Law and therefore did away with it. Therefore, according to the Church, even though the Eternal One commanded it, bound himself by it, had the people of Israel agree to it, had Moses record it, and sent his Son Yeshua to teach it and live it out before us, we are no longer obligated to do it. The Church erroneously teaches that because Jesus fulfilled the Law we are no longer obligated to keep YHWH'S Law. It is no wonder that the Jews have rejected the Church, Christianity, and their Jesus. The idea that the Messiah would come and free people from the Torah is contrary to every word about the Messiah found in the scriptures! Beyond this there is a great hypocrisy evident in the teaching of the Church.

With one side of their mouth the Church boldly declares freedom from the Law and then from the other side of their mouth they teach

that we are still, in fact, bound by the Law. When asked about keeping the Sabbath, the Feasts of YHWH, or the dietary laws the Church declares, "We are no longer under the law!" But when asked about adultery, murder, or stealing the Church teaches we are still obligated to the "Moral Law". So while they proclaim freedom from the Law with one breath with the next breath they reverse this decision and proclaim that we are in fact still under the Law. To accommodate this hypocritical teaching the Church explains that there are two different Laws: the Moral Law and the Ritual Law. Jesus evidently only came to do away with the ritual laws. There are several peculiar conclusions that may be drawn from this. The first is that if Jesus did away with the Law by fulfilling it, and he only did away with the ritual laws, then we may conclude that Jesus only kept the ritual laws and not the moral laws. This would mean that Jesus was immoral! The second conclusion that we may draw is this; if Jesus was indeed a moral person and kept the moral laws and they were not done away with then it would stand to reason that if Jesus kept the ritual laws then these were not done away with either, and are therefore just as much in effect as the moral laws are.

A second evidence of the hypocrisy of the Church's teaching lies in its response to our suggestion that we as the covenant people of YHWH are to be keeping the Torah. All too often I have been asked if I am keeping 100% of the Torah. These misguided believers then quote James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all."* Therefore our Christian Brothers would teach us that if we do not want to be obligated to keep every jot and tittle of the whole Law we should not keep any of it. How ironic it is that they who propose that we are to keep half of the law (the Moral Law) do not fear the judgment they intend to cast upon those who seek to keep the whole Torah. In other words, the Church teaches, that if one dares to keep even one commandment of the Law he is obligated then to keep the whole Law. But if this is indeed their teaching, it would stand to reason that we are either no longer obligated to keep the moral law, or we are obligated to keep the whole Torah. Clearly one cannot arbitrarily divide the Torah

between the Moral and Ritual Law. The Sabbath gives us a great example of this. The Church teaches that we no longer have to keep the Sabbath because the Sabbath is about worship which belongs to the ritual laws. But the Torah also commands that we are not to cause anyone else to work on the Sabbath.

“Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as YHWH thy Elohim hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labor and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of YHWH thy Elohim: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy ass nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as you. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that YHWH thy ELOHIM brought thee out thence though a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore YHWH thy ELOHIM commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.” (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

Here we see a number of important elements. We should note some of the purposes for the Sabbath as they are alluded to in this passage. First we see that one purpose of the Sabbath is to remind us of creation, and more importantly the Creator. Every week we are reminded that we are not the owners of the earth but merely the stewards of it. The Sabbath teaches us that how we are to interact with the rest of creation, which is clearly a moral issue. Second we also see that the Sabbath is a reminder of the exodus from Egypt, where we were not allowed to keep the Sabbath. Thus we are reminded of how it felt to have someone other than YHWH in charge of our schedule, our life, and our finances. The Sabbath prohibits us from becoming tyrannical employers who exploit their employees for personal wealth and gain. This too is clearly a moral issue. Finally we are called to sanctify and rest on the Sabbath, to cease our labor. This command is to protect us from the disease of materialism and greed. By resting on this one day, we are given time to stop and ponder the right values of our lives. This too is a moral issue. So we see that in this one commandment to keep the Sabbath there are

several moral issues involved. Clearly the Sabbath cannot be considered merely a “ritual” law. If this is correct, then the Sabbath belongs to the category of moral law. The Church has no right to change the Sabbath, or free anyone from it. There is an irony in all of this. Since the Church began teaching that we do not have to keep the Sabbath, more and more of its members are forced to work on Sunday. Employers do not honor religious days, either Saturday or Sunday. Many of these employers are in fact Church men and women. As the pastor of a Lutheran Church for 20 years, I watched as our congregation suffered a decline in attendance and income because the fruit of this erroneous teaching. Eventually we were forced to accommodate this sad reality by scheduling another time for worship. What day did we pick? Saturday the Sabbath!

The truth of the matter is there are still TEN Commandments and not nine. The Sabbath is still one of the commandments of YHWH. But this is not a teaching about the Sabbath. The point that I want to make is this. If the Church’s teaching about the Sabbath does not line up with the scriptures, maybe this is because the Church doesn’t understand the purpose of the Torah. At the heart of the Church’s teaching is the matter of salvation. The question that the Church is seeking to answer for people is “How are we saved?” Their answer is simple: “Believe in Jesus.” There is no room for the Law in this simple statement. But what if the Torah was never meant to be the means of personal salvation? What if Torah was never the answer to the question of salvation? As we shall see the Church’s teaching about Jesus doing away with the Law is based upon their own lack of understanding about very purpose of the Torah. The question of the Torah is “How do we serve?”

One of the greatest stories of “Salvation by grace through faith” in the bible is found in the Torah in the book of Shemot/Exodus. The children of Israel have become enslaved by the tyrannical king of Egypt. The Pharaoh feared the size and strength of the children of Israel and began to persecute, oppress, and scheme to kill the children of Israel. The children of Israel cried out to YHWH and He heard their cry and came to deliver them. We should note in this

story that there is nothing said about the children of Israel keeping the Torah, or keeping the Sabbath, or circumcising their children. There is nothing stating that the children of Israel merited this favor from YHWH because of their holy and righteous behavior. All that the Torah reports about the children of Israel is that they cried out in despair. YHWH hears their cry and comes and delivers them with plague and power. YHWH unconditionally delivers the Children of Israel. He parts the Red Sea and swallows up Pharaoh and his army. At this point in the story the children of Israel were saved! Moses even calls YHWH his salvation. We should also note that YHWH did all of this without any conditions being placed upon the children of Israel. Only after Israel was saved does YHWH invite them to His holy mountain (Mount Sinai) and offer them the opportunity to serve Him by keeping His covenant. Notice that the covenant came after the children of Israel had been unconditionally saved. Notice also that the children of Israel were not forced into the covenant, but invited in. Having seen all that YHWH did for them, the children of Israel willingly and lovingly entered into this marriage covenant with YHWH.

Here the Christians always ask, "If we do not keep the Law to get saved then why keep it?" The answer is simple, "Because he asked us to." The question now remains why did YHWH give us the Torah in the first place?

Again there is a simple and logical answer. The Torah is the self revelation of YHWH. The Torah contains within its many stories, teachings, commandments, ordinances and judgments, the revelation of YHWH'S many and wonderful attributes. The Torah is like a self portrait of the Creator. What YHWH was asked the children of Israel at Mount Sinai was to be His body and living image on the earth. Thus the Torah (the whole Torah) is job description for the children of Israel to be the image of the living Elohim on the earth. By keeping the Torah the children of Israel embody the attributes of YHWH that all of creation may see them. It is important then that we are able to keep the whole Torah. If we keep only half the Torah we are presenting only half the image. When we tamper with the true image of YHWH we are presenting a false image. If we live

according to the Church's teaching that we only are obligated to keep half of the image then we would be presenting an idol to the world. I will be so bold here as to assert that the Jesus of the Church is such a false Idol. Yeshua did not break the covenant, nor did he teach his talmid to live contrary to the Torah. In truth Yeshua taught and fulfilled the Torah exactly as it was meant to be done. In this Yeshua was the expressed and manifest image of the invisible Elohim on the earth. YHWH calls people to keep the Torah so that he will be known in his creation. This was the original purpose of man. Adam was to be the image of Elohim in the earth. We too, who believe in Yeshua have likewise been called to be the body of Elohim in the earth. We do this by following the Torah as Messiah taught it.

The prophet Ezekiel declared the promise of YHWH that He would pour His Spirit into us and cause us to keep His statutes and ordinances. Yeshua promised that when he ascended he would likewise pour out this Spirit upon his followers. If we are the followers of Yeshua, and if we claim to be filled with the Spirit the Holy One, then we should sense the Torah being written in our hearts and find it evident in our lives. If one claims to be filled with this Spirit and yet continues to live contrary to the Torah one may question why the fruit does not match the tree.

Yeshua taught if you love me keep my commandments. He also taught that the commandments were not his own but the Father's who sent him. YHWH asked us to keep the commandments. This should be reason enough to keep them, even if we are not obligated to do so. Yeshua strengthened this by teaching that is the way we are to show our love to him. I can't imagine believers claiming to love Jesus and then doing something other than what he asked of them. I do not keep the Torah to "get saved". I keep the Torah because the one who saved me asked me to. Out of love for Yeshua who delivered me from bondage with outstretched hands, I will gladly, willingly, joyfully, sincerely, and as fully as is possible, keep the Torah. The motivation for keeping the Torah is nothing more than gratitude and love. There are numerous blessings and benefits to keeping the Torah, but I will mention only one. Since the Torah is the

expressed image of YHWH, when we live the Torah we embody the Image of YHWH making him visible in our world. Thus the more we keep the Torah the more YHWH is visible in our world. There is nothing that delights me more than seeing the presence of our Elohim being manifested in the darkness of our present culture.

I would suggest to my Christian brothers that they re-think their position on the Torah and Yeshua and repent and join us in keeping the Torah.