

## **Rebuttal to “Dangers of the Hebrew Roots Movement written by Tim Chaffey on March 17, 2018”**

Written by Patrick McGuire of Beit Yeshua Torah Assembly on March 26, 2018

This rebuttal is to challenge those who are critical of others who have embraced the ways of the Father as He states in His Word. It is especially to challenge those who lead in and teach such things that they may repent and turn to the Father’s Instructions.

Our group, [Beit Yeshua Torah Assembly](#), does not necessarily fall in line with the Hebrew Roots Movement, per se. We are simply a group that studies Scripture and desires to live in a way that is pleasing to our Father in heaven by being obedient to His Word and His Ways. We have been doing so for the last 20+ years or so. However, if we were to be “categorized” in a group the HRM would be closer than any other. Regardless, the outlandish claims made in this “abstract” show a deep ignorance that must be addressed.

(Prov 18:17 NASB) The first to plead his case seems just, Until another comes and examines him.

The response to the AIG abstract is rather lengthy in order to address each and every issue, accusation, and allegation made by Tim Chaffey. If one wishes to address one or more of these issues as a time instead of the rebuttal as a whole, we have provided bookmarks to jump to the following points:

- The Torah is “God’s Law” and [not an invention of Moses](#)
- “Israel” consists of a [“mixed multitude,”](#) not just Jewish people. ([Exodus 12:37-38](#))
- Many Christian traditions are non-Scriptural and are adopted from [pagan ceremony](#).
- It is vitally important to understand [the New Covenant](#) according to Scripture!
- How should we understand [“Israel” and “the church” according to Scripture?](#)
- Some Gentiles are a part of God’s people, which is “Israel.” ([Ephesians 2:11-3, 19, 3:6](#))
- What did He mean when Messiah said he came to [“fulfill”](#) the Law? ([Matthew 5:17-19](#))
- [Peter warns us](#) not to interpret Paul’s letters in a lawless manner! ([2 Peter 3:14-18](#))
- What did Paul mean by the [“decrees against us that were hostile to us,”](#) that were [“nailed to the cross?”](#) ([Colossian 2:13-14](#))
- What does it mean to not be [“under the Law?”](#) ([Romans 6:14](#))
- What does it mean to not be [“under the Law?”](#) ([Romans 7:1-7](#))
- What does it mean to not be [“under the Law?”](#) ([Galatians 5:16-18](#))
- Is it questionable that Yeshua was referring to the Torah when He told His disciples to [“keep His commandments?”](#)
- Was Yeshua’s command to [“love one another”](#) in John 13:34 already spelled out in Torah? ([Leviticus 19:18](#))
- God’s Law does not [change](#). It is not for just [some people and not others](#).
- If we break one commandment, [have we broken them all?](#)

- Why access to [the Levitical Priesthood](#) is irrelevant, according to Torah, at this time.
- The Jerusalem Council did not give Gentiles just [“four laws”](#) to follow.
- How can one best understand [Paul’s letter to the Galatians](#)?
- If someone is [circumcised](#), does that mean they are condemned if they do not follow all of the Torah?
- If [one’s heart is circumcised](#), that person will have a love for the Torah of the Father.
- What did Paul mean by [“let no man judge you concerning food and drink?”](#) ([Colossians 2:16-17](#))
- Does [Romans 14](#) teach us to make our own rules? Or is it [addressing conflicts over differing opinions that are not specifically spelled out in Scripture](#)?
- Why did Paul describe some as [“weak in faith?”](#) ([here also](#))
- Was Noah originally told that [all animals are food](#)?
- Did Messiah change the dietary restrictions? ([Mark 7:1-9, 18-23, Matthew 15: 17-20](#))
- Was Torah always in effect? Did Abraham obey the Torah? ([Genesis 26:5](#))
- Does [Romans 14:5](#) allow His people to observe holidays that have pagan origins? Or is [Romans 14 still referring to people’s opinions or doubtful things like National Holidays](#)?
- Can we do whatever we desire as long as we realize that we are [not doing it for “salvation?”](#)
- Does [Scripture condemn lawlessness \(those who ignore and refuse to follow His Torah\)](#)?
- Can we learn [too much Scripture](#)? That seems to be the message from some Christians.
- Why do those in the Hebrew Roots Movement [follow the Torah](#)?

## Abstract

The Hebrew Roots Movement has influenced hundreds of thousands of Christians in recent decades, and many more have encountered arguments from those in that group. The movement places a strong emphasis on Hebrew traditions and the Mosaic law. This article will describe the nature of the Hebrew Roots Movement, examine some of its major beliefs in light of relevant biblical passages, and challenge those who have been influenced by its teachings.

One of the main tactics of those who justify lawlessness is to belittle the Torah by using dismissive terms such as “Mosaic law.” The term “Mosaic Law” is not even used in the Scriptures. The term “Law of Moses” is used some 22 times, but that is not an attempt at being dismissive. It is quite the opposite! The term is used in Scripture to emphasize importance, not the lack thereof. The words of Moses were to have greater importance than all other prophets after him because the Father spoke to him directly, and not in visions or dreams. Just to be clear, the Torah is not an invention of Moses. It is the Torah (Instructions) of God given through Moses:

(Deu 5:28-29 NASB) "And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and **the LORD said to me**, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. **'Oh that they had such a**

**heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always**, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

(Neh 10:29 NASB) are joining with their kinsmen, their nobles, and are taking on themselves a curse and an oath to walk in **God's law, which was given through Moses, God's servant**, and to keep and to observe all the commandments of GOD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes;

As a matter of fact, the term “law” is not a very accurate translation of the Hebrew word Torah. It is better translated as God’s “Instructions” rather than “law,” which seems to have negative connotations in so many minds.

## **At-a-Glance**

- Certain Jewish teachings are elevated to the level of Scripture.

This is a shamefully false allegation. Followers of the HRM that I know of revere Scripture and hold HIS word above all.

- The Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM) misunderstands the extent and scope of the Mosaic law.

The HRM fully understands the instructions of the Father, and also the words of Yeshua when he said "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law". It is our belief that Christianity has ignored God’s Instructions since the fourth century and has instead chosen to blatantly sin and ignore His Ways.

- The “Jerusalem Council” rejected the notion that Gentile believers must follow the Law of Moses.

Actually, no. [They didn't](#).

- The Apostle Paul refuted many of the most popular teachings of the HRM.

The writings of the Apostle Paul are always twisted by Christianity in order to justify a lawless agenda. The writings of Paul are undoubtedly best understood when viewing him as a Torah observant Jewish teacher teaching recent believers how to live Torah observant in a non-Torah observant world.

## **The Growing Dangers of the Hebrew Roots Movement**

In recent years, an increasing number of Christians have adopted teachings associated with the Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM). Properly defining this movement is difficult because

it has no central hierarchy or leader and no official statement of faith for members to endorse. While this article will explain and critique some of the major teachings connected to this movement, we recognize that some adherents to the HRM may not agree with all of the positions outlined here.

There is no central hierarchy or definitive leader in the HRM because those in the HRM are coming out of organizations that “follow the leader.” Almost all of the people in the HRM are studying Scripture for themselves and finding answers through searching the Scriptures and unlearning what they had been spoon-fed in the past. Most in the HRM do not want to be told what to think any more. They want to know the message of God’s Word for themselves.

## What Is the Hebrew Roots Movement?

Broadly speaking, followers of the HRM believe that Christians are obligated to follow Jewish laws and practices from the books of Moses.

“Jewish laws and practices from the books of Moses.” This is dismissive terminology. Perhaps Tim Chaffey does not understand that in the days of Moses, “Israel” was not just Jews. Judah was just one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Also, “Israel” was a mixed multitude:

(Exo 12:37-38 NASB) Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. And **a mixed multitude also went up with them**, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.

Furthermore, the Torah is not just for the Jewish people, but for all people:

(Eccl 12:13-14 NASB) **The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.** For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

In addition, perhaps Tim Chaffey does not understand that that Yeshua (and His disciples) taught from the Hebrew Bible – the scriptures used by the Jews. In fact the teachings in the New Testament are directly from the scriptures used by the Jews.

Oftentimes, extrabiblical rabbinic teachings and traditions are elevated (if not in official doctrinal beliefs then in practice) to the same level as Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

This is false. The HRM people that I know revere the Word above all else. Tim Chaffey does not recognize the difference between the Jewish Faith who have extrabiblical rabbinic teachings and those in the HRM who adhere to Yeshua’s teachings. Why the fallacious allegations? Is it an attempt to elevate his side of the argument? Is it to denigrate fellow believers in Messiah? Regardless, the writer’s words are antagonistic toward Jewish people.

Although they often speak of keeping the “law,” they are usually inconsistent in how this is understood and defined. For example, certain laws are either broken or neglected while a great deal of attention is placed on keeping the Sabbath (Friday sunset through Saturday sunset) and celebrating the feasts mentioned in Leviticus 23. These issues will be discussed in more detail below.

Tim Chaffey claims that people in HRM ignore certain laws while focusing on the Sabbath, but he does not give one effective example. He also attempts to use the lack of Levitical priests as an illustration, but this serves to demonstrate his lack of understanding the Torah.

It is difficult to document the movement’s history because of its lack of organizational structure, but the modern HRM has been influenced in some ways by Seventh-Day Adventism and the Worldwide Church of God during the lifetime of its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong.

I cannot speak for others, but none of those organizations influenced our assembly in any way, shape, or form. Our assembly grew out of study of scripture; we saw the inconsistencies between the Christian Church teachings and what is stated in the Word of God. We decided to come out of Babylon. The HRM is a grass roots movement, which is why there is no organizational structure.

Additionally, the HRM has been influenced by the practices of Messianic Jews, but the similarities between the groups are superficial and should not be conflated. In fact, many Messianic Jewish organizations have denounced the beliefs of the HRM.[1](#)

Actually, HRM followers typically come out of Christian denominations. The Messianic Jewish followers feel a Jewish connection.

The past few decades have witnessed a growing influence of this movement among conservative Christians. It is not unusual to see some HRM proponents give themselves Hebrew names, write “God” as “G-d,” eat kosher foods, claim that the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew (or at least several books were),

Most HRM followers feel a zeal, a deep love, when they find their faith. It is like finding your true love- you want to take their name, adopt their ways, and you want to announce it to the public. What is strange is that other believers in Messiah mock them or shame them for these things.

condemn numerous Christian traditions as pagan,

There ARE numerous Christian traditions that arose from pagan rituals. That is a historical fact! Even a man such as Pat Robertson admits it in this [YouTube video](#).

If that link does not work, one only needs to Google “Pat Robertson Christmas is pagan” in order to view the video. There is plenty of information on the internet or in the Catholic Encyclopedia to verify the pagan origins of many Christian holidays.

and dismiss teachings from Paul’s epistles.

Virtually none of HRM people do this, although the accusation is often made. Granted, some of Paul’s letters are difficult to understand (that’s what Peter said) and should not be viewed with the mindset that he is encouraging sin and disparaging the Word of the Father.

Some have gone so far as to challenge orthodox Christian beliefs such as the Trinity and even the deity of Jesus Christ.

One main problem with Christianity is that it is not so much a belief system derived from Scripture as it is a belief system derived from its creeds (specifically the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed). The alleged “trinity” is not at all a Scriptural concept and brings to mind more of a “Council of Gods” than anything else. What about the burning bush He appeared as to Moses? What about the whirlwind He appeared as to Job? What about the “seven Spirits of God” in Revelation? We are up to twelve already!

In addressing the question of the Trinity and the deity of Yeshua, we, and most in the HRM, fully agree with John 1:1-3, 14:

(John 1:1-3 NASB) **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

(John 1:14 NASB) And **the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us,** and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

A Scriptural discussion of the issue can be found [here](#).

Fundamentally, the HRM teaches that many modern Christian beliefs and practices were introduced to the church by pagan Greeks. This is why they generally do not like to be identified as Christians. Instead, they believe that they need to recover the first century Hebrew roots of Christianity.

Most, not all, in the Hebrew Roots Movement do not want the “Christian” label because modern Christianity is an emotion based belief system that rejects the Instructions of the Father that are clearly spelled out in His Word.

One writer summarized the HRM in the following way:

It is a very modern movement that insists that we must resurrect first-century Judaism (our Jewish Roots) and the milieu and lifestyle of first-century Jews and impose them on

both Jewish and non-Jewish believers. This is not just an academic study to better understand Scripture and its setting but is rather a movement of restoration that claims that the church has moved off its Jewish foundation and must return to a more Jewish way of life to be authentic.<sup>2</sup>

Our particular assembly does no such thing. We do not do Hebrew dance, or Hebrew songs, or promote others to change their names or try to return to a more Jewish way of life, so to speak. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with those things. Our assembly focuses solely on Scripture and desiring to live a life pleasing to the Father and in accordance with His Instructions.

## Covenantal Confusion

Since the early years of the church, Christians have wrestled with issues related to Israel and the church. Many of these struggles can be seen throughout the New Testament epistles and they have continued into the twenty-first century. For example, two leading theological systems within Protestantism, *covenant theology* and *dispensationalism*, reach very different conclusions in how they understand the natures of Israel and the church. As a non-denominational ministry, Answers in Genesis does not take a position favoring one of these views over the other (please see "[Where Do We Draw the Line?](#)" for more details).

The way Scripture describes Israel is that they are His chosen people, His children, and His bride. Elohim chose Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their descendents. Elohim also chooses whom He will graft into the olive tree of Israel. Elohim just chooses whom He will:

(Rom 9:15-18 NASB) For He says to Moses, "I WILL HAVE MERCY ON WHOM I HAVE MERCY, AND I WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON WHOM I HAVE COMPASSION." **So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH." **So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.**

As for the "church," that is another story. That which is the "church" today is a man-made Gentile group that formed a religion based upon Catholicism. Most Christians are not aware that the "church" is referenced more in the Tanakh (Old Testament) than it is in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament). The trick is in the translation! The Greek word that is translated as "church" is *ekklesia* or *ekklaysia*. Here is the definition:

Church - G1577. ekklaysia, from G1537 and G2564; **an assembly**, a religious **congregation**:-- **assembly**<sup>3</sup>, church<sup>74</sup>, churches<sup>35</sup>, **congregation**<sup>2</sup>.

In Hebrew, there are several words with the same meaning, but none of which are translated as "church" in the Tanakh (Old Testament):

Convocation - H4744. miqra, [896d]; from H7121; a convocation, convoking, reading:-- **assemblies2, assembly2,** convocation14, convocations3, reading1, summoning1.

Assembly - H6951. qahal, [874c]; from an unused word; **assembly**, convocation, **congregation**:-- army\*1, **assembly95,** companies1, company15, **congregation8,** crowd1, horde2.

Assembly - H5712. edah, [417a]; from H3259; **congregation**:-- **assembly5,** band2, company13, **congregation126,** congregation's1, herd1, swarm1.

Hebrew and Greek Terms translated as “assembly” or “congregation” in Scripture:

Ekklaysia Greek – 114 times

Miqra Hebrew – 23 times

Qahal Hebrew – 123 times

Edah Hebrew – 149 times

Scripture uses the equivalent Hebrew words for “assembly” 295 times vs. the Greek term used 114 times. But it is never translated as “church” in the Tanakh (Old Testament). The fact of the matter is that the Greek term *ekklyasia*, which is translated as “church” in the New Testament, is a reference to an assembly of all or part of Israel. There is absolutely no indication in Scripture to think otherwise.

Many of the most serious errors of the HRM stem from its misunderstanding of certain biblical covenants. Chief among these misunderstandings is the notion that “the law” was intended to be binding on all people throughout history. Part of the rationale behind this notion stems from certain statements from Jesus.

Christianity is ignorant of the New Covenant according to Scripture. The Christian mindset is that the Jews are under the Old Covenant while Christians are under the New Covenant. But if we look at what the New Covenant actually says, it does not do away with any laws. As a matter of fact, the New Covenant further embeds the law (Torah) in His people by writing it on our hearts and minds:

(Heb 8:8-9 NASB) For finding fault with them, He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

Notice the identity of the recipient of the New Covenant. It is not with the “New Testament Church,” but with Judah and Israel:

(Heb 8:10-13 NASB) “FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. “AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. “FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE.”

This passage in Hebrews is a direct quote from Jeremiah 31: 31-34. When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

The “first covenant” was conditioned upon their obedience:

(Exo 19:5-8 NASB) ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. ‘These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.’” So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. And all the people answered together and said, **“All that the LORD has spoken we will do!”** And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

The difference between the first covenant and the second covenant is that the first covenant was conditional upon obedience. Now the law (Torah) is written on our hearts and in our minds and we are given a love for His Ways. However, Torah itself doesn’t change.

The first covenant was an effort on the part of Israel to be obedient to Elohim through their personal efforts and they failed. The second covenant does not embody anything new in content, but is different in that Elohim places His Spirit (Breath) within us and He gives us a desire to obey His Torah. Obedience to Torah becomes the love of our life because it is pleasing to Him. Elohim plants His Breath within us and that establishes forever a redemption that will suffice before Yahweh.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ([Matthew 5:17](#))

If you love Me, you will keep my commandments. ([John 14:15](#))

The HRM makes much of the fact that Jesus said he did not come to abolish the Law and that he stressed the importance of keeping commandments. In their view, this means that the law must still be in force today—even on Gentiles, although they were not under the law in Old Testament times ([Ephesians 2:11–13](#)).<sup>3</sup>

Let’s take a close look at the reference the author uses:

(Eph 2:11 NASB) Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands--

Eph 2:11: He says here that we were once called "uncircumcised." That was used a derogatory term for pagans (1 Sam. 17:26). But we no longer are called that after our hearts are circumcised (Phil 3:3). Our heart being circumcised is being obedient to the Father, which many of the alleged "circumcised" did not do (Jer. 9:25-26).

(Eph 2:12 NASB) remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Eph 2:12: Before our hearts were circumcised, we were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise. Being separated from Messiah and Israel means we have no hope and are without Elohim in the world.

The Greek word for "commonwealth" is politeia:

G4174 - politeia, pol-ee-ti'-ah; from G4177 ("polity"); citizenship; concr. a community:--commonwealth, freedom.

It means "citizenship" (Acts 22:28).

(Eph 2:13 NASB) But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Eph 2:13: But now, in Yeshua Messiah, we have been brought in to citizenship of Israel.

(Eph 2:19 NASB) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

Eph 2:19: We are no longer strangers from the citizenship of Israel or aliens from the covenants of promise. We are all fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of Elohim, which is Israel.

Ephesians 3:6 reminds us that it is Gentiles who are brought into Israel, not vice versa:

(Eph 3:6 NASB) to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel,

Eph 3:6: The mystery (Ephesians 3: 1-5) is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body as a part of Israel. Gentiles are no longer strangers of the commonwealth of Israel and are no longer aliens of the covenants of promise (Eph. 2:12-13, 19, 3:6).

Somehow they seem to overlook or reinterpret the last part of [Matthew 5:17](#). Jesus said he came to *fulfill* the Law and the Prophets.[4](#)

The author would benefit from a better understanding of the passages he references. Matthew 5:17 is part of a particular message from Yeshua:

(Mat 5:17 NASB) "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.

Mat 5:17: This is one of the many, many misinterpreted passages used by Christianity. They claim that since He has "fulfilled" the Law and the Prophets, He has abolished it, even though He says He did not come to abolish it. That is patently absurd. He has just been speaking of how His people need to be obedient to Torah and how they will be blessed by it.

First of all, look at the Greek term for "fulfill." Fulfill - 4137. pleroo, play-ro'-o; from G4134; **to make replete**, i.e. (lit.) to cram (a net), level up (a hollow), or (fig.) to furnish (or imbue, diffuse, influence), satisfy, execute (an office), finish (a period or task), **verify** (or coincide with a prediction), etc.--accomplish, X after, (be) complete, end, expire, fill (up), fulfil, (be, make) full (come), **fully preach**, perfect, supply.

The word in the Greek means to "make full," "fully preach," "fill up," or "to verify." Look at other passages that use the term (Matt. 13:47-48, 23:31-32, Luke 2:40, Romans 15:19). It is "never" used to imply that something is negated, abolished, or abandoned.

(Mat 13:47-48 NASB) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was **filled** (*Gr. – pleroo*), they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.

(Mat 23:31-32 NASB) "Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. "**Fill up** (*Gr. – pleroo*) then the measure of the guilt of your fathers.

(Luke 2:40 NASB) And the Child continued to grow and become strong, **increasing** (*Gr. – pleroo*) in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

(Rom 15:19 NASB) in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have **fully preached** (*Gr. – pleroo*) the gospel of Christ.

Yeshua did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to verify and make them "more full" than was the teaching of that day. That becomes increasing evident in the next passage.

(Mat 5:18 NASB) "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

Mat 5:18: The smallest letter or stroke is a reference to the jot or tittle in the Hebrew language. Not one little mark of the Torah will pass away until heaven and earth pass away. He said this in Luke also (Luke 16:17).

Yeshua is paraphrasing the Tanakh (Isa. 51:6-8, Psalm 102:25-27). The Father and His Torah are never changing, permanent, forever...

(Mat 5:19 NASB) "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 5:19: This passage is often used to justify entrance of the kingdom even though they ignore the Torah of Elohim. However, the passage says quite the opposite. The Greek preposition used for "in" in the passage can also mean "by." That totally changes the power and meaning of the verse (Deut. 27:26, Psalm 119:127-128, Deut. 12:32). Even if the preposition is not directly "by," the implication is there that those in the kingdom will call those who annul the least of these commandments "least."

Elohim had warned the leaders of Israel of this hundreds of years before (Malachi 2:8-9).

By living a sinless life ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)), and then dying as the ultimate sacrifice, our Passover ([1 Corinthians 5:7](#)), Jesus Christ fulfilled the law ([Colossians 2:14](#)).

There are no qualms at all with saying that Yeshua led a sinless life (meaning that He followed all of the Torah AND that we are to walk in His footsteps and do the same) nor with saying He is our Passover (plus, Paul says in the following verse (1 Corinthians 5:8) for us to celebrate Passover, "let us therefore celebrate the feast").

But to say that Messiah "fulfilled" the Torah (meaning "He did away with it") in Colossians 2:14 is an invalid misconception! A closer look at that passage tells us that Paul says no such thing. Paul's writings needn't be taken in such a simplistic manner. He is not teaching that man should sin and break the Instructions of the Father.

Keep in mind that the letters written by Paul were primarily letters to assemblies addressing issues they either had problems with, or addressing their questions. We are not always privy as to the situations or questions to which they were inquiring. Therefore, when researching Paul's writings (they should be "researched" and not just have phrases plucked from within) we need to keep in mind the warning from the Apostle Peter when reading Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:14-18):

(2 Pet 3:14 NASB) Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

2 Pet 3:14: We are to look forward to a new heaven and earth where righteousness dwells. With that being the case, we are to be found by Him spotless and blameless when He returns (Phil. 1:9-11).

Before we go into the conclusion of Peter's last letter, let's review the overwhelmingly major point that he has stated in this letter. His main message is to be obedient to the Torah of the Father and don't be taken in by others teaching foolishness and lawlessness (2 Peter 1:2-3, 2:2-3, 6-8,10, 15, 20-22).

With that being the case, Peter gives one final warning. It is the only warning in Scripture that is a warning against another part of Scripture.

(2 Pet 3:15-16 NASB) and regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; **just as also our beloved brother Paul**, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also **in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

2 Pet 3:16: Peter says that the patience of Elohim is our salvation. Then he goes into a very interesting warning.

Peter states that Paul told them of these same things (be obedient to the Torah) also in his letters. He then says that some of the things Paul states are hard to understand. He states that untaught and unstable men distort Paul's letters and the rest of the Scriptures to their own destruction.

Men have been twisting the words of Paul and other Scriptures to line up with their pagan and evil traditions. Yeshua warned about forsaking the Torah of Elohim for the sake of man's traditions (Matt. 15:3, Mark 7:6-9).

(2 Pet 3:17 NASB) You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness,

2 Pet 3:17: Peter warns us to be on guard lest we be carried away by the error of "unprincipled men." The Greek word for "unprincipled men" is G113. *athesmos*, *ath'-es-mos*; from G1 (as a neg. particle) and a der. of G5087 (in the sense of enacting); **lawless**, i.e. (by impl.) criminal:--wicked. He is warning us to be on guard lest we be carried away by the error of lawless men that twist Paul's letters and the rest of Scripture to their own destruction.

(2 Pet 3:18 NASB) but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

2 Pet 3:18: Peter ends his second letter by telling the readers to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Yeshua Messiah. We do that by studying His Torah and living it in our lives, just as He did.

With that in mind, let's look at the passage in Colossians that the author referenced:

(Col 2:13-14 NASB) And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Col 2:14: This passage is often used by many Bible teachers to claim that Torah was nailed to the cross and now we should not follow it. That is an impossible interpretation of this passage for several reasons. The Greek word for "decrees" is *dogma*. Paul would not refer to Elohim's Word as "dogma." Paul is also saying that this dogma against us is "hostile to us." Torah is not hostile to us at all.

Paul tells us that Torah is holy, good, righteous, and spiritual (Romans 7:12, 14). Paul tells us that the fullness of Torah is in one word, "love" (Romans 13:8-10). The Psalms tell us that Torah is perfect, soul-restoring, righteous, pure, eye-enlightening, true, more precious than gold, and in keeping Torah is great reward (Psalm 19:7-11):

We can plainly see that Paul is NOT saying that the pure, perfect, holy, good, and righteous Torah of Elohim is "dogma" that is "against us" and is "hostile toward us." Paul is speaking of something else.

Paul is most likely speaking of the traditions of Judaism that claimed the Gentiles were unclean and should not be associated with Elohim's people, the Jews. That dogma and man's tradition was nailed to the stake and taken out of the way. And the love of Elohim and His Torah, through the blood of Yeshua, goes out to the world to the Gentiles also.

Looking at this passage in conjunction with Paul's earlier warning against being deceived through the traditions of men make this is the most likely answer (Col. 2:8, 13-14).

This is why the Apostle Paul confidently wrote that those who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ are "not under the law" ([Romans 6:14](#), [7:4](#); [Galatians 5:18](#)).

Once again, we need to examine these passages so we are not "carried away by the errors of lawless men" as Peter warns us:

(Rom 6:14 NASB) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.

Rom 6:14: You are no longer a slave to sin. You have a new desire to follow Him through the grace of Elohim.

What does Paul mean by "under the law" and "under Grace?" He is putting people into two different categories. There are those who reject Messiah and His ways. They are under the judgments of Torah. There are also those who are chosen by the Father to love His ways and in whom sin (breaking the Torah) is not a master. They are under His graciousness of the Father and will be blessed.

Tim Chaffey brings up one passage from the middle of a midrash (allegorical discussion) from Paul in Romans 7. Instead of phrase plucking a few words, let's look at a larger section of Paul's argument:

(Rom 7:1 NASB) 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?

Rom 7:1: "Or do you not know,...." Paul is saying, "Are you ignorant?" He was always blunt in his teaching and never beat around the bush. Torah has jurisdiction and should be followed by a person as long as he lives.

Paul never taught against following Torah. He says here a person should follow it all his life.

But Paul is going to make a contrast between those who seek to follow Torah for their own salvation, such as those who were steeped in Judaism sought to do, and those who are alive to Torah through the blood of Messiah.

Paul says that Torah has jurisdiction over a man as long as he lives. Death is the only thing that separates a man from the jurisdiction of Torah. It is only at death that we are released from the judgment of Torah. Because of this, we must die with Messiah on the tree in order to be wed to Him. Then we have life through Him.

(Rom 7:2 NASB) 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.

Rom 7:2: Paul is not trying to give us rules about marriage and divorce. He is using this law to illustrate that a wife is bound to her husband until death. In other words, if he is dead, she is no longer married to him.

He is using this illustration to show how we are under the jurisdiction of Torah while we are alive. Paul is using the law of marriage here as a "midrash" to make another point.

(Rom 7:3 NASB) 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.

Rom 7:3: Some people claim that this verse prohibits divorce and remarriage. That is not what Paul is trying to convey here. For someone to make that claim means that they have no idea what Paul is saying in this section of Romans. Neither divorce nor remarriage are mentioned in this passage at all.

Paul is making the narrow illustration that a woman is bound to her husband until he dies. Then she is free to remarry.

(Rom 7:4 NASB) Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.

Rom 7:4: The wife represents the believer in Messiah. The second husband represents Messiah. Who (or what) is represented by the first husband? The first husband represents Adam and our sinful position in Him which leads to judgment according to Torah which means death. We have been told in previous chapters in Romans how we are joined to Adam and death is the result.

Torah was given to control our sinfulness, but we in our sinful flesh are not able to live up to Torah in and of itself.

Paul says that when Messiah died in His body, we are identified in Messiah in His death, and now we are dead to the condemnation of the Torah and that condemnation through Torah is dead to us. The first husband is Adam, and we are no longer joined with him. We are now joined to the living Messiah. We died with Him and are raised with Him. He is the second husband and enables us to bear fruit (follow the Torah). The believer (the follower of Torah through the Spirit of the Father) is not under the condemnation of Torah, but is under grace of Elohim.

(Rom 7:5 NASB) 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.

Rom 7:5: Before we came to Messiah, **the sinful passions which were defined by Torah,** were at work in our body. Those sinful passions led to death. The word "aroused" is not in the Greek. Torah does not "arouse us to sinful passions."

The Law is there to define sin for us. The Torah tells us what our sinful passions consist of. It is not there to control the flesh, but to inform it. Torah informs us of what sin is, and what the punishments for being disobedient to it are. The flesh, without Messiah, has no desire to follow Torah. The flesh broke the Law and suffers the penalty, death.

(Rom 7:6 NASB) 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.

Rom 7:6: Just as the woman was released from her first husband because he died, we are released from the sinful passions defined by Torah when we die to our sin. We don't follow the Torah simply because it is a list of written rules and regulations. But His people delight in serving Elohim because we love Him and want to please Him.

Yeshua said to the disciples, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15, 21-24, 1 John 2:3-7). Serving Yeshua is not a matter of reading and observing the rules. It is an act of love.

The question for His people is not whether or not they will follow a written set of rules for salvation. The question for the believer is this, "Do you love Yeshua?" If so, then there is only one way to do so (2 John 6).

Paul is saying that we should not follow Torah because it is a written set of do's and don'ts. We should follow Torah out of love because of the newness of His Spirit is within us (Romans 7:6).

(Rom 7:7 NASB) 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."

Rom 7:7: Paul is making it clear here that Torah is not the problem. Torah defines for us what "sin" is. Paul admits that he would not know not to covet if it were not for Torah. Torah tells us what sin consists of, and what the penalties are for disobedience. That is what Paul is telling us here (Romans 3:20).

(Gal 5:16 NASB) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Gal 5:16: How does one "walk in the Spirit?" The Word of Elohim tells us EXACTLY what it means to walk in the Spirit (Ezek. 36:27). To walk in the Spirit is to keep His commandments and walk according to His Torah.

(Gal 5:17-18 NASB) For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Gal 5:18: Paul states here, and in Romans 6:14, that there are two groups of people: Those under Torah and who will be judged by Torah (Judaism), and those led by the Spirit of Elohim who are under grace (redeemed by faithfulness and led by the Spirit to follow Torah).

If you have the Spirit of Elohim within you, you will not be judged according to the curses in Torah. You will be judged according to the grace of Elohim. In the previous verses in this chapter, Paul makes it very clear that since they are redeemed, they are to avoid all sin (lawlessness).

Furthermore, it is highly questionable to assume that Jesus had the Mosaic law in mind when he told the disciples to keep his commandments.

It is not questionable (not even an iota) that He had the Instructions of the Father in mind when He said this! If Yeshua added to or took away from the Torah, He was a sinner and was NOT the Messiah!

(Deu 4:2 NASB) "**You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it,** that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

(Deu 12:32 NASB) "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you **shall not add to nor take away from it.**

(Deu 27:26 NASB) '**Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.**'  
And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

(Josh 1:7-8 NASB) "Only be strong and very courageous; **be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left,** so that you may have success wherever you go. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but **you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it;** for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

(Prov 30:6 NASB) **Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.**

(Mat 5:18 NASB) "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.**

(Luke 16:17 NASB) "But **it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.**

Earlier in the same evening, he commanded the disciples to love one another ([John 13:34](#)),

That comes straight from the Torah!

(Lev 19:18 NASB) 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself;** I am the LORD.

and he gave them several commands during his ministry that are not spelled out in the Mosaic law.

Name one and prove it. Then I will show you how wrong you are. Your statement serves to label Messiah as a lawless reprobate and sinner.

It is far more likely that Christ's words in [John 14:15](#) referred to these instructions.

That is not possible. Because the correct understanding to this passage in John 14 is that Yeshua is saying that He and the Father are one:

(John 14:11 NASB) "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves.

He is not relegating His Father's Word into nonexistence! He is emphasizing obedience to His Father's Word! He is that Word (the Torah) made flesh:

(John 14:15 NASB) "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

Before he ascended, Jesus delivered what is popularly called the Great Commission, in which he instructed his disciples to make disciples of all nations, and part of that process was to teach them to obey everything he had commanded them ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)).

And He commanded them to follow the Torah of His Father!

Notice Jesus did not command them to bring their future disciples into the nation of Israel, as God told Moses ([Exodus 12:48](#)), but to make disciples of Jesus among the nations. HRM followers often engage in some trinitarian misdirection here. They rightly claim that God gave the law to Moses and that Jesus is God. Then they conclude that since Jesus is God, his commandments would be the commandments given to Moses. There are multiple problems with this type of argument. First, God gave plenty of commandments in Scripture that do not fall under the Mosaic law.

Tim Chaffey must learn to distinguish between a covenant contract with rules and a specific directive. One main problem with Christianity is that they dismiss the Torah and relegate to nothingness using poor reasoning such as this.

He *commanded* Noah to build an Ark and to bring food for all the animals that would come to him, and Noah obeyed God's commands ([Genesis 6:22](#), [7:5](#)). Should we assume that every believer must also follow these commands? If so, we should expect to see many more Arks being built around the world. The HRM followers I have spoken to about this typically reply that those commands were given to a specific person for a specific time, and they are correct. But if that reason is strong enough to avoid following such commandments, why does it not hold true when it comes to the Mosaic law? After all, the Mosaic law was given to a specific group of people at a specific time. The Bible spells out this fact at the initiation of this covenant and again 40 years later when the Israelites prepared to enter the land God promised to them.

The teachings of Messiah were also given to a specific people at a specific time. Every one of them points to the Torah. The HRM people do not dismiss any of Scripture.

But there are many directives given in Scripture that are not commandment terms of a contract, as is the Torah.

Shortly after the Lord delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, they camped at the foot of Mt. Sinai, and Moses went up the mountain to hear from God.

The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.” ([Exodus 19:3-6](#), emphasis added)

The Bible is abundantly clear that God made this covenant with the people of Israel (the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), and Moses acted as their representative before the Lord.

This command was given to His people, the “mixed multitude” ([see above](#)). They weren’t all descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at all! Caleb was not a blood Israelite. He was a Kennizite.

The ONLY people God made a covenant with were Israel. He never made a covenant with any Gentile group of people in any way, shape or form. His people are called “Israel.” Just to clear up any confusion as to the identity of Israel, look at [this paper](#).

Throughout Deuteronomy (the name of the book means “second law”), Moses repeatedly emphasized that God made this covenant with the Israelites at Mt. Sinai (Horeb), and he even states that the covenant was not made with their fathers ([Deuteronomy 5:2-3](#)). Following a lengthy restatement of hundreds of commandments in chapters 4-28, we read these words: “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb” ([Deuteronomy 29:1](#)). The entire book is replete with references to these laws being given to the Israelite people for them to obey as they live in the land they were about to possess.

I would agree that the Covenants, both old and new, are made ONLY with Israel and none of them mention any Gentile group or Gentile organization.

Many HRM proponents respond to such claims by arguing that believers in Jesus are Jewish, even if they have no known Jewish heritage or ethnicity. Therefore, they argue that Christians are under the Mosaic law.

I know of no HRM folks who make an issue out of ethnicity. That is absolutely irrelevant. However, the Torah of the Father does not change. It is the same **forever!**

(Psa 119:89 NASB) **Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.**

(Psa 119:111 NASB) **I have inherited Thy testimonies forever,** For they are the joy of my heart.

(Psa 119:144 NASB) Thy **testimonies are righteous forever;** Give me understanding that I may live.

(Psa 119:152 NASB) Of old **I have known from Thy testimonies, That Thou hast founded them forever.**

(Psa 119:160 NASB) The sum of Thy word is truth, And **every one of Thy righteous ordinances is everlasting.**

(Isa 40:8 NASB) The grass withers, the flower fades, **But the word of our God stands forever.**

(Mat 24:35 NASB) "Heaven and earth will pass away, **but My words shall not pass away.**

There is no other Torah in Scripture. There are no other laws or instructions in Scripture. The Instructions (Torah) given to Moses are the instructions for righteousness:

(Deu 6:25 NASB) "And **it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment** before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

Besides the issue of the law being fulfilled,

Previously discussed and **totally disproved.**

this claim raises two additional problems. First, by inconsistently following the law, HRM followers are guilty of breaking the entire law. James stated, "For whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point, has become guilty of all of it" ([James 2:10](#)).

Torah Observant people are not "inconsistently following the Torah." Tim Chaffey has misunderstood the passage he referenced.

(James 2:10 NASB) For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

James 2:10: James is not saying that if you break one commandment, you break them all. Combining verses 10 and 11 together make this perfectly clear. He is saying that one is guilty and cursed no matter which commandment has been broken (Deut. 27:26, Jer. 11:3-5).

Yeshua told is this same thing also (Matt. 5:17-19).

(James 2:11 NASB) For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

James 2:11: If you break Torah, you are a lawbreaker and cursed.

(James 2:12 NASB) So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

James 2:12: James calls Torah, the "law of liberty." Torah is liberty for His people (Psalm 119:45). Yeshua said that we should know the Truth and the Truth will set us free (John 8:31-32). The "Truth" spoken of by Yeshua is the Torah (Psalm 119:43-44, 142, 155, 160).

Perfection is not achieved in this life. That is fully understood. But those who love His ways are the ones who fear Him and receive His loving kindness (grace).

(Exo 20:4-6 NASB) "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but **showing lovingkindness (*grace*) to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**

By ignoring the Instructions of the Father, are pleasing to Him? By being lawless and disobedient to His Word, will you get some kind of reward? What do you think ignoring of His Ways of righteousness will achieve for you? "Salvation?"

But HRM adherents do not follow the 613 commands (by traditional count) in the Mosaic law—they focus only a small fraction of those. In fact, they could never keep all of those laws because they do not have access to the Levitical priesthood.

One should know the Instructions of the Father before being so critical of others keeping them. The duties of the priesthood concerning offerings are only to be performed if the place to perform them is accessible. If that place designated by the Father is not available, then the offerings are NOT to be done. Currently, that place is now occupied by the Islamic Dome of the Rock. Therefore, according to the Torah, offerings are not allowed to be performed.

(Deu 12:10-14 NASB) "When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security, then **it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God shall choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD.** "And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or inheritance with you. **"Be careful**

that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every cultic place you see, but in the place which the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

The second problem with the teaching that Gentiles must be placed under the Mosaic law is that the New Testament has much to say on this issue that directly contradicts the claims of the HRM, as will be explained in the remaining sections.

Mr. Chaffey assumes the Torah of the Father is a “burden” that the HRM is placing upon Gentiles. That is not true. First of all, HRM doesn’t place anything on anybody. HRM is not an entity ruling over anyone. Secondly, the people in the HRM do not look at the Torah of Elohim as a heavy burden at all. Yeshua told us to take His yoke upon ourselves and that yoke is “easy.”

(Mat 11:29-30 NASB) "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

The NASB capitalizes quotes in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) that come from the Tanakh (Old Testament). This quote of “you shall find rest for your souls” comes from Jeremiah 6:16:

(Jer 6:16 NASB) Thus says the LORD, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

In Matthew 11: 29-30, Yeshua says His easy yoke and light load are the “ancient paths” (the Torah of the Father), the “good way” in which we are to “walk.” Unfortunately for many, they have said “We will not walk in it!”

## **Did the Apostles Believe That Gentiles Should Follow the Mosaic Law?**

The book of Acts records how the early Christian message started in Jerusalem and then spread to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The first seven chapters focus primarily on the church’s growth in Jerusalem. Beginning in chapter eight, the message spreads beyond the city. The well-known conversion of some Gentiles, Cornelius and those in his house, at Peter’s preaching sparked a crucial debate in the early church. Not too long after that, following Paul’s first missionary journey where countless Gentiles believed the gospel message, the apostles gathered together in Jerusalem to settle a divisive issue in the church that speaks directly to the claims of the HRM.

After Paul and Barnabas declared all that God had done during their journey, particularly the conversion of the Gentiles, some of the “believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep

the law of Moses” ([Acts 15:1-5](#)). The apostles and elders debated the matter for a time, and then Peter stood and argued that such burdens mentioned in [verse 5](#) (circumcision and Mosaic law) should not be placed on the Gentile believers. “Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” ([Acts 15:10-11](#)).

This passage is a common place where Christians attempt to justify their lawlessness. The issue in Acts 15 and in the letter to the Galatians is whether or not Gentiles should be forced to convert to Judaism before they are allowed to enter the synagogues and learn of Messiah and the Torah of the Father given through Moses. Conversion to Judaism begins with male circumcision. Let’s look at these verses quite a bit closer:

(Acts 15:1 NASB) And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Acts 15:1: Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch (Acts 14:26). While they were in Antioch, certain men came from Judea to Antioch to teach that the Gentiles were not saved unless they were circumcised and became Jews.

They were proclaiming that the way to salvation was through Judaism. “Circumcision” is the first step in conversion to Judaism. We are not told whether these men believed in Yeshua or not, but they definitely believed in salvation through ritual conversion to Judaism (circumcision).

(Acts 15:2 NASB) And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

Acts 15:2: There was a huge argument concerning this issue. "Was it necessary for one to be circumcised and become a Jew in order to be saved?" Paul and Barnabas and others went up to Jerusalem to discuss this matter with James and the apostles and elders.

Understand that circumcision is not commanded in order for one to hear the message of salvation. All believers in that day were already circumcised on the eighth day of their lives (Gen. 17:10-12). This was not an issue until they got the Gentiles involved.

After one is saved, they should seek to follow Elohim's Law out of love and obedience. Keep in mind that Abraham himself was not circumcised until long after he himself was saved (Gen. 15:6).

But the subject here is not whether one should obey Elohim's law, but whether one should become a Jewish proselyte for salvation. Jewish tradition declared Jews to be "righteous" by doing the proper initiations of being a proselyte. According to the Talmud, one had (has) to be circumcised, make a sacrifice, and perform a taval (a ritual baptism), in order to become a Jew.

The saved Jewish believer (and the proselyte) did not want to associate with a Gentile who was not circumcised. They were not allowed in the synagogues to hear the Word of Elohim (Acts 13:42-50).

This is the issue Paul, Barnabas, and others dealt with in Jerusalem. Should the Gentiles become proselytes before they are allowed to go to the synagogues to hear the message of Messiah and be saved?

(Acts 15:3 NASB) Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 15:3: The "church" (*ekklesia* which means an assembly or group) sent them to Jerusalem. The group in Antioch wanted this solved also.

(Acts 15:4 NASB) And when they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

Acts 15:4: Once again, the term "church" actually means "assembly." It has nothing to do with a building or separate Gentile organization.

Paul and Barnabas were telling those in Jerusalem that the Spirit of Elohim is coming upon the Gentiles. This was an amazing thing to them. They did not realize it was possible for a Gentile to be saved just as they were unless they converted to Judaism (Acts 10:44-45).

(Acts 15:5 NASB) But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

Acts 15:5: The question is this, "does the law of Moses command that we circumcise them?"

The question of circumcision is a controversial one. The Israelites were commanded to circumcise their sons on the eighth day of their lives (Lev. 12:1-3). The law also states that all males must be circumcised before they can partake of Passover (Ex. 12:43-49).

But this was not an easy requirement to demand at any other particular time. It is questionable as to "when" a man should be circumcised if it was not done when they were eight days old. The Jews were demanding it before they were declared worthy of salvation and allowed to hear Elohim's Word in the synagogue with the other believers.

Paul and Barnabas spoke to the assembly and laid out the matter at hand. Afterward, some of the Pharisees in the congregation rose up to support the teaching about circumcision that had come to Antioch.

There were some Pharisees that wanted all the Gentiles to be circumcised and then directed to follow the Torah of Moses. The question is never whether or not the Gentiles should follow the Torah of Moses. The question was whether or not they should be required to be circumcised first before any training in the Torah took place.

(Acts 15:6-7 NASB) And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

Acts 15:7: Peter says that he learned a while back (in Acts 10 concerning his dream of unclean creatures) that he should not declare the Gentiles unclean when Elohim declares them clean. Peter now knows that the Gentiles are to be saved also.

Peter is a convincing witness because he believed earlier that Gentiles were indeed unclean.

(Acts 15:8-9 NASB) "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

Acts 15:9: Peter is saying that they are saved just like the believing Jews are saved. Elohim does not make a distinction between them.

(Acts 15:10 NASB) "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

Acts 15:10: This is an interesting passage. People mistakenly desire to define the "yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" as Elohim's law. That is not the subject of this sentence. It is the predicate of the sentence. The subject of the sentence is this "Why do you test God?"

First of all, if this is speaking of the Torah, how could that possibly be "testing Elohim?" What is "testing Elohim?" To "put Elohim to the test" is to question His presence (Exodus 17:2-7, Deut 6:16, Matt. 4:6-7). What is it about telling someone to follow Elohim's Law that questions the presence of Elohim? Actually it would verify Elohim's presence by warning people into obedience because Elohim is omnipresent. Also, if this passage is speaking of the law as a "burden" or yoke, then it would be in direct contradiction with John's message (1 John 5:3).

The false teachers were saying that the presence of Elohim cannot occur in a man who is not circumcised. They considered him unclean and Elohim cannot be in the heart of an unclean man, at least according to their logic.

This is what Peter was warning against. To "test Elohim" would be to question Elohim's presence in a man who is not circumcised.

What is the "yoke" that is spoken of? Let's look at the word "yoke" in the Greek. It is "zugos" which means "obligation." That obligation would be adult circumcision before the Spirit of Elohim dwells within them. The Greek word for "able" is "ischuo" which is better translated "force." Why should they burden the Gentiles with something that they, nor their forefathers, were forced to go through (adult circumcision)?

(Acts 15:11 NASB) "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Acts 15:11: The Gentiles are saved through the grace of Elohim, just like the Jews that are circumcised. They are not saved by faithfulness + circumcision. It is rather ironic that Peter is giving this message because he did not have a favorable opinion of Gentiles before Elohim gave him the vision of the sheet with the unclean creatures (Acts 10:28). Peter urged the saved Jews not to forbid the baptism of the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-47). Also, Paul rebuked Peter for being a hypocrite concerning the Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-14). Peter's acceptance of the Gentiles was not an easy task. It took a lot of time and a vision from Elohim Himself.

I have spoken with someone in the HRM who responded to this by saying that this referred only to the evangelistic message, and that once a Gentile became a believer, then he would be expected to be circumcised and keep the law. However, this is flatly contradicted by what happened next. James addressed the group and said, "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood" ([Acts 15:19-20](#)).

Let's look closer at that passage:

(Acts 15:19 NASB) "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

Acts 15:19: James is proclaiming that the Gentiles would not need to have the burden of circumcision before they are made whole with Elohim.

(Acts 15:20 NASB) but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

Acts 15:20: The Gentiles would not need to be circumcised before they could be taught of Messiah and Elohim's law. But they would have to obey a few rules in order to not be extremely offensive to the believing Jews.

These four things were particularly offensive and/or physically obvious. They were to stay away from things contaminated by idols, from sexually immoral acts, from eating road kill, and from blood. These were all things that pertained to their idolatry and pagan ways.

Peter thought that Gentiles were offensive and unclean at one time and that was the prevailing opinion among the Jews. James and the others at the Jerusalem council were clearing up this matter. That is, as long as they stayed away from their pagan idolatry.

(Acts 15:21 NASB) "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Acts 15:21: Moses was preached on the Sabbath in every city throughout many generations. The Gentiles would now be allowed to hear the same teaching without the burden of having to be circumcised first.

However, the Gentiles must avoid their overtly pagan practices. Why was this necessary? Because Torah states that Elohim's people are prohibited from associating with pagan people because they would become a snare to them (Ex. 23:33, Josh 23:6-8, 12-13). They are instructed to totally destroy the implements of their pagan ways without compromise (Deut. 7:1-5). That is the reason for these demands on the Gentiles.

If one would pay close attention, these four prohibitions are not explicitly detailed in Torah. They specifically pertained to pagan practices in that day.

So why did James think that four restrictions should be placed on Gentiles? Was it because Gentiles needed to obey these laws to be saved? Not at all! He answers that question in the next verse. "For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues" ([Acts 15:21](#)). One HRM follower told me that this verse meant that the Gentiles would go to the synagogues in those cities to learn about following the law. But that is not even close to what James said. The reason for the restrictions was so that the Gentile Christians who were not under the Mosaic law would not unnecessarily offend the Jews. Notice, James did not include circumcision or the entirety of the law in his response. In fact, the four "apostolic decrees," as they have been called, are quite similar to four of the regulations in the Mosaic law placed upon foreigners who wished to remain in the land of Israel. They were to abstain from pagan sacrifices ([Leviticus 17:8-9](#)), from blood ([17:10-14](#)), things strangled ([17:13-14](#)),<sup>5</sup> and sexual immorality ([18:6-23](#)).

"Apostolic decrees?" Dismissive terminology is used for the Word of Elohim ("Mosaic Law") and glorifying terminology to keep Gentiles from being offensive to the Jews.

Leviticus 17: 8-9 says nothing about things contaminated by idols. It states that offerings can only be performed at the place that Elohim designates. Leviticus 17:10-14 prohibits the eating of blood, but does not prohibit any contact with blood itself. Leviticus 17:13-14 states nothing about strangulation. It simply states that the blood of an offering should be poured out on the ground. Strangulation does not necessarily have anything to do with that passage. Leviticus 18 addresses incest, adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality (as a side note, the New Testament

does not disallow bestiality). But that passage does not prohibit premarital sex, which is most often pictured when one thinks of “sexual immorality.”

The council in Jerusalem was not adding to the Torah at all (which is strictly prohibited). They were prohibiting the Gentiles from engaging in overtly pagan practices of that day in order to enter the synagogues and learn of the Messiah and how to live a righteous life according to the Ways of the Father.

Did the rest of the elders and apostles agree with Peter and James? Absolutely. In fact, they agreed at every point and drafted a letter to be sent out to Gentile believers that included the following words:

The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul. . . . For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. ([Acts 15:23–26](#), [28–29](#), emphasis added)

So the disciples specifically stated that they did not send people to teach Gentiles that the law must be kept, and then they sent people to deliver a letter that included just four regulations.

While it’s almost crude to plainly state it, let’s look at this for what it really is. The Gentiles would not have to cut off a piece of their male organ before they could learn of the ways of the Father. The Gentiles rejoiced!

(Acts 15:30-33 NASB) So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, **they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.** And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. And after they had spent time there, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out.

The Gentiles rejoiced because it was not required to cut off their foreskin in order to hear of the Messiah and Instructions of the Father. That is why they “rejoiced.”

If ever there was a time in early Christianity to teach that Gentiles should follow the law, this was it. The decision of the “Jerusalem Council” carried the combined weight of the apostles and confirmation of the Holy Spirit. They did not command the Gentile believers to keep the Sabbath, observe the festivals, or to be circumcised.

The passage clearly states that Gentiles rejoiced because their only requirements were to avoid those four overtly pagan practices in order to enter the synagogues every Sabbath and learn of the Torah of the Father given through Moses (Acts 15:20-21).

## **Do the New Testament Epistles Teach That Gentiles Should Follow the Mosaic Law?**

As mentioned earlier, the HRM often ignores relevant passages in the New Testament epistles. In some cases, the text is not technically ignored; rather its meaning is flipped on its head. Downplaying the teaching contained in these letters is unwise, particularly since most of these letters were specifically composed to instruct the various churches or individuals on matters of Christian doctrine and practice. The Gospels and Acts, on the other hand, are more akin to historical writings. That is, their emphasis is on what happened whereas the epistles' focus is on how one should live.

Keep in mind that the Epistles were to deal with issues and problems in certain assemblies. In some instances, we do not really know what the problem is that is being addressed. We do know that if anything in the Epistle contradicts the clear Words of the Father, then we should carefully examine the translation, situation, and other issues surrounding that passage to make sure that we are not being led astray by untaught and unstable lawless men who twist the words of Paul and other Scriptures to their own destruction ([2 Peter 3: 14-17](#))!

### **The Gospel: Jesus Plus Nothing Else**

Written close to the same time as the convening of the Jerusalem Council, Paul's letter to the Galatians was penned primarily to deal with the same type of issues. A group of people known as Judaizers had troubled the churches in Galatia with the idea that believers in Christ must submit to the Mosaic law, with circumcision being highlighted throughout the letter. In fact, it is probably not a stretch to say that the HRM would end today if each of its followers properly understood the main argument of Galatians.

The author of this paper does not understand the main argument of Galatians. It is true that there were Judaizers troubling the assemblies that Paul visited, especially the one in Galatia. But what they were promoting was the proselytizing of the Gentile to convert to Judaism. They were telling the Gentiles that if they wish to be saved, conversion to Judaism is the answer. Since that is the answer, belief in Yeshua is not necessary. Paul knew that obedience to the Torah does not remove sin and provide redemption to the Father. But Paul was certainly not promoting that the Gentiles should continually sin and condemn themselves as Tim Chaffey suggests.

In this letter, Paul is battling the Judaizers who were compelling the Gentiles to get circumcised, convert to Judaism, and forget about Yeshua as Messiah. He used circumcision as the key

element in reference to conversion to Judaism. He did this because it was the key element on their minds.

Paul makes some extremely strong statements against such teaching. Following his introductory comments, he twice condemned those, whether man or angel, who would preach any other gospel than what Paul had preached to them ([Galatians 1:8-9](#)). Later, he stated, "We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified" ([Galatians 2:15-16](#)).

The HRM follower might respond that they do not believe they are justified by the law, but through faith in Christ.<sup>6</sup> Instead, many of them view the works of the law as being required of believers for the purpose of obedience and sanctification. Paul bluntly addresses this idea as well:

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ([Galatians 3:1-3](#))

Recognize that Paul is clearly contrasting Judaism (which rejects Messiah and claims salvation through keeping the Torah) to faithfulness in Yeshua Messiah. The Judaizers were clinging to the covenant at Sinai where they claim "All that Elohim has spoken we will do!" They reject the New Covenant in Messiah through which one receives the Spirit (Breath) of the Father which gives him a heart and desire to obey His Torah, commandments, statutes, and ordinances.

Paul stated that those who think they can be sanctified by the works of the law are foolish and have been bewitched. If we have been saved by "hearing and faith," having "begun by the Spirit," then how should we live? Paul condemns the notion that one should now rely on the works of the law, attempting to be perfected by the flesh. Instead, he provides the answer near the end of his letter. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, *you are not under the law*" ([Galatians 5:16-18](#), emphasis added). How much plainer does Paul need to say it? What can we unreservedly say about those who are led by the Spirit? They are "not under the law."

This passage was already addressed above [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). Those who are "led by the Spirit, "follow the Law!"

Instead of being under the law, Paul stated that in Christ, we have liberty and do not need to rely on law-keeping.

Tim Chaffey does not understand that those who are a part of the New Covenant are not “under the law,” nor do they rely on “law-keeping.” Those who actually have the Spirit (Breath) of the Father in them EMBRACE the Torah because it is life! It is what we think about when we get up in the morning and what we talk about when we walk along the road. Following His Ways are the very life of the believer! Obedience to the Fathers Ways is not the ugly burden the author portends.

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Look: I, Paul say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ([Galatians 5:1–3](#))

Tim Chaffey is saying that if you have been circumcised, you have to keep the whole Torah or else you are condemned. That is incorrect. Paul is saying that if you rely on conversion to Judaism (which starts with circumcision) for your salvation, your salvation hinges upon your perfection. No man can do that.

(Eccl 7:20 NASB) Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

(Psa 130:3 NASB) If Thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

(Psa 143:2 NASB) And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, For in Thy sight no man living is righteous.

Notice the similarity of [verse 3](#) with [James 2:10](#). If someone believes he must keep the law, then he cannot pick and choose which parts of the law he wants to keep: it’s all or nothing.<sup>7</sup> There is much more from Galatians to address this issue, but we need to see what Paul taught about these matters in some of his other letters.

Paul is condemning conversion to Judaism (starting with circumcision) for salvation, not breaking the Torah.

## **The Gospel Does Not Depend on the Works of the Law**

In [Colossians 2](#), Paul explained that the Colossian believers, who were of the uncircumcision (i.e., Gentiles) had been “circumcised with a circumcision made without hands” having been saved “through faith in the powerful working of God” ([Colossians 2:11–12](#)). This circumcision made without hands refers to a circumcision of the heart, which comes through the Spirit ([Romans 2:25–29](#)).

Paul speaks of the circumcision of the flesh (conversion to Judaism) as being totally insufficient. The circumcision of the heart is spoken of in the Torah and the Tanak (Old Testament). The key

element is that when you have a circumcised heart, you will have a love for the Torah and will be obedient to it:

(Deu 30:6-8 NASB) "Moreover **the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants,** to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live. "And the LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. "**And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today.**

(Jer 31:31-33 NASB) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "**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.**

(Ezek 11:19-21 NASB) "And **I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them.** Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. "But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I shall bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord GOD.

(Ezek 36:25-27 NASB) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. "Moreover, **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**

THAT is the circumcision of the heart spoken of in Scripture. It is when Elohim puts a love for His Ways in your heart and you will walk in His statues and you will be careful to observe His ordinances. If one does not have that love for His Torah, they do NOT have a circumcised heart according to Scripture. That is a fact.

The previous paragraph laid the framework for what Paul told these Gentile believers next. "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)).

The Colossians were a Gentile group new to Torah and trying to live according to the Word of Elohim. Apparently Jewish leaders were telling them that they did not know how to keep Torah or the Feast days and were not capable. Paul tells them not to worry and not to let the Jewish leaders be their judge.

Paul reminds them that those things are a shadow of what is coming. The Greek word for "substance" is swma. G4983. swma, of unc. or.; **a body:-- bodies(11), body(128), personal(m)(1), slaves(m)(1), substance(m)(1)**. It should be translated as "body" instead of "substance." Paul is saying that the body of believers in Colossae does not belong to Judaism, but to Messiah.

As we have already seen in Acts 15 and Galatians, the early churches often consisted of contingents of both Jews and Gentiles, and they struggled with the dynamic of Gentiles being "brought near by the blood of Christ" ([Ephesians 2:13](#)).

Tim Chaffey misses the meaning of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. That passage is already addressed [above](#). It is as an obvious reference to the fact that some Gentiles are brought into the Commonwealth of Israel through the blood of Messiah. Read it closely with that in mind and see if it doesn't jump out at you!

Many of the Gentile believers had been told that they need to believe in Jesus and follow some or all of the Mosaic law. But, as he did in Galatians, Paul rejected such a view and told these Gentiles not to let anyone judge them if they did not follow Jewish customs, such as the dietary laws, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths.

The Torah of Elohim is not "Jewish customs." They are the unchanging, perfect, truthful Word of the Father filled with love for His people.

Amazingly enough, HRM teachers flip the meaning of [this verse](#) on its head, claiming that Paul is telling them not to let anyone judge them for now keeping these practices.<sup>8</sup> Such an interpretation is exactly the opposite of what Paul stated. The whole thrust of the passage is that a person is saved by faith alone and not by human effort, such as legalism.

The subject of the sentence is "Let no one act as your judge..." That is in reference to how well one is keeping the Torah.

(Col 2:16 NASB) Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—

Tim Chaffey and those like him are the ones in which Torah Observant people should not let "act as our judge" in how we eat and observe our faith.

Also, the word "legalism" is not in any Bible translation.

Paul urges these Gentile converts to understand that they are in danger of losing their reward if they seek to be sanctified in any way outside of faith in Christ, whether it be legalism ([verse 16](#)) or other fleshly practices, such as asceticism and mysticism ([verses 18-23](#)).

Where Tim Chaffey gets "legalism" in Colossians 2:16 is a mystery. Once again, I fail to even find the term "legalism" in any translation in Scripture. But in his own words, Mr. Chaffey will "turn the meaning of a verse up on its head" in order to make it fit his dated dogma. He seems to insist that one should sin and be disobedient to the Father's Torah ("sin is lawlessness" - 1 John 3:4). He seems to have the strange notion that to sin and be disobedient to the Father's Word will draw one closer to the Father.

Verses 18-23 in Colossians chapter 2 further cements the fact that verse 16 is speaking of being judged by the Pharisees and others who denigrate the Messiah and insist on conversion to Judaism:

(Col 2:20 NASB) If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to **decrees**, such as,

(Col 2:21 NASB) "**Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!**"

(Col 2:22 NASB) (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)-- in accordance with **the commandments and teachings of men?**

(Col 2:23 NASB) These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Col 2:23: This is continuing the warning against the Pharisees who took their traditions of men and magnified them to the level of the Torah (Instructions) of Elohim. The Greek word for "decrees" in verse 20 is the Greek word "dogma" (the same term as in verse 16, which he calls "commandments of men" in verse 22) Their teachings of ritualistic washings before they touch food and taste it (and other worthless traditions) are of no value against sin and against fleshly indulgence (Mark 7:1-13). Keep in mind how Paul had JUST TOLD the Colossians how Yeshua publicly humiliated the rulers and authorities when they tried to push these worthless traditions on the people (Col. 2:15).

(Col 2:15 NASB) When **He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.**

Col 2:15: The rulers and authorities that Yeshua disarmed were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, and other Jewish religious leaders who were deceiving the people. He did this many times in the Gospels (Matt. 22:15, 22-23, 33-35, 46, Mark 12:34, Luke 20:39-40).

## **The Law of Liberty and the Weaker Brother**

Paul discussed dietary regulations and Sabbaths in [Colossians 2](#), and these two aspects of the Mosaic law show up again in [Romans 14](#).

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment

on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ([Romans 14:1-5](#))

Romans 14 is one of the most misused and most misquoted passages in Scripture. The Romans were dealing with problems that are not explicitly mentioned in Torah or in the Tanakh (Old Testament). Paul is helping them deal with those things in this section of his letter.

Paul is not giving broad statements concerning all conduct. In this chapter, Paul is only addressing disputable issues, gray areas, or people's opinions (depending on the translation used). Paul makes that abundantly clear in the first verse. Even a man like J. Vernon McGee agreed that this chapter is about things that are up for dispute and that are doubtful.

(Rom 14:1 NASB) Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on **his opinions**.

(Rom 14:1 NKJV) Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to **disputes over doubtful things**.

(Rom 14:1 KJV) Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to **doubtful disputations**.

Paul tells the people to accept those who are weak in faithfulness. But don't accept them merely to pass judgment upon their opinions. Paul spends some time addressing the opinions of those weak in faithfulness.

Once again, it is difficult to be much clearer than what Paul wrote here. Believers should not pass judgment on each other over the foods they choose to eat.

Exactly and Torah Observant believers feel that others should not pass judgment on them for choosing to eat kosher or kashrut according to Scripture.

One person believes he can eat any type of food, but the one who is weak in faith believes he can only eat certain foods. Yet, even though Paul identifies this person as weak, he still urges one side not to pass judgment on the other side. The same is true when it comes to recognizing certain special days. One person highly esteems a given day while another esteems all days the same. Both positions are fine as long as each person is fully convinced in his own mind. These issues are matters of the conscience.

Incorrect. The issue Paul was addressing when referring to those who are "weak in faith" are those who believed that eating meat meant it was sacrificed to idols. Many of the new Gentile believers had lived their lives sacrificing lambs and cows to their false gods and then eating them. They could no longer eat meat because their conscience was seared from their past idolatry. Paul addresses this issue very clearly in 1 Corinthians 8. But this has

nothing to do with ignoring God's Instructions by eating poison or participating in worship of Him that has roots in ancient pagan ritual.

How could Paul, a Jewish believer in the Messiah, tell people that they do not need to observe special days or dietary restrictions? He explains in [verse 17](#) that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Keeping the Mosaic law does not sanctify a person (nor does it save him) and neither does following any manmade set of rules. We are to walk in the Spirit each and every day, seeking to honor God in every situation.

Paul taught the same thing in 1 Corinthians 8. The person with a weak conscience is one who would not eat certain food, namely that which had been offered to idols. Others understood that the food itself was not defiled by an idol and that God is the Creator of all things, so they had no qualms about eating it. They recognized they were free to eat it because "food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do" ([1 Corinthians 8:8](#)). However, Paul did place a stipulation on them—they were not to eat such meat if it would cause their brother to stumble. Living the Christian life is not about what food you eat or which days you might acknowledge as holy. The issues of food and holy days require more space since the HRM focuses so much attention on them.

What Tim Chaffey forgets to point out is that when Scripture speaks of "food," it is not speaking of rats, dog, pig, or spiders. "Food" is that which is designated in Scripture as food. As a matter of fact, look at the meaning of the word cited in the author's referenced passage as "food."

(1 Cor 8:8 NASB) But food (*Gr. – bromā*) will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat.

G1033. bromā, bro'-mah; from the base of G977; food (lit. or fig.), espec. (cer.) **articles allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law**:--meat, victuals.

The problem with those "weak in faith" as Paul talks about is simply one issue. They were former idolaters. Because if this, when they see people eating meat, they make the connection that they must have sacrificed to idols because that is what they always did before they eat meat. The average believer knows that eating meat, in and of itself, has nothing to do with pagan sacrifices. But Paul says if this distresses those who were former idolaters, he will not eat meat in front of them.

The fact of the matter is that we do not really have an application today for what Paul is describing as those "weak in faith." Times have changed. Situations have changed. We do not have new believers who were former idolaters that are hurt in their beliefs when they see someone eat a cheeseburger.

There are other issues that Paul dealt with that are not really issues today. There are not Judaizers saying that all men must be circumcised and convert to Judaism before they can hear

of the Torah and of Messiah. However, that was one of the main issues Paul was struggling against. But that does not exist today. These things must be kept in mind when studying the Scriptures!

## Special Foods

It can easily be demonstrated from the pages of Scripture that the dietary regulations of the Mosaic law were not binding on all people throughout history. We have already seen that Paul permitted his readers to eat whatever they chose, as long as their decision did not injure the conscience of the weaker brother.

No. Paul does not say that. Why does the author say Paul is “permitting” or “not permitting” things? Is Paul God? Does he have that power to make laws himself? Do the apostles (missionaries) have the power to make their own laws? First we have God’s Laws. Then Tim claims we have Jesus’ laws, now he claims we have Paul’s laws?

Does the Old Testament have any teachings similar to this?

When God created Adam and Eve, he instructed them to eat vegetation ([Genesis 1:29](#)).

That is real a stretch. I know this is a common claim among creationists, but that is not what the passage states.

(Gen 1:29 NASB) Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you;

It states that Elohim provided some of the seed bearing plants as food. But not all! I don’t think poison ivy and other similar plants were not created as food. It does not prohibit animals as food. As a matter of fact, we are told that Cain and Able performed offerings. These offerings were often a big barbecue for the people.

There is no mention of any change in this regulation until [Genesis 9:3](#), which records the Lord telling Noah after the Flood, “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.” Of particular interest here is that God specifically proclaims that he is changing what man is permitted to eat. At first, man could only eat plants, but after the Flood, God permitted man to eat meat from “every moving thing that lives.”

Not “all” of the seed bearing plants were to be food. Some were not food. The passage specifically points out, “I give all to you, as I gave you the green plant.” Not ALL green plants were food. In the same way, not “all” animals were meant to be food. Since Noah obviously knew the difference between clean and unclean animals, he knew the meaning of that command.

(Gen 9:3 NASB) "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, **as I gave the green plant.**

HRM proponents have argued that since the Flood account distinguishes between clean and unclean animals ([Genesis 7:8](#)), then it follows that God was simply telling Noah that he could now eat clean animals; thus it is just like the Levitical restrictions. A problem with this claim is that [Genesis 9:3](#) makes no mention of the distinction between clean and unclean animals,

Actually, it DOES make the distinction between clean and unclean because God said it is "as I gave the green plant."

so they are reading such an idea into the text rather than getting it from the text.

Unfortunately for him, it is Tim Chaffey that uses eisegesis as opposed to exegesis, as shown in this rebuttal.

In fact, the text specifically states twice that man was now permitted to eat "every" moving thing, and it mentions no restrictions. Another problem is that this verse still shows that prior to this moment, man was only permitted to eat vegetation. So the dietary restrictions found in Leviticus were clearly not in operation prior to the time of Moses. And if God changed the dietary restrictions at the time of Noah and the time of Moses, then there is no reason he could not have done so at the time of Jesus ([Mark 7:18-19](#)).

This is another place where the HRM greatly differs from much of Christianity. We know that the Elohim of the Scriptures does not change, nor does He change His mind:

(Mal 3:6 NASB) "**For I, the LORD, do not change;** therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

(Psa 102:26-27 NASB) "Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed. **"But Thou art the same, And Thy years will not come to an end.**

(1 Sam 15:29 NASB) "And **also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.**"

(James 1:17 NASB) Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down **from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.**

The attempt at using Mark 7 (or Matthew 15, which is the same incident) as an example of God changing His mind is a fallacy when that is impossible according to His Word! Mark 7 and Matthew 15 is all about the Jewish traditional ceremonial handwashings before a meal. (They still do this, by the way). In Mark 7, Yeshua is battling these Jewish traditions of man because

they put these traditions on the same level as the Torah, therefore making the Torah of no effect:

(Mark 7:1-2 NASB) And the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered together around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

Mark 7:2: The ritual handwashing that they were doing is still practiced in Judaism to this day.

"In Temple times there were elaborate rules in connection with ritual impurity. If a person had been rendered impure through having come into contact, say, with a dead rodent, he contaminated sacred food such as the tithe given to the priests, which must then not be eaten. The way in which contamination of this kind could be removed was through immersion in a ritual bath.

But the sages imposed in certain circumstances the minor form of contamination known as "hand contamination" in which only the hands, not the whole body, was contaminated and for this to be removed total immersion was not required, only the ritual washing of the hands. Since there was a good deal of priests' tithe in ancient Palestine which could easily come into contact with the hands, the sages eventually ordained that the hands of every Jew, not only the hands of a priest, must be washed ritually before meals.

### Not a Matter of Hygiene

It has to be appreciated that this ritual washing of the hands has nothing to do with physical cleanliness. On hygienic grounds, the hands are obviously to be clean of dirt before food is eaten. Even when the hands are physically clean they are still required to be ritually washed.

Although the original reason for washing the hands no longer applies, since there is no sacred food to be eaten, the ritual was continued on the grounds that the ideal of holiness demands a special, ritualistic washing of the hands. The act of washing the hands in this sense is seen as the introduction of the holiness ideal into the mundane life of the Jew. This ritual washing is only required before a meal at which bread is eaten.

### Procedure and Practice

The procedure is to pour water out from a cup or glass first twice over the right hand and then twice over the left hand--care being taken that the unwashed hands do not touch the water used for the washing. The hands are then dried with a towel before partaking of the meal. A benediction is recited over the washing of the hands: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of

the universe, who has sanctified us with Thy commandments and has commanded us concerning the washing of the hands."

The reference to the command has to be understood in the context that rabbinic ordinances are also commanded by God. Observant Jews are very strict in this matter of washing the hands before meals."

[http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Prayer/Blessings/Hand\\_Washing.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Prayer/Blessings/Hand_Washing.shtml)

(Mark 7:3-4 NASB) (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.)

Mark 7:4: What we have here is a delegation sent from Jerusalem to spy on Yeshua. They were trying to trap Yeshua because He totally ignored the traditions of the elders. The traditions Yeshua was ignoring were the washing traditions that were added by the elders and the Pharisees. The Book of Leviticus says a lot about washing, or cleansing. However, Leviticus tells us when that is necessary. They were adding to those laws with their own laws. The cleansing described in Leviticus was for sanitary reasons and to give us an object lesson that we must be cleansed of our sins before we can enjoy fellowship with Elohim.

The Pharisees only saw the importance of ritually washing and they even extended the washing to the cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and the couches upon which they sat. This washing was entirely ceremonial and had nothing to do with sanitary eating.

The Greek term used for washing here is "baptismo." The root word for the Greek word is where we get our word baptism. They baptised the bejeebes out of everything. It was purely an outward performance. This was religion with a vengeance.

They distorted the Torah of Elohim by turning it into their own meaningless ceremony. Ceremony and ritual is mans attempt to reach Elohim and is entirely worthless. Yeshua condemns these ceremonial traditions of Judaism in this chapter. That is the battle that Yeshua was engaged in during His years of teaching. Paul was engaged in that same battle during his years of teaching also. However, Christianity distorts Scriptures to make this battle to be against Torah, and not against the traditions and oral laws.

(Mark 7:5 NASB) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked<sup>^</sup> Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

Mark 7:5: The Pharisees are criticizing Yeshua personally by accusing His disciples. The way He deals with them is nothing short of harsh.

(Mark 7:6-7 NASB) And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

Mark 7:7: A hypocrite is one who is merely acting out a part. It is the Greek word "hupokritays" which is a term used for actors on a stage. Their hearts and lips may as well belong to different people.

They are leading the people astray by teaching as doctrines, the teaching of men. Yeshua is quoting Isaiah 29:13. If the people turn aside from Torah, they will follow futile things (1 Sam. 12:20-21).

Elohim warns against adding to or taking away from Torah (Deut 4:2, 12:23, Joshua 1:7-8).

(Mark 7:8-9 NASB) "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." He was also saying to them, "You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

Mark 7:9: They were holding to their traditions, but neglecting the commandments of Elohim. When man rejects the Torah of Elohim, they are cursed (Isa. 24:5-6).

The ritual handwashing being elevated to the level of Elohim's Torah is the subject of this entire passage. Now that the fact has been established, let's look at the passage quoted by Mr. Chaffey:

(Mark 7:18-19 NASB) And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.)

Mark 7:19: The disciples were misunderstanding this also. Keeping this in context, Yeshua is speaking of the handwashing traditions of the elders. Handwashing rituals do not cleanse a man. The Pharisees were not being polluted by not doing their traditional handwashings. They were being polluted by the things in their hearts.

The NKJV is a much better translation of this last verse:

(Mark 7:19 NKJV) "because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"

The foods passing through the digestive system are purified in the stomach and then are eliminated. He is not saying that He declares everything that enters into a man's mouth to be clean. Regardless, the Greek word for food is "broma" which is a reference to things that are real foods allowed by Torah: Food - 1033. broma, bro'-mah; from the base of G977; food (lit. or fig.), espec. (cer.) articles **allowed or forbidden by the Jewish law**:--meat, victuals.

(Mark 7:20-23 NASB) And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Mark 7:23: Yeshua states that it is the evil that proceeds out of the heart of man that defiles him. Following the traditions of the elders does not purify a polluted heart. Matthew's account of this same account makes this very clear (Matt. 15:17-20).

(Mat 15:17-20 NASB) "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. "**These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.**"

This simple fact undermines the central tenet of the HRM—the Mosaic law was not binding on all people throughout history.

Yes it was! That is why Cain and Abel brought offerings to the place Elohim designated. That is why Noah knew the difference between clean and unclean animals. That is why Judah knew he was to follow the Levirate Law in Genesis 38. It was even told that Abraham was obedient to the Torah and that is why Isaac (and the rest of us) received the blessings of the Father:

(Gen 26:4-5 NASB) "And I will multiply your (Isaac's) descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; **because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.**"

Of course, this does not mean it was fine to murder someone before God told Moses, "You shall not murder" ([Exodus 20:13](#)). Long before that, he confronted Cain over his evil act of murder ([Genesis 4:10-15](#)). He also told Noah that murderers deserve to be put to death, because man was made in God's image ([Genesis 9:6](#)). Just because certain laws or principles can be found across biblical history, it does not follow that all 613 laws of Moses are binding across history.

But they were in effect! Scripture proves that fact!

## Special Days

A very common teaching in the HRM is that faithful believers must only celebrate the holidays that were part of the Mosaic Covenant. Leviticus 23 describes the proper protocol for celebrating the following feasts: Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks (Pentecost), Trumpets, Tabernacles, and Day of Atonement.

Every year around Christmas, Answers in Genesis receives hundreds of messages (via email and Facebook) from people within the HRM who castigate the ministry for talking about Christmas and using it as a time to point people toward the Savior. There is no question that many of our culture's Christmas traditions have no biblical basis, and HRM followers use this truth to label any and all celebrations of Christmas akin to worshipping pagan gods. The same thing happens every year at Easter time. Many of the claims about these holidays by the HRM are flawed, being based on revisionist history, shoddy scholarship, and the misinterpretation of Scripture. We have written much on these topics, so there is no reason to rehash the issues here (see footnote for links to various relevant articles).<sup>9</sup> We will consider a few of the major errors of the HRM on these points.

There is no doubt that Sun-day worship, Christmas, and Easter have elements and timing that were originally from pagan celebrations. They are totally non-Scriptural and were absorbed into Christianity and changed to be "Christianized" (study the history or see [the Pat Robertson video](#)). Therefore, His people are prohibited from celebrating them:

(Deu 12:1-4 NASB) "These are the statutes and the judgments which you shall carefully observe in the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess as long as you live on the earth. **You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods, and you shall obliterate their name from that place. You shall not act like this toward the LORD your God.**

(Deu 12:29 NASB) "When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations which you are going in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, beware that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed before you, and **that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'** **You shall not behave thus toward the LORD your God, for every abominable act which the LORD hates they have done for their gods; for they even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.** "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it.

God's people are prohibited from worshipping the Father the way the pagans worshipped their false gods! Elohim is not interested in being worshipped or approached in that way. We are to come to Him on His terms, not our own.

First, as discussed above, Christians have the freedom to esteem any day higher than any other or to not hold one day in honor above another ([Romans 14:5](#)).

Romans chapter 14 is addressing "Doubtful things," or "people's opinions," as demonstrated [previously](#)! Events like the Feast of Purim, Hannukah, Fourth of July, birthdays, or Thanksgiving fall into that category. Celebrations of Jesus that came from ancient pagan practices do not!

Keep in mind that the Appointed Times of Yahweh are not doubtful or anyone's opinion:

(Lev 23:1-2 NASB) The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'The **LORD'S (Yahweh's) appointed times** which you shall proclaim as holy convocations (*assemblies*)-- **My appointed times are these**:'

Those are the Appointed Times of the Father. They are not "Jewish Holidays" as some falsely state! They are "His Appointments" that most have been missing!

While this particular verse might have been written to specifically address the issue of the Sabbath, it can still be applied to any holiday, and Paul taught the same type of freedom applied to the festivals ([Colossians 2:16](#)). Neither did the apostles at the Jerusalem Council instruct the Gentile believers to celebrate the Levitical feasts.

Why must the commands of Elohim be repeated by certain other individuals in order to be valid? They don't!

Second, it is quite hypocritical to accuse Christians of celebrating pagan holidays (because extrabiblical ideas have become associated with the celebrations for some people) when their own celebrations are loaded with extrabiblical ideas. For example, HRM proponents criticize Christians who celebrate Christmas for a variety of reasons. One popular reason is that the Bible never says anything about things like Santa, reindeer, and mistletoe being connected to the birth of Jesus Christ. While it's true that the Bible does not mention these things, it does not follow that every Christian who celebrates the Lord's birth in December does so using things like Santa, reindeer, and mistletoe. Furthermore, this criticism is a wee bit like the clover calling the grass green. When HRM followers celebrate the Passover, they include several items and practices that are not mentioned in Scripture, such as a roasted egg, the hidden piece of matzah bread called the afikomen, a bowl of salt water representing tears of Hebrew slaves and the Red Sea, and an extra seat for Elijah. These "traditions of men" were added over the centuries and are not found in the Bible. So why is it acceptable for traditions to be added to the Passover celebration but not to holidays deemed unacceptable by the HRM?

Because those things used in the Passover Seder (that was celebrated by Yeshua in what Christians mistakenly call “the Lord’s Supper”) did not arise from the pagan traditions that Santa, reindeer, and mistletoe originate! Look at the Deuteronomy 12 passage again. When we imitate pagan traditions and use them to “honor” Him, He says He sees children being sacrificed as in days of old!

Third, if it is highly offensive to God to celebrate any holiday outside those mentioned in Leviticus 23, then why do so many HRM adherents often celebrate at least one holiday not found in that chapter and did not arise until more than 12 centuries after Moses? Hanukkah is an eight-day holiday to remember the rededication of the temple following the Maccabean Revolt (c. 167–160 BC). Why would the HRM celebrate such a festival when it is not mentioned in the Mosaic law?

The fact that it is not mentioned in Leviticus 23 is NOT the point! Hannakah is a celebration of a military victory and falls into the Romans 14 category. “Do with it what you want.”

The HRM certainly cannot condemn those who celebrate Hanukkah for a couple of reasons. Their followers highly esteem Jewish practices, and Hanukkah is a very important Jewish celebration. But the greatest argument against the “Leviticus 23 only” position is that Jesus almost certainly celebrated Hanukkah, “the Feast of Dedication” in the “winter” mentioned in [John 10:22](#). If he was not in Jerusalem to celebrate the holiday, then what was he there for? And if it were wrong to celebrate it, why did he not take the opportunity to set people straight during the “Feast of Dedication”? So if Jesus did not violate the law by celebrating a holiday not found in Leviticus 23, then why would it be wrong for Christians to celebrate a holiday not listed in that chapter? It should be mentioned that many HRM followers also celebrate Purim, another Jewish holiday that started long after Moses ([Esther 9:26–28](#)).

Is there a single person in the world who has who has this alleged “Leviticus 23 only” position as described by Tim Chaffey? It is doubtful.

The point of the above discussion is not to criticize those who wish to learn more about the Hebrew culture, traditions, and practices during biblical times. In fact, learning about these things to some degree is necessary for properly understanding the Bible. Jesus and all of his apostles were Jews. With a few possible exceptions,<sup>10</sup> every book of the Bible was written by Hebrews. If we are to properly interpret the Bible, we need to be aware of the historical context of its writings.

There is nothing wrong with a Christian taking part in a Passover seder or celebrating Hanukkah, as long as he realizes that such practices are not required for salvation or sanctification and do not grant any special favor with God.

The author is literally saying that it does not matter what you do, but how you “feel” about it is what’s important. That is about as convoluted as it can be. The HRM does not believe in

emotionally based dogma where sin does not really exist, unless you “feel” a certain way about it.

That’s one of the main reasons why most Torah observant folks do not want to carry the “Christian” label in these modern times. Most modern Christians seem to have a dislike for much of the Word of God, or at least an ignorance of it. It is commonly taught in churches that your “belief” is all you need and all you should have. But according to Scripture, your feelings and “belief” are nothing without obedience to the Father:

(John 3:36 NASB) "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; **but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**"

The Greek word for “believe” is “pisteo” and it is an action word in the Greek language. It is not a passive emotional word. Obedience is directly tied to belief. According to that passage in John, without obedience, there is no salvation!

Observing these festivals can help one acquire a better grasp of the Bible’s context. I recently had the privilege of visiting Israel during Hanukkah, and I believe it was quite helpful for me to see firsthand what the celebration is like today and what it means to the Jewish people. But I certainly do not believe it made me any holier than fellow believers who have not had such a wonderful opportunity.

## Final Considerations

The reason for this critique of the HRM is that many in the movement go far beyond the desire to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the historical and cultural background of Scripture and have fallen for false doctrine. These are not minor disagreements that can be swept under the rug, but are egregious errors that often have serious ramifications and must be addressed. When it condemns Christians for not following the Mosaic law and Hebrew traditions, then the HRM has crossed a line repeatedly rejected by the apostles.

It is not HRM that condemns Christians for their lawlessness. It is the Word of God which does so:

(Deu 6:24-25 NASB) "So **the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God for our good always** and for our survival, as it is today. **"And it will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.**

(Deu 10:12-13 NASB) "And now, Israel, **what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God**

**with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?**

(James 1:22-25 NASB) But **prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at **the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.**

James references the "Law of liberty." That is the Torah!

(Psa 119:44-45 NASB) So **I will keep Thy law continually, Forever and ever And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Thy precepts.**

(Psa 19:7-11 NASB) **The law of the LORD is perfect,** restoring the soul; **The testimony of the LORD is sure,** making wise the simple. **The precepts of the LORD are right,** rejoicing the heart; **The commandment of the LORD is pure,** enlightening the eyes. **The fear of the LORD is clean,** enduring forever; **The judgments of the LORD are true;** they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. **Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.**

It is untaught people that mock Scripture and declare the Word of God to be less perfect, sure, right, clean, and true.

They need to hear the same rebukes that Paul delivered to the Galatians who had been bewitched by teachings very similar to the HRM.

For a detailed study on Galatians that does not mock the Word of the Father, one can start [here](#). If it is preferred it in video form, they can be viewed [here](#). The verse by verse Galatians study goes from videos #7-#12.

There are real dangers in taking good intentions (learning more about the Hebrew backdrop of Christianity) too far.

"It's good to learn about the Word of the Father, but don't look into it too deep!" Ridiculous! We should be learning of the Torah and it should be our passion in life!

(Deu 11:18-23 NASB) "**You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul;** and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. "**And you shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.** "And **you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,** so that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give

them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth. "**For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you, to do it, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him;** then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

The HRM has created divisions in the body of Christ by labeling non-HRM believers as pagans or accusing them of engaging in pagan practices. They have set up a Christianity consisting of haves and have-nots (i.e., the haves who keep the law and the have-nots who do not).

Division? No. It's not "division." We left. We aren't dividing.

Some of the people involved in this movement have slipped into believing and teaching a false gospel by promoting "works salvation" when they argue that believers must keep the Mosaic law.

The only thing HRM promotes is obedience to the Father. HRM does not force anyone to do anything. The movement mostly consists of individuals who have come to these conclusions through the Spirit (Breath) of the Father working in them through study of His Word. That is all.

(Prov 28:9 NASB) **He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.**

(Micah 3:4 NASB) Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time, Because they have practiced evil deeds.

(John 9:31 NASB) "**We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.**

If salvation is by God's grace received through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, as the Bible clearly states ([Romans 11:6](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)), then it cannot be based on works of the law, or else it would no longer be by grace. Certainly, Christians should do the good works God has set before them ([Ephesians 2:10](#)), but we are not saved by such efforts. We can only be saved on the basis of the complete and perfect atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Those that are Torah Observant are not obedient to the Words and Ways of the Father because they feel they are "under the Law" or "need to work for salvation!" We obey the Father's Torah because we LOVE it! It is our life's breath! We EMBRACE it with our very being! The Father placed His Spirit (Breath) within us and has caused us to have a love for His Torah in these last days. According to Scripture, that is the "New Covenant!" (Jer. 31: 31-34, Ezekiel 36: 25-27, Hebrews 8: 8-11)

Many an HRM believer says "I cannot explain how or why I feel this way. All I know is that I never truly knew the Father until I started being obedient to His Word."

(1 John 2:3-7 NASB) **And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;** but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. **By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.** Beloved, **I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.**

John says that if one abides in Messiah, they should walk just as He walked. Messiah's daily "walk" consisted of perfectly keeping His Father's Torah. If one claims they know Him without keeping the Father's Torah, John says he is a liar. Peter says he is unstable, untaught, and lawless.

John also reminded us that he is not referring to any "new" commandments. John is referring to the old commandments we had at the beginning, which is the Torah.

If you have been influenced by the Hebrew Roots Movement, I urge you to carefully read through the book of Galatians. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you read. Do not rely on my interpretation of its passages mentioned above or on the interpretation of various HRM teachers. Just carefully and prayerfully read through the letter to see what Paul told his readers. Look closely at the other passages discussed in this article. Think about why none of the apostles ever instructed the Gentile believers to follow the Mosaic law when they had perfect opportunities to do so.

The Apostles did instruct the Gentile believers to follow God's Instructions. Every time they encourage "righteousness," tell the people "do not sin (or some derivative of that phrase)," tell the people to "be holy," and many more such terms they are direct references to being obedient to the Father's Ways.

Remember that the kingdom of God is not about food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit ([Romans 14:17](#)).

This is another [Romans 14](#) reference. Paul said he was referring to "doubtful things" or "people's opinions" remember? In that chapter, Paul is trying to help the Roman assembly sort out non-Scriptural issues. He is NOT trying to rewrite the Word of God!

Recall the simplicity of the gospel, which is the power of God to salvation for everyone who *believes*, for the Jew first and also for the Gentile ([Romans 1:16](#)).

As pointed out with John 3:36, the Greek word translated as "believe" has obedience tied to it. Just because you feel good about something doesn't mean you are "saved."

(Rom 2:12-13 NASB) For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; **for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.**

It is not about the works we might do for God, but what God has already done for us. The gospel message Paul received and delivered is this: “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” ([1 Corinthians 15:3-4, NKJV](#)).

The HRM is not about “the works we might do for God” at all. We fully understand what Elohim has done for us. Actually, we understand more of what “God has already done for us” than the Sun-day morning churchgoer. Elohim has breathed life into His people and caused them to walk in His statutes, and they are careful to observe His ordinances (Ezekiel 36: 25-27). Those who are part of His New Covenant will do so.

Those in the HRM are not trying to be obedient to His Torah out of sense of guilt or obligation. Following His Torah is a privilege and an honor! (It’s not difficult at all...) Those who are in the HRM are people who were not satisfied with what they were being spoon-fed on Sun-days and could not get answers to the Scriptures from their local preachers and denominations.

Just as every single point and Scriptural opinion brought up by Tim Chaffey was shown to be in grave error, every point and every Scripture in this rebuttal should be dealt with also. All of Scripture is of the utmost importance. Picking a few phrases and ignoring the rest seems to be how modern Christianity got to where it is in the first place. As a matter of fact, there are more Christian denominations in the world than there are verses in the Bible! Why is that?

(2 Tim 3:16-17 NASB) **All Scripture** (Paul only had the Old Testament for “Scripture” in that day) **is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for **every** good work.

Shalom!