



**Christian Foundational Teachings
No. 6: Sha'ul's Letters
(Advanced)**

**Undeniable Facts Why Paul's Letters
Cannot be Discredited**

WE INFORM – YOU CHOOSE

PROFESSOR WA LIEBENBERG

Undeniable Facts Why Paul's Letters cannot be Discredited

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Preface

YHWH "God" has called us to do two things. First, we are to never give up studying and seeking the correct interpretation of any given Bible passage. Second, such opportunities are golden moments for us to learn to show grace and love to others whose understanding of a given passage may differ from ours.

Throughout the HRTI's teachings, we use a slightly different vocabulary to that which some might be accustomed. We have chosen to use what many refer to as a Messianic vocabulary. The reasons being: firstly, using Hebraic-sounding words is another way to help you associate with the Hebraic Roots of your faith. Secondly, these words are not merely an outward show for us, they are truly an expression of who we are as Messianic Jews and Gentiles who have "taken hold" of our inheritance with Israel.

Instead of saying "Jesus", we call our Saviour "Y'shua" – the way His parents would have addressed Him in Hebrew. In addition, rather than referring to Y'shua as "Christ", we use the word "Messiah" – which is an Anglicized version of the Hebrew word, Moshiach.

"YaHoWaH" is the name of God in Hebrew, where it is written as four consonants (YHWH or YHVH, as the W and V is derived from the same Hebrew letter 'Vaw'). These four letters are called the Tetragrammaton (Greek for "[a word] having four letters"). Jews ceased to use the name in the Greco-Roman period, replacing it with the common noun Elohim ("God") to demonstrate the universal sovereignty of Israel's God over all others. At the same time, the divine name was increasingly regarded as too sacred to be uttered and was replaced in spoken ritual by the word Adonai ("My Lord"). From about the 6th to the 10th century the Masorettes (Jewish scholars who were the first to add vowels to the text of the Hebrew Bible) used the vowel signs of the Hebrew words Adonai or Elohim as the vowels for YHWH; and later on the artificial name *Jehovah* was produced. Christian scholars and translators after the Renaissance and Reformation periods replaced the sacred name YHWH with GOD and LORD (all in capital letters in the Bible); which was a strategic move of Satan for not using the Name. The Sacred Name occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew text of the Bible, proving YHWH wants us to use it.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, biblical scholars again began to use the form Yahweh and it is now the conventional usage in biblical scholarship; but leading Hebrew Scholars suggest YHWH should be pronounced as Yah-oo-VaH (Y'shua is derived from YaH-shuvah which means YaH saves. Yah (יָ) is an abbreviation of God's name, YHWH, as seen in Psalm 68:4. The Name is also found in the word hallelu-YaH, which means, "you praise the LORD").

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
The Origin of the Written Law and the Oral Law	5
What the Oral Torah Includes	6
Did the Roman Catholic Church Formulate the Bible?	8
The Formulation of the Bible	9
The Books the Muratorian Fragment Includes	9
The Birth of the Roman Catholic Church	11
The Roman Catholic's Bible Books	11
Facts Established	12
Introduction to the Letters of Sha'ul	13
Accusations against Sha'ul as a False Prophet	13
1. The Issue that Sha'ul is zealous for the Oral Torah (Gal 1:14)	13
2. Sha'ul's Contradictions on Justification (Rom 3:20, 28; 4:3, 5; 5:1)	30
3. We are "free from the Law" (Rom 7:6)	35
4. Sha'ul's Issue on "Righteousness" (Phil 3:9; Gal 2:21; Rom 4:5; 10:4; Eph 2:8-9)	42
5. Sha'ul's view concerning Abraham's Justification (Rom 4:2-3)	45
6. Concerning the "True" Apostle for the Nations (Rom 11:13)	51
7. Was Sha'ul for or against Circumcision? (1 Cor 7:18; Gal 5:2)	56
8. Does Sha'ul's view on Sin and Grace conflict with that of YHWH's? (Rom 11:32)	67
9. Sha'ul's view on Heathens coming into the Commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:11-13)	69
10. Sha'ul's view on Kosher Food (Rom 14:14, 20; 1 Cor 10:25-27)	76
11. Sha'ul's doesn't quote Y'shua's Words of what Y'shua did	78
12. Sha'ul Implies that "Works" are no longer Needed (Rom 9:11; 11:6; Gal 2:16; Gal 3:10; Eph 2:9; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5)	80
13. Sha'ul doesn't Stay in Context when he Quotes Scripture (Rom 3:4)	90

14. Sha'ul the People Pleaser and Hypocrite (Gal 1:10; 1 Cor 10:33)	99
15. Sha'ul and the Working of the Spirit in Us (Gal 3:2)	103
16. Sha'ul and the Children of Abraham (Gal 3:7)	106
17. Sha'ul's Logic Reasoning on Cursed is Anyone that does not Do Torah is Flawed (Gal 3:10)	119
18. Sha'ul' Purpose of the Torah Contradicts the Torah Itself (Gal 3:19)	119
19. Sha'ul said Angels gave the Law to Moshe (Gal 3:19)	120
20. Sha'ul and When did Faith Come? (Gal 3:23)	120
21. Sha'ul and the Predestined Doctrine? (Eph 1:5-5, 11)	120
22. Shaul's teaching on Vessels of Honour and Vessels of Clay (Rom 9:14-23; 2 Tim 2:20-21)	121
23. Sha'ul makes up in suffering for where the Messiah fell short for the Church (Col 1:24)	128
24. Sha'ul in all his letters did not once connect his love for YHWH or Y'shua to obeying	130
25. Sha'ul's Churches all moved away from him (2 Tim 1:15)	131
26. Understanding Sha'ul's Training	133

Conclusion	148
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Is 'Paul' Promoting Roman Catholic Doctrines?

Introduction

Many Believers today say that Sha'ul (Paul) taught that the Law has been done away with. Then there are Believers who are in the Hebraic Roots Movement today who are starting to question the authenticity of Sha'ul's letters. These Believers with sincere hearts are only seeking the truth and strive to live a holy life. Then there are groups of Believers who outright detest the work of Sha'ul in the harshest possible way and make it their life's mission to disprove Sha'ul's work.

These last group of Believers claim that Sha'ul is a false prophet who is used by the Roman Catholic Church and that he is deceiving Believers by steering them away from the Torah-based teachings of Y'shua and His Father.

There is one **core reason** for all of this: *"Believers fail to distinguish between Sha'ul's defense of Faith in Messiah (the Living Torah) and his attack on the false gospel of the circumcision (salvation by works – see our booklet 'Christian Foundational Teaching No 7 – Galatians' for more information on this topic), which he spent an incredible amount of time refuting".*

Come and journey with us back in time to see where it all started...

The Origin of the Written Law and the Oral Law

The Written Law, known in Hebrew as the Torah, consists of the Books of the Hebrew Bible, the TaNaCh. The term "Bible" is more commonly used by non-Jews, as are the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament." The appropriate term for Jews to use of the Hebrew Bible is "TaNaCh". TaNaCh is an acronym for Torah (Instructions), Nevi'im (Prophets) and Chetuvim (Writings).

The Torah is also known as the Chumash, Pentateuch or Five Books of Moshe (Moses). The word "Torah" has the following meanings:

1. A scroll made from kosher animal parchment, with the entire text of the Five Books of Moshe written in it by a sofer [ritual scribe]. This is the most limited definition. (This is as Moshe received it from YHWH at Mount Sinai and written word for word).
2. More often, this term means the text of the Five Books of Moshe, written in any format, whether Torah scroll, paperback book,

CD-ROM, sky-writing or any other media. Any printed version of the Torah (with or without commentary) can be called a Chumash or Pentateuch; however, one never refers to a Torah Scroll as a Chumash. (This is as Moshe received it from YHWH at Mount Sinai and written word for word).

3. In Rabbinical Judaism, the term "Torah" can mean the entire corpus of Jewish law. This includes the Written and the Oral Law (Oral Torah), which includes the Mishnah, the Midrash, the Talmud written during the Babylonian captivity and even latter day legal commentaries. This definition of Torah is probably the most common among Orthodox Jews. Usually you can figure out which definition is being used by the context. (This is as Moshe received it from YHWH at Mount Sinai, but also according to the rabbis' various interpretations of the Written Torah down through the ages. Orthodox Judaism regards the man-made interpretations (the Oral Torah) equally as authentic YHWH's Written Torah).

One can say the following, with regards to the writings of Scripture. Scripture exists out of:

1. The 10 commandments (Hebrew: Davar, meaning words), written by Elohim's own hand.
2. Torah, the direct words of Elohim, written down by Moshe.
3. The rest of Scripture, which is the inspired writings of Elohim, but not His direct words, nor written directly by Him.

Y'shua, Sha'ul, Kariate Judaism world-wide, and HRTI do not believe in the Oral Law as captured in the Talmud as YHWH's Word.

What the Oral Torah Includes

The Oral Torah also comprises the *legal* and *interpretative traditions* that, according to tradition, were transmitted orally from Mount Sinai and were not written in the Torah. According to Rabbinic Judaism, the Oral Torah, Oral Law, or Oral tradition¹ was given by YHWH orally to Moshe in conjunction with the Written Torah²; after which it was passed down orally through the ages – later to be codified and written in the Talmud. This, of course, is found nowhere in the Scriptures. While other cultures and Jewish groups

¹ Hebrew: פה שבעל תורה, Torah she-be-'al peh

² Hebrew: שבכתב תורה, Torah she-bi-khtav

maintained oral traditions, only the rabbis gave ideological significance to the fact that they transmitted their tradition orally.

These rabbis of the Talmudic era claimed they conceived of the Oral Law in two distinct ways. First, Rabbinic tradition conceived of the Oral law as an unbroken chain of transmission. The distinctive feature of this view was that Oral Law was "*conveyed by word of mouth and memorized*".³ Second, the rabbis also conceived of the Oral law as an interpretive tradition, and not merely as memorized traditions. In this view, the Written Torah was seen as containing many levels of interpretation. It was left to later generations, who were steeped in the oral tradition of interpretation, to discover those ("hidden") interpretations not revealed by Moshe.⁴

The "oral law" was ultimately recorded in the Mishnah⁵, the Talmud⁶ and Midrash⁷.

³ Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *The Orality of Rabbinic Writing*, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud*, ed. Martin Jaffee, 2007. p. 39. This is attested to in numerous sources, such as Mishna Avot 1:1. The manner of teaching and memorization is described in B. Eruvin 54b.

⁴ In Rabbinic literature, this view is exemplified by the story of Rabbi Akiva who expounded heaps and heaps of laws from the scriptural crowns of the letters in the written Torah. The Talmud relays that Moshe himself would not understand these interpretations; nevertheless, these are also called Mosaic traditions (*Halakha leMoshe miSinai*). B Menahot 29b. See, Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *op cit*.

⁵ The Mishnah or Mishna (Hebrew: מִשְׁנָה, "repetition", from the verb shanah שָׁנָה, or "to study and review"; also "secondary" (derived from the adj. שֵׁנִי)) is the first major written redaction of the Jewish oral traditions called the "Oral Torah". It is also the first major work of Rabbinic Judaism. It was redacted c. 220 AD by Judah haNasi when, according to the Talmud, the persecution of the Jews and the passage of time raised the possibility that the details of the oral traditions dating from Pharisaic times (536 BC – 70 AD) would be forgotten. It is thus named for being both the one written authority (codex) secondary (only) to the TaNaCh as a basis for the passing of judgment, a source and a tool for creating laws, and the first of many books to complement the Bible in a certain aspect. The Mishnah is also called Shas (an acronym for Shisha Sedarim - the "six orders") in reference to its six main divisions. Rabbinic commentaries on the Mishnah over the next three centuries were redacted as the Gemara; which, coupled with the Mishnah, comprise the Talmud.

⁶ The Talmud (Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד talmūd "instruction, learning", from a root lmd "teach, study") is a central text of mainstream Judaism. It takes the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history. The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the Gemara (c. 500 CE), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the TaNaCh. The terms Talmud and Gemara are often used interchangeably. The Gemara is the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and is much quoted in other rabbinic literature. The whole Talmud is also traditionally referred to as Shas (ש"ס), a Hebrew abbreviation of shisha sedarim, the "six orders" of the Mishnah.

⁷ The Hebrew term Midrash (Hebrew: מִדְרָשׁ; plural midrashim, "story" from "to investigate" or "study") is a homiletic method of biblical exegesis. The term also refers to the whole compilation of homiletic teachings on the Bible. Midrash is a way of interpreting biblical stories that goes

It is these traditions Y'shua referred to:

2 "Why do Your taught ones transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 But He answering, said to them, "Why do you also transgress the command of Elohim because of your tradition?

6 is certainly released from respecting his father or mother.' So you have nullified the command of Elohim by your tradition.⁸

Note that Y'shua didn't condemn the traditions themselves, but merely pointed to the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They left the commandment of Elohim, in order to pursue their traditions.

Did the Roman Catholic Church Formulate the Bible?

A number of erroneous views have been stated regarding the Council of Nicaea's role in establishing the Biblical Canon in 325 CE⁹. In fact, there is no record of any discussion of the Biblical Canon at the council at all. The development of the Biblical Canon took centuries, and was nearly complete (with exceptions known as the Antilegomena¹⁰) by the time the Muratorian fragment was written (**perhaps as early as 150 years before the council**); but more likely in the 4th century, specifically at the Council of Carthage in 397 and 419¹¹.

In 331 CE, Constantine commissioned fifty Bibles for the Church of Constantinople, but little else is known (though it has been speculated that this may have provided motivation for canon lists). In Jerome's Prologue to

beyond simple distillation of religious, legal or moral teachings. It fills in many gaps left in the biblical narrative regarding events and personalities that are only hinted at.

⁸ Matt 15:2-3, 6.

⁹ A.D.

¹⁰ Antilegomena, a direct transliteration from the Greek αντιλεγόμενα, refers to written texts whose authenticity or value is disputed. Eusebius in his Church History written c. 325 used the term for those Christian scriptures that were "disputed" or literally those works which were "spoken against" in Early Christianity, before the closure of the New Testament canon. This group is distinct from the notha ("spurious" or "rejected writings") and the Homologoumena ("accepted writings" such as the Canonical gospels). These Antilegomena or "disputed writings" were widely read in the Early Church and included the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, the Apocalypse of John, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antilegomena>

¹¹ McDonald & Sanders' The Canon Debate, Appendix D-2, note 19: "Revelation was added later in 419 at the subsequent synod of Carthage." "Two books of Esdras" is ambiguous, it could be 1 Esdras and Ezra-Nehemiah as in the Septuagint or Ezra and Nehemiah as in the Vulgate.

Judith, he claims that the Book of Judith was "*found by the Nicene Council to have been counted among the number of the Sacred Scriptures*"¹².

The Formulation of the Bible

Traditional views assume that the bulk of New Covenant (N.T.) texts date to the period between 45 CE and 100 CE, with the Pauline epistles among the earliest texts. Other views may pre- or post-date the individual Books by several decades¹³.

The Muratorian fragment is a copy of perhaps the **oldest known list of the Books of the New Covenant**. The fragment, consisting of 85 lines, is a 7th-century Latin manuscript bound in an eighth or 7th century codex that came from the library of Columban's monastery at Bobbio; it contains internal cues which suggest that it is a translation from a Greek original written about 170. The text of the list itself is traditionally dated to about 170 ($\pm 70-75$ after John was on the Island of Patmos) because its author refers to Pius I, bishop of Rome (142 - 157).

The condition that the original manuscript was in, as well as the poor Latin in which it was written, has made it difficult to translate. The beginning of the fragment is missing and it ends abruptly. The fragment consists of all that remains of a section of a list of all the works that were accepted as canonical **by the early churches** known to its anonymous original compiler. It was discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan by Father Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), the most famous Italian historian of his generation, and published in 1740.¹⁴

The Books the Muratorian Fragment Includes

The Muratorian fragment author accepts *four Gospels*, the last two of which are Luke and John; but the names of the first two at the beginning of the list are missing (Matthew and Mark). Also accepted by the author are the "*Acts of all Apostles*" and *13 of the Pauline Epistles* (the Epistle to the Hebrews is not mentioned in the fragment, nor are 1 and 2 Peter and James).

The author considers the letters claiming to have Sha'ul as the author that are supposedly addressed to the Laodiceans and to the Alexandrians as counterfeit. Of these, he says they are "*forged in Paul's name to [further] the heresy of Marcion.*"

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea#cite_note-54

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating_the_Bible

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muratorian_fragment

Marcion of Sinope (85-160 CE) was a bishop in early Christianity. His theology, which rejected the deity described in the Jewish Scriptures as inferior or subjugated to the God proclaimed in the Christian gospel, **was denounced by the Church Fathers** and he was excommunicated¹⁵.

Marcion created a canon, a definite group of books which he regarded as fully authoritative, displacing all others. These comprised ten of the Pauline epistles (without the Pastorals and Hebrews) and Luke's Gospel. It is uncertain whether he edited these books, purging them of what did not accord with his views, or that his versions represented a separate textual tradition. Marcion's gospel, called simply the Gospel of the Lord, differed from the Gospel of Luke by lacking any passages that connected "Jesus" with the Old Covenant. He believed that the God of Israel, who gave the Torah to the Israelites, was an entirely different god from the Supreme God who sent "Jesus" and inspired the New Covenant. Marcion termed his collection of Pauline epistles the Apostolikon. These also differed from the versions accepted by later Christian Orthodoxy.¹⁶

Back to the Muratorian Fragment: of the General epistles, the author accepts the *Epistle of Jude* and says that *two epistles* "bearing the name of John" are counted as well as the *Book of Wisdom*, "written by the friends of Solomon in his honour" (which are also today in the Catholic Church's Canon).

It is clear that the Muratorian author assumed that the author of the Gospel of John was the same as the author of the First Epistle of John, for in the middle of discussing the Gospel of John he says, "What marvel, then, is it that John brings forward these several things so constantly in his epistles, also"; saying in his own person, "*What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled that have we written,*" (1 John 1:1) which is a quotation from the First Epistle of John. (It is not clear whether the author considers the second epistle of John to be the New Covenant Second Epistle of John or the New Covenant Third Epistle of John.)

Another indication that the author identified the Gospel writer John with two epistles bearing John's name is that when he specifically addresses the epistles of John, he writes, "*the Epistle of Jude indeed, and the two belonging to the above mentioned John.*" In other words, he thinks that these letters were written by the John whom he has already discussed; namely, John the gospel writer. He gives no indication that he considers the John of the Apocalypse to be a different John from the author of the Gospel of John;

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcion>

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_New_Testament_canon

indeed, by calling the author of the Apocalypse of John the "predecessor" of Sha'ul, whom he assumes wrote to seven churches (Rev 2-3). Before Sha'ul wrote to seven churches, he most likely had in mind the gospel writer, since he assumes that the writer of the Gospel of John was an eyewitness disciple who knew Y'shua. Thus he preceded Sha'ul, who joined the church only after Y'shua's death.

In addition to receiving the Apocalypse of John into the church canon, the author remarks that the Apocalypse of Peter is a book which "some of us will not allow to be read in church." However, it is not certain whether this refers to the Greek Apocalypse of Peter or the quite different Coptic Apocalypse of Peter; the latter of which (unlike the former) was Gnostic. But the latter is a poor possibility, because the writer rejected the works of gnostic teachers¹⁷.

The Birth of the Roman Catholic Church

In 313, the struggles of the Early Church were lessened by the legalisation of "Christianity" by the Emperor Constantine I.

The First Council of Nicaea was a council of Christian bishops who convened in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day İznik in Turkey) by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325 CE. This first ecumenical council was the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom.

In 380 CE, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire (the birth of the RC Church) by the decree of the Emperor, which would persist until the fall of the Western Empire, and later, with the Eastern Roman Empire, until the Fall of Constantinople. During this time (the period of the Seven Ecumenical Councils) there were considered five primary sees according to Eusebius: Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria, known as the Pentarchy.¹⁸

The Roman Catholic's Bible Books

The disputed books are often called the Biblical apocrypha, a term that is sometimes used specifically (and possibly pejoratively in English) to describe the books in the Catholic and Orthodox canons that are absent from the Jewish Masoretic Text (also called the TaNaCh or Miqra) and most modern Protestant Bibles.

¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muratorian_fragment

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church

Catholic Christians, following the Canon of Trent (4 April 1546), describe these books as deuterocanonical, meaning of "the second canon"; while Greek Orthodox Christians, following the Synod of Jerusalem (1672), use the traditional name of anagignoskomena – meaning "that which is to be read". They are present in a few historic Protestant versions: the German Luther Bible included such books, as did the English 1611 King James Version.¹⁹

The Roman Catholic's O.T. canon is:

The five books of Moshe (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings [i.e. both Books of Samuel, both Books of Kings], Books of Chronicles, two of Paralipomenon, the first book of Esdras, and the second which is entitled Nehemias; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidical Psalter, consisting of a hundred and fifty psalms; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, with Baruch; Ezekiel, Daniel; the twelve minor prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonah, Micheas, Nahum, Habakuk, Sophonias, Aggaeus, Zacharias, Malachias; two books of the Machabees, the first and the second).

The Roman Catholic's N.T. canon is:

The four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of Sha'ul the Apostle, (one) to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, (one) to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, (one) to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two of Peter the apostle, three of John the apostle [1, 2, 3], one of the apostle James, one of Jude the apostle, and the Apocalypse of John the apostle.

Facts Established

Before we examine the critics' arguments against Sha'ul's Letters, let's pause for a moment to establish some facts derived from our resources:

- 1) YHWH did not inspire the Oral Torah.
- 2) Y'shua rejected leaving the commandments of Elohim in order to establish traditions. Traditions, if not against Torah, are not necessarily a bad thing, but it must never supersede the commandment of Elohim, the Torah.
- 3) The earliest canon of the New Covenant is that of the Muratorian Fragment of 170 CE and it included Sha'ul's Letters.

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible

- 4) The bulk of the Biblical Canon was almost complete as early as 170CE, 150 years before the Council of Nicaea.
- 5) The Council of Nicaea in 325 CE did not establishing the Biblical Canon nor the Roman Catholic Canon; in fact, no canons were even discussed at the Council.
- 6) In 331CE, Constantine commissioned fifty Bibles for the Church of Constantinople, which was not the Roman Catholic Canon, as it was not established yet.
- 7) Only in 380CE, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire (this is the birth of the Roman Catholic Church) by the decree of Emperor Constantine.
- 8) Catholic Christians use a Canon today that was formulated only at the Canon of Trent on 4 April 1546, **nearly 1400 years after the early Church had already accepted Sha'ul's letters** as part of the New Covenant Canon.
- 9) Thus, the acceptance of Sha'ul's Letters has nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Church.

Introduction to the Letters of Sha'ul

Sha'ul's Letters are also known as The Pauline Epistles, Epistles of Paul, or Letters of Paul, and are the thirteen New Covenant Books which have the name "Paul" (Παῦλος) as the first word, hence claiming authorship by Sha'ul the Apostle.

Among these letters are some of the earliest extant Christian documents. They provide an insight into the beliefs and controversies of early Christianity; and as part of the Canon of the New Covenant, they have also been and continue to be foundational to Christian theology and Christian ethics. The Epistle to the Hebrews was also anciently attributed to Sha'ul, but it does not bear his name.

Accusations against Sha'ul as a False Prophet

1. The Issue that Sha'ul is zealous for the Oral Torah (Gal 1:14)

To understand the context of the issue, let's read from verse 13 through to verse 24:

13 For you have heard of my former way of life in Yehud_{ai}sm²⁰, how intensely I persecuted the assembly of Elohim, and ravaged it.

²⁰ Judaism

14 And I progressed in Yehudaism beyond many of my age in my race, **being more exceedingly ardent for the traditions of my fathers.**

15 But when it pleased Elohim, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His favour,

16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might bring Him, the Good News, to the gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

17 neither did I go up to Yerushalayim, to those who were emissaries before me. But I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I went up to Yerushalayim to learn from Kēpha²¹, and remained with him for fifteen days.

19 And I saw no other of the emissaries except Ya'aqob²², the brother of the Master.

20 And what I write to you, see, before Elohim, I do not lie.

21 Then I went into the districts of Syria and of Kilikia²³.

22 And I was still not known by sight to the assemblies of Yehudah²⁴ which were in Messiah,

23 but they were hearing only that, "The one who once persecuted us now brings as Good News the belief which he once ravaged."

24 So they were esteeming Elohim in me.

The transformation of Sha'ul's life and outlook was so dramatic after meeting the risen Messiah, that Sha'ul is compelled to dwell on the point a little longer. It is important to him that he explains his background first - where he came from and what he believed before he met Messiah - so that his gospel message to the Galatians can be clearly understood. In fact, the contrast between what Sha'ul believed as a Pharisee and what he afterward held fast to as a follower of Messiah was at the very core of his message throughout his letter to the Galatians.

Sha'ul's Former Life:

13 For you have heard of my former way of life in Yehudaism, how intensely I persecuted the assembly of Elohim, and ravaged it.

14 And I progressed in Yehudaism beyond many of my age in my race, **being more exceedingly ardent for the traditions of my fathers.**

²¹ Peter

²² James

²³ Cecilia

²⁴ Judah

Before he met the Messiah, the apostle Sha'ul had a ferocious reputation. He was consenting unto Stephen's death. He approved of it and assisted by holding the cloaks of those who were scourged. He was zealous for his beliefs and the lifestyle which he was taught as a Pharisee from his youth and upward. This zeal led him to persecute the followers of Messiah and imprison them.

Sha'ul describes his upbringing and his training in a number of places. First, he identifies with the Hebrew people and with Avraham's descendants:

*Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Yisra'ēlites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.*²⁵

Next, he identifies his tribal affiliation:

*I say then, has Elohim rejected His people? Let it not be! For I also am a Yisra'ēlite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Binjamin.*²⁶

And he admits openly and proudly to his upbringing as a Pharisee:

*Now Sha'ul, perceiving that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, cried out in the council, "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, I am being judged concerning the expectation and resurrection of the dead!"*²⁷

While in Yerushalayim under arrest, Sha'ul answered the crowds regarding the accusations made against him. In these remarks, he describes his own upbringing:

*"I am indeed a Yehudite, having been born in Tarsos of Kilikia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamli'el, having been instructed according to the exactness of the Torah of our fathers, being ardent for Elohim, as you all are today,"*²⁸

Who was Gamaliel, the teacher who trained Sha'ul? Gamaliel was one of the most famous of all the Pharisees throughout history. Sha'ul acknowledged that it was under Gamaliel that he learned about the *Torah*.

²⁵ 2 Cor 11:22

²⁶ Rom 11:1

²⁷ Acts 23:6

²⁸ Acts 22:3

Sha'ul was a devout Jewish Pharisee whose custom was to enter the synagogue on Sabbath and teach Torah:

And it came to be in Ikonion that they went together into the congregation of the Yehudim, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Yehudim and Greeks believed.²⁹

He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:4).

He entered into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for a period of three months, reasoning and persuading about the things concerning the Kingdom of Elohim (Acts 19:8).

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Yahudi synagogue. As his custom was, Sha'ul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-2).

In his letter to the Philippians, he gave testimony of his zeal when he was among the Pharisees who proclaimed the good news of the circumcision (salvation by works):

2 Look out for dogs, look out for the evil workers, look out for the mutilation!

3 For we are the circumcision, who are serving Elohim in the Spirit, and boasting in Messiah משיח, and do not trust in the flesh,

4 though I too might have trust in the flesh. If anyone else thinks to trust in the flesh, I more³⁰

He called these Pharisees "dogs" because of their infatuation with performing their circumcision on men ("mutilating the flesh"). But the true "Circumcision" is those who "worship by the Spirit of Elohim" and "exalt in Messiah". Such who depend on Elohim and remain loyal to the Covenant by keeping His Written Torah (commandments) have no need to "rely on human credentials" because human achievement is meaningless in Elohim's sight. What He wants is our fidelity and love for Him.

But Sha'ul goes on to expound upon his "human credentials"; because if they meant anything at all, then he proclaimed that he would've been among the best of men:

²⁹ Acts 14:1

³⁰ Phil 3:2-4

4 though I too might have trust in the flesh. If anyone else thinks to trust in the flesh, I more –

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Yisra'ël, of the tribe of Binyamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, according to Torah a Pharisee,

6 according to ardour, persecuting the assembly; according to righteousness that is in the law, having become blameless.

7 But what might have been a gain to me, I have counted as loss, because of Messiah.

8 What is more, I even count all to be loss because of the excellence of the knowledge of Messiah יהושע my Master, for whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them as refuse, in order to gain Messiah,

9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through belief in Messiah, the righteousness which is from Elohim on the basis of belief,³¹

As a Pharisee, Sha'ul lived according to the law - their law - the Law of the Pharisees. Not according to Elohim's Law. (Do not be mistaken about what he is saying here.) In context, Sha'ul is talking about human credentials here. As living by human law, he was blameless. (But according to Elohim's Law, he was a murderer! because he participated in the unlawful execution of Stephen.) This entire section is splattered with "salvation by works" speech. Verse 6 mentions the "righteousness that is in the law, having become blameless". Verse 9 speaks again of this same righteousness, which is gained by keeping the Torah and he contrasts this righteousness with the righteousness which is from Elohim, only on the basis of belief. Even verse 1 hints at the fact that this is not a new discussion, yet that he did not write this to the assembly of Philippians before.

For the rest, my brothers, rejoice in יהיה. To write the same matters to you is truly no trouble to me, and for you it is safe.

Here, Sha'ul mentions writing the same matters to them, but does not mention the word "again", which should be expected there. It is believed that he is repeating instructions to them, which he has written to some of the other assemblies before. We know already that he spent the entire letter to the Galatians refuting this very same issue, so it could very well mean that he was repeating to them, that which he sent to the Galatians.

³¹ Phil 3:4-9

As for living according to the law as a Pharisee, he was the best. But he came to understand that there is no value in living according to even the best of human standards and man's very best law code. He came to understand that the Torah itself, and keeping the the Torah, cannot save a man, since no man can keep the Torah perfectly. In Messiah, he considers all of that "rubbish" or "dung"; or in today's vernacular, all man's achievement based on man's laws is "a pile of dung" or "hogwash"! Since he came to faith in Messiah, he discovered that the righteousness that comes from Elohim is based on Messiah's faithfulness. Thus, the faithfulness to the written Scriptures which Messiah modeled in His life for His disciples is the only true way to live for Elohim. This is Elohim's righteousness - walking as Messiah did in obedience to the Written Law of Moshe.

Yet, all of Sha'ul's own human achievement accomplished nothing for him. His entire Pharisee commandment-keeping amounted to nothing, since it could not achieve him salvation. Human credentials are worthless in the sight of YHWH. Only in believing in Y'shua, can one achieve salvation.

The Way of the Pharisees:

Sha'ul testifies of himself that he "progressed in Judaism" because he was more zealous than his peers. The life of a Pharisee was a *stark contrast* to the walk of the Messiah and *the walk of faith* which He taught his disciples. Sha'ul claims in verse 14 that he was "*more exceedingly ardent for the traditions of my fathers*". What are these "*traditions of the fathers*" he is speaking of?

For centuries now, **Christianity has misunderstood** and has been **misrepresenting** what Sha'ul is teaching here in Galatians!!! Sha'ul was comparing and contrasting the good news (saved by favour through faith) with the good news of the Pharisees (salvation by works, the good news of the circumcision.) The Pharisees' Torah came to a gospel of good works as explained earlier in this book. So Sha'ul is drawing from his own experience *of being taught Pharisaic Law to show the stark differences between Pharisaic law and Scriptural Torah.*

The "traditions of the fathers" which Sha'ul is referring to here, **are not** the teachings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as many Christians think. The "*traditions of the fathers*" were the *teachings and laws of the Pharisees*, the concoctions of men's imaginations and other traditions of men, especially those in contrast to the Torah or YHWH. None of these was what Moshe wrote down in the five books of the Torah. Thus, Sha'ul **is not** teaching that the Torah of Scripture is worthless and done away with in Messiah. Sha'ul's

point is *that the man-made laws and traditions of the Pharisees are being done away with in Messiah.*

The fact that there are actually two Torahs - the Written Torah and the Oral Torah - is very well known by Jewish Rabbis, **but not understood at all by most Christians.** Even the famous Pharisee Shammai said so:

A Certain gentile came to Shammai: The Gentile said to him, How many Torah's do you have? (Shammai) answered: TWO. The written Torah and the ORAL TORAH (Torah She-Be'al Peh)³².

Thus, to understand what Sha'ul is speaking of when he talks about the "law", we must discern between the two Torahs which Sha'ul was both thoroughly trained in.

In his former life as a Pharisee, Sha'ul **was zealous** (exceedingly ardent) **for the man-made laws and traditions of the religion of Pharisaic Judaism.** And the righteousness that he had then, which he calls "*my own righteousness derived from the law*" (note, not the law, but derived FROM the law) is the righteousness of following the *commandments of men* (Pharisaic Judaism)! In Messiah, all of men's own righteousness based on the keeping of their own made-up commandments, amounts to nothing at all. The righteousness of Elohim, on the other hand, is based on doing what Elohim has commanded. And he said, "*do not add to what I have commanded, and do not take away from it*" (Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32).

In fact, we see two kinds of righteousness in scripture. Righteousness of man, and righteousness of Elohim. Man can never be saved from out of his own righteousness, which is why we needed a savior in the first place. Only the righteousness of Elohim can save a man. And that righteousness comes from following Torah. However, not even one person on earth has kept the whole Torah of Elohim flawlessly, from birth to death, except Y'shua HaMashiach. And it is because of this righteousness that he is capable of providing salvation for mankind.

We see Isaiah speaks of this righteousness of man

And all of us have become as one unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as soiled rags. And all of us fade like a leaf, and our crookednesses, like the wind, have taken us away.³³

³² Babylonian Talmud, Sabbath 31a

³³ Isa 64:6

Please understand that the Oral Torah, and other traditions are not the problem per se. Y'shua, our Moshiach, most likely adhered to many, if not all of these traditions. We see quite frequently in the gospels that Y'shua was reprimanded, not for He Himself breaking the commandments and traditions of the elders, but rather that His disciples broke these traditions. There is only one case where Y'shua Himself was reprimanded by the Pharisees, and that was when he healed on the Sabbath. Why was this a problem area for Him? Because their law, or tradition, was against what Moshe preached in Torah. Moshe said to always do good, while the Pharisees said that Sabbath is so holy, that you may not even heal someone or do good on the Sabbath. This is in stark contrast to what Y'shua says is the goal of the Sabbath.

And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."³⁴

Now, if the Oral Torah and other traditions was not the problem, and Y'Shua did in fact keep them all (or most of them rather), what is the problem surrounding the Oral Torah then?

Well, my dear friends, the problem is adding or subtracting from Elohim's Torah. Y'Shua Himself had a custom of preaching in the synagogues every Sabbath, did He not? Now, if every custom or tradition that does not come from Torah, is a sin (due to adding to the Torah), then was Y'Shua then not sinning by adding such a custom, even if only for Himself? Clearly not, since we know He never sinned. So, what is the problem then?

The problem is when we add a custom or tradition; that is one of two things:

1. In direct contract to what is taught in Torah.
2. When this tradition or custom is more restrictive than Torah, and it becomes of such great importance, that doing something that would fall outside of the allowance of the new tradition/custom, but still inside of Torah, is rebuked and thought of as sin. The example of Y'Shua healing on the sabbath is a prime example of this. Their laws were more restrictive than Torah, in that they were not even able to heal someone on the sabbath. Now, while more restrictive is not a bad thing, looking at healing on the sabbath as a sin, is clearly a problem that Y'Shua felt enough anger towards, to repeatedly break, openly in front of their eyes, in order to provoke them to the truth.

³⁴ Mark 2:27

So, this is the problem with traditions and customs. Let's get back to the pharisees and their laws.

The Pharisees had so many of their own made-up laws that it is easiest for us to understand them by separating them into several categories.

The first is the "halacha" or the Pharisaic law based upon their *interpretation of Scriptural law*. The second is "minhagim" or *Pharisaic customs* that have become law. The third is "takanot and gezerot" or enactments and decrees of the Pharisees that *take on the authority of law*. And the fourth is the "ma'asim" which is deeds or works of the Pharisees *which through their repeated exercise become law for all Yisrael*.

Halacha:

The word halacha (halachot in the plural) comes from the Hebrew which means "to go, to walk". It is a common metaphor for the "way one conducts himself" or "the manner in which one lives his life". The metaphor of walking transcends many languages and is understood in many tongues as referring to one's lifestyle. The halacha, then, are the commandments and instructions of Scripture which Elohim has commanded us to do. Thus, when Yochanan (John) tells us

The one who says he resides in Elohim ought himself to walk just as Y'shua walked³⁵.

We understand that he means we who belong to the Mighty One should live our lives as Messiah lived His, doing the very things that Messiah did. Our walk or behaviour should be the same as Messiah's walk and behaviour. For example, if Messiah kept the true Sabbath day (and he did!), then we should also keep the Sabbath day.

It is one thing to "walk" *according to the Scripture commandments*, and quite another to "walk" *according to Pharisaic commandments*. The Pharisees, then, and the Rabbis of Judaism since then and to this day, establish their own halachot *based on their own (private) interpretations of Scripture*. The Pharisees, Rabbis and even Christian theologians throughout "Church history" have made a habit of taking a simple Scripture commandment or statement and twist, distort, re-interpret or outright change or add to the plain meaning of a statement of writ.

³⁵ 1 John 2:6

An example of Pharisaic halacha: The Scripture commands us that no work (occupational labour, chores, everyday busy-ness tasks) is to be done on the Sabbath. The Rabbis break "work" down into 39 different categories and additional subcategories which one is not allowed to do on the Sabbath, to the point of being absurd. From the re-interpretive twisting of the intended meaning of "do no work", they regard flipping a light switch as building a fire (because you are connecting a circuit), and forbid it on the Sabbath.

They take it from Exod 35:3, *"do not kindle a fire on Shabbat"*, and reinterpret it to mean that one should not start a fire on Shabbath - but as long as you start the fire before Shabbat, the burning of a fire is okay.

A classic example of a Rabbinic halacha is where they take Exod 23:2,

You must not incline after the majority into evil things; in a lawsuit you must not offer testimony that agrees with a crowd so as to pervert justice.

This is clearly an instruction not to pervert justice just because the majority of others pervert it, and snatch out the phrase *"incline after the majority"*. They ignore all else, including the context in which these words were spoken; and they rip out that single phrase, *"incline after the majority."* They interpret this phrase to be a halacha which instructs men to do what the majority of the Rabbis consent to. Thus, if the majority of Rabbis agree that one should change his underwear twice a day, then it is law in Israel. (This is an absurd example, but this accurately illustrates the thinking of the Rabbis).

There are many hundreds of other such halachot of the Pharisees and Rabbis which are derived from the twisting, distorting, adding to or taking away from the written Word of Elohim. Even though YHWH emphatically commands us, *"do not add to what I have commanded, and do not take away from it"* (Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32), this is precisely what Oral Rabbinic Law does. It is no wonder why Sha'ul, who came out of this religious system, says that all of that is "rubbish" or "a pile of dung" (see again Phil 3:7)!

Minhag

The word minhag (plural is minhagim) comes from the Hebrew which means "custom". Customs, while not commanded by Scripture, are the common way of life and the accepted practice of people based on the repeating of a behaviour induced by some circumstance. The historical record of Scripture references some customs...

A certain woman died a virgin. Her tragic death gave rise to a custom in Israel. Every year Israeli women commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite for four days (Judges 11:39-40).

And another:

Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, the Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants (Esther 9:26-28).

Even the pagans had their customs:

So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed³⁶.

Not to be outdone, and to further establish their own authority to make law and to control all Israel, the Rabbis concocted their own customs for all Israel and made them binding upon all. The requirement upon all Jewish males to wear a kippah (also called a yarmulke or skull cap) is an accepted minhag. Males not wearing the kippah are considered to be transgressing the law. This law for Jewish males also stipulates that one may not walk four cubits without covering his head, nor can one make a blessing without donning a kippah. Wear kippah if you so will because you like it, not because it is minhag.

Another example of a minhag is the conflicting custom of eating beans and rice during the feast of Unleavened Bread. The Ashkenazi Jews forbid the eating, while the Sephardic Jews permit the eating during the Feast. Members of each sect of Judaism are required to obey the custom of the sect they belong to. The absurdity of declaring this custom to be "Law in Israel" is self-evident.

Such customs gave rise to a common saying among the rabbis in Israel, "minhag Yisrael torah hi" which translates as, "a custom of Israel is Torah". Even though the TaNaCh lists the commandments and sayings of Elohim as

³⁶ 1 Kings 18:28

"Torah", the Rabbis have added to "their torah" *any of their own established customs, and these mostly are of higher importance than Elohim's Torah!*

Takanah and Gezerah:

The word takanah (plural is takanot) comes from Hebrew and means, "to become straight, to make right, to put in order, to fix, to repair, to arrange, to establish, to enact". The word gezerah (plural is gerzerot) comes from Hebrew and means, "decree". Thus, the "takanot and gezerot" are the enactments and decrees of Pharisaic law. They are *"the commandments of the Rabbis"*.

The Scribes and Pharisees before the time of Messiah (and the Rabbis afterward saw a need to construct additional commandments. As they assumed the role of authoritarian leadership in Israel, the Scribes and Pharisees enacted their own laws for all Israel, which were designed to enforce their own right of authority to interpret and apply law and even create new laws for Israel. Under the guise of "guarding" the Torah (which the Scriptures command they began to "guard" the Torah by enacting additional laws in an act which they termed, "making a fence around the Torah").

In an article entitled, "Adding, Uprooting, and Rabbinic Authority", Rabbi Baruch Paz wrote:

*Some rabbinical ordinances were enacted not for the purpose of protecting the laws of the Torah, but because the Rabbis saw an independent need to enact them; others, though, were enacted as preventative measures, safeguards to prevent people from violating actual commandments of the Torah. At times the Rabbis even saw fit to uproot a Torah law in order to erect one of these safeguards...*³⁷

These "commandments of the Rabbis" were often in conflict with the written word of Elohim. The Scripture commands us to guard the Torah:

*Observe them carefully (Hebrew, literally, "Guard them"), for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people"*³⁸.

Guard his rules and commandments that I am setting forth today so that it may go well with you and your descendants and that you may

³⁷ Cited from Galatians by Avi ben Mordecai, pg. 67

³⁸ Deut 4:6

enjoy longevity on the land that YHWH your Elohim is about to give you as a permanent possession³⁹.

The meaning here is that one should guard the Torah by practicing it and by teaching it. The Pharisees, however, intentionally misinterpreted this by suggesting that it meant that they should construct additional laws around the Torah to insure that the Torah would not be transgressed. This they did in clear violation of another instruction of Scripture:

Do not add a thing to what I command you nor subtract from it, so that you may guard the commandments of YHWH your Elohim that I am delivering to you⁴⁰

Thus, the very act of "building a fence around the Torah" in order to "guard the Torah" was a violation of the Torah. The takanot and gezerot, or "commandments of the Rabbis" are these transgressions of Elohim's Word.

Messiah Y'shua rebuked the Pharisees for their commandments which contradicted the Word of Elohim. The commandment to wash one's hands before eating is a Pharisaic takanah. It is NOT a commandment of Scripture. They taught that one could cause food to become "unclean" by transference of bacteria from unwashed hands to the food. Thus, they required a *ceremonial* washing of hands before eating, rather than simply a quick wash/rinse of the hands that we normally do.

Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Yerushalayim to Yahusha' and said, "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition (Hebrew, takanot) of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you disobey the commandment of Elohim because of your tradition (Hebrew, takanot)?"⁴¹.

The word "tradition" used here, in the Shem Tov Hebrew gospel of Matthew, is takanot. Say what you will about the rabbinic influence on the manuscript of Shem Tov's Mattityahu: the Hebrew is takanot, and there is no reasonable explanation for why a rabbi would have changed the word here from something else to takanot.

So it is critical to have the correct understanding of Y'shua's message. He is talking about the "commandments of the Rabbis" here. This is a direct

³⁹ Deut 4:40

⁴⁰ Deut 4:2

⁴¹ Matt 15:1-3

rebuke of the Pharisees who made up their own law; which in their view, superseded the Scriptures.

Mark's account of this saying cites an additional detail of interest:

"...Thus you nullify the word of Elohim by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this"⁴².

Y'shua is suggesting here that the Pharisees commonly practiced this error of replacing the written word of Elohim with their own commandments. And we see over and over again how the Pharisees had laid a heavy burden upon Israel by requiring them to obey Pharisaic Law.

Y'shua concluded the matter of washing of hands by saying:

What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person"⁴³.

Washing one's hands before eating may be a good suggestion. But it certainly is not a requirement of ethical proportion. It is NOT commanded by Elohim.

Ma'aseh:

The word ma'aseh (plural is ma'asim) comes from Hebrew and means, "work, do". This word is used in the TaNaCh to reference any work, action or deed done by Elohim or by man. For example,

YHWH your Elohim will make the work (ma'aseh) of your hands abundantly successful and multiply your children, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil"⁴⁴.

In the New Covenant, its Greek equivalent (e'rgon) has a similar usage. It could be used of man's works or of Elohim's works:

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead"⁴⁵.

⁴² Mark 7:13

⁴³ Matt 15:11

⁴⁴ Deut 30:9

⁴⁵ James 2:26

They sang the song of Moshe the servant of Elohim and the song of the Lamb: "Great and astounding are your deeds, YHWH Elohim, the All-Powerful! Just and true are your ways, King over the nations!"⁴⁶

However, the Pharisees (and after them, the Rabbis) attributed to this term special nuance. Another Pharisaic invention (the ma'aseh) is a law created for all Israel based on the repeated actions of a Pharisee. The thinking goes something like this: if one so pious as a Pharisee (and later, a Rabbi) consistently performs an action, said action must have great merit. Therefore, this action of the Pharisee becomes law for all in Israel.

A ma'aseh in Pharisaic thinking is an action, work or deed of a Pharisee which by its repetition has become law for all of Israel. These works were common among Pharisees and Rabbis, as my friend Nehemia Gordon explains; noting that learning precedents from the action of the Rabbis is a standard method used to derive religious law. There is no need for biblical proof because rabbinic precedent is even better!⁴⁷

In their thinking, Pharisaic authority (and Rabbinic authority) does not need the agreement of Scripture, because Pharisaic authority supersedes the authority of Scripture.

There were many ma'asim in the Oral Torah of the Pharisees. This ma'asim - the deeds, actions or works of the Pharisees which became law in Israel - became known as ma'asim hatorah or "works of the law". Not to be mistaken for the "works of Elohim", the phrase "works of the law" as used by the Pharisees and Rabbis today and as used by Sha'ul in his letters of the New Covenant, **are a reference to the made-up laws of the Pharisees.**

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus explained the difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by the observance of man-made traditions:

What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the Torah of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers...⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Rev 15:3

⁴⁷ From Mordecai, Galatians, pg. 82

⁴⁸ Book of Antiquities 13.10.6

For all their failures, at least the Sadducees had it right about not being waylaid by the Oral traditions of the Pharisees!

There is a great deal of confusion among New Covenant Scholars, Writers and Preachers when it comes to Sha'ul's usage of the term "law" and his usage of other phrases such as "*works of the law*" and "*under the law*".

Most of those unlearned New Covenant "scholars" haven't a clue that Sha'ul uses the term "law" in **at least three different ways in his letters**. When he speaks of the "law" as righteous, spiritual, good and holy (set-apart), he is referring to the Law of Moshe as written in Scripture. When he speaks of the "law of my members" and similar phrases, he is talking about the "law of sin" or the controlling effect of sin on mankind. But when he speaks of the "law" as something that has no merit and is worthless and contrary to the work of Messiah, he is talking about the Pharisaic Oral Law, or more importantly, the traditions which supercede the Torah, which he was trained in and which, when he came to know Messiah, he came to realize are worthless.

Thus, those who are placing their confidence for salvation in the works of man truly are "under a curse" because in doing so, they are rejecting the true righteousness which Elohim has revealed in the commandments that he has given.

Sha'ul's training as a Pharisee taught him that doing the 1) works, 2) traditions, 3) teachings and 4) practices of the Pharisees, most of which they had made up themselves and that were *not in agreement with the commandments of Scripture, was the proper way to righteousness and salvation*. But when he met Messiah Y'shua on the road to Damascus, his mind and his way of thinking were drastically changed. He realized not only who the true Messiah is, but that *all of his training in Judaism was worthless toward salvation*; and worse yet, that the way of the Pharisees *actually leads to bondage and loss of salvation* because their works have no value in Elohim's sight.

Sha'ul's Training in Messiah:

But when it pleased Elohim, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His favor, to reveal His Son in me, that I might bring Him, the Good News, to the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Yerushalayim, to

*those who were emissaries before me. But I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus*⁴⁹.

Sha'ul describes his calling in terms similar to the prophet Jeremiah, who was also chosen while in the womb:

*YHWH said to me, "Before I formed you in your mother's womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations"*⁵⁰.

The sovereign control of YHWH is alluded to, who carries out His purposes through men He chooses.

The encounter Sha'ul had with the resurrected Messiah profoundly changed his thinking. But because of his intense and detailed training as a Pharisee, Sha'ul did not consult with the apostles of Messiah for guidance. They were not equipped to understand and handle all the issues which Sha'ul had to then rethink. The "unlearned" followers of Messiah did not have *the education and training background to understand and refute the false teachings of the Pharisees*. So, Sha'ul's response to the revelation was to go to Arabia.

Why Arabia? He realized that the only source of answers to his many questions was the Scriptures. It was at Mount Sinai that the Instructions of Scripture were given to Israel through Moshe. This, for Sha'ul, was the logical place to go to get clarity. Sinai would provide the setting and atmosphere where Sha'ul could petition the Almighty for understanding of the Scriptures, and then immerse himself in the written Word. It is at Mount Sinai, the beginning of it all, where the answers would lie.

Fear of Sha'ul in the Assembly:

Then after three years I went up to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) to learn from Kepha (Peter), and remained with him for fifteen days. And I saw no other of the emissaries except Yacov (James), the brother of the Master. And what I write to you, see, before Elohim, I do not lie. Then I went into the districts of Syria and of Kilikia. And I was still not known by sight to the assemblies of Yehudah which were in Messiah, but they were hearing only that, "The one who once persecuted us

⁴⁹ Gal 1:15-17

⁵⁰ Jer 1:4-5

now brings as Good News the belief which he once ravaged.” So they were praising Elohim in me⁵¹.

Following his stay at Sinai, Sha'ul paid a visit to Yerushalayim to meet with Kepha and the other emissaries of Messiah. The events as recorded in Acts 15 take place at this time. Sha'ul's understanding of the need for the Gospel to be proclaimed to the Gentiles was already superior to Kepha's and Yacov and the others'.

As a result of Sha'ul's limited exposure with the other emissaries for several years, the followers of Messiah still did not know him, but they had heard good things of him and were "praising Elohim" on account of his change of allegiance.

To conclude, the issue that Sha'ul is zealous for the Oral Torah in Gal 1:14 is both unscriptural and unfounded.

2. Sha'ul's Contradictions on Justification

In Romans, Sha'ul says the following concerning justification – and at face value, it looks as if he contradicts himself a couple of chapters later:

*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, **but the doers of the law shall be justified.*** (Rom 2:13)

Now it looks as if Sha'ul is contradicting himself one chapter onwards:

*because by the **works of the Law** no flesh will be justified in His sight...* (Rom 3:20)

*for we maintain that a **man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law,*** (Rom 3:28)

*For what does the Scripture say? 'And **Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness*** (Rom 4:3)

Therefore, having been justified by faith... (Rom 5:1)

*But to the one **who does not work, but believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness*** (Rom 4:5)

Here are six verses written by Sha'ul, and they indicate at face value that Sha'ul is contradicting himself – or so it is assumed. It looks as if Sha'ul not only contradicts himself – but also Yacov, Y'shua's brother:

⁵¹ Gal 1:18-24

You see that a **man is justified by works** and not by faith alone,
(James 2:24)

...so also **faith without works is dead**, (James 2:26)

Which is it? What is going on? Are we justified by faith or by works?

a) The Meaning of "Works of the Torah":

Rom 3:20 is the first occurrence of the unique expression "*works of the Torah (Law)*". The Greek used here is *ergon nomou*. This term is very familiar in modern preaching as "*works of the law*"; however, it would be more properly translated in context as "*works of Torah*", since the law (*nomos* in Greek) is what Sha'ul is addressing in Romans and Galatians – referring to the Mosaic Law. It is important to note that "Nomos" is the common Septuagint translation⁵² of the Hebrew term "Torah".

The translation of *ergon nomou* as "works of Torah" is confirmed by archaeological-lexical evidence, because it also appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls – the writings of the first-century Qumran community in Israel. It appears in a famous document known as MMT, which served as the Constitution or Declaration of Independence for the Qumran community.

This document, whose name translates as "Some Pertinent Works of Torah", is focused on certain disputed interpretations of specific Mosaic regulations, and it reveals an enormous preoccupation on the part of first century Jews with works of Torah. The phrase *works of Torah/works of Law* is used repeatedly and sheds great light on the meaning of the term used by Sha'ul in his letters. Somehow those discrediting Sha'ul's letters have missed the point...

It is important to note that the term "works of Torah" thus **predates** Sha'ul and was a commonly used term he picked up from the Jewish vocabulary of his day. This "works of the Torah" is the **very reason** why he is disputing

⁵² The Septuagint or simply "LXX" is an Ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It was originally the designation for the Koine Greek translation of the Pentateuch, but in time came to refer to the Greek translation of the entire Old Covenant adopted by Christians, incorporating the translations of all the books of the Hebrew Bible and books later considered apocryphal or deuterocanonical; some composed in Greek and some translations. The translation process was undertaken in stages. It began by the 3rd century BCE and was completed by 132 BCE in Alexandria. King Ptolemy gathered 72 Jewish Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: "Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher." God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did.

over it with people in Romans and Galatians, because they were already using the term. And as we said, its first occurrence is in Rom 3:20.

b) The Faith and Works Justification Issue:

Perhaps one of the **most confusing** issues in the Bible is that of the relationship between faith and works. The more I hear the issue discussed, the more it seems to me that it is endemic with misunderstanding. It should strike us as curious that evangelicals, who claim to take the Bible more seriously than anyone, rally around the cry of "justification by faith alone" - when we distinctly read in the New Covenant Scriptures, "*a person is justified by works and not by faith alone*". Here it is in context:

*Was not Abraham our father **justified by works** when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see **that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works**; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. **You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.** (James 2:21-24; ESV)*

Justification is a biblical term that means "being made right with YHWH". How one is made right with YHWH is a major issue throughout the whole Bible that becomes most controversial in the New Covenant Scriptures. This is because it was essential to determine the basis upon which non-Jews could be included in the messianic community. Many Jewish Believers in Y'shua assumed that the embracing of Torah as given by YHWH at Mt. Sinai through Moshe, and as understood by the Prophets and Sages of old was that which established right standing with YHWH. And, in fact, if you look carefully at the Old Covenant scriptures, you will see that faith was always the means to salvation, not the keeping of the law (Torah). King David clearly knew this, and so did all the fathers of our faith. Many Rabbis in Judaism also know this. But many were misled in this, and believed that the keeping of the Torah, gave you right-standing with Elohim.

The New Covenant writers also rejected this notion. While Torah was YHWH's true and holy revelation to Israel, it had two fundamental functions.

First, it was designed to prepare Israel and the world for the coming of the Messiah.

And second, it stood as an indictment against Israel and the world that we all fall short of YHWH's requirements and need YHWH to rescue us.

When the New Covenant writers speak against justification by works, they are **opposing the rabbinical claim** held by some messianics of their day that Israel finds right standing with YHWH through the Torah as a system.

The Rabbis knew that no one could keep Torah perfectly; but by adhering to Torah to the best of one's ability, one could be confident that he was in good stead with YHWH. Sha'ul and the New Covenant writers appeal to the example of Abraham and others whose right standing with YHWH was **clearly on the basis of their trust in Him** (faith, belief, and trust are the same words in the biblical languages).

It is so that right standing with YHWH can only come about through faith in the Messiah, but works also plays a vital role. While the Protestant directs Christians to the teaching of justification by faith alone, they play down the place of works so much that today many Bible believers get nervous whenever someone seeks **to restore works** to their proper biblical place.

It is possible that this was already happening in the first century, which would explain why Yacov addresses it. The balance between faith and works is actually all through the pages of the Bible. Right standing with YHWH cannot be achieved by anything we do. YHWH is the one who justifies us. Trusting in Him and what He has done through Y'shua the Messiah is what makes us right with Him.

General good works and religious activities **are the necessary fruit of real faith**. Works don't produce right relationship with YHWH, but those who claim right relationship with YHWH who also lack the *resulting fruit* are most likely hypocrites.

c) Sha'ul's explanation of "works of the Torah":

So what did Sha'ul actually mean that man is not justified by works of the law?

The hypothesis by the anti-Paul teachers, is that Sha'ul has in mind the Ceremonial Elements of Torah when he mentions "works of Torah"; meaning Sha'ul is referring to the Ceremonial Laws' works, i.e. slaughter a lamb for the remission of sin. This is the "do-part" of the Torah, the ceremonies and rituals – the "works of the law". The Moral Laws which describe YHWH's character are written on your heart; i.e., do not steal; these are the moral standards by which you live. The Civil Laws, on the other hand, are bound up

in nature; i.e., a woman will have blood-flowing every twenty eight days; these will always be there.

Sha'ul never had this in mind as "works of the law". In fact, there is no biblical indication that this categorisation of the Torah even exists. Let's now read these verses again to make sense of it:

*For not the hearers of the law are just before God, **but the doers of the law shall be justified.** (Rom 2:13)*

*because by the **works of the Law** (the Ceremonial Laws' works) **no flesh will be justified in His sight...** (Rom 3:20)*

*for we maintain that a **man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law** (the Ceremonial Laws' works), (Rom 3:28)*

*For what does the Scripture say? **'And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness** (Rom 4:3)*

*Therefore, **having been justified by faith...** (Rom 5:1)*

*But to the one **who does not work** (meaning trying to do the Ceremonial Laws' works), **but believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is reckoned as righteousness** (Rom 4:5)*

d) Exegesis of Sha'ul's "works of the law":

We will handle "works of the law" in great detail in question 26, close to the end of this booklet. In short, with the "works of the law", Sha'ul meant the added traditions by the Pharisees and later, the Rabbis. These added laws to the Torah, which became law for all Israel. These laws were always rooted in self-justification, and it is these laws, that cannot justify a man. This then handles Rom 3:20.

Another perspective to also take note of, especially with regards to Rom 2:13, is that of the inclusion of the previous statement into the next. This often happens in Hebrew, where the second part of a statement assumes inclusion of the previous part, and this doesn't always convey intended meaning during translation. In this case, it would be:

1. For not the hearers of the Torah are righteous in the sight of Elohim
2. But the doers of the Torah shall be declared right

Section two would assume inclusion of section one into the same statement as one entity. So, it could be read as follows:

Those who HEAR and DO the Torah, shall be declared righteous. This is exactly what Sha'ul says the Gospel is about, is it not? Those who believe

with their heart (hear and receive and believe) and profess with their mouths (commit and do), will be saved. The true Gospel is always about hearing AND doing, just as Yacov also said:

23 Because 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,

24 for he looks at himself, and goes away, and immediately forgets what he was like.

25 But he that looked into the perfect Torah, that of freedom, and continues in it, not becoming a hearer that forgets, but a doer of work, this one shall be blessed in his doing of the Torah.⁵³

See, Sha'ul is speaking the exact same words as Yacov was speaking. Be a HEARER AND a DOER of the word.

Conclusion:

Sha'ul preaches the same message as Yacov, and Y'shua, and the other writers, and does not contradict himself in this case. Sha'ul believes, and preaches, that justification comes by favour through faith, and sanctification MUST happen after justification, as the fruit of your salvation.

3. We are "free from the Law"

At first glance, it looks as if Sha'ul contradicts himself by saying that we are to comply with the Torah; and then four chapters later he suggests by saying that we are set totally free from the Law. Let's look at the two places:

*Rom 3:31: Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, **we establish the law.***

*Rom 7:6: But now **we have been set free from the law**, having died to that in which we were held, so as for us to serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.*

To make any sense of Scripture, we must follow the golden rule; and that is to look at **the context** of the chapter. Context as Scripture exegesis is paramount; and if you do not understand the context, **then you are missing the point!** For that, let us start from the beginning of this so-called problematic chapter alluding to that "we are not under the law anymore", a chapter used by anti-Paul teachers to discredit all his letters.

⁵³ James 1:23-25

The Dying to the Law Issue:

Rom 7:1: Surely you know, brothers - for **I am speaking to those who understand Torah** - that the Torah has authority over a person only so long as he lives?

Rom 7:2: For example, a married woman is bound by Torah to her husband while he is alive; but if the husband dies, she is released from the part of the Torah that deals with husbands.

Rom 7:3: Therefore, while the husband is alive, she will be called an adulteress if she marries another man; but if the husband dies, she is free from that part of the Torah; so that if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress.

Rom 7:4: Thus, my brothers, you have been made dead with regard to the Torah through the Messiah's body, so that you may belong to someone else, namely, the one who has been raised from the dead, in order for us to bear fruit for YHWH.

Two valuable points are derived from the opening verses...

- 1) The audience here is "**those who understand Torah**" – speaking specifically to the Jewish Believers in Rome.
- 2) The second point is "**dying to the Torah**".
 - a) Sha'ul's attitude towards the Torah immediately *destroys the idea* that he is advocating ceasing to practise it **as in the many other places in his various letters**:
 - i. Acts 23:6: *But knowing that one part of the Sanhedrin consisted of Tz'dukim and the other of P'rushim, Sha'ul shouted, "Brothers, I myself am a Parush"⁵⁴ and the son of P'rushim; and it is concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am being tried!"*
 - ii. He admits in Rom 7:12: *So the Torah is holy; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good.*
 - iii. He regarded the **Torah as binding** on Jewish and proselyte Believers (Acts 21:20ff, Gal 5:3)
 - iv. 1 Tim 1:8: *We know that the Torah is good, provided one uses it in the way the Torah itself intends. And this is...*
 1. Gal 5:14: *For the whole of the Torah is summed up in this one sentence: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (cf. Rom 13:8ff)*
 2. Gal 6:2: *Bear one another's burdens - in this way you will be fulfilling the Torah's true meaning, which the Messiah upholds.*

⁵⁴ Pharisee

- v. He did not see the Torah as being in opposition to the promises of grace (Gal. 3:21), but as **pointing to Messiah** the source of God's grace (Rom 10:4).
- vi. He **cited the Torah** in making Messianic halakhah⁵⁵ (1 Cor 9:9, etc.)
- b) Sha'ul is speaking of **dying to the Torah** as an end to itself:
 - i. Meaning the Written Torah **directs us to Y'shua** who is the Living Torah:
 - 1. Rom 10:4: *For the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts.*
 - 2. John 5:39f: *You keep examining the TaNaCh⁵⁶ because you think that in it you have eternal life. Those very Scriptures bear witness to me, but you won't come to me in order to have life!*
 - ii. The Written Torah is therefore **Messiah's shadow** (cf. Col 2:17),
 - 1. Symbolically:
 - a. A kosher Torah Scroll is the Word of God written on lambskin, nailed to two pieces of wood (the rollers) which are called the Eytz Chaim (Tree of Life; cf. Prov 3:18), robed in splendor, wearing the breastplate representing that of the High Priest, topped with a crown or a pair of finials that represent crowns.
 - b. Y'shua is the Word of God who come as the Lamb, nailed to two pieces of wood that are to us a Tree of Life, now robed in splendor, interceding for us as our High Priest, and wearing many crowns upon His head.
 - 2. Practically:
 - a. In the Torah's histories are the prophetic types of Messiah (Isaac, Yoseph, Moshe, etc.)
 - b. In the Torah's ceremonies, we continually reenact YHWH's plan of Redemption, past and future (i.e., the Feasts and the Exodus (Col 2:17))
 - c. In the righteous moral commands of the Torah, we see the righteousness of the Messiah and learn to become more like Him day-by-day (cf. Rom 8:29)
 - iii. And while we love Messiah so much that **we love even His shadow**, we never mistake the shadow for the person.

The Letter vs. the Spirit Issue:

⁵⁵ To walk the correct way

⁵⁶ Old Covenant Scriptures

Rom 7:5: *For when we were living according to our old nature, **the passions connected with sins worked through the Torah** in our various parts, with the result that we bore fruit for death.*

Rom 7:6: *But now we **have been released from this aspect of the Torah**, because we have died to that which had us in its clutches, so that we are **servicing in the new way provided by the Spirit and not in the old way of outwardly following the letter of the law.***

- 1) Verse 5 says the **Torah points out our sin** because of the dominance of our yetzer hara – "the evil inclination" which is discussed further on.
- 2) Verse 6 says we are "**released from this aspect of the Torah**"
 - a. Literally this verse means: "we have been abolished (κατηργήθημεν) from the law".
 - i. Sha'ul is not saying that "the law has been abolished" (in Rom 3:31 we find the same root word for "abolish"), which **would contradict the earlier statement** that we uphold the Torah.
 - ii. Rather, we have been **abolished from the particular aspect of the Torah that inspires us to sin more**, because we have died to the Torah as an end to itself and been born anew in the Messiah that the Torah points to.
- 3) Letter vs. Spirit
 - a. To those who are **still "wed"** to the Torah, **the letter can be all-consuming**.
 - i. Putting a fence around a command to avoid breaking it is all well and good⁵⁷ – but when the fences themselves become regarded as a kind of Torah, we end up with **endless fences around fences**.
 - ii. Examples:
 1. The additions to the kosher commandments in ways which would have been impossible for the vast majority of first century Jews to keep—like having separate refrigerators and dishes for meat and dairy—and which only serve the purpose of promoting division in matters of table fellowship, even between different groups of Orthodox Jews.
 2. Conversely, it is the "letter of the law" that allows many Jews to employ a "Sabbath Gentile" to perform the tasks that they consider to be forbidden on the Sabbath, like turning on the lights.

⁵⁷ Avot 1:1

- b. To those wed to Messiah and having Torah written on our hearts (Jer 31:31ff, Heb 8:8ff), and to non-Messianic Jews who focus on the spirit of the Torah, **a different set of priorities emerge**.
 - i. The Apostles extended table-fellowship to even Gentiles who would have been barely aware of the requirements of Biblical kosher—they would not have countenanced rabbinic additions that made such fellowship between Believers impossible.
 - ii. Nor would they have encouraged Gentiles to perform actions that they considered sinful for themselves for the purpose of making their lives easier.

The Torah Defines Sin:

Rom 7:7 *Therefore, what are we to say? That the Torah is sinful? Heaven forbid! Rather, **the function of the Torah was that without it, I would not have known what sin is.** For example, I would not have become conscious of what greed is if the Torah had not said, "Thou shalt not covet."*

1. A syllogism⁵⁸:
 - a. Statement 1: The Torah defines what sin is and what it is not.
 - b. Statement 2: We are not to deliberately sin just because we are under God's grace.
 - c. Conclusion: Therefore, though no longer married to the Torah as an end to itself, we should still keep it and guard the commandments.
2. That is why Y'shua commanded us to **keep even the least commandments of the Torah** (Mat 5:17-19) – exactly what Sha'ul is stating.

The Law points out Lawlessness:

Rom 7:8 *But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, worked in me all kinds of evil desires - for apart from Torah, sin is dead.*

Rom 7:9 *I was once alive outside the framework of Torah. But **when the commandment really encountered me, sin sprang to life,***

Rom 7:10 *and I died. The commandment that was intended to bring me life was found to be bringing me death!*

⁵⁸ A kind of logical argument in which one proposition (the conclusion) is inferred from two or more others.

Rom 7:11 *For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me; and through the commandment, sin killed me.*

1. Human nature has the perverse propensity **to violate any law that confronts it**.
 - a. Adam and Eve had only one negative commandment—not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—and yet it was so easy for the Serpent to tempt our first parents into doing just that.
 - b. This is not unique to the Torah of Moshe.
 - i. The Sermon on the Mount has the same effect—"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matt 5:28: But many say, "I'm not hurting anyone just by looking at a woman. Why shouldn't I? It's perfectly natural!"
 - ii. If you want to see people walking through your yard, just put out a "Keep off the grass" sign.
 - iii. People raised in families who outright forbid drinking are more likely to abuse alcohol when on their own than those who were allowed to drink in moderation and under supervision growing up.
2. The point, **"alive outside the framework of Torah"**.
 - a. "In Romans 7, Sha'ul divides his life into three periods – roughly, they are as follows. First, a period when although sin was latent in him, it was 'dead' and he was able to live a full life without restraint – the age of innocence as we should call it. Secondly, the period when the commandment came and with it sin sprang to life. Hitherto sin was not known as sin; it was revealed as such by the Law. The latter, moreover, not only brought into being the awareness of the sinfulness of sin but also, on the principle that forbidden fruits are sweetest, actually gave an impetus towards sin. Sha'ul is driven into the painful state that Aristotle called ἀκρασία (incontinence) in which a man knows what is right and desires it and yet cannot do it. He becomes a Jekyll and Hyde. The third stage in the Apostle's life is that in which the Spirit came to deliver him." (Davies, Paul 24)
 - b. Among the rabbis, it is commonly taught that until the age of thirteen, the yetzer hara has full sway; but at thirteen (the age of bar mitzvah), the struggle between the yetzer hara and the yetzer hatov (good inclination) begins.

3. Sha'ul speaks of "**sin**" as a **personal being** here (cf. Gen 4:7), synonymous with the author of sin, the Devil.
 - a. He parallels his own innocence, deception, and death with that of Adam and Eve.

The Goodness of the Torah:

Rom 7:12 *So the **Torah is holy**; that is, the commandment is holy, just and good.*

Rom 7:13 *Then did something good become for me the source of death? Heaven forbid! Rather, it was sin working death in me through something good, so that sin might be clearly exposed as sin, so that sin through the commandment might come to be experienced as sinful beyond measure.*

1. If the Torah is holy, and its commandment holy, just, and good, should we not seek to follow it just as Y'shua did?
2. The problem is not and has never been that the Torah is impossible to keep – it is that the sin in us rejects YHWH's commandments.

Sha'ul now Concludes with the Struggle of the Redeemed:

Rom 7:14 *For we know that the **Torah is of the Spirit**; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave.*

Rom 7:15 *I don't understand my own behavior - I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate!*

Rom 7:16 *Now if I am doing what I don't want to do, **I am agreeing that the Torah is good.***

Rom 7:17 *But now it is no longer "the real me" doing it, but the sin housed inside me.*

Rom 7:18 *For I know that there is nothing good housed inside me - that is, inside my old nature. I can want what is good, but I can't do it!*

Rom 7:19 *For I don't do the good I want; instead, the evil that I don't want is what I do!*

Rom 7:20 *But if I am doing what "the real me" doesn't want, it is no longer "the real me" doing it but the sin housed inside me.*

Rom 7:21 *So I find it to be the rule, a kind of perverse "Torah," that although I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me!*

Rom 7:22 *For in my inner self I completely agree with God's Torah;*

Rom 7:23 *but in my various parts, I see a different "Torah," one that battles with the Torah in my mind and makes me a prisoner of sin's "Torah," which is operating in my various parts.*

Rom 7:24 *What a miserable creature I am! Who will rescue me from this body bound for death?*

Rom 7:25 *Thanks be to God [he will]! - through Y'shua the Messiah, our Lord! To sum up: with my mind, **I am a slave of God's Torah**; but with **my old nature, I am a slave of sin's "Torah."***

What Sha'ul is actually saying here is his open and honest explanation of the agony of the follower of Messiah, seemingly torn almost in half between two natures. He never once contradicted himself or spoke against the Torah, nor did he say that we are "free from the Torah".

4. Sha'ul's Issue on "Righteousness"

The next issue is Sha'ul's explanation on righteousness. At first glance, it looks like Sha'ul is agreeing with the TaNaCh on what "righteousness" is and how to obtain it; but then it looks as if he directly contradicts himself in the same letters.

Firstly, we need to ask what is *righteousness* and *where* does it originate from?

Psalm 119:172 *My tongue shall speak of Your word, For **all Your commandments are righteousness.***

Sha'ul confirms this:

Phil 3:6 *concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the **righteousness which is in the law**, blameless.*

Rom 2:26 *Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the **righteous requirements of the law**...*

Rom 9:31 *but Israel, pursuing the **law of righteousness**, has not attained to the law of righteousness.*

But then it looks as if Sha'ul now contradicts himself and says righteousness comes from faith:

Phil 3:9 *and be found in Him, **not having my own righteousness, which is from the law**, but that **which is through faith***

Then Sha'ul further says that righteousness does not come from the Torah:

Gal 2:21 *I do not set aside the grace of God; for if **righteousness comes through the law, then Messiah died in vain.***

The doctrine of only believing in Y'shua for righteousness (and totally rejecting the righteousness of the Torah) evolved out of what Sha'ul wrote in this verse, verse 21. This argument is further reinforced in Sha'ul's letter to the Roman Believers as well as to the Ephesians:

Rom 4:5 *But to him **that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the unrighteous, his faith is counted for righteousness.***

Rom 10:4 *For **Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

Eph 2:8-9 *For by **grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of YHWH:***

9 **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

This is why the Book of James was first left out in the original compilation of the Bible as James (rather Yacov, Y'shua's brother) contradicted what Sha'ul is supposedly saying: "that you must only believe to be saved".

Jam 2:19 *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even **the demons believe—and tremble!***

The question immediately arises: "Are demons now righteous because they also believe in Y'shua?" Yacov therefore continues and makes this profound statement in the very next verse:

Jam 2:20 *But do you want to know, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead?***

The Question:

Why would Sha'ul say in Eph 2:8-9 that we are saved by grace through faith alone and not of works?

And in Gal 2:15-16 he says the same thing:

15 *We [who are] Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,*

16 *Knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Y'shua Messiah, even we have believed in Y'shua Messiah, that we might be justified by the faith of Messiah, and not***

by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Let's attempt to explain this by starting to read what Sha'ul is saying in Gal 5:19-21:

19 Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are [these];
Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife,
seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the
which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that they
which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of YHWH.

In Rom 2:13 Sha'ul says:

*For not the hearers of the law [are] just before YHWH, **but the doers of the law shall be justified.***

Sha'ul is here in agreeing with James (2:17) saying:

Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

The Answer:

In Eph 2:8-9 and in Gal 2:15-16, Sha'ul is talking about faith for atonement. Atonement justifies a person. Justification takes away the sin that is still upon a person even though he has repented and is living a righteous life. Sin stays with you until it is atoned for; when it is, you are justified and made pure.

YHWH will no longer accept the **works of the law**, meaning **doing animal sacrifices for atonement**, or as some believed – circumcision; this would be rejecting the work of His Son and would be an insult to YHWH. We now can only be cleansed of sin **by faith in Messiah as our atoning sacrifice**; thus the statement in Gal 2:16: "by **the works of the law** shall no flesh be justified".

In Gal 5:19-21 and in Rom 2:13, Sha'ul is stating that we must live our lives according to YHWH's commandments (Law (Torah); guidance, direction, and teaching). In this way **we maintain our righteousness**. So here he is referring to **the "Law" (Torah) apart from the animal sacrifices** for atonement. Note that the word "justified" is used in Rom 2:13; where it is

declared that if one expects to be justified by faith in Messiah for atonement, but **is not living according to YHWH's commandments**, he will **not receive justification!**

This is what Yacov is referring to in Chapter 2:17 when he says faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone. **Faith in Messiah for atonement must be accompanied by righteous living**, as with the "doers of the Law" in Rom 2:13.

While **atonement justifies a person**, takes away sin; the **Torah teaches us how to avoid sin**. Sha'ul commented on whether we should now sin, because we now can be cleansed (justified) by faith in Messiah as our atonement (easier than having to obtain an animal and bring it to a priest to be sacrificed as an atonement for your sins); Sha'ul then said, "**YHWH forbid.**" (See Rom 6:1, 2)

Therefore the definition of a "Saint" or righteous person (a pure one) is given in Rev 14:12 and it comprises two conditions:

*Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they **that keep the commandments of YHWH, and the faith of Y'shua.***

Another thing to note is the difference between man's righteousness and YHWH's righteousness. Man's righteousness is like filthy rags, while YHWH's righteousness is Torah. It's HIS standard of living for us. It is His perfect standard, which we cannot adhere to, because our flesh is too strong for us. There is not one person, other than Y'shua, who has ever lived the Torah, His righteousness, perfectly, from birth to death. And it is only because He was perfectly righteous (made so by Torah), that He could atone for the rest of the world. Unlike the Jewish belief (it is not a widespread belief, but nonetheless) that, if you just try your best, Torah could make you righteous, Y'shua was actually righteous by keeping Torah perfectly. Because of this difference, He can atone for sin.

5. Sha'ul's View Concerning Abraham's Justification

Anti-Paul teachers state that Sha'ul contradicts Y'shua's brother Yacov concerning Abraham's justification:

Rom 4:2-3 *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a boast, but not with God.*

3 *For what does the Scripture say? "**And Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.**"*

According to these teachers, they say that Yacov, Y'shua's brother, tells a different story...

*Jam 2:21 Was not our father **Abraham justified by works** offering up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith worked with his works; and out of the works the faith was made perfected.*

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, "And Abraham believed God, and it was counted for righteousness to him;" and he was called, Friend of God.

The **main theme of Yacov** can be summed up in these words: **real faith produces genuine works**. If you say you've come to know Y'shua, then it should be reflected in your life; and the primary section for this is chapter 2:14-20. This is the Book's main thrust and the first verse of this passage is:

*What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? **Can that faith save him?** (V14)*

Now that statement begs a comparison with Sha'ul's statement in Eph 2: 8-9:

*8 For it is by **grace you have been saved, Through faith and not of yourselves**, it is the gift of God
9 **not by works**, so that no one can boast.*

Can these seemingly contradictory statements be reconciled? Of course they can!

Let's take a journey and explore this controversy regarding **works vs. faith**, which seems to be opposing views as evidenced in the writings of Yacov and Sha'ul.

Turn with me to James chapter 2 – starting with verse 10, and read with me through verse 26:

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

- 13 *For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*
- 14 *What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*
- 15 *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,*
- 16 *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*
- 17 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*
- 18 *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.*
- 19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*
- 20 *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*
- 21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*
- 22 *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*
- 23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*
- 24 *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*
- 25 *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*
- 26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Yacov is saying in today's vernacular, "You can't have one without the other". But that doesn't adequately address the issue that needs clarifying, does it? Yacov says: "a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone"; and Sha'ul in his great thesis in Romans chapters 3-5 says: "a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law". It was this issue that also caused Martin Luther (who started the Reformation Movement) to label Yacov "a right strawy book", blatant heresy.

But is it really? First, **we must understand that the emphasis of Sha'ul's and Yacov's writings are different.** Sha'ul **stresses the root of salvation**, which is trust in the Messiah plus nothing. Yacov calls attention **to the fruit after salvation.** Jot down this reference and read it during your private Bible study: John 15:4-5 and you'll see what I mean.

Second, we must look to their *individual perspective*. Both Sha'ul and Yacov look at it from *YHWH's perspective*, but Sha'ul sees the fire in the fireplace and Yacov sees the smoke coming out of the chimney. In Yacov's mind, he believes the world should be able to see the faith in hearts **by the works coming out of Believers' lives**.

But let's continue... *"Now it's possible to have works without faith, but is it possible to have faith without works?"* Yacov is not saying that works gains salvation **but that salvation effects works** and we are **fooling ourselves if we profess salvation and have no works**. Essentially, he's asking, *"Can that kind of phony faith save?"* The answer of course, is NO!

Intellectual assent we might have, but that is not genuine faith. In verse 19 Yacov asks, *"You believe God is One?"* And a person's defense against not having works is to hide behind his impressive knowledge of YHWH's Word. He has been socialized; he knows the Bible, Believer's terminology, the prayers, liturgy, etc. His theology is impeccable. *"I believe God is One"*, he replies, just like it is written in Deut 6:4. *"The Word of God is inerrant,"* he adds. Yacov responds: *"you do well; wonderful, join hands with the demons, they also believe and shudder."* You see, demons have their religious facts straight; but they are still demons. In fact, our modern religious example's dead faith doesn't even shudder as the demons do. And the Greek word here for shudder implies "goose bumps" from fear.

Now Yacov isn't ridiculing having an intelligent faith; rather he is mocking those religious intellectuals who love to debate religious truth, **but have absolutely no plans to commit themselves to following Y'shua in obedience**. If you take away the **element of applications of works**, you're only left with intellectual assent and even Satan has that.

I'm going to take two examples - one that Sha'ul also uses to justify faith to prove to you **that genuine faith is evidenced by good works**. Read with me verses 21-25 again and let's examine the subjects of those verses – Abraham and Rahab the harlot:

21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*

22 *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*

23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*

24 *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*

25 *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*

One... Abraham is called "the friend of God", and the other a "prostitute, a Gentile" who was to become the future great grandmother of David, Rahab. There couldn't have been two more different examples.

Rahab reminds me of what Alan Redpath wrote in his biography of David – he said: *"The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment, the manufacture of a saint is the task of a lifetime."*⁵⁹

That statement contains the key to the manufacturing of Abraham from a callow convert to a steadfast Believer. That key is testing. Time and again YHWH put Abraham through the furnace of testing. YHWH did not put Abraham to the test **to show if he was a Believer, but to show the validity of his faith.** Yacov calls this in the ill-conceived jargon of church doctrine and anti-Paul teachers *"justification by works"* which means that Abraham **proved himself to be a man of faith by his works of obedience.**

We all know the story of Abraham, but I'll touch on some highlights to demonstrate how works prove faith. At age 75 Abraham was told to leave his home and all that he knew and loved, and go to an unknown land that YHWH would show him. Next he was compelled to separate from his nephew Lot whom he loved. The third crisis came when Abraham was told to abandon his plans for his cherished son, Ishmael, whom he dearly loved. However, the greatest test came next. In Gen 22:1, it reads: *"now it came about after these things that YHWH tested Abraham" and YHWH calls to Abraham, and Abraham answers "Here I am". And YHWH says: "Now take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."* In Judaism, this is called the Akedah, which means "binding".

The word in verse 1 is an *intense form* of the word in the original Hebrew. It is used only here in the entire Book of Genesis. It is actually saying God **intensely tested Abraham.**

To fully appreciate the emotional impact of this scene, you must remember that by this time Abraham was well over a hundred years of age. This was

⁵⁹ Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, Fleming H. Revell Company [Old Tappan, N.J.], p. 5

the promised son – the covenant son of promise, which only came through YHWH's blessing. How he must have reacted when YHWH instructed him to sacrifice his beloved son – and as a burnt offering at that.

The Hebrew word used for offering, *olah*, refers to a whole burnt offering which would have included an animal's hooves, face, head, skin – everything. The entire animal would have been consumed in the fire, and this is what YHWH told Abraham to do with Isaac.

Verses 3-10 reveal four characteristics of Abraham's response.

1. *"He rose early in the morning"*. Meaning, Abraham's obedience was **immediate**.
2. Abraham's response was characterized by **faith**. In verses 4-5, we see that, *"On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with a donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and **return to you**."* That is a remarkable statement! With the mountain of sacrifice in his sight he was able to focus on worshipping YHWH and trusting that He would raise Isaac from the dead, if it came to that. The writer of Hebrews documents Abraham's response in Heb 11:19.
3. In verse 6-8 we see Abraham's third characteristic revealed. When Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb for the burnt offering was, Abraham replied, "God would provide for Himself the lamb." Abraham's response was based on his **unfailing belief** that YHWH would fulfill his promise that through Isaac, Abraham's descendant would be named (12:12) and Abraham was staking his whole future on YHWH's unchangeable nature.
4. The fourth characteristic was that it was **thorough and complete**. He prepared thoroughly and did not shrink from obedience even as he stretched out his hand to strike Isaac with the knife. And YHWH rewarded him for his **unflinching faith**.

So what does Yacov say? Read chapter 2:21-24:

21 *Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?*

22 *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works.*

23 *Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.*

24 *You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.*

So, here we have the **same example Sha'ul used in Romans for His argument**, the same **Yacov used for his argument**. This is the issue that caused Martin Luther (who, by the way, was a great anti-Semite) to label Yacov a "*right strawy book*"; meaning that he felt it lacked solid, biblical doctrine. To Luther, whose "battle cry" was "justification by faith alone" the Book of James was blatant heresy. He even tried to have it removed from the canon. But is it heresy, really? Let's examine Rahab and come back to that question.

No two more different people could have been picked as Yacov's examples. Abraham was moral, admired, a Jewish patriarch; and Rahab was a harlot, looked on with hatred and considered insignificant.

When Rahab, our second example, responds to YHWH (recorded in Joshua 2:11), we must try to see her as YHWH must have seen her that she was justified by faith. When she (at a potential cost of her life) helps the Israelites, she is justified by works. In other words, neither faith nor works can be separated from the other. Had she not acted on her pronounced faith, would it have been genuine?

In Yacov 2: 25, we read: "Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road?"

To understand this, it is **crucial to know** that the emphasis of Yacov and Sha'ul's **writings are different**, as mentioned before. Sha'ul stresses **the root of salvation**, which is trust in Y'shua plus nothing. Yacov **calls attention to the fruit after salvation**. Every believer rooted in Y'shua by faith **will bear fruit**, like branches on a vine (see Y'shua's words in John 15:4-5). **Sha'ul talks about the root and Yacov talks about the fruit.**

Why such learned men have had so much trouble with this Book is beyond me. Anti-Paul teachers **wake up**; you are **busy discrediting a vast amount of YHWH's Word**. How will you explain this to YHWH one day, as you caused many "little ones" to stumble by your erroneous teachings!

6. Concerning the "True" Apostle for the Nations

Who is the true Apostle appointed for the nations, Sha'ul or Kepha (Peter)? In Rom 11:13, Sha'ul says he is the Apostle for the nations; but in Acts 15:7, Kepha had the vision of the Jewish prayershawl (tallit) a type of a Tabernacle

descending down from heaven filled with unclean animals – a type of the Gentile nations (also see Acts 9 and 10). Let's read these two verses:

Rom 11:13 *For I speak to you, the nations, since **I am an apostle of the nations, I magnify mine office**: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

Acts:15:7 *And much disputation having occurred, **rising up Peter** said to them: Men, brothers, you recognize that from ancient days, **God chose among us that through my mouth the nations should hear the Word of the gospel**, and to believe.*

To understand and to make any sense of what is happening here, we have to go all the way back to prophecies.

Understanding a prophetic passage in Scripture is often difficult. To aid in our understanding, many prophecies are given **multiple times**. Therefore, we have the opportunity to compare the prophecies from different perspectives. In fact, to discern the meaning of a prophecy, it is crucial that we find parallel prophecies and compare them. When studying Scripture, we can use this type of comparative analysis to give us a deeper understanding of the prophecy. This is important, since all the prophecies are designed to complement one another. Prophecies given by individuals in a congregational setting are also subjected to comparative analysis.

Sha'ul instructed the congregation at Corinth to use comparative analysis by allowing the prophets to judge the prophets. 1 Cor 29-33 states, *"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."*

Sha'ul's instruction to let the prophets judge the prophets brought unity to the congregation by confirming the prophecies that were spoken. Therefore, the congregation would not fall into the confusion that occurs when prophecies are not in agreement. **Comparative analysis of the Scriptures works the same way**. Comparative analysis brings unity to the prophecies and eliminates confusion. One of the easiest Torah portions to use comparative analysis on is Ha'azinu⁶⁰. This is because **Sha'ul has already used comparative analysis** to interpret part of Ha'azinu in Romans chapter 11.

⁶⁰ Means "listen" and which is the first word in the parshah of the 53rd weekly Torah portion in the annual Jewish cycle of Torah reading and the 10th in the book of Deuteronomy. It constitutes Deut 32:1–52

Before his death, Moshe warned Israel that the nation would not always be faithful to YHWH. Deut 32:15-18 states *"Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."*

Moshe prophesied that Israel would eventually turn to idolatry and forget the Elohim who delivered them from Egypt. However, according to Sha'ul, an integral part of interpreting this prophecy is the understanding that **Israel's unfaithfulness allows YHWH's plan for the world to be fulfilled**. Deut 32:20-21 states, *"He said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those, which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation."*

Sha'ul's interpretation of Deut 32:21 starts in Romans 10:19 when he states, *"Did not Israel know? First Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you."*

From this quotation, Sha'ul begins to explain that the foolish nation mentioned in Deut 32:21 consists of Gentiles. Sha'ul is literally interpreting Deut, 32:21. This is because the word used for nation in Deut 32:21 is "goy". When translated, the Hebrew word "goy" refers to anyone who is not Jewish. Therefore, Sha'ul interpreted this passage to show how YHWH would use Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy. So that both would return to the covenant.

Rom 11:11 states, *"I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."* Sha'ul understands that when Israel turned away from YHWH and practiced idolatry, it allowed YHWH's plan of salvation to come to the Nations where Israel (Northern Ten Tribes) was scattered. In the next verse, Sha'ul then explains that through the salvation of Gentiles, YHWH intends to bring Israel to fullness as Rom 11:12 states: *"Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?"*

In the following two passages, Sha'ul then explains how salvation of the Gentiles will bring about the fullness of Israel. The focus is "to the Jew first and then to the Gentile"⁶¹; it is all about Israel. Rom 11:13-14 states, "*I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*" Sha'ul states that as an emissary to Gentiles, he magnifies his office in hopes that he **might provoke Israel to emulation**. In other words, by teaching Gentiles, Sha'ul hopes that he will **provoke many of his Jewish brethren** to live a lifestyle that is founded on his example of faith in Y'shua and established in the Torah.

This agrees with Sha'ul's previous comment in Rom 3:29-31, where he states "*Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles (Nations where Israel is scattered)? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the Torah through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Torah.*"

Sha'ul clearly believes that Gentiles, who include Israel, and Jews (Judah) are both justified by faith so that the Torah will be established. This agrees with Ezekiel 36:26-27, which states: "*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*"

Sha'ul then makes the promise that **when Israel has faith** in Y'shua and establishes the Torah through faith, **it will reconcile the world/nations** and a transforming experience will occur, as Rom 11:14 states: "*For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*"

This means that **Sha'ul is a messenger/apostle to the House of Israel among the nations**, and also to those who are in the nations who cling to the House of Israel. He went to synagogues much of the time to find them, though he also preached in "open air" meetings in pagan cities such as Athens. (Acts 17) He expresses his hope that the receiving of Messiah by the nations **will provoke those of the House of Judah to jealousy**; again, **the focus is on Israel**.

⁶¹ Rom 2:10

Comparative analysis of prophecy leads us into deeper understanding. Sha'ul used comparative analysis this way to lead his followers into a deeper understanding of Ha'azinu. Sha'ul's teaching on Ha'azinu focuses specifically on Deut 32:21, which states that **YHWH will provoke Israel to jealousy with a foolish nation**. Sha'ul draws the conclusion that this section of Ha'azinu is talking about YHWH's future plan for the Gentile Believer. In fact, Sha'ul even states that teaching Gentiles **magnifies his ministry of getting Israel saved**, and brings hope that his ministry to the Gentiles will lead his brothers in the flesh to emulate his lifestyle of faith in Y'shua and obedience to the Torah. When this happens, Sha'ul promises that reconciliation of the world will occur and the world will be transformed.

Further, Sha'ul was the only one of the apostles who could minister "Jewish things" to the Gentiles because the other apostles were ignorant of Rabbinic teachings – Acts 4:13 "... of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled;... ". Sha'ul was highly trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel⁶².

Here is a clue as to how Sha'ul viewed his apostleship:

Luke's account of the story of Sha'ul's "revelation" in Acts 9 may give us our first clue as to how Sha'ul perceived his apostleship and justified his claim to that high and exalted position in the fellowship of Y'shua:

*Having been blinded by the brilliant light outside the city of Damascus, he was led into the city where for three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank. Then the Lord appeared to a disciple at Damascus, Ananias by name, and sent him to Paul that he might regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ananias objected because he had heard of Paul's reputation as a persecutor of the followers of Y'shua but **the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel..."***

Now since the twelve Apostles chosen by Y'shua already occupied the ministry to the sons of Israel, that based on this **Sha'ul from the beginning**

⁶² No doubt Sha'ul left his home during his early adolescence and was taken to Jerusalem for his formal education in the most prominent rabbinical schools of that day. Among his teachers, young Sha'ul had the privilege to be trained by Gamaliel, the most outstanding rabbi teacher of that time (Acts 22:3). Gamaliel was one of the most honorable and reputable Jewish rabbis during the days of the Apostles (Acts 5:34). He was the grandson of Hillel, the founder of the most influential rabbinical school of Judaism. Gamaliel was also the president of the Sanhedrin in succession of his father.

must have seen his ministry as focused on the Gentiles for the purpose of Israel. Moreover, Y'shua said Sha'ul must go to the Gentiles!

7. Was Sha'ul For or Against Circumcision?

Again, it looks as if Sha'ul is contradicting himself concerning the issue of circumcision; and the following verses are used for motivation:

1 Cor 7:18 *Is any man **called being circumcised**? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*

Gal 5:2 *Indeed I, Paul, say to you **that if you become circumcised, Messiah will profit you nothing.***

But then it looks as if Sha'ul is doing the direct opposite:

Acts 16:3 *Paul desired this one to go forth with him (Timothy), **and taking him he circumcised him**, because of the Jews being in those places. **For they all knew his father, that he was a Greek.***

To understand Sha'ul's instructions on Circumcision, we must start with *when* circumcision was given, in Gen 17:9-14:

*"And God said unto Abraham: 'And as for thee, thou shalt keep My covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee: **every male among you shall be circumcised.** And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant betwixt Me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every male **throughout your generations**, he that is **born in the house**, or bought with money **of any foreigner, that is not of thy seed.** He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, **must needs be circumcised**; and **My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.** And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, **that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.**"*

The command is given to Abraham. Abraham is the father of the Jewish people, but this covenant is made **before the Israelites have been chosen**. In fact, it is given before Isaac is even born. So, circumcision isn't given just to the Jewish people but to all of Abraham's descendants. Abraham obeyed YHWH, and all the males in his household were circumcised.

A common argument is that Non-Jewish Believers don't need to be circumcised because they come into YHWH's covenant, not through Torah or Jewishness, but through Abraham. Yet we've **just seen** circumcision was the ***very sign*** of the covenant **YHWH made with Abraham before Torah was even given**. So this argument doesn't excuse Non-Jewish Believers from being circumcised.

Further more, it must be noted that, after Abraham was circumcised, he became the first Hebrew. Is this not then to be a pattern that we should follow?

What Does Y'shua Teach About Circumcision?

Both Y'shua (Luke 2:21) and Yochanan (John in Luke 1:59) were circumcised. Y'shua only discussed circumcision once, in a comparison to healing, but He did uphold both the importance and priority of circumcision in His remarks:

*"I have done one work and you are all surprised at it. Moses gave you circumcision--**not that it comes from Moses, but from the fathers--**and even on the Sabbath you give a child circumcision. If a child is given circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?" John 7:21-23*

An indirect reference to circumcision is Y'shua's command that Believers partake of the Passover each year in remembrance of Him:

*"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this **do in remembrance of me.**" Luke 22:19*

*"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this **do in remembrance of me.**" 1 Cor 11:24*

The indirect factual reference to circumcision is that **in order to obey Y'shua's command**, one would have to be circumcised, **because Torah forbids anyone uncircumcised to partake of the Passover**:

*"And **when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to YHWH, let all his males be circumcised, and then let***

him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; but no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. Exod 12:48

From the TaNaCh (specifically the Torah and the Gospels) there is **no reason any Non-Jewish man should think circumcision isn't for him**. So let's find where the confusion begins.

Timothy's Circumcision in Acts:

*"Paul had a desire for him to go with him, and **he gave him circumcision because of the Jews** who were in those parts: for they all had knowledge that his father was a Greek."* Acts 16:3

Now knowing that Timothy's father was Greek, the Jews would know that Timothy had not been circumcised as an infant, so Sha'ul had Timothy circumcised. The Christian argument is that since **Timothy was Jewish** (because his mother was Jewish) that **Timothy's circumcision doesn't count**. After all, Timothy was Jewish but **Non-Jews aren't obligated to do the same**.

Are there two paths to YHWH? Are there two sets of rules? A Jewish Way and a Non-Jewish Way? Of course not! In Gal 3:28, Sha'ul clearly explains *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Messiah Y'shua."* One!

Further more, Torah clearly states that there is one Torah for both the stranger and the native born Israelite (Num 15:15 - 'One law is for you of the assembly and for the stranger who sojourns with you – a law forever throughout your generations. As you are, so is the stranger before יהוה). There is ONE standard for righteousness, not two.

So either circumcision applies to all, or to none. If none, then Sha'ul should have simply explained to the people that Believers didn't have to undergo circumcision. He didn't. When Sha'ul circumcised Timothy, **he was showing that faith in Y'shua *also* upheld circumcision**.

Sha'ul's Teachings Regarding Circumcision:

A common misconception about circumcision is that "**circumcision of the heart**" replaces physical circumcision. Yet the Brit Chadasha⁶³ passage that

⁶³ New Covenant

mentions **circumcision of the heart** is directed ***only*** to the **Jewish people**. Let's look:

*"But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter** (Torah); whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom 2:29*

Yet in the preceding verse 17, it reads: *"But if you bear the name 'Jew'"* and in the preceding verse 23 it reads: *"You who boast in law"*. The audience here has been clearly identified as a Jewish audience. Sha'ul is really just **reiterating Torah** here in this passage to His Jewish brethren. He was quoting the Torah:

*"**Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.**" Deut 10:16*

*"And **YHWH thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love YHWH thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.**" Deut 30:6*

Sha'ul is ***not*** introducing a new concept so that Gentiles can circumcise their hearts instead of undergoing physical circumcision. He is **reminding his Jewish brethren that physical circumcision *alone* is not enough**. Jeremiah repeats this need:

*"**Circumcise yourselves to YHWH, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest My fury go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.**" Jer 4:4*

Note, at no point in Jewish history did anyone ***ever*** interpret these texts to mean that **circumcision of the heart replaced physical circumcision**. ***Both*** circumcisions are YHWH's commands; both circumcisions are important.

Sha'ul to the Romans:

Let's look at the Romans 2 passage:

Rom 2:23 *Thou that makest thy boast of the Torah, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?*

Rom 2:24 *For the name of God is blasphemed **among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.***

The group being addressed are clearly Jews.

Rom 2:25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the Torah: but if thou be a breaker of the Torah, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

"Circumcision" here is Jewishness, those born into the covenant. A Jewish person **who does not keep Torah** is likened to a person outside the covenant (a Gentile).

Rom 2:26 Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?

A Gentile who obeys Torah is likened to a Jew. To **keep the righteousness of Torah includes being circumcised since circumcision is included in Torah**. So this text contradicts itself if we understand "uncircumcision" to mean **anything other than a "non-Jew" or "Gentile"**. Stay close to the text here. Sha'ul is exposing His fellow Jews confidence -- they boast *because* they are Jewish and were given Torah. The discussion here **isn't about circumcision but Jewishness**.

Rom 2:27 And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the Torah, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the Torah?

Explained in better terminology: *'If a Gentile by birth (nature) obeys the Torah, couldn't he judge you, who are Jewish through covenant (letter), if you break the Torah?'*

It's a logical point: which counts more, righteousness without covenant and birthright, or unrighteousness having covenant and birthright? Sha'ul was an early evangelist to the Gentiles; he is seeing many more Gentiles come into faith in Y'shua than Jews. He is speaking this to his brethren out of shame.

Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Again, Sha'ul is addressing his Jewish brethren. Yes, they have outward circumcision in accord with the covenant; they were circumcised at 8 days of age by their parents, true. But a **true Jew also has circumcision of the**

heart, in the spirit outside of the covenant. **It isn't performed as a ritual of identification for others to see, but for YHWH alone.** Sha'ul isn't criticising physical circumcision – it is a covenantal birthright and Torah command; but there is a deeper level one should be seeking. Resting solely on **birthright and the covenant will never be enough.**

Rom 3:1 *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?*

Rom 3:2 *Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

I included the above verses for continuity, to show this passage was directed **only** at Sha'ul's Jewish brethren (as related to Romans 2: "Spiritual Jews").

What we've seen in the above passage is one of several cases where 'circumcision' and 'uncircumcision' mentioned are interchangeable for 'Jewish' and 'Gentile' and aren't strictly reflecting the covenantal command itself. As Sha'ul explains: *"Wherefore remember, that in the past you were Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands."* Eph 2:11 "Uncircumcision" was used loosely to simply mean "Gentile".

Romans 4:

Rom 4:7-10 *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this **blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also?** for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? **when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.**"*

Sha'ul is showing that Y'shua's atonement and grace covers the Gentiles as well as the Jews. But how can Gentiles receive this blessing, too, since Gentiles are outside the covenant that gives the blessings? Because Abraham himself received these blessings **before** he was circumcised and entered the covenant.

Rom 4:11-13 *"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And*

the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

This is a marvelous picture of YHWH's larger plan. YHWH selected Abraham *before* he entered the covenant and was circumcised. **Gentiles are brought into the covenants of Israel in the same way. Faith precedes the covenant.** Note: Abraham *did* undergo circumcision; this passage does not abrogate the covenant of circumcision YHWH made with Abraham. Sha'ul is showing that **YHWH made a provision for those who would later come into the faith that the promise of righteousness could be bestowed on all through Abraham.**

Rom 4:14-17 "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the Torah, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the Torah be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: Because the Torah worketh wrath: for where no Torah is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the Torah, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."

These promises were made to Abraham *before* Torah was given so that they extend to *all* Abraham's seed and not just Israel. Grace is from YHWH and our **response of faith towards His grace *precedes* Torah.**

Simply put, Torah was given later through only one line of Abraham's seed (Isaac to Jacob). **Torah only set boundaries for the people but it did not provide grace nor was it ever intended to.** As in chapter 2, Sha'ul is exposing the confidence of his brethren who felt **grace/righteousness came only through Jewishness and Torah.** Torah had been misused as a system for justification and as a way of limiting the promises of Abraham so that only the line of Jacob received them. Abraham is the father of Ishmael (the Arabs), the father of the Israel/Jews, and is the father of *all* through faith.

Sha'ul to the Galatians:

Galatians 2

Galatians chapter two is often misunderstood as being against circumcision.

Gal 2:1-2 "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

Sha'ul has gone to Jerusalem to check with the Beit Din and to verify the Gospel he was teaching met their approval (Yacov (James), Kepha (Peter), and Yochanan (John), the leaders in Jerusalem). Note that the early Believers had accountability: no man is an island, not even Sha'ul.

Gal 2:3-5 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Messiah Y'shua, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Now, note in verse 4 **who** was pestering Titus to be circumcised. It wasn't Yacov, Kepha or Yochanan – it was **false** brethren who heard Sha'ul and Titus were in town. Who were these false brethren?

Two hints help us: we know they are in Jerusalem, and we know they wanted Gentiles to convert (be circumcised). It is probably the same group as in Acts 15:1, that certain men from Judea who believed all Gentile Believers should become proselytes and undergo the conversion rituals of Pharisaic Judaism (recommended you read "Acts 15").

We already know from Acts 15 that Gentiles do **not** have to become proselytes. The issue of circumcision here, as in Acts, **isn't about a Torah command of circumcision**; this is **about ritual circumcision** to basically convert Gentiles into Jews. Had Titus been compelled by these false brethren, it would have given them more power to push others into conversion. They could then say, "Even Sha'ul agrees that Gentiles must become Jews in order to be saved".

Salvation was being offered to **all** people **through faith alone**; it was not limited to Jews (and Gentile proselytes). Y'shua wearied at such efforts to convert Gentiles: **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."** Matt 23:15

Sha'ul refused to submit to these false brethren; he submitted himself only to YHWH and the Jerusalem Beit Din.

Galatians 5

1 *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Messiah hath made us free, and be not entangled **again with the yoke of bondage.***

Bondage here is bondage of men (the traditions of men).

2 *Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Messiah shall profit you nothing.*

If you convert (become circumcised) **it's validating the teachings of the false brethren**: you'd be **agreeing that salvation is based on conversion and works**, in which case you wouldn't need Messiah.

3 *For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.*

The one who is dependant on keeping the "whole law" for salvation has no room for error.

4 *Messiah is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*

Sha'ul here indicates who specifically he is talking to. This happens a number of times in the book of Galatians. In this case, he is speaking with those "of you who are justified by the law". No man can be justified by the law. **There is no justification through works**, it was a false belief system, it is *not* a Scriptural teaching. Justification can only ever be through favour by faith, and works follow AFTER this.

5 *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

6 *For in Y'shua Messiah neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.*

As quoted earlier, 'there is neither Jew nor Greek' – **salvation is found in faith working by love**, not through Jewishness or Non-Jewishness.

7 *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

8 *This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*

9 *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*

10 *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.*

11 *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.*

12 *I would that those troubling you would mutilate themselves.*

Now Sha'ul is angry. Sha'ul has been teaching the Galatians about the Gospel of Y'shua, yet in came these false brethren trying to yoke the new Believers into following **conversion rituals and oral law/tradition**. Theirs was *not* the Gospel of Y'shua that Sha'ul had originally shared with them.

It should have been obvious to the Galatians that these teachers opposed Sha'ul since they persecuted Sha'ul too. If Sha'ul had also taught such conversion was necessary (as these false brethren taught), then he wouldn't be persecuted. The Galatians should have easily recognized they were false teachers instead of Sha'ul having to reteach them. But since the Galatians didn't recognize the false doctrine, Sha'ul reshares his testimony at the beginning of his letter to the Galatians and reminds them that Gospel he teaches is in accordance with YHWH *and* the Beit Din of Jerusalem (Kepha, Yacov & Yochanan). In other words, Sha'ul's gospel can be trusted; whereas the 'gospel' of these false brethren cannot.

Gal 6:12-16

12 *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Messiah.*

13 *For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the Torah; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.*

In other words, **this Pharisaic group** compelling these Galatians to be circumcised want to boast in their flesh, and **prove to their peers** that they **maintained and taught Pharisaic Judaism and gained many new converts / proselytes**. Yet for all this emphasis on making proselytes, they weren't even obeying Torah themselves. If these Galatians refused to submit, then the Pharisaic believers would suffer persecution, too, for failing to make more proselytes.

14 *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Y'shua Messiah, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Sha'ul points out that we glory in our Lord Y'shua, not in making proselytes.

15 For in Messiah Y'shua neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

This is better rendered, "*For in Messiah Y'shua, neither Jewishness is anything nor Non-Jewishness, but a new creature.*" Referring back to the fact that Israel's Olive Tree is like a new man comprised of Believing Jews *and* Gentiles, with no need for the Gentiles to undergo any conversion ritual to be included. This is the Israel of YHWH.

Some of Sha'ul's writings had been grossly misunderstood as being against Torah, as Kepha says:

*"And be certain that the long waiting of the Lord is for salvation; even as our brother **Paul has said in his letters to you, from the wisdom which was given to him**; And as he said in all his letters, which had to do with these things; in which are some hard sayings, so that, **like the rest of the holy Writings, they are twisted by those who are uncertain and without knowledge, to the destruction of their souls.**"*
2 Peter 3:15-16

It's nothing new that Sha'ul's teachings are being twisted into saying something they don't (like the church today saying that Sha'ul teaches us not to obey the Torah). Sha'ul has been misunderstood for two millennia.

So, did Sha'ul teach against circumcision for Believers?

Let's look at two very easy-to-understand texts of Sha'ul:

*"But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, **believing all things which are written in the Torah and in the prophets.**"* Acts 24:14

*"And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. While he answered for himself, **Neither against the Torah of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.**"* Acts 25:7-8

Sha'ul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. Sha'ul himself claims to uphold Torah and teach Torah. I will accept him at his word.

Concerning the issue of 1 Cor 7:18: *"Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised."* Again we have Rav Sha'ul expanding on this lesson that the **physical act of circumcision is not the important factor**. It is, instead, the result of one's having come to faith, setting their heart on the Word. **Then, the act of circumcision comes to the Gentile only after he has gelled his faith and understanding that to be obedient to YHWH by means of abandoning the ways of the world.**

So, let's go back to the two types of people we mentioned. The Isra'eli (today, commonly referred to as the "Jew") who is **circumcised on the eighth day has no choice in his circumcision**, but **still has to choose to be obedient to the Word**; otherwise **his circumcision is "nothing"**.

Similarly, for the Gentile, he should not be circumcised for the sake of being circumcised (1 Cor 7:18-19). For both, **the key is to keep YHWH's commands** (but willingly, not by tradition) (1 Cor 7:19).

In conclusion, Sha'ul's teachings on circumcision are one hundred percent sound and are in line with YHWH's Torah and Y'shua's teachings. Sha'ul actually makes things quite difficult to understand, in his use of the word circumcision. He means one of three things, when using this word:

1. The physical act of circumcision of the foreskin
2. The act of becoming a prostelyte. This is a three year process which, amongst many other things, includes the act of circumcision of the foreskin.
3. As a nation, the Jews are known as the circumcision, in Sha'ul's words, while gentiles are known as the uncircumcision.

And this is only circumcision of the flesh. Of course, there is the use of circumcision of the heart, which isn't always qualified, as Sha'ul expects you to know the context, in order to figure out which of the three (or four), he means.

8. Does Sha'ul's View on Sin and Grace Conflict with That of YHWH's?

YHWH says distinctly that He will punish Israel and take them into captivity if they sin. YHWH therefore expects obedience and He gave man choices to choose from; but according to Anti-Paul teachers, Sha'ul had other ideas...

Rom 11:32 *For God has committed them (Anti-Paul teachers read into the Scriptures that this refers to Israel) all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.*

What kind of Elohim insists on obedience but then allows the people against their will to sin to show them mercy, and then He punishes them without mercy? What about the individual in the nation who is doing his/her best not to sin and then must take the punishment of the entire nation? These are questions that those who are opposing Sha'ul's Letters are asking.

Well to begin with, it is not Israel that is under discussion here, but in fact it is the Gentiles! The complete opposite!

1. The Gentiles are the main subject of discussion

As with Rom 11:11-32, here Sha'ul is similarly addressing those formerly "*the Gentiles in the flesh*" in v. 11, so that they might understand that they have been graciously engrafted into the root of Abraham as wild stock; except that the language here is of being "brought near", having formerly been "separate from Messiah, excluded ... strangers ... having no hope and without God in the world", vs. 12-13.

2. The Gentiles were "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel", v. 12

They were "*excluded from the commonwealth [polite...a, politeia] of Israel [as a nation], and strangers to the covenants of promise*" that is separate from "*the rich root of the olive tree*" being the Abrahamic covenant and the "fathers", Rom 11:17, 28. Such alienation was when they "*were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... [and] walked according to the course of this world, ... [and] formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh*" (Eph 2:1-3).

3. The Gentiles "have been brought near" by Messiah, vs. 13-16

It is vital to notice here that the Gentiles are not saved to comprise the Church, but are "brought near" to an unidentified entity by means of Messiah's atonement. So in Romans 11, the wild olive branches are not

independently saved as the church, but are engrafted into "*the rich root of the olive tree*".

9. Sha'ul's View on Heathens Coming into the Commonwealth of Israel

According to anti-Paul teachers, Sha'ul apparently contradicts many Scriptures in the Old Covenant concerning Heathens that could have been part of the Israel commonwealth during biblical times up to the point when Y'shua came. They use Eph 2:11-13 to prove that Sha'ul contradicts the Old Covenant.

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Y'shua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.

It is evident from many Old Covenant Scriptures that Heathens/Gentiles had always access to YHWH, they always had hope. Previously, they could get into the covenant without the blood of Y'shua just by adhering to the Torah as per the Scriptures listed below:

Exod 12:49 One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.

Lev 24:22 You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am YHWH your God.

Num 15:16 One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.

Num 15:29 You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

Ps 18:44 As soon as they hear of me they obey me; The foreigners submit to me.

Isa 56:6 Also the sons of the foreigner Who join themselves to YHWH, to serve Him, And to love the name of YHWH, to be His servants— Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant—

Ezek 44:9 Thus says the Lord YHWH: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel".

The issue here is much deeper than what we can see here at face value. In fact, it is a huge mystery!

It's because there's more to having a relationship with YHWH than just "believing in Jesus" as Christianity insists. He has some rules to follow; and if you refuse, then you don't belong to Him – period. This is what Sha'ul is explaining here...

Here is just one example of how Christianity and Anti-Paul teachers have misinterpreted the writings of Sha'ul, which are used as "proof" that YHWH's Torah (Divine Instructions in Righteousness) were supposedly abolished at the "cross".

Christianity seems to be built on the much-misunderstood writings of Rav Sha'ul, and anti-Paul teachers fail to understand the depth of Sha'ul's teaching on the Torah. Even Peter mentioned that Sha'ul's writings would be hard to understand and that people would ultimately twist Sha'ul's teachings:

15 And think of our Lord's patience as deliverance, just as our dear brother Sha'ul also wrote you, following the wisdom God gave him. 16 Indeed, he speaks about these things in all his letters. They contain some things that are hard to understand, things which the uninstructed and unstable distort, to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. 17 But you, dear friends, since you know this in advance, guard yourselves; so that you will not be led away by the errors of the wicked and fall from your own secure position. (2 Peter 3:15-17)

Okay, let's start at the beginning to resolve this mammoth mystery.

Before the foundations of earth were formed, Father knew and loved you and me so much that He devised such an intricate plan for our redemption that even the angels (and Satan) couldn't fathom its depths. We can only begin to comprehend the meaning of true love as we gain a greater realization of the depths of His love and the intricacy of His plan for the sons (and daughters) of faith.

This teaching and the words of Sha'ul will explain the wonder of YHWH's love and the deeper understanding of why Y'shua, our Messiah, had to die that we might fulfill the original purposes of our heavenly Father's love and determination!.

1 But we speak the wisdom of YHWH in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which YHWH ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes (rulers) of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Cor 2:7-8)

I can't help but think that our heavenly Father was even more excited as He considered our ends even from our beginnings. I suspect that His love, which is His very essence, resonated with the joy of His heart as He called out faithful Abraham from among pagan worshippers of Ur in anticipation of birthing a nation of the faithful, called *Israel*. And yet, even before the first breath of the chosen ones was drawn, YHWH had a purpose of union in the most intimate of relationships – marriage.

He called forth a people of faith, like Abraham; and a nation that would be a tree of righteousness planted by the river of YHWH. But even as the prophet Jeremiah declared immediately after stating this beautiful allegory, YHWH knew that *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jer 17:9). Thus, many branches of the called-out Israel would have to be cut off (and others grafted in) the root stalk of that tree.

The Book of Hebrews records (Heb 3:15-18) that many fell in the wilderness for their unfaithfulness and lack of belief. The book of Romans also records, *"... For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel"*. But it is **Israel** and **Judah (two different groups)** to whom will be given the new covenant: Heb 8:8, *"But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of **Israel** and with the house of **Judah**".* Again, we notice **two different groups**. Thus, we (the Believers in Y'shua) are to understand that we are Israel by our faith, which will be proven to you.

Even though YHWH knew the heart of man, He loved His betrothed so much that He brought her out of Egypt unto Mt. Sinai and proposed His marriage covenant by saying:

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation... (Exod 19:5,6)

And the bride responded with "I do", saying:

And all the people answered together, and said, All that YHWH hath spoken we will do. (Exod 19:8)

She then reaffirmed this pledge again as recorded and finalized the covenant in writing and consummated it in blood:

And Moses wrote all the words of YHWH, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto YHWH. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that YHWH hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which YHWH hath made with you concerning all these words. (Exod 24:4-8)

However, unlike us earthly fathers who really didn't know if all our children would even make it to college, YHWH knew every step that Israel would take. He knew that she would accept His marriage covenant at Mt. Sinai only to become a harlot once He gave her the Promised Land. Do you recall that He had Moshe prophesy her harlotry in song before they ever entered the land?

*When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their forefathers, and when they eat their fill and thrive, **they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant.** (Deut 31:20)*

As parents, our hearts are grieved when we begin to see the hearts of our children rebel in disobedience, follow after foolishness, sin, separate themselves from the ways we've taught them and abandon our council and fellowship. How much more must our Father's heart have been grieved to know from the beginning of His courtship **that He would have to die** to have a "bride" and loving wife! That's right; YHWH's love was so great for us **that He already purposed to die for us to have a wife!** But that's getting ahead of the story, so let's continue with this brief history.

Once the Israelites were in the Promised Land, they desired a king. YHWH gave them a king and then one king after the other followed. Eventually Solomon was king and his kingdom was spilt into the northern part consisting of Ten Tribes and the southern part consisting of Two Tribes. Solomon's wives lured him to worship other gods and this is what YHWH refers to as His betrothed that has become harlot. They slept with and worshipped other gods!

Various Names of the Two Kingdoms:

Northern Kingdom

(Northern Ten Tribes)

House of Israel

Israel

Ephraim

Joseph

(Lost Ten Tribes)

Southern Kingdom

(Southern Two Tribes)

House of Judah

Judah

After years and years of admonishments and pleas trying to woo Israel back into fidelity, YHWH's intentions were made clear in the writings of Hosea. The Book of Hosea was written in the 8th century B.C., more than a century before the exile of the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim (721 B.C.) and Judah (586 B.C.). In this allegorical account of our redeemer's love, Hosea's prophetic life announces YHWH's intention to divorce the House of Israel and then to wed a people that were not His people. In Hosea 1:6, *Lo-Ammi* in Hebrew means "not His people".

While YHWH's long-suffering character caused Him to endure the shame and pain of His harlot wife for many centuries, He finally rejected both the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim as well as the Southern Kingdom of Judah:

Israel:

I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. (Jer 3:8,9)

Judah:

Thus saith YHWH, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away. (Isa 50:1)

Now comes the good part of this story and the mammoth revelation of love Sha'ul spoke about. It is a love that overwhelms even the love of a parent who sacrifices everything to give their children a better life and greater

opportunities than they had. We can understand a parent's sacrifice, but can we truly understand YHWH's?

Although we rejoice in our Messiah's sacrifice, doesn't the forgoing question make you wonder WHY the Lord of Glory had to die? At the most basic level of understanding, we comprehend that He took the curse of our sin upon the crucifixion stake with Him because we couldn't overcome sin and keep YHWH's covenant – at any point of our spiritual history. And yet when we comprehend a deeper mystery of YHWH's love and persistent purpose to have the intimate fellowship of His bride, we see a deeper aspect of the riches of His mercy and love for us.

Why did our Lord have to die? The deeper revelation lies in the laws He gave to us through Moshe, the Torah. Remembering that YHWH is holy and righteous and cannot break His own Word, let's read:

*If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house **she becomes the wife of another man**, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, **then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of YHWH...** (Deut 24:1-4)*

So here, then, is the dilemma and THE mystery of the Gospel. How does the Holy One, who cannot break His own spiritual laws, make for Himself a bride of Israel whom He once divorced and she had married another?

Faithless Israel was not only given a writ of divorcement, but joined herself to other gods through fornication with the world (Hosea 1:8, 9 and Hosea 2:23). Indeed, the question is, as YHWH asked, *"How shall I pardon thee O Israel for this?"*

How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. (Jer 5:7)

It seems an impossible dilemma, doesn't it? But all things are possible with YHWH and **He determined to die for us** that we might have everlasting life (Matt 19:26) **AND be able to become His bride, once again!**

This is the very essence what Sha'ul explains in Rom 7:1-6:

Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. (Rom 7:1-3)

Listen with your spiritual ears so that you may understand the mystery of the ages that even escaped the wisdom of creation – both physical and spiritual (or they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory). Messiah Y'shua was/is fully Elohim (and fully man) and formerly our spiritual husband. When He died on the crucifixion stake for our sins, we were released from this binding law of marriage in the Torah and were deemed to be no longer in adultery! Sha'ul goes on to say:

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the (that) law through the body of Messiah, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God (Rom 7:4)

HalleluYah! Ah, the mystery of it all and depths of YHWH's not only have been set free from our sin of adultery through Abba's sacrifice of His Son, all our sins have been washed clean. Additionally, by this same faith in the risen Saviour are we now betrothed to Y'shua!

And so it is written, The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-47)

Think of it! Think of the depth of this mystery. The Word says that YHWH knows the end from the beginning. He knows what is going to happen before it begins.

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: (Isa 46:9)

With such a revelation of the Word, I am awed by the depths of YHWH's love toward us and the lengths to which He had to go in order to accomplish the demonstration of that love. He knew that the forefathers of our faith would play the harlot and turn to other gods even before He breathed life into them. It is a love story and a yearning for His bride that transcends the dimensions of time and space so that we might begin to have a greater understanding of His love and mercy toward those who love Him and are called to be sanctified according to His purpose.

It can be clearly seen that Sha'ul never contradicted any Scriptures in the Old Covenant concerning Heathens/Gentiles that could have been part of the Israel commonwealth during biblical time up to the point when Y'shua came, as anti-Paul teachers erroneously teach. With that as background, Eph 2:11-13 now makes perfect sense:

11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— 12 that at that time you were without Messiah, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Y'shua you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.

It is evident from Sha'ul's teachings and the Torah that Y'shua had to die, as this was the only way that YHWH's Torah was not violated for YHWH to remarry Israel, and **only** Sha'ul explains this deep mystery!

10. Sha'ul's View on Kosher Food

Anti-Paul teachers are of the opinion that Sha'ul said that you can now eat what you want and that the Kosher Laws in the Torah has been done away with – but is this really what he said? They use the following verses to support their argument:

*Rom 14:14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Y'shua that there is **nothing unclean of itself**.*

Rom 14:20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

Some cite this passage to note "*that nothing is unclean of itself*", and that something is only unclean if a person believes it to be so. Are individuals to ascertain for their own sake whether the Scriptures mean what they say for

each one as each one sees fit? Is Sha'ul writing here, in essence, "do as you please"? NO! This will be explained shortly; let's now look at the next verse they use:

1 Cor 10:25-27: Eat whatever is sold in the market, asking no question for conscience sake. For the earth is YHWH's and the fullness thereof. If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you care to go, eat whatever is put before you, without raising questions of conscience.

Let's start off by explaining that many strange items can be found in the various markets. In Corinth there were certainly also *unclean meats* sold in the market. But in the case of the Corinthians, Rabbi Sha'ul was referring to the eating of meat sacrificed to idols.

The point was that since part of the animal is offered to idols, the idol and its worshippers were sharing a common meal. This, according to oriental thinking, creates a bond of fellowship between them. A further objection is that, to join in pagan sacrificial meals, destroys the True Believer's fellowship in Messiah.

In Rom 14:14, where Sha'ul writes, "*...there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteems anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*" The English word "unclean" should more properly be rendered 'common', as it is from the Greek word *koinos*; and has the sense of 'not sacred' or 'profane' and has **nothing at all to do with "unclean" food.**

The word "unclean" occurs in 28 other places from the Greek word *akathartos*. This Greek word means something that *is in and of itself unclean or profane*. This *akathartos* word is used to refer to demons and animals that YHWH has identified as "unclean". This is NOT nearly the same word Sha'ul used in Rom 14:14; there are two different Greek words, although some translations render it as "unclean"!

Now here is the real problem. The Jews had added a designation to the clean food laws of Scripture that was NOT in Scripture. That designation was "common" animals. These are animals that are **clean animals**, but Judaism labeled them unfit because they came from a Gentile source or that did not meet a standard established by men of Judaism. That is the very reason why Peter in the vision of Acts 10 told YHWH, "*I have never eaten anything that is **common OR unclean***". Did you get that!

There is no Scriptural prohibition against that which is "common". That is simply what Sha'ul was addressing in Rom 14:14, "*nothing is **common** of*

itself" because this is an added designation by man—it is not of YHWH! That is why Sha'ul followed this writing with, "*to him who accounteth anything to be **common***,"—to whom?—"to HIM" is the individual and not to YHWH! It is the individual who designates something common and not YHWH who does so!

Sha'ul then concludes, "*to him it is **common***". Again, "to HIM" is the individual who has so designated something common and not to YHWH!

Romans Chapter 14 basically has nothing whatsoever to do with **clean and unclean foods** that YHWH Himself declared in His Word! Once again, this is **dealing with the traditions of men** – as is the case of the entire chapter – and this is what Sha'ul had a problem with!

11. Sha'ul's Doesn't Quote Y'shua's Words or What Y'shua did

Anti-Paul teachers argue that Sha'ul never quoted Y'shua's words or what Y'shua did. Well, let's have a look if this statement is correct...

We cannot be ignorant of what Sha'ul says about Y'shua:

Y'shua is for Sha'ul no docetic⁶⁴ figure, but a real man, born of woman (Gal 4:4), a member of the nation of Israel who promoted and lived under the Torah (Rom 9:5; Gal 4:4), a descendant of David (Rom 1:3) and he admits Y'shua was the Messiah and died by crucifixion (Gal 3:1). Although crucifixion was well known to be a Roman and not a Jewish mode of execution, it was the Jews who were made primarily responsible for the death of Y'shua (1 Thess 2:15).

Further, Sha'ul knows of the apostles of Y'shua and of His brothers; he knows that some of them were married (1 Cor 9:5). He quotes sayings of Y'shua as to put an end to all controversy:

- His prohibition of divorce, for example (1 Cor 7:10f.).
- His ruling that *'those who proclaim the gospel should earn their living by the gospel'* (1 Cor 9:14; cf. 1 Tim 5:18; Luke 10:7).
- His words at the institution of the Covenant Meal (1 Cor 11:24f.), and the 'word of the Lord' of 1 Thess 4:15.

⁶⁴ An early Christian heresy, claiming that Y'shua the Messiah was not a real person.

It is noteworthy to observe that Sha'ul shows no readiness to invent new teachings to meet new occasions not envisaged in the setting of Y'shua's earlier ministry. It is all foundational, based on Y'shua's teachings.

Apart from direct or indirect references to words of Y'shua, we can clearly observe how close Sha'ul's ethical teaching, in particular, follows Y'shua's teaching as it was later recorded in the canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Take note that Sha'ul started writing first before the Gospel Writers recorded their accounts – see the table below:

Book	Date (A.D.)	Book	Date (A.D.)
James	45-49	Philippians, Philemon	63
Galatians	49	1 Peter	63-64
1 & 2 Thessalonians	51	1 Timothy	63-66
Mark	50s or 60s	Titus	63-66
Matthew	50s or 60s	Hebrews	64-68
1 Corinthians	55	2 Peter	66
2 Corinthians	56	2 Timothy	67
Romans	57-58	Jude	68-80
Luke	60	John	85-90
Acts	61	1, 2, 3 John	85-90
Colossians, Ephesians	61	Revelation	90-95

Furthermore, for Sha'ul as for Y'shua, love is the fulfilling of the Torah (Rom 13:8-10; Mark 10:17-22; 12: 28-34); that Saul of Tarsus was taught the lesson learned by the wealthy enquirer of Mark 10:17 or the scribe of Mark 12:28. This is a pleasant fancy belonging to the realm of romance and not of biblical exegesis; but Saul of Tarsus learned full well the lesson taught by Y'shua to these two men, as can clearly be seen in his letters.

Indeed, the entirety of the 'ethical' section of the Epistle to the Romans (Rom 12:1-15:7) has only to be compared with the Sermon on the Mount by Y'shua for us to see how thoroughly the Apostle was saturated with his Lord's teaching. Moreover, one of Sha'ul's principal arguments in his ethical instruction is the character and example of Y'shua. And the character of Y'shua which Sha'ul presents as an example in his letters is completely in agreement with the character of Y'shua portrayed in the Gospels.

Sha'ul's appeal to *'the meekness and gentleness of Messiah'* (2 Cor 10:1) echoes the Gospel portrayal of Him who was *'gentle and lowly in heart'* (Matt

11:29). The self-denying Y'shua of the Gospels is the Y'shua who, according to Sha'ul, *'did not please himself'* (Rom 15:3). Just as the Messiah of the Gospels calls on His followers to deny themselves (Mark 8:34), so Sha'ul insists that the followers of Messiah must (as their Master) refrain from pleasing themselves (Rom 15:1). *'Just as I try'* (he says elsewhere) *'to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved'* (1 Cor 10:33). No wonder he said: *'Be imitators of me, as I am of Messiah'* (1 Cor 11:1).

The Messiah of the Gospels who said to His disciples, *'I am among you as one who serves'* (Luke 22:27) and suited the action to the words by washing their feet (John 13:4ff.) is the Messiah who, according to Sha'ul, took *'the form of a slave'* (Phil 2:7).

In a word, when Sha'ul wishes to commend to his readers the sum total of those graces which adorn the Messiah of the Gospels, he does so by telling them to *'put on the Lord Y'shua the Messiah'* (Rom 13:14).

You have to agree that Sha'ul based all his teachings on Y'shua's and he made overwhelming references to Y'shua.

12. Sha'ul Implies that "Works" are no longer Needed

Anti-Paul teachers suggest that Sha'ul was against works and that the Believer only needed to focus on faith in Messiah Y'shua. They use the following Scripture to prove how corrupt Sha'ul's teachings are:

Rom 9:11 *(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, **not of works but of Him who calls**),*

Rom 11:6 *And if by grace, **then it is no longer of works**; otherwise grace is no longer grace*

Gal 2:16 *knowing that **a man is not justified by the works of the Torah** but by faith in Y'shua the Messiah, ... that we might be justified by faith in Messiah and not by the works of the law.*

Gal 3:10 *For as many as are **of the works of the law are under the curse.***

Eph 2:9 ***not of works**, lest anyone should boast*

2 Tim 1:9 *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Messiah Y'shua before time began,*

Titus 3:5 **not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,**

Then they go to James and state that James (Yacov, Y'shua's brother) says the opposite:

James 2:14 *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith **but does not have works**? Can faith save him?*

James 2:17 *Thus also faith by itself, **if it does not have works**, is dead.*

James 2:20 *But do you want to know, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead**?*

James 2:26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, **so faith without works is dead also.***

Then they go further and say Luke agrees with Y'shua's brother Yacov:

Acts 10:35 *But in every nation whoever fears Him and **works righteousness is accepted by Him.***

Then to put a nail in the coffin, they go to Y'shua's own words where He says you know the Scripture:

Matt 16:27 **Reward each according to his works.**

And finally, they jump to the Book of Revelation and state that the conditions to enter Heaven are laid out in this Book:

Rev 2:26 *And he who overcomes, **and keeps My works until the end...***

Rev 14:13 *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: **'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'**" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*

Rev 20:12 *And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. **And the dead were judged according to their works**, by the things which were written in the books.*

Rev 22:12 *And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, **to give to every one according to his work.***

To understand what Sha'ul is saying here concerning works, we need to understand the concept of "grace" first.

In Hebrew, the word for grace is *chesed* and means mercy, kindness, or faithfulness. Most Christians readily concede that Y'shua was full of grace, but they forget about the Torah. In the Psalms, however, David writes:

Psalm 119:29: *Remove me from the way of falsehood, and **give me grace with your Torah.***

And again:

[Verse 64] O YHWH, Your **grace** (*chesed*) **has filled the earth; teach me your Torah!**

[Verse 77] **Let your compassions come to me that I might live, for your Torah is my delight.**

So we see that YHWH's grace, favour and compassion toward us **actually is the giving of the Torah and the Covenant!** He gave us instructions (Torah) to follow because He knows what is best, and He gave us a promise that He would be with us so long as we obeyed them. Then, as the all-merciful Elohim that He is, included a means of atonement as part of that Torah – which was the Messiah. Praise Yah!

Chesed is actually a split word; in that, depending on how it is used, it can mean completely contrasting things. Besides mercy and kindness, it can also mean shame or reproach; and in one instance (Lev 20:17) it is even translated as "wicked thing". In Rom 6:1, 2 Rav Sha'ul asks: "*What then, shall we continue in sin that grace (Chesed) may abound? God forbid!*" His point from a Hebraic perspective is that when grace or mercy is misused as a license to sin, it becomes a shameful or wicked thing.

Now just as grace (or *chesed*) is associated with the Torah; so in the TaNaCh grace (or favour) is accompanied by faith, which is known in Hebrew as *emunah*.

Psalm 36:5: *Your favor (chesed), O YHWH, is in the heavens; and your faithfulness (emunah) reaches unto the clouds.*

Psalm 89:2: *Your mercy (chesed) is built up for ever: You establish Your trustworthiness (emunah) in the heavens.*

Psalm 92:2: *You declare Your mercy (chesed) in the morning, and your faithfulness (emunah) each night.*

Psalm 100:5: *For YHWH is good; His favor (chesed) is everlasting; and His faithfulness (emunah) endures to all generations.*

Psalm 98:3: *He has remembered his favor (chesed) and His faithfulness (emunah) toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*

This association between favour, faith, and salvation is also mentioned by Rav Sha'ul in:

Eph 2:8: *For by favor you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Rom 3:25b: *For in his forbearance, God passed over the sins that had taken place before, [26] to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He is righteous and justifies (or declares right) the one who believes (the words of) Y'shua.*

The Naves Topical Bible states that:

"In the Old Testament (KJV), the word 'faith' in the sense of belief occurs only five times. Faith (however) is also communicated by words such as 'believe', 'fear', 'hope', 'LOVE', and 'trust'. Faith is seen in the examples of the servants of (Elohim) who committed their lives to him in unwavering trust and obedience. 'Old Testament' faith is never mere assent to a set of doctrines or outward acceptance of the law, but absolute confidence in the faithfulness of (Elohim) and a loving obedience to His will."

Faith is the result of genuine love, and Y'shua says in:

John 14:15: *If you love Me, you shall guard My commands.*

John 15:10: *If you guard My commands, you shall stay in My love, even as I have guarded My Father's commands and stay in His love.... [12] This is My command, that you love one another, as I have loved you.*

Accordingly, Sha'ul confirms Y'shua's words and says in:

Rom 13:10: *Love does no evil to a neighbor. Therefore love fulfills (the requirements of) the Torah.*

As we notice in Hebrews chapter eleven, it was by faith that the patriarchs obtained witness (Heb 11:2), **and in every instance their faith was accompanied by action - by loving obedience to YHWH's commands.**

Heb 11:4: *By faith, Abel offered to God a greater sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God witnessing of his gifts. And through it, having died, he still speaks. [5] By faith, Enoch was translated so as not to see death, "and was not found because God had translated him." For before his translation he obtained witness, that he pleased God. [6] But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God has to believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him. [7] By faith, Noah, having been warned of what was yet unseen, having feared, prepared an ark to save his house, through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to belief. [8] By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he was about to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. [9] By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as a stranger, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise, [10] for he was looking for the city having foundations, whose builder and maker is God. [11] By faith also, Sarah herself was enabled to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the normal age, because she deemed Him trustworthy who had promised. [12] And so from one, and him as good as dead, were born as numerous as the stars of the heaven, as countless as the sand which is by the seashore... [17] By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only brought-forth son, [18] of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," [19] reckoning that God was able to raise, even from the dead, from which he received him back, as a type. [23] By faith, Moses, having been born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a comely child, and were not afraid of the sovereign's command. [24] By faith, Moses, having become great, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, [25] choosing rather to be afflicted with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a time, [26] deeming the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. [27] By faith, he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the sovereign, for he was steadfast, as seeing Him who is invisible. [28] By faith, he performed the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the first-born should touch them. [29] By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, and when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned. [30] By faith, the walls of Jericho fell, having been surrounded for seven days. [31] By faith, Rahab the whore did not perish with those who did not believe, having received the spies with peace. [32] And what more shall I say? For the time*

would fail me to relate of Gideon and Baraq and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets, [33] who through their faith (or belief), overcame reigns, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became mighty in battle, put foreign armies to flight. [35] Women received back their dead by resurrection. And others were tortured, not accepting release, to obtain a better resurrection. [36] And others had trial of mockings and floggings and more, of chains and imprisonment. [37] They were stoned, they were tried, they were sawn in two, they were slain with the sword. They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in need, afflicted, mistreated, [38] of whom the world was not worthy - wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes of the earth. [39] And having obtained witness through faith, all these did not receive the promises [40] God having provided what is better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

In **no instance** did the patriarchs demonstrate faith (or belief) by sitting back and doing nothing. In **every instance** their faith and its results involved action, sacrifice, or pleasing YHWH by obeying His commands. Yet when it comes to the apostolic writings, commentators change their tune – stating that "*faith has both an active and a passive sense in the Bible*". Notwithstanding what the commentators may say, the apostle Sha'ul **confirms** in Romans chapters two and three that there is no such thing as a "passive faith" in the Scriptures.

Rom 2:12: *For as many as sinned without Torah shall also perish without Torah, and as many as sinned in the Torah shall be judged by the Torah. [13] For not the hearers of the Torah are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the Torah shall be justified.*

Rom 3:27: *Where then is the boasting? It is shut out. By what Torah? Of works? No, but by the Torah of belief (or faith). [28] Therefore we conclude that it is by belief that a man is justified and not by the works of the law.*

In these verses, Sha'ul states that:

- 1) Hearing the Torah does not justify us.
- 2) The doers of the Torah shall be justified (after justification by faith).
- 3) We are not justified by works.
- 4) We are justified by faith.

This can only mean one of two things: Either 1) Sha'ul is hopelessly confused by contradicting himself; or 2) faith is an integral part of the Torah, and a prerequisite to truly keeping the Father's commands.

Rom 14:23: *He who doubts...is condemned, because (doubting) is not of faith, and all that is not of faith (or belief) is sin.*

What Sha'ul in fact teaches is **that just doing good works does not save us**; but at the same time, **true faith produces visual results in the form of obedience.**

In the Psalms, David says:

Psalm 96:13: *YHWH cometh....to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth (emunah).*

Psalm 119:30: *I have chosen the way of faith (emunah): thy judgments have I laid before my eyes.*

Psalm 119:86: *All thy commands are faith (emunah): they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.*

Solomon also states in:

Prov 12:17: *He that professes faith (emunah) sheweth forth righteousness.*

Finally, Rav Sha'ul asks in:

Rom 3:31: *Do we then render the Torah void through our faith (emunah)? May it never be! To the contrary, we establish the Torah.*

The Greek word translated "void" is *katargeo* and means:

- 1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, or inoperative
 - a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency
 - b) to deprive of force, influence, or power
- 2) to cause to cease, to put an end to, to do away with, to annul, to abolish
 - a) to cease, to pass away, to be done away
 - b) to be severed from, to be separated from, to be discharged from, to be loosed from anyone

The Greek verb that's translated "establish" is *histemi* and means:

- 1) a) to cause or make to stand

- b) to make firm, to fix, to establish
- 2) to cause a person or a thing to keep his or its place
- 3) to establish a thing, to cause it to stand, to uphold or sustain the authority of force of a thing

Therefore, rather than teaching against the Torah in this passage or rendering it obsolete, Sha'ul actually teaches that faith is what causes the Torah to be in continual force and existence!

Now listen to Y'shua's words: *"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you.....have neglected the weightier matters of the Torah: the judgment, and the compassion, and the faith (emunah). These need to have been done without neglecting the others."* Matt 23:23.

Sha'ul says in Gal 3:10: *For as many as are out of (or apart from) the works of the Torah are under the curse. For it has been written:*

Deut 27:26. Cursed is he that continues not in all the words (or commands) of this Torah to do them. And all the people shall affirm it.

The Torah is comprises of two things: *commands* and continuity. Fulfilling the Torah, in turn, **requires faith in the one who gives the commands and loving obedience to His will.**

*Acts 14:22: (And Sha'ul) strengthened the beings of the disciples, encouraging them to **continue** in the faith, and that through many pressures we have to enter the reign of God.*

The Greek word translated "faith" is *pistis* and means *"faithfulness, belief, (or) trust, with an implication that actions based on that trust will follow; 'The faith' refers to...(both) belief and lifestyle."*

Heb 10:38: But the just shall live by his faith, but if anyone draws back, my being has no pleasure in him.

In this verse, Sha'ul is quoting the words of Habbakuk's prophecy concerning the man of sin (or lawlessness) and the end times.

*Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul is defiant (or rebellious); it is not upright in him: but the **tzaddik** (righteous person) shall live through his **emunah** (faith).*

Emunah means "faithfulness, steadiness, trustworthiness"; "firmness, fidelity (or) steadfastness."

Isaiah 7:9b: *But if you do not believe (or have faith), you are not steadfast.*

Steadfastness in what? Again, Sha'ul provides the answer:

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the emissaries, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers.*

What was the teaching of the emissaries (apostles)?

Acts 24:14. *And this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect (i.e. the Nazarenes), so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all that has been written in the Torah and in the Prophets.*

Acts 28:23. *And having appointed him a day, many came to (Sha'ul) where he was staying, to whom he was explaining, earnestly witnessing about the reign of God, and persuading them concerning Y'shua from both the Torah of Moshe and the prophets from morning until evening.*

Acts 17:11: *And (the Bereans) received the word with great eagerness, and searched the (TaNaCh or "Old Testament") Scriptures daily, to see if (the teachings of the apostles) were so.*

Over the last 1,700 years, Christianity has abandoned the Berean's practice of proving doctrine by the TaNaCh and wandered far from the original Hebraic understanding of faith as exemplified by actions – the type of faith spoken of by Sha'ul in Philippians chapter two.

Phil 2:12: *As you always **obeyed.....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.***

Work out our own salvation with fear and trembling of what? The answer is found in:

Isaiah 66:2: *All these My hand has made, and all these that exist - declares YHWH - Yet to such a one do I look: on him who is poor and bruised of spirit, and who trembles at My Word (the Torah).*

Christianity, however, has embraced the Greek-Platonic mindset which defines "faith" as "thought"; and thereby assumes one to be "saved" **if they merely think a thing to be true**. This is the very type of pseudo-faith which Moshe warned the children of Israel against in Deuteronomy 32!

*Deut 32:4: YHWH is the Rock; His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of **faith** (emunah) and without unrighteousness, righteous and straight is He. [5] A twisted and crooked generation has corrupted itself, Their mark is not the mark of his children.*

In the verses which follow, Moshe recalls Israel's frowardness and their lack of faith or steadfastness, as exemplified in their refusal to follow YHWH's commands.

*[Verse 15] But Yeshurun grew fat and kicked.... so he forsook Eloah who made him, and scorned the Rock of his salvation. [16] They moved Him to jealousy with foreign matters, and with abominations they provoked Him. [17] They slaughtered to demons - not Eloah - mighty ones they did not know, new ones which have sprung up lately, which your fathers did not fear. [18] They neglected the Rock who brought them forth, and forgot the El who fathered them.... [20] And He will say, "I will hide My face from them, and see what their end shall be -- for they are a froward generation, children in whom there is **no faith** (emunah)."*

The only means of recourse, as outlined by Yacov, is to return to YHWH and **demonstrate true faith and love towards our Bridegroom by obeying His commands**.

Jam 2:14: My brothers, what use is it for anyone to say he has faith but does not have works? This faith is unable to save him. [17] ...Faith, if it does not have works, is in itself dead. [18] But someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faithfulness without your works, and I shall show you my faithfulness by my works. [19] You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe - and shudder! [20] But do you know, O foolish man, that the belief without the works is dead? [21] Was not Abraham our father declared right by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? [22] Do you see that the faith was working with his works, and by the works the faith was perfected? [23] And the Scripture was filled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness." And He was called "God's friend...." [26] For as the

body without the spirit is dead, so also faith (or belief) is dead without the works.

1 Tim 1:5: *Now the goal of this command is love from a clean heart, from a good conscience and a sincere faith.... [8] And we know that the Torah is good if one uses it legitimately.... [19] Having faith and a good conscience (resulting from obedience), which some have thrust aside and suffered shipwreck concerning their faith.*

Rom 10:6: *The righteousness of faith speaks in this way: [8] "The Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it" (Deut 30:14). That is the word of faith which we are proclaiming.... [10] For with the heart one believes (or is faithful) unto righteousness (obedience), and one confesses with the mouth, and so is saved.*

What the Anti-Paul teachers fail to see is that Sha'ul in fact teaches **that just doing good works does not save us**; but at the same time, **true faith produces visual results in the form of obedience**. Sha'ul was never against works that resulted in our love for YHWH and Y'shua; and therefore we love doing Torah. No, what Sha'ul was against is the fact that men did works in order to be saved but never had the faith aspect that comes when we **are** truly saved – which is the core of Torah.

13. Sha'ul doesn't Stay in Context when he Quotes Scripture

Anti-Paul teachers say that when Sha'ul quotes Scripture that he never stays in context with the Scripture being quoted and they use the following verses as examples.

13:1. What was Sha'ul's context in:

Rom 3:4: Let it not be! But let God be true, and every man a liar; even as it has been written, "That You should be justified in Your words, and will overcome in Your being judged."

From the Scripture quoted above, it looks like the sentence *"That You should be justified in Your words"* refers to the individual, but in actual fact it refers to YHWH. Sha'ul quotes here direct from Psalm 51:4.

Now, where the issue comes in is where Sha'ul apparently contradicts himself in the beginning of Romans chapter 3 where it begins with the thought of "What Advantage does the Jew have" – in other words, what

advantage and value is it of being Jewish? And in verse 3 and 4 he states that YHWH is true when every man is a liar, which includes the Jews:

Rom 3:3: *If some of them were unfaithful, so what? Does their faithlessness cancel God's faithfulness?*

[4] *Heaven forbid! God would be true even if everyone were a liar! - as the TaNaCh says, "so that you, God, may be proved right in your words and win the verdict when you are put on trial."* (Quoted from Psalm 51:4 from the Septuagint Bible, LXX)

Sha'ul bellows out, "*Heaven forbid!*" which is in Greek *μη γένοιτο*, and means "*Let it not be!*" Probably a translation of "*Chalilah!... Hebrew's most intense wish for negation; therefore KJV's 'God forbid!' conveys the sense well.*" (Stern, Commentary 341).

Psalm 51 was composed by David in confessing and repenting from the sin of Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Sam 11f). Let's look at the facts derived:

- a) David's faithlessness did not remove YHWH's faithfulness in keeping His covenant with David that his house would endure forever on the throne of Israel (2 Sam 7:11ff).
- b) However, that sin did result in a temporary disruption of David's throne when his rebellious son Abimelech led a successful coup which drove David into exile.
- c) In the same way, Israel's faithlessness in not receiving Y'shua in His First Coming or carrying out her mission to be a priestly nation among the nations put YHWH's promises on hold and even resulted in exile; but just as YHWH was faithful to David, so He is faithful to David's kingdom through Ben David, The Son of David – Y'shua the Meshiach.

As said, Psalm 51 is about David repenting; but in verse 18, it categorically states in verses 18f that Jerusalem will prosper irrespective of David's sin: *In your good pleasure, make Tziyon prosper; rebuild the walls of Yerushalayim. Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then they will offer bulls on your altar.*

Sha'ul reinforces this principle and says that sin must be punished regardless of its end result:

Rom 3:5: *Now if our unrighteousness highlights God's righteousness, what should we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict his anger on us? (I am speaking here the way people commonly do.)*

[6] *Heaven forbid! Else, how could God judge the world?*

[7] *"But," you say, "if, through my lie, God's truth is enhanced and brings him greater glory, why am I still judged merely for being a sinner?"*

[8] *Indeed! Why not say (as some people slander us by claiming we do say), "Let us do evil, so that good may come of it"? Against them the judgment is a just one!*

Even though one's sin may bring glory to YHWH by His use of that sin to bring about good, we are still responsible for our decisions. Sha'ul merely reinforces a biblical principle as seen in the Old Covenant.

The Anti-Paul teachers then state that the proof can be seen in Rom 3:10-18, and where it is quoted from that, the context has not been followed:

10 *according as it has been written, "There is none righteous, not one!"*

11 *There is none that understands, there is not one that seeks after God.*

12 *All turned away, they became worthless together, not one is doing goodness, not so much as one!"*

13 *"Their throat is an opened grave;" "they used deceit with their tongues; the poison of asps is under their lips;"*

14 *whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.*

15 *Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

16 *ruin and misery are in their way;*

17 *and they did not know a way of peace;*

18 *there is no fear of God before their eyes."*

This passage is perhaps among the very best evidence that the use of the LXX (Septuagint) in the New Covenant demonstrates deliberate tampering of a most serious kind. The problem here, though, is difficult to spot for those of us who do not speak Greek and Hebrew.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ This section was taken from pages 11-14 Paul Herring's book *"The New Testament: The Hebrew Behind the Greek"* (minor changes have been in the article). HRTI would like to thank Mr Herring for his thorough research. Recommended book, see link <http://www.amazon.com/Defending-The-Apostle-Paul-ebook/dp/B009TLLK0U/>

This passage is unusual to begin with in that it is a construct from several verses in the TaNaCh. The problem is that these verses have been taken totally out of context.

The passage then becomes even more problematic, in that some of these verses appear to have then been joined together in Psalm 14 of the Septuagint. That is, it appears an editor or editors have altered the Septuagint (or at least some of the versions of it that we now have), so that it now is an exact copy of the New Covenant passage.

Consider v10: *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

This passage from the New Covenant is supposed to be a quote from the Hebrew Scriptures, from the TaNaCh. However, it is not a quote from the TaNaCh. Nowhere does the TaNaCh say the direct words "*There is none righteous, no, not one*". The are in fact places where it says that man is unrighteous i.e. Psalm 53:1-3, Ecl 7:20, 1 Kings 8:46, etc. (and they must be viewed in context), but none uses the direct words as Sha'ul supposedly quotes in verse 10.

The TaNaCh however does state that "*There is no one who does good, not even one*", Psalms 14: 1, 3-5:

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

3 They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

4 Do all the workers of wickedness not know, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord?

5 There they are in great dread; For God is with the righteous generation.

Verse 1 doesn't just say, though, that there is no one who does good – that's only the last part of the verse. How does the verse start out? It is the fool who says there is no Elohim – it is the fool who is wicked and there is not one person who says this who is good.

Look carefully at verse 4. This further emphasizes that those who do not do good are the wicked. In other words, the statement is not universal; there are righteous (non-wicked) who do good. We then see in verse 5 that there are, in fact, many who are righteous.

The following are just some Scriptures that attest to this:

Gen 6:9: *These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.*

Gen 7:1: *Then the Lord said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.*

Exod 23:7: *Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty.*

Num 32:11-12: *11 'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, 12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the Lord fully.'*

1 Kings 14:8: *and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you--yet you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in My sight;*

1 Kings 15:5: *because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.*

2 Kings 23:25: *Before him there was no king like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.*

Psalms 97:10-12: *10 Hate evil, you who love the Lord, Who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked. 11 Light is sown like seed for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Be glad in the Lord, you righteous ones, and give thanks to His holy name.*

Psalms 106:3: *How blessed are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times!*

Prov 13:5-6: *5 A righteous man hates falsehood, but a wicked man acts disgustingly and shamefully. 6 Righteousness guards the one whose way is blameless, But wickedness subverts the sinner.*

Job 1:1: *There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*

Jer: 20:12: *Yet, O Lord of hosts, You who test the righteous, Who see the mind and the heart; let me see Your vengeance on them; For to You I have set forth my cause.*

Psalms 32:11: *Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.*

There is, however, a passage in the TaNaCh that states that there is no one who does good (quoted above). It is Eccl 7:20: *Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.* Here we can see that people can be righteous even though there is no one who is always good. Righteousness is not about perfection, it's about a connection with YHWH that brings a swift response of repentance upon the understanding that transgression has taken place.

Now, you may start to see some of the irregularities or contradictions evident in the New Covenant, and even in the same epistle. For example, we read in Rom 1:17, the Apostle Sha'ul endorsing Habbakuk and quoting Hab 2:4 *'...but the just [righteous] shall live by his faith [fullness]...'* If we were to take Rom 3:10 as correctly quoting Scripture, we would appear to have a serious contradiction here; and this is what Anti-Paul teachers are doing.

It could be possible that Psalm 143:2 was the Scripture being referred to in Rom 3:10: *Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous.* Frank Selch⁶⁶ points out though that the Hebrew does not say *"in your sight"* but *"before your face"*. We can perhaps now recognize that in this context; that is, when compared with the righteous of the Almighty, no man's righteousness comes close; it is cast into such a shadow as to make this a valid comparative statement. To repeat, there are a great many Scriptures that indicates that there are righteous amongst the living.

The next verse (verse 11) *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God"* is just as problematic:

Consider the cry of King David (Psalm 27:8): *When You said, "Seek My face", my heart said to You, "Your face, YHWH, I will seek."*; and (Psalm 40:16): *Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The Lord be magnified!"*

Also, Isaiah writes, *With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early... Isaiah 26:9; and Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, you who seek the Lord... Isaiah 51:1.*

Note also that verse 12 states that there is not a single person who does good; yet in 2 Kings 22:2 we read: *And he (Josiah) did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.*

⁶⁶ Frank Selch, 'The Enigma of Romans 3', Unpublished August 2011

Consider also all those of faith mentioned in Heb 11: the parents of Yochanan the Immerser, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Anna the prophetess, Simon, the disciples and all their converts.

Clearly, this reference if truly from the TaNaCh (possibly from Psalm 14 and actually written by the Apostle Sha'ul) must only refer to Gentiles (to unbelievers) – not to the righteous men and women of faith. Yet, when we read this reference in its context in Romans 3 (especially the context of the verses immediately following), we get a very different picture.

The result is a statement that appears to argue against these men and women of faith and against the power of Torah to bring repentance, righteousness and salvation. The signs of corruption and deliberate distortion become increasingly evident.

Now we come to the most glaring deception, so powerful that many see it as in fact very strong evidence that the New Covenant **did quote** from the LXX!

Research a few well-known scholars who have written commentaries on Romans and you will likely find many stating that in Rom 3:10-18 the Apostle Sha'ul has quoted excerpts from a number of different places in the TaNaCh (including Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 5:9; Psalm 10:7; Isaiah 59:7,8; Psalm 36:1).

You might also find, though some like the famous Adam Clarke (1762–1832), indicating that Rom 3:13-18 is in fact a direct quote of Psalm 14 in the Septuagint: *"This and all the following verses to the end of the 18th Romans 3:13-18 are found in the Septuagint, but not in the Hebrew text; and it is most evident that it was from this version that the apostle quoted, as the verses cannot be found in any other place with so near an approximation to the apostle's meaning and words."*

Note that Adam Clarke states *"with so near an approximation"*; **yet the Greek versions are not just close, they are identical!**

Quoting Frank Selch (The Enigma of Romans 3:10-18):

"The LXX came into being approx. 200 plus years before the Christian era. Is it at all feasible that Psalm 13 [Masoretic Psalm 14] contained that inclusion which is there today? In all likelihood no, since the verses are a collection from other Psalms and wisdom writings and need not be there." The following segment from Rom 3:13-18 is from the NKJV:

'Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.'

And this one is a copy of Psalm 14:3 [Ps. 13 in the Greek text] from the 'English Translation of the Greek Septuagint Bible, The Translation of the Greek Old Testament Scriptures, Including the Apocrypha'; as compiled from the Translation by Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton 1851:

'Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit the poison of asps is under their lips whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known there is no fear of God before their eyes.'

Here is the Greek text of Romans 3:13-18:

τάφος νε γμένος ό λάρυγξ α τῶν, ταῖς γλώσσαις α τῶν έδολιοῦσαν, ἰδς σπιδῶν ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη α τῶν ὦν τὸ στόμα ρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει, ὄξεις οἱ πόδες α τῶν έκχέαι αίμα, σύντριμμα καὶ αλαιπωρία έν ταῖς ὁδοῖς α τῶν, καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης ο κ ἔγνωσαν ο κ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ πέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν α τῶν.

And here is the text of Psalm 14:3b [13] form the LXX:

'...τάφος νε γμένος ό λάρυγξ α τῶν ταῖς γλώσαις α τῶν έδολιοῦσαν ἰδς σπιδῶν ὑπὸ τὰ χεῖλη α τῶν ὦν τὸ στόμα ρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει ὄξεις οἱ πόδες α τῶν έκχέαι αίμα σύντριμμα καὶ ταλαιπωρία έν ταῖς ὁδοῖς α τῶν καὶ ὁδὸν εἰρήνης ο κ ἔγνωσαν ο κ ἔστιν φόβος θεοῦ πέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν α τῶν.

The two portions are identical!"

So, is this solid proof that the LXX was indeed used after all (as most Christian scholars have indeed argued for a great many years)?

NO!

Because even Adam Clarke went on to state: *"The verses in question, however, are not found in the Alexandrian MS. But they exist in the Vulgate, the Aethiopic, and the Arabic. As the most ancient copies of the Septuagint*

do not contain these verses, some contend that the apostle has quoted them from different parts of Scripture; and later transcribers of the Septuagint, finding that the 10th, 11th, and 12th, verses were quoted from the xivth Psalm, Ps 14:10-12 imagined that the rest were found originally there too, and so incorporated them in their copies, from the apostle's text.^{67 68}

Pause and consider carefully. Adam Clarke acknowledges (and this was over 150 years ago!) that the earliest versions of the LXX (first compiled in Alexandria) do not contain this portion that is so perfectly quoted in Romans 3! That is, the Romans 3 quote we have today has been added by the translators at some stage. It is not a translation of the original, it is not inspired by any stretch of the imagination; but instead a great forgery (however well-intentioned the editors may have been in their redaction)!

Have others noted this before? Yes, Douglas Moo's opinion (from his NICNT commentary, 'The Epistle to the Romans', Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) writes: "*The inclusion of Romans 3:13-18 in several MSS of the LXX of Psalm 14 is a striking example of the influence of Christian scribes on the transmission of the LXX. (See S-H for a thorough discussion). (p. 203, fn. 28) [S-H refers to A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, by William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam (ICC. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902)]*"

Douglas Moo is stating that the Septuagint's rendering of Psalm 14:3 is a direct insertion copied back from Rom 3:13-18 by Christian editors and translators.

Clearly, something very deliberate and most questionable is evident here.

Further, very few if any Hebrew manuscripts have this version of Psalm 14. The Dead Sea Scrolls portion 11QPs(c) contains Psalm 14:1-6 in Hebrew. Below is a translation in English of Psalm 14:

- 1 *The fool says in his heart, "There is no God". They are corrupt, they commit vile wickedness; there is no one who does good.*
- 2 *YHWH looks down from heaven upon humankind to see if there are any who are wise, any who seek after God.*
- 3 *They have all gone astray; they are all alike corrupt; there is no one who does good – no, not even one.*
- 4 *Do they never learn, all those evildoers who devour my people as humans eat bread, and who do not call upon the YHWH?*

⁶⁷ <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=ro&chapter=003>

⁶⁸ These 5 verses are also found in the Peshitta (Aramaic) version of Romans 3.

- 5 *Toward this place they will be in mighty dread, for God is with the company of the righteous.*
 - 6 *You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor, but YHWH is their refuge.*
- (See p 515, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible' Martin Abegg Jr, Peter Flint & Eugene Ulrich 1999)

Given the existence of this Hebrew version of Psalm 14 at the time that the Apostle Sha'ul first wrote Romans, and given the evidence referred to here that indicates that Hebrew was both the main spoken language in Israel during the Second Temple period, and the language in which the Jewish scribes and the Jewish authors of the New Covenant wrote; then this is much more likely the version that Sha'ul would have quoted.

So, we might ask again at this point why this deliberate change was made to the Septuagint and the New Covenant; and what are the implications and ramifications of this deliberate tampering with versions of the LXX as it would appear by inference, the New Covenant?

Put bluntly, it all comes back to doctrine, to the deliberate attempt to write into the New Covenant the doctrines of men rather than accept the doctrines and teachings (Torah) of the Almighty and His Messiah!

There are many other Scriptures Anti-Paul teachers use to discredit Sha'ul's teachings. To explain each one of them will take a tremendous amount of space; therefore, they are just mentioned here and the reader should get sound explanations on the Internet that falsify the Anti-Paul's claims.

Rom 9:1-13 compared to Gen 21:12-13.

Rom 9:14-18 compared to Exod 33:12-22.

Rom 9:23-26 compared to Hosea 2:23 and Hosea 1:10.

Rom 9:33 compared to Isaiah 28:16.

Rom 10:1-9 compared to Deut 30:11-16.

Rom 10:10-12 compared to Isaiah 28:16.

Rom 10:13 compared to Joel 2:32.

Rom 10:14-15 compared to Isaiah 52:6-7/Nah1:15

Rom 10:16 compared to Psalm 19:4

Rom 11 Sha'ul is now adopting pre-destined elect doctrine. (In short what Sha'ul actually meant is that all of the "Lost Sheep of Israel" (Lost Ten Tribes/House of Israel/House of Ephraim/Gentiles adopting the Torah Covenant) that return back into the covenant are the pre-destined elect. Why? As Y'shua only came for the Lost Sheep of

Israel, meaning that you must come into the only Covenant and that is a Torah based Covenant).

Rom 14:10-12 compared to Isaiah 45:23-25.

Gal 3:13 compared to Deut 21:22-23.

Eph 4:7-8 compared to Psalm 68:17-18.

14. Sha'ul the People Pleaser and Hypocrite

Anti-Paul teachers say that Sha'ul was nothing more than a 'people pleaser' and a 'hypocrite' and use the following verses to “prove” their allegations:

Gal 1:10: For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Messiah.

1 Cor 10:33: just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Now, let's take a look at 1 Corinthians 10 in context, reading from verse 19:

19. What then do I say? That an idol is anything? Or, that an idol's sacrifice is anything? No.

20. But that what the Gentiles[1] sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to Elohim. And I would not that you should be associates of demons.

21. You cannot drink the cup of our Master (Y'shua) and the cup of demons; and you cannot be partakers at the table of our Master, and at the table of demons.

22. Or, would we provoke our Master (Y'shua's) jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

23. Everything is in my power; but everything is not profitable. Everything is in my power; but everything does not build up.

24. Let no one seek his own things, but also the things of his fellow-man.

25. Whatever[2] is sold in the flesh-market, you eat, without an inquiry on account of conscience:

26. For the earth is Master YHWH's, in its fullness.

27. And if one of the pagans invite you, and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you, without an inquiry on account of conscience. 28. But if any one will say to you, This meat is derived from a sacrifice,[3] don't eat it, for the sake of him who told you, and for conscience's sake.

29. *The conscience I speak of is not your own, but his who told you. But why is my freedom judged of, by the conscience of others?*[4]

30. *If I by grace partake, why am I reproached for that for which I give thanks?*[5]

31. *If you therefore eat, or if you drink, or if you do any thing, do all things for the glory of Elohim.*

32. *You be without offense to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the assembly of Elohim:*

33. *Even as I also, in everything, please every man;*[6] *and do not seek what is profitable to me, but what is profitable to many; that they may live.* (AENT)

Let's do a short exegesis of the various points as listed in the verses above to get the full understanding of the context and what Sha'ul was saying:

[1] Actually, "Pagans". By calling these people *khanpa* rather than *aimmeh*, Rav Sha'ul is making a clear distinction between the Gentiles who are learning Torah under his leadership from their fellow residents who are still steeped in anti-Torah lies and polytheism. In other words, Sha'ul is pointing two groups of people out.

[2] "Whatever" is sold in the marketplace refers to meat that has the potential of being "sanctified by the Word of YHWH". Rav Sha'ul did not give license to buy pork or unclean meat from the marketplace; see 1 Tim 4:5. In addition, Sha'ul says in 1 Cor 10:25: "*Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience.*" (Stern's Complete Jewish Bible). The context of this verse is important. First, of course, Sha'ul is not saying here that "all food is okay to eat". The fact that Sha'ul lived a kosher, Torah observant life sufficiently supports this. Here, Sha'ul is talking to the Messianic community of Corinth, and he and they know to only eat Kosher. So this verse is not permitting the eating of pork or shellfish or anything that is not "food" as declared by YHWH. Secondly, in this part of chapter 10 of 1 Corinthians, Sha'ul returns to the topic he introduced in chapter 8 - that of food sacrificed to idols.

Rav Sha'ul is explaining how the food that was prepared has no hold on you - that since you are living a life of obedience to the Word of YHWH, then the food that YHWH permits, provides the same sustenance for you as it would if you knew its "chain of custody" (to use a legal phrase - meaning, if you could trace the path of the animal from its owner to the meat market and you therefore knew it was handled entirely kosher, the meat has the same value to you and your body as it would if you were not able to trace its chain of custody. However, if you find out that it was sacrificed to an idol, even though

you could still eat it because you know that that sacrifice possesses no power over you, you should not eat it so as to show the "unbeliever" (verse 10:27) serving it to you in a teaching opportunity, that his sacrifice was not valid and that you will not participate in what the unbeliever intended it to mean. See Sha'ul's own clarification of this in the verses just prior to 1 Cor 10:25. In 1 Cor 10:19-21 – Sha'ul says you do not want to partake at the table of our Master Y'shua and at the table of demons; instead take courage and show the unbeliever the error of their ways.

[3] All Believers can determine whether meat is unclean pork or shellfish or whether it could be sanctified according to the Word. In this case *khanpa* designates "Pagans" and refers to whether the meat was sacrificed to a pagan idol. If someone informs you that the meat came from an animal that was sacrificed to an idol, do not eat it. See also Acts 15:28, 29, Exod 34:15, this is no license to eat unclean food.

[4] Conscience refers to the discernment of right and wrong, based on Torah as the Word of YHWH. "Conscience" among the household of Faith is neither random nor variable, but a "group conscience" of the "*Kedoshim*" (Set Apart people). As Torah is being written upon the heart (Jer 31:33), each soul is to recognize and support the work of the Ruach haKodesh within the Body. Sha'ul is not at "liberty" to break the Word of YHWH and eat meat sacrificed to idols. **He is addressing the frail and immature "conscience" of those who struggle to leave paganism.** When a Believer voices Torah conscience, **the rest of the body is obligated to support them**, even if some think otherwise. Sha'ul refers to the Believers in Corinth as carnal babes who can't digest solid food and who are struggling to receive truth; they are contentious and walking in the flesh (1 Cor 3) – much the same as the modern Christian church who uses these verses to endorse violation of Torah, which is simply a poor attempt to "justify" the weak carnal flesh.

[5] If the food appears kosher and you have prayed unto YHWH, why should you be reproached if you didn't know the full quality of the meat? If the host knows about removing blood and states that precautions have been made and you pray that it be acceptable, is that not enough? Otherwise a person would be required to be present when the meat was prepared. Nowadays, kosher food companies supervise both the slaughter and the preparation of meat in the kitchen. Absent these things, the next best thing is to do the best you can, offer a prayer and do not let worry ruin the meal or offend a well-meaning host who gave it their best effort.

[6] Diplomatic and kind to all, but never teaching against Torah (See 1 Cor 9:21). Only a fool would think Rav Sha'ul to be a man-pleaser, as though he

postured himself as a social butterfly to win popularity; this thinking is merely projecting one's own ideals. Rav Sha'ul preferred the *Malchut Elohim* (Kingdom of Elohim); he could have been a "big boy" in the "traditional" Jewish world, but he left it behind for Mashiach. This is why he bellows out in Gal 1:10: *For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Messiah.*

What he meant by "to please every man" is to pay attention as to not cause the new ones coming into Torah to stumble by eating meat sacrificed to idols, meaning consider the "new ones in Torah" as well!

15. Sha'ul and the Working of the Spirit in Us

Anti-Paul teachers say Sha'ul is contradicting Y'shua's instructions concerning the Spirit of YHWH and use the following verses as their argument:

Gal 3:2: *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Anti-Paul teachers suggest this contradicts Y'shua's words:

John 14:15-17: *15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.
16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—
17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

Sha'ul's strategy here in context of Galatians chapter 3 is to compare and explain the two major covenants that YHWH made with His people: the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. He says that, among other things, the **Abrahamic Covenant pictures what it is to be justified by faith**. All of us who are relying on faith for our justification are just like our father, Abraham. Thus, Sha'ul writes in Gal 3:6-9: *Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness'.... Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

Where does the Covenant of Torah fit in? Sha'ul says that it is an entirely different kind of covenant. While the Covenant of Abraham is, on the one hand, a covenant of promise and faith in those promises – *the Covenant of Torah, on the other hand, is a covenant of obedience*. In the Covenant of

Torah, the ones who received Yah's promises by faith would enjoy and bear fruit in those promises by their obedience. Accordingly, Sha'ul writes in Gal 3:12: *The Torah is not based on faith...* This is Sha'ul's way of stating what we have declared in all our literature, **that the purpose of Torah was not for salvation**. If the Covenant of Abraham pictures salvation, then the Covenant of Torah would picture life as a redeemed person in Y'shua.

Sha'ul says that anyone who relies on observing the Torah for his/her justification is under a curse, for it is written: *Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Torah* (Gal 3:10-12). The key word here is not "observing", but "relies on". The one who is relying on doing the Torah to earn, merit, or keep their justification/salvation is not saved or justified. Justification is only by grace through faith.

Actually, the word "rely" is not in the Greek text. Rather, Sha'ul expresses his thought literally like this: *"For as many as are of the works of the Torah..."* The KJV has a good translation of this passage. But, NIV seems to accurately reflect the thought of the text. The passage is speaking about people who are trusting in what they do, including obeying the Torah, to earn their salvation/ justification. Simply stated, if one sought to earn salvation by doing the instructions of the Torah, **one must be perfect at it**. Unless one practiced everything written in the Torah, he/she would be cursed. That is true only for those who are attempting to secure their justification by Torah obedience. It is a completely different story for those who are already justified by faith as we see from Sha'ul's life (and others like him).

This is the reason why Sha'ul wrote a letter to the Galatians: because they were Gentiles who came to faith in Mashiach and they were learning to walk in Torah; and then there came some Pharisees from Judea, who taught them that they were saved only after keeping Torah (circumcision, and all the other commands of Moshe)!!! Therefore Sha'ul sets them straight in Chapter 3. He even asks them if they received the Ruach/Spirit by the works of Torah or by the hearing of belief/faith – he never made a statement or suggested they can receive the Spirit (reborn) by keeping Torah. With the correct context now before us, let's read it again:

Gal 3:1-2: *O senseless Galatians! Who has put you under a spell, not to obey the truth – before whose eyes Y'shua HaMashiach was clearly portrayed among you as impaled?*
2 *This only I wish to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of Torah, or by the hearing of belief?*

In John 14:15-17, Y'shua promises another helper. This helper is of old, He can be seen in Gen 1:2: *the Spirit of God was hovering above the waters*. And David said in 2 Sam 23:1-3, when he was on his death bed, he said: *the Spirit of the Lord Spoke by Me, His words were on my tongue*. In Psalm 51:13, David says "*don't take your Spirit from me*"; which to me shows a little depth to the fear of the Lord. This demonstrates that The Holy Spirit was active in selected people's lives in the Old Covenant. In Joel 2:28 we have a promise that in the last days "*The Lord will pour His Spirit on all flesh, and He will cause many to have visions, and dreams*". That Helper is the Ruach HaKodesh who will teach you all things and convince you to keep Torah.

Empowering and Baptism in the Ruach:

There is a baptism of the Holy Spirit, and an empowering of the Holy Spirit. In Luke 3:21-23, Y'shua was immersed, and received the Ruach Hakodesh ("Holy Spirit"). It declares that the Holy Spirit is gentle because He came down like a dove; but then you see after that in chapter 4 that Y'shua was led into the wilderness. In Mark 1:12 it says the Spirit *drove* Y'shua. The word *drove* means tossed or hurled. So we see the Holy Spirit tossed Y'shua into the wilderness to defeat satan. He will do that in our lives. Now after the temptation and 40 days of fasting, Luke 4 says Y'shua returned in the power of the Spirit.

We see an example of it here: Y'shua was tempted in trials and tribulation as fully man; yet He endured and resisted satan. After that He was filled with the Power of the Spirit – now Y'shua is also fully Elohim – He is the Word of YHWH, the walking Torah manifested in flesh. I believe it was to show us this example of Receiving and Empowering.

The Holy Spirit bestows gifts:

Upon being "reborn", you receive the Spirit of YHWH (or the Living Torah in you) and all other spirits depart, as YHWH does not live in a dirty temple. After water Immersion, you receive the gifting (Acts 2:38) strictly according to the model of the Jewish Wedding.

1 Corinthians 12, and in 14. There is an order to using the gifts in an assembly. Each gift is given for the edification of others or self. He gives to each one according to how He chooses. There are many who think that they can pre-see what gifts they have – this is foolish thinking, because the gifts are given to whom the Spirit wills, not to whom man wills as it says in 1 Cor 12:11.

What the Holy Spirit does:

John 14: 25-29 illustrates that the Holy Spirit is a teacher. He teaches us how to apply the Scripture/Torah to our lives. Y'shua said: *He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.* John 16:7-8. The Ruach convicts the world of sin using the Torah to reveal sin (Rom 3:19-20, 5:20, 7:7), reveals righteousness and executes Judgment. Those that are of this world obviously hate that, but it is life to those who hold to Him.

This is what Y'shua meant when He said in John 14:15-17:

15 *If you love Me, keep My commandments (to identify sin and to obey the Torah).*

16 *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—*

17 *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (this happens when you are reborn).*

16. Sha'ul and the Children of Abraham

Anti-Paul teachers say Sha'ul teaches that you must be **in faith** to be Abraham's children which contradicts Y'shua's words that you need to do **the works** of Abraham to be Abraham's child.

Sha'ul said in Gal 3:7: *Therefore know that only those **who are of faith** are sons of Abraham.*

Y'shua said: *John 8:39: They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Y'shua said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would **do the works** of Abraham.*

Let's take a brief look at Galatians chapter 3...

To start off as the background, Gal 5:2-6 says:

2 *Indeed I, Sha'ul, say to you that if you become circumcised, the Messiah will profit you nothing.*

3 *And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.*

4 *You have become estranged from Messiah, you who [attempt] [to] be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*

5 *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.*

6 *For in the Messiah Y'shua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

The key words are "Justified by the Law", and this is where most people get caught up. Over and over and over again Sha'ul plainly states that trying to be saved by keeping/doing the Law is useless. But why? Well here is the key: Nobody except Y'shua has ever kept the law perfectly.

YHWH's standard is perfection. Believers need to understand that only if a person keeps that law **perfectly** could the law ever justify them. But no one ever has kept it perfectly except Y'shua the Messiah. This is why Sha'ul says that if one were to believe as those that sought justification through Torah (Law), they would then be "*debtors to keep the whole law*".

Therefore the Law condemns them rather than justifies! The Law will not justify us on Judgment Day because of our transgressions...but Y'shua will because of His lack of transgressions! Why is Sha'ul so adamant on this point? Why is it stressed over and over again?

Let's think about the times that they were living in. Sha'ul was constantly teaching in the synagogues and reasoning with both Jews and Greeks. Many Jews believed they didn't need the Messiah for salvation because they had the Law, and they were sons of Abraham. Y'shua said that true sons of Abraham are those who do the things that Abraham did (see John 8:39 quoted above), which was to keep the Torah and trust in YHWH.

*Gen 26:5: because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.*⁶⁹

The term translated "laws" in Gen 26:5 is Torah.

Contrary to the "grace only" or "faith only" promoters, Scripture **clearly** proves that Abraham merited his good standing with YHWH through obedience – which is an integral, inseparable component of "faith"! **Faith without obedience is not biblical faith!** We have the verse above to prove the point. If you continue to believe or teach "grace only" using Abraham as your example, then you directly conflict with Gen 26:5 – or more to the point, you directly conflict with YHWH!

⁶⁹ The New King James Version, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1998, c1982.

In fact, Abraham was so intent on obeying YHWH that he was willing to sacrifice his son in obedience to YHWH! How can anyone possibly believe or teach that Abraham's example somehow removes the requirement for obedience?!

In short, the Israelites whom Sha'ul addressed had "confidence in the flesh"; that is, much of their confidence was in the fact that they were Israelites to whom the promises and the Torah were given. This is what Sha'ul had to always fight against. He attempted to teach that Law and fleshly heritage cannot save us due to our transgressions of the Law. The Torah can only condemn us; however, Sha'ul **never** meant to imply the Law was abolished.

Today we have a similar situation which dominates Christianity! During the first century, it was commonly believed – particularly among Jewish religious leaders whom Y'shua and Sha'ul opposed, that one's "fleshly heritage" guaranteed entrance into the world to come (salvation). It was the "once saved, always saved" belief of the first century! They believed their "salvation", once promised to their father Abraham and confirmed through his seed (Jacob / Israel), made them "eternally secure".

Then, as now, Sha'ul tried to explain how putting your faith in a **past experience** or **in that of someone else's faith** was a recipe for eternal disaster! We all will be judged according to our own works! Y'shua's sacrifice is effective **only** for those that ***persevere in trying to live a righteous, Torah-observant life***. Those that profane His death by living habitually sinful lives are eternally damned because they have made His sacrifice "of no effect" in their lives! The "eternal security" or "once saved, always saved" doctrine of today may be **the** single most damning error in all of Christianity, which **will** result in the eternal death of untold millions of surprised Christians.

It **must** be understood that Sha'ul's teachings on Law were almost always with respect to the narrow specifics of **justification**. Traditional Christians as well as Anti-Paul teachers take Sha'ul's **limited discussions** and **incorrectly apply them** to the general Torah. Such misapplication of Sha'ul's teachings has been tragic to the cause of Truth and has created a situation in which the **majority of Christians openly transgress the Law!** Sha'ul is pointing out the need for a Saviour! He is **not** pointing out that the Law has been nullified. Y'shua kept that Torah perfectly; therefore, only **His** deserved justification according to the letter of the Law can justify us in our undeserving sinful condition. Reading Sha'ul's writings with this mind-set will reveal the truth that Y'shua never abolished the Torah. In fact, the requirement for Y'shua to perfectly abide by Torah in order to justify us

proves Torah is eternal and vindicates YHWH against those that slander Him with the accusation that the Torah was/is impossible to keep!

Ok with that as the background, let's start with the beginning of the 3rd chapter in Galatians:

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Y'shua the Messiah hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

Someone had slandered them so they wouldn't "**obey**" the truth, even though Y'shua was clearly shown to them as pierced.

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

The Gentiles who had turned their lives over to YHWH didn't receive the Holy Spirit because they had been keeping the Law. They received the Holy Spirit because they repented and accepted Y'shua the Messiah. Kepha (Peter) also had been shown this truth:

Acts 10:44-47: 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify El'. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

YHWH even had to send a vision to prove this point to Kepha. I believe it was something very difficult for Jews to accept because it was so ingrained in their culture that a Gentile couldn't just come to YHWH **in one day**. The tradition at that time was that a Gentile **had to go through a one year proselyte period** in which they were circumcised and fully taught the Torah.

But the Gentiles received YHWH's Spirit because their sins were forgiven and a beautiful inward change had taken place, not because they were circumcised and had known all about the law. However, it is important to understand these were **first steps** into YHWH's saving grace - those things necessary to "get your foot in the door". It is expanding greatly upon the text to assume that the Torah is not necessary at all, just because it is not

necessary for **initial** salvation. Also, we read in Acts 15 that during the Jerusalem conference, the **basics** were stated as:

Acts 15:19-21:

19 *Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,*

20 *but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.*

21 *For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.*⁷⁰

Obviously, the statement in verse 21 regarding Moshe being read (literally meaning the Torah being taught) every Sabbath (the day one is **biblically** supposed to set aside for YHWH), means it was an assumption that all new Believers would study and learn Torah! This is **blatantly obvious, yet overlooked** by most Traditional Christians. Some things, particularly basics of the Hebraic faith, are rarely talked about in the New Covenant **because of the assumption that everyone knew it!** In short, ALL the New Covenant authors **assumed** you and I would know to study the TaNaCh (Older Covenant) and Torah (Pentateuch Gen - Deut) and would not have be told to do so! Back to Galatians 3:

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Regarding the Jews' doctrine concerning circumcision, the Gentiles were starting to fall into this false doctrine that they were not saved unless they were circumcised. The Jews of that day taught that you were not a child of Abraham and therefore 'not Israel' until you got circumcised. They believed that one couldn't be saved or receive Israel's promises unless you were 'Israel' by being circumcised. They were putting **all their faith** in the fact that they were children of Abraham. But Yochanan the Immerser rebuked them for this as well:

Matt 3:7-8: 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

⁷⁰ The New King James Version, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1998, c1982.

9 *And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, that YHWH is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

Therefore, when the Gentiles were taught this same doctrine, Sha'ul was troubled.

Gal 3:4 *Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if [it be] yet in vain.
5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, [doeth he it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

The Gentiles are being reminded of all the things they suffered for Y'shua's sake. Those miracles did not come because they had kept the Law or were circumcised. But YHWH had purified their hearts by faith. And also the miracles that had been done among them as further evidence that they were indeed accepted by YHWH.

6 *Even as Abraham believed YHWH, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*

Here it is pointed out that even Abraham 'believed' in YHWH and it was considered righteousness. Note that Abraham's belief was backed up by his works. He was willing to even offer his own son unto YHWH! Abraham spent much of his life not being circumcised, yet YHWH accepted him. Note again the verses in Genesis regarding Abraham.

Gen 26:5: *because Abraham **obeyed** My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.*

As I stated before, the term translated "laws" in Gen 26:5 is Torah (Law). Contrary to the "grace only" or "faith only" promoters, Scripture **clearly** proves that Abraham merited his good standing with YHWH through obedience – which is an integral, inseparable component of "faith"! **Faith without obedience is not biblical faith!** How can anyone possibly believe or teach that Abraham's example somehow **removes the requirement for obedience?!**

Gal 3:7 *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.*

If one has faith like Abraham, one is like Abraham. Therefore they are children of Abraham; however, traditional Christians somehow miss

Abraham's **obedience**, which was the **foundation of his faith**. Consider what Y'shua said to the Scribes and Pharisees on this same subject:

John 8:37-39:

37 *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.*

38 *I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

39 *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Y'shua saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.*

So for the record to the Anti-Paul teachers, Sha'ul is in total agreement with what Y'shua had taught on this.

Gal 3:8 *And the scripture, foreseeing that YHWH would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed.*

So the Scripture quoted here (which is Gen 22:18) says that all nations (even Gentiles) would be blessed. How? Through Abraham's seed, Y'shua our Messiah!

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Note, again, what YHWH says, "...because **thou hast obeyed**...". It is through faith in Y'shua (thy seed) that we are blessed and justified/made righteous!

9 *So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

10 *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Now if we took the stance of many on this Scripture, we would say that anyone who tries to keep the Law is under a curse. **But that isn't what is being said here at all!** Look at the Scripture that is being quoted here. It is Deut 27:26:

*Cursed [be] he that confirmeth **not** [all] **the words of this law to do them**. And all the people shall say, Amen.*

Does this Scripture say that those who do them are under a curse? Certainly not. It is saying those who **do not** do them **are under a curse!**

So how does this fit in with what Sha'ul said? It is those Jews who did not accept Y'shua's good news of salvation who are not of faith because they are relying on their obedience to YHWH's Law to save them. **Those who teach salvation by doing the 'works of the Law' are under a curse because they have broken that Law that they are relying on to save them!** No man except Y'shua has kept it perfectly, this is why **all men** need Y'shua the Messiah!

In contrast to the problem Sha'ul faced, then, consider a worse problem today. Then, Sha'ul tried to teach how we are not "saved" (meaning justified), through our efforts; but instead, through Y'shua's perfect obedience – since **only** perfection can justify through the letter of the Law.

Today's grace only, "once saved, always saved" Christians are taught we are to make **no effort at all!** Thus, Traditional Christianity has taken Sha'ul's teachings against **reliance** upon our efforts and have twisted it into a teaching against **any effort at all!** The situation today is absurd and eternally tragic for billions of Christians; and has resulted in generations of godless, pleasure-seeking, carnal and worldly "Christians" that profane YHWH daily through their unholy and unrestrained lifestyles of sin. But who can blame them since their Preachers are telling them they can sin all they want and will still go to "heaven". **Those preaching such lawlessness will pay eternally for it.** I would **not** want to be in the shoes of any "once saved, always saved" preacher on the Day of Judgment!

Gal 3:11 *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of YHWH, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

No one is justified by the Law because the just must live by faith. Let's look at the Scripture quoted here:

Hab 2:4: *Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.*

One cannot live or be justified **by trusting in his own righteousness.** This scripture says "*his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him*". To claim that we have our own righteousness is to be proud or 'lift up our soul'. Here is how the NKJV translates this:

Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.

So just because a person claims to be "upright" does not mean he is. We cannot be justified by our claims of righteousness because all men except Y'shua have sinned at some point in their life. We are left with no choice but to live by faith! Faith and hope for mercy from YHWH Almighty, *which has always been the belief within the Hebraic faith (Messianic Judaism)!* We must come to YHWH and trust in Him to forgive us of our sins and make us righteous through Y'shua the Messiah if we expect to have any hope whatsoever. Any other claim to righteousness is pure pride!

Gal 3:12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

This is once again a quote from the Law. Let's examine it:

Lev 18:5: Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I [am] the YHWH.

If a man will do the Law, he will certainly **live** and have eternal life. This man would be justified by the Law. But again, **no man** has ever done this except Y'shua the Messiah. Therefore no man can **live** or have salvation because they kept them. We all must rely on Y'shua!

Gal 3:13 The Messiah hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:

Is the Law a curse? Some would love to quote this verse to you to tell you that. But as we learned earlier, it isn't those who **keep** the law that are under the curse, but those who have **broken** it! **Y'shua redeemed us from the curse that comes when you break the Law** (For He was cursed for us by being hung on the tree.)

Deut 21:22-23:

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:

23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged [is] accursed of Elohim;) that thy land be not defiled, which the YHWH thy Elohim giveth thee [for] an inheritance.

Y'shua was hanged on a tree, yet He committed no sins. We have committed sins (transgressions of the Law - 1 John 3:4) that are worthy of death (the wages of sin **is** death); yet have never hanged on a tree. **So Y'shua has redeemed us from this curse!!** Y'shua was made a curse **for us**. We deserved what He endured but He did it for us, HalleluYah!!!

So if we claim to have salvation because we have kept the Law, **we are surely under that curse!** But if we also claim there is **no need for Law** and willfully disobey, **we also fall under a curse** because we prove by such behaviour that **the love of YHWH is not in us** and **we lie if we say we know him** (1 John 2:3-5, Matt 7:21-23). If we do not accept Y'shua's offer of salvation and we instead reject what He has done for us (became the curse) then **we are putting ourselves "under the Law" which means we are cursed forever!** For we have not obeyed the Law as Y'shua did!! Let us all accept what Y'shua did for us so that:

Gal 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Y'shua the Messiah; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

We see this promise fulfilled when we saw how the Gentiles received the Spirit in Acts 10. So now the blessing of Abraham would also come to the Gentiles when they receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. What is meant by this verse is explained in the following verses:

15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though [it be] but a man's covenant, yet [if it be] confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

Even in covenants of men, no one can take away or add to those covenants. Therefore, the same is true of YHWH's covenants. Unfortunately, traditional Christian theology takes away the majority of what YHWH promised, especially the specific **land promise** to Israel. Through "Replacement Theology", which teaches the church has replaced Israel by becoming "spiritual Israel", traditional Christianity erases a large majority of YHWH's direct, unambiguous promises by spiritualizing them away. The almost universal acceptance of these false replacement doctrines as taught by many denominations is proof of widespread ignorance of the TaNaCh (Older Covenant) among Christians.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is the Messiah.

To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He doesn't say "to seeds" but rather "to his **seed**" (Gen 22:18) **that seed being Y'shua**, through whom all the nations be blessed!

17 And this I say, [that] the covenant, that was confirmed before of YHWH in the Messiah, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Now here is where it gets very confusing. Even the Law, which was given 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant to Abraham that in Y'shua would all the nations be blessed. So the Law covenant does not make this promise and covenant void. The Law never took away the promise of the blessing through Abraham's seed, Y'shua, nor did it annul any of the other promises - such as the ones regarding the sure fact of a future in which Abraham and his seed would inherit as theirs, the literal land of Israel.

18 For if the inheritance [be] of the law, [it is] no more of promise: but YHWH gave [it] to Abraham by promise.

For if the inheritance (which is the promises of YHWH to Abraham) comes from YHWH's Law, it is no longer a promise **but rather a condition!**

19 Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

What is the purpose of the Law? It was added **because of disobedience** to YHWH's will! YHWH had to show everyone what His will is, what His way of Righteousness is so that when Y'shua would come, **we would all realize we are sinners**. And the promise of Y'shua's coming through YHWH's declaration to Abraham said that "all nations would be blessed"; so this promise was made to Gentiles also.

20 Now a mediator is not [a mediator] of one, but YHWH is one.

This is a confusing verse, but I believe it is saying that a mediator is not a mediator of one person, but of many. However, YHWH **is** one. So in reality, Moshe was mediating not just for Jews but for Gentiles also; because the Law would also show the Gentiles a need for Y'shua. Also a human mediator is not in oneness with YHWH because he also is a sinner. But YHWH and Y'shua are one in spirit since Y'shua's spirit was free from the defilement of sin. Therefore, Y'shua is a better mediator than Moshe or any High Priest.

21 *Is the law then against the promises of YHWH? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.*

How can the Law be "against" YHWH's promises of eternal life through Abraham's Seed, Y'shua? It certainly does not take precedence over the promise to Abraham. The Law itself doesn't give us life. If the Law gave eternal life, then righteousness would have been by the Law and not by a promise. Our life is given through Y'shua, the **perfectly** obedient servant of YHWH.

22 *But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Y'shua Messiah might be given to those who believe.*

The Scriptures in His Law show us that we all are in sin so that the promise (by faith in Y'shua) would be given to those who believe. So the promise that Y'shua would bless us and give us life was there because the Law shows us that we are sinners. **So the purpose of the Law was to lead us to the promise!** He gave us the Law so that we would realize we are sinners and have faith in the promise of eternal life in Y'shua.

23 *But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.*

But until this promise of Y'shua's coming came to fulfillment, we were guarded by the Law and kept there for **the faith in the promise** (Y'shua blessing us and giving us eternal life) which would be revealed.

24 *Therefore the law was our tutor [to] [bring] [us] to Messiah, that we might be justified by faith.*

Because we were guarded and kept by the Law, the Law was our teacher to bring us to Y'shua, in whom is the promise of Abraham that all Gentiles would be blessed. Here is the question: And what did Torah teach us?? Torah taught us that we are sinners!

25 *But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

So now that we have faith in Y'shua, in whom is the promise of Abraham that all Gentiles would be blessed, we no longer need to be taught that we have sinned because now we are forgiven of all those sins! The Law has done what it always does. It brings us to the realization that we have sinned so that we would turn to Y'shua. So now we are not under (the condemnation

of) the Law (which condemned us) but under grace. So now that we are no longer under the condemnation the Law requires, does this mean that once we have been forgiven for breaking that Law that now it is okay to go out and break it again?

Rom 6:15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Sin is transgression of the law (See 1 John 3:4) or breaking His commandments. Now what would happen if we continue to sin or break his Law? We would then be back under the Law's curse and once again we would need the Law to "teach or tutor" us to come to Y'shua. And this is what the Law does. It doesn't save us. It shows us our sins so we will repent and come to Y'shua. Another fact to ponder is the question: after one is "tutored", does that person then go off and purposely discard all he was taught? It is puzzling that many consider the **only** tutoring we are free to forget is the Law! Obviously, even without Scriptural support, one cannot reasonably state that we are free to discard our schooling of Law.

So once again, we conclude that the law shows us our sins but does not save us from them. YHWH's plan of salvation has been distorted by those who despise His Law. YHWH's plan was to promise all of us eternal life through Abraham's seed, Y'shua. It was first by showing us the path of righteousness which is in His Law and accurately explained by Sha'ul. And YHWH, being ever so merciful, gave His only Son to redeem us from the curses that result in our disobedience to Him – which Sha'ul neatly explains and reinforces. The standard of righteousness **does not change** when we accept Y'shua, but our standing before YHWH does!

It is a total distortion to teach that everyone else in the world is expected to refrain from sin (transgression of the Law) but those who receive Y'shua are free to transgress the Law all day long!! This is not what Sha'ul taught!! This is not YHWH's glad tidings!! Why would we ever want to go back and break that Law again? It was for forgiveness of breaking it that Y'shua had to die in the first place! If, after accepting Y'shua as Messiah one then returns to sin, it is as Peter states in 2 Peter 2:22:

22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."⁷¹

⁷¹ The New American Standard Bible, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977.

So even after being "washed" of sin, the fool (Prov 26:11) returns to sin; and thus his cleanliness is erased. But praise Yah! Even then YHWH is ever present to forgive *if* we **truly** turn to Him with our **whole** heart!

26 *For ye are all the children of YHWH by faith in the Messiah Y'shua.*

27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into the Messiah have put on the Messiah.*

28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in the Messiah Y'shua.*

29 *And if ye [be] the Messiah's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

So in conclusion, YHWH does not change. His standard and His love are the same yesterday, today and forever. Let us remember the words of YHWH in Mal 3:6. *"I YHWH, change not"*. If He says "forever", He means "forever". If He says obey, He means obey. Whatever He said in the TaNaCh is in force yesterday, today, and forever and Sha'ul fully agrees with YHWH, Yshua and Torah!

17. Sha'ul's Logic Reasoning on "Cursed" is Anyone that Does Not Do Torah is Flawed

Anti-Paul teachers say Sha'ul's logic reasoning of following Torah makes a Believer cursed and contradicts the Torah itself in Deut 27:26:

Gal 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

This allegation is totally defeated in Point 16.

18. Sha'ul's Purpose of the Torah Contradicts the Torah Itself

Anti-Paul teachers quote the following verse to support their argument that Sha'ul's purpose of the Torah contradicts the Torah of YHWH...

Gal 3:19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...

This allegation is totally defeated in Point 16.

19. Sha'ul Said Angels Gave the Law to Moshe

Anti-Paul teachers say that the Law was given to Moshe by angels and therefore contradicts the Torah that says YHWH gave it to Moshe (Exod 20:1):

*Gal 3:19 Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; [and it was] **ordained by angels** in the hand of a mediator.*

It (the Torah) was handed down to Moshe on Mount Sinai through angels, **a point made three times in the New Covenant** and through a human mediator, Moshe:

*Acts 7:53: you who have received the law that **was put into effect through angels** but have not obeyed it.*

Acts 7:38: He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

20. Sha'ul and When did Faith Come?

Anti-Paul teachers suggest that Sha'ul had it all wrong as to when faith came, as faith was there before the Law even existed, and use this verse to support their argument:

Gal 3:23: But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

This "faith" issue is grossly misunderstood by Anti-Paul teachers. It is fully explained in Point 16.

21. Sha'ul and the Predestined Doctrine?

Anti-Paul teachers say that Sha'ul promoted the Calvinism Doctrine of Predestination and use the following Scriptural references to suggest Sha'ul taught a flawed doctrine:

*Eph 1:4-5, 11: 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world
5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Y'shua Messiah to Himself*

11 *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him.*

It is really heart sore to see intellectual Believers who reject Sha'ul's teachings are actually rejecting the knowledge of the "biggest mystery" ever, and only Sha'ul reveals this mystery in the entire Bible... Already covered, please see Point 9 for the "ultimate truth" of the Ten Tribes to understand who those are who are "predestined". You can also read Point 22 below, which will give you more insight.

22. Sha'ul's teaching on Vessels of Honour and Vessels of Clay

Anti-Paul teachers say that Sha'ul contradicts himself with the idea that YHWH has selected certain people for works of glory and others for works of unrighteousness, and use the following verses to prove that Sha'ul contradicts himself:

Rom 9:14-23:

14 *So are we to say, "It is unjust for God to do this"? Heaven forbid!*

15 *For to Moshe he says, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will pity whom I pity."*

16 *Thus it doesn't depend on human desires or efforts, but on God, who has mercy.*

17 *For the TaNaCh says to Pharaoh, "It is for this very reason that I raised you up, so that in connection with you I might demonstrate my power, so that my name might be known throughout the world."*

18 *So then, he has mercy on whom he wants, and he hardens whom he wants.*

19 *But you will say to me, "Then why does he still find fault with us? After all, who resists his will?"*

20 *Who are you, a mere human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to him who formed it, "Why did you make me this way?"*

21 *Or has the potter no right to make from a given lump of clay this pot for honorable use and that one for dishonorable?*

22 *Now what if God, even though he was quite willing to demonstrate his anger and make known his power, patiently put up with people who deserved punishment and were ripe for destruction?*

23 *What if he did this in order to make known the riches of his glory to those who are the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory —*

2 Tim 2:20-21: 20 *In a large house there are dishes and pots not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. That is, some are meant for honorable use and some for dishonorable.*

21 *If a person keeps himself free of defilement by the latter, he will be a vessel set aside for honorable use by the master of the house and ready for every kind of good work.*

Understanding the concept of Foreknowledge and Predestination:

In the Book of Romans, we find the surprising phrase in two places, "*whom He foreknew*". The first time (Romans 8) refers to an individual – any individual who chooses to dedicate his life to Y'shua the Messiah; and the second place (Romans 11) refers to a nation, specifically to the nation of Israel.

An important scriptural principle is that "foreknowledge" precedes "predestination."

Rom 8:29-30: *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined...*

YHWH loves all people and desires for them to be His children. However, in order to love, one must be given free will. Free will allows a person to choose to love in return or to choose not to love.

Although God grants free will, His supernatural ability allows Him to see ahead of time who will end up choosing to love Him and who will end up refusing. This goes along with the rabbinic saying: "*Everything is foreseen, yet freewill is granted.*" (Pirke Avot 4:19)

YHWH prefers that everyone would choose to receive His grace, yet He knows that not everyone will. For those whom He knows will ultimately choose Him, He "predestines" – prepares a plan to bless them. For those whom He knows will ultimately refuse Him, He prepares a plan to punish them. It is up to each individual to choose which one of these destinies he will take part in; this is explained in 2 Tim 2:20-21:

20 *In a large house there are dishes and pots not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay. That is, some are meant for honorable use and some for dishonorable.*

21 *If a person keeps himself free of defilement by the latter, he will be a vessel set aside for honorable use by the master of the house and ready for every kind of good work.*

If a person chooses to receive the grace of YHWH, then YHWH chooses him. Anyone who chooses YHWH becomes one of the chosen, the "elect". YHWH predestines the Elect because He knows ahead of time which will choose Him. His "election" is based on His "foreknowledge".

1 Peter 1:2: *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God...*

The same process [free will – foreknowledge – predestination] holds true for every person, whether he is the simplest Believer or the greatest Apostle. Sha'ul's description in Romans 8 is applying to every Believer the same calling that was given to the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer 1:5).

The Chosen People:

At the beginning of Romans chapter 11, YHWH twice refers to the Jewish people as "His people". In this "New Testament" age after the Gospels and after the Book of Acts, the Jewish people are still referred to as "God's people". There is the 'present tense' meaning (not just past) to the Jews being the chosen people, even from a totally "Christian" world view.

How can this be? There must be some spiritual, moral or historical reasons for this designation. I believe the answer is found again in the phrase, "*whom He foreknew*".

Rom 11:1-2: *1 Has God cast away His people? 2 Certainly not! God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew.*

If YHWH foreknew the Jewish people, there must have been something that He knew. What is it? Meditate on that for a few minutes. There must be something to "justify" His choice of the Jewish people as the chosen people. He must have known something that has already happened, or He must know something that has *not yet* happened. Let's look at the range of possibilities:

1. Total Sovereignty

YHWH has the right to choose whomever He wants. He is the potter; we are the clay. If He decides to choose the Jewish people as the chosen people, then it is a test for all the other nations of the world to submit to YHWH's sovereign authority. That is the argument of Rom 9:14-23.

However, we understand well enough the character of YHWH to know that His choices are never arbitrary and unjust; even though He has the right and power to do so.

2. Faithfulness to the Forefathers

The Jewish people are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. YHWH cut a covenant with these forefathers. One of the articles of YHWH's covenant is that He gives special attention to the descendants of His covenant partners. (Any person who chooses to believe in Y'shua comes into his own covenant relationship with YHWH, and in that sense his children are also "chosen" after him for special blessing.)

Sha'ul referred to this concept in verse 28 when he said, *"concerning the election, they are beloved for the sake of the fathers."* This is what the rabbis call "z'chut Avot" meaning the "right" of the forefathers.

3. The Firstborn Nation

Not only were the Jewish forefathers faithful to YHWH, but the nation as a whole was the first nation in history to have an ongoing covenant with YHWH. When YHWH sent Moshe into Egypt, He said, *"Israel is My son, My firstborn."*⁷²

Because of the "firstborn son" role of the Jewish people, they have a certain standing in the international family of YHWH. Even the present Pope recently referred to Israel as the "elder brother" of the Church. The fact that Israel was the first nation to receive the covenant of faith provides an historic foundation or root for the rest of the nations⁷³.

4. First Century Apostolic Community

The international church today is founded not only on the faith of the forefathers, but also on the first century Apostles and Prophets. The fiery community of faith in the early chapters of the Book of Acts was primarily Hebraic. They took upon themselves the mission of world evangelism. Their community did more than any other to spread the kingdom of YHWH.

Few Christians would deny how much of their faith they owe to a zealous student of Rabban Gamliel in Jerusalem, named Sha'ul (known to the world as Paul the Apostle), but having said this, YHWH's choice of them is purely by grace.

⁷² Exod 4:22

⁷³ Rom 11:16-21

Note: Perhaps many of the readers would agree with me up to this point. However, in this article I am not looking for just the historic meaning of the chosen people, but the prophetic meaning for the future.

What will their Fullness be?

Romans chapter 11 is the primary passage in the Bible describing why the Jews are the chosen people. Surprisingly enough, the emphasis of the passage is not on the nation as a whole but on the Messianic remnant within the nation. Even more surprising, the emphasis is not on what Israel has already done, but on what is going to happen in the future.

The future role of Israel is not only greater than its past role but "much more" so.

Rom 11:12, 15: 12 If their fall is riches for the world and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness be. 15 If their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

A question to be asked here is: "More than what?" The answer is: more than the apostolic mission of the first century. That's it. The "fullness" and the "acceptance" of Israel will be similar to the revival of the first century but much more so. That has not yet happened; but it will soon, YHWH willing. Let's continue with our survey of the "election" of Israel...

The End-Time Remnant:

The remnant described by Sha'ul in Romans 11 is the community of the Torah Observant Messianic Believers from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel scattered amongst the heathens.

The final move before Y'shua returns will be the Restoring of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, bringing a Torah Observant revelation to the church and the nations.

6. End Times Revival

A central reason that the Jewish people are "chosen" is that YHWH foreknew and foresaw that there would be an awakening of Believers to become part of the commonwealth of Israel in the end times, in which virtually the entire globe would be stirred to faith in Y'shua and His teachings. Sha'ul winds up his argument about the destiny of the Torah Observant Believers (Lost Ten

Tribes of Israel) in Romans 11 with the great promise of verse 26: "*And so all Israel shall be saved.*" Why, because they came back into the only covenant of YHWH; and that is the Old Covenant Torah Based Covenant of which Y'shua came to explain so clearly. No wonder Y'shua said He came only *for the Lost Sheep of Israel!*

As the Gospel was ignited by a great revival in Jerusalem (Acts 2), so will it end up with another revival; a revival of the truth in the Scriptures: *May my teaching (doctrine) fall like rain. May my speech condense like dew, like light rain on blades of grass, or showers on growing plants.*⁷⁴ This "second" Shavuot (Pentecost) will fulfill the prophecy that "*it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh*".⁷⁵

7. National Destiny into the Commonwealth of Israel

In Christian culture, there is much understanding of 'personal salvation' but not much of national destiny to be grafted back into the Commonwealth of Israel. In Jewish culture, there is not much understanding of personal salvation but much of 'national destiny'. It is part of the paradoxical and often painful experience of the Jewish people that they are acutely aware of being a chosen people, but as individuals they are lacking their own spiritual and moral fiber to qualify them for that chosen-ness. Whether we like it or not, YHWH is refining us all in spiritual fire.

Y'shua is about to return and set up His millennial kingdom on the earth. The restoration of the Commonwealth of Israel is part of preparing this world for the Messianic kingdom to come. May YHWH's promise to Abraham finally be fulfilled; that through *his seed*, all the nations will be blessed (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4)!

With that as the background, let's now move into Rom 9:14...

What will we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

The opening words of Rom 9:14 indicate that Sha'ul is arguing with an assumed objector concerning things he has just said. If we were to identify what Sha'ul may have imagined the objector to say:

The objector would say YHWH is unfair in choosing someone for no reason and YHWH is unfair for rejecting someone for no reason.

⁷⁴ Deut 32:2

⁷⁵ Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28

Rom 9:15-18 *For he said to Moshe, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of G-d that shows mercy. For the scripture said to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens.*

If we trace Sha'ul's argument, what does each segment of the argument contribute to the whole?

9:14 YHWH's righteousness

9:15 YHWH's mercy and compassion

9:16 YHWH's mercy

9:17 YHWH's judgment and then YHWH's sovereignty

Rom 9:19-20 *You will say then to me, Why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will? No but, O man, who are you that replies against God?*

Why do you think Sha'ul responds to the question of verse 19 as he does?

Will the thing formed say to him that formed it, why have you made me this way?

Rom 9:21: *Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel into honor, and another into dishonor?*

How does the illustration of the potter and the clay support his argument?

From where does Sha'ul get this illustration of the potter and the clay?

Answer: Who is the creature to question the Creator? It's not too smart to question YHWH's ways. He is Yah and He is just. The potter chooses beforehand what he will use the pot for; just as Yah chooses beforehand what He will use us for. Where else is this mentioned? See Isaiah 29:16, 45:9; Sha'ul was quoting from the Prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 29:16: *How you turn things upside down! — Is the potter not better than the clay, Does something made say of its maker, "He didn't make me"? Does the product say of its producer, "He has no discernment"?*

Isaiah 45:9: *Woe to anyone who argues with his Maker, like potsherd lying on the ground! Does the clay ask the potter, "What are you doing?" or, "What's this you're making, that has no hands?"*

Sha'ul concludes with the words that those who did not come into the Commonwealth of Israel await YHWH's wrath; which YHWH knew who they would be from the beginning. Opposed to this are the obedient Believers who join themselves with the Commonwealth of Israel and these are the saved ones in Messiah Y'shua; in other words, the Lost Sheep of Israel whom Y'shua came for: *He said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*⁷⁶

Rom 9:22-23 *What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,*

Again Sha'ul's teaching is 100% in line with Y'shua's.

23. Sha'ul Makes Up in Suffering for Where the Messiah Fell Short for the Church

Anti-Paul teachers suggest that Sha'ul makes up in suffering where the Messiah Y'shua fell short of on the crucifixion stake for His church, and the following verse is used to support it:

Col 1:24 *Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Messiah's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*

To understand this passage we need to take a few steps back...

The story of Y'shua's ministry begins with an event. Y'shua comes to the Jordan to be baptised by Yochanan the Immerser. After a brief argument about protocol, *"Yochanan tried to stop him. 'You are coming to me? I ought to be immersed by you!' However, Yeshua answered him, 'Let it be this way now, because we should do everything righteousness requires.'" (Matt 3:14-15, CJB) – The text tells us that, "While all the people were being immersed, Yeshua too was immersed. As he was praying, heaven was opened; the Ruach HaKodesh came down on him in physical form like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, whom I love; I am well pleased*

⁷⁶ Matt 15:24

with you" (Luke 3:21-22, CJB); Y'shua was being "filled" for His ministry, His time of service to YHWH.

In this case, it was not simply Y'shua's hands that were being filled but His whole life and body being "completed" to empower and enable Him to perform the healing and other attesting miracles that authenticated His ministry, to equip Him to preach and teach the Word and Way of YHWH; and ultimately to endure arrest, trial, beating and execution on the stake. It was that life and power that brought the victory: *"God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him"* (Acts 2:24, NIV).

The writer to the Hebrews takes the theme further: *"In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering"* (Heb 2:10, NIV). Should we assume from this that Y'shua was less than perfect before the crucifixion stake? No, the same principle is at work in this text: the experience of suffering at Golgotha *"filled the hands"* of Y'shua and marked Him as consecrated for the unique ministry He has as our Mediator, our High Priest and our Atonement.

Rav Sha'ul is even more explicit concerning his own ministry: *"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's (Messiah's) afflictions"* (Col 1:24, NASB). Can Sha'ul possibly be saying that Y'shua's afflictions – carried out to bring about our reconciliation with Father YHWH – are incomplete or insufficient for the task?

No, he carefully chooses the words *"filling up"* to show that he too is using the same **word picture of ordination or consecration**; by the sufferings and hardships that he is undertaking in travelling and spreading the Gospel through the Mediterranean world – the Jewish communities and Gentiles whom he meets along the way – Sha'ul is pointing to the consecration of Y'shua as the Saviour of both Jew and Gentile in a way that Y'shua's own ministry did not do, **geographically confined as it was to Israel**.

By his exertions within the body of Messiah, Sha'ul is reaching people and places that Y'shua Himself could not do on a natural level; although of course He is speaking and working through Sha'ul in both words and miracles. This is what Rav Sha'ul meant in Col 1:24!

Now here is the punch line... Are we also to be involved in this process? Absolutely! Kepha (Peter) tells us, *"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery*

ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ (Messiah), keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:12-13, NASB). As Believers, we should expect to play our part in consecrating – setting apart, declaring holy – Y'shua and sharing the accompanying suffering: misunderstanding, rejection, being laughed at; in some cases, persecution.

How are we to survive this testing and still serve YHWH? The answer is still the same: **be filled**. Rav Sha'ul again: *"Don't get drunk with wine, because it makes you lose control. Instead, keep on being filled with the Spirit - sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to each other; sing to the Lord and make music in your heart to Him; always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah"* (Eph 5:18-20, CJB). It is as we are filled by the Spirit of Yah (the Holy Spirit) that we are enabled to witness for Yah; not only do we consecrate Y'shua as the Messiah but we are ourselves consecrated in the process, becoming like Him.

Let's read it again to see the truth in what Sha'ul is actually saying and meaning: *"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's (Messiah's) afflictions"* (Col 1:24, NASB).

24. Sha'ul in All His Letters Did Not Once Connect His Love for YHWH or Y'shua to Obeying the Torah

Anti-Paul teachers suggest that Sha'ul in all his letters did not once connect his love for YHWH or Y'shua to obeying the Torah. They use this verse in Romans to that of Y'shua's instruction further below as support:

Rom 8:38-39: 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of YHWH which is in Messiah Y'shua our Lord.

John 14:21: He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Anti-Paul teachers apparently do not study Scripture, because if they would they would have known what Sha'ul stated categorically: *Don't owe anyone anything - except to love one another; for whoever loves his fellow human*

being has fulfilled Torah. For the commandments, "Don't commit adultery, ""Don't murder," "Don't steal," "Don't covet," and any others are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does not do harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fullness of Torah. (Rom 13:8-10)

Sha'ul summed up the whole of the Torah with this one sentence. Sha'ul, in fact, is quoting from Lev 19:18: *Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am YHWH.* Sha'ul instructs the Roman Believers (and us today) in exactly what YHWH instructed him!

To reinforce what has been said, Judaism contains a number of epitomes (models) of Torah; one of the best-known passages naming several of them is in the Talmud:

"Rabbi Simlai said, '613 commandments were given to Moses—365 negative mitzvot (commandments), the same as the number of days in the year, and 248 positive mitzvot, the same as the number of parts in a man's body. David came and reduced them to eleven (Psalm 15), Isaiah to six (Isaiah 33:15), Micah to three (Micah 6:8), Isaiah again to two—"Observe and do righteousness" (Isaiah 56:1). Then Amos came and reduced them to one, "Seek me and live" (Amos 5:4)—as did Habakkuk, "The righteous one will live by his trusting [or by faith] (Habakkuk 2:4)" (Makkot 23b–24a, abridged) (ibid. p. 565).

If Sha'ul is wrong, then all these great Leaders and Prophets are also wrong because Sha'ul merely did what these prominent men of YHWH did; and if they are wrong, then the entire Word is a myth.

25. Sha'ul's Churches all Moved Away From Him

Anti-Paul teachers say that all Sha'ul's churches turned their back on Sha'ul – the verse of 2 Tim 1:15 comes to mind...

2 Tim 1:15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

There is a reason for everything and Scripture identifies everything; we just need men that have the spirit of YHWH to consult with Him and to find out the reason. YHWH destroyed the host of Egypt, He destroyed the first world, He sent down the terror of the *shamayim* (heavens) on Sodom and Gomorrah. Men today will attribute these things to YHWH; and yet in this modern day age of religion and photo opportunities they will say that is not the "god" that I

know! He would not do such a thing as to send the tsunami on Asia. The Scriptures tells us that YHWH never changes, and He has not changed.

Conversion is a Man's Heart Turning:

This is a generation that has turned away. Sha'ul writes in 2 Tim 1:15, how *"all they which are in Asia turned away"* from sound Torah doctrine which brings revelation. That is revealed understanding of the purpose of YHWH that you may truly worship Him. They were not converted, for when a man is converted he will worship the ABBA.

Conversion is a man's heart turning from worshipping the dark deities and the Trinitarians of the world that he may worship YHWH, for He is one. Without conversion, there has not been a change whereby the heart is governed by a law that brings a man to the throne and the mercy seat of YHWH.

Rejection and Turning Away from YHWH:

Hoshea (Hosea) 4:6 tells us that the rejection and turning away from YHWH will cause YHWH to turn away from you. YHWH knew the weakness of the flesh, so He sent Messiah Y'shua in the flesh to fulfill all by the letter that He may furnish us with the power of the Spirit that we may live.

The Turn-Away from YHWH:

There were also many times when the Jews of ancient Israel had turned away from YHWH and worshipped the false gods of their Gentile neighbours. Many Old Covenant Prophets had warned the people that they would face these punishments if they turned away from YHWH.

The punishment cycle of exile, persecution and restoration certainly came upon the Israelites; in fact, it happened twice: once after many people had turned away from YHWH, and once after Y'shua had been rejected by many people as YHWH's anointed Messiah.

The first time that this cycle of exile, persecution and restoration began was more than 2,500 years ago. At that time, as explained by writers of the Old Covenant, many people had turned away from YHWH and began to worship the false gods of pagan Gentiles. As punishment, the people were exiled and scattered to many countries by the invading Assyrians and Babylonians. And, as the Prophets had promised beforehand, the Jews later returned to their homeland and rebuilt Jerusalem and the Temple which had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

The second time that this cycle of exile, persecution and restoration began was about 2,000 years ago, after Y'shua was rejected as the Messiah by many people in Jerusalem. Shortly after the rejection, the Romans crucified Y'shua. Then, about 40 years later, the Romans suppressed a Jewish uprising for independence and killed 1.1 million Jews and forced others into exile and slavery. The Romans also destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple.

Only recently, during the past 100 years or so, have the Jews returned in large numbers to their ancient homeland to re-establish the sovereign nation of Israel. So why did this cycle of exile, persecution and restoration (the punishments for disobeying YHWH) begin the second time? The reason is clear: because many people turned away from YHWH by rejecting Y'shua as the Son of YHWH.

Now if YHWH's own creation can turn away from Him and His Son Y'shua, then surely Sha'ul is not superior so that people will not turn away from him.

26. Understanding Sha'ul's Training

Sha'ul, apart from Y'shua, had probably undergone the best training and education in the Torah compared than any other person in history:

Gal 1:13-24: For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the assembly of Elohim (God), and ravaged it. And I progressed in Judaism beyond many of my age in my race, being more exceedingly ardent for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased Elohim, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His favor, to reveal His Son in me, that I might bring Him, the Good News, to the gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Yerushalayim (Jerusalem), to those who were emissaries before me. But I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Yerushalayim to learn from Kepha (Peter), and remained with him for fifteen days. And I saw no other of the emissaries except Yacov, the brother of the Master. And what I write to you, see, before Elohim, I do not lie. Then I went into the districts of Syria and of Kilikia. And I was still not known by sight to the assemblies of Yehudah (Judah) which were in Messiah, but they were hearing only that, "The one who once persecuted us now brings as Good News the belief which he once ravaged." So they were praising Elohim in me.

Before he met the Messiah, the Rav Sha'ul had a reputation. He was consenting unto Steven's death. He approved of it and assisted by holding the cloaks of those who were whipping the stones. He was zealous for his beliefs and the lifestyle which he was taught as a Pharisee from his youth and upward. This zeal led him to persecute the followers of Messiah and imprison them.

Sha'ul describes his upbringing and his training in a number of places. First, he identifies with the Hebrew people and with Abraham's descendants:

Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they sons of Yisrael? So am I. Are they Avraham's descendants? So am I. (2 Cor 11:22).

Next, he identifies his tribal affiliation:

I ask then: Did Elohim reject his people? By no means! I am an Yisraeli myself, a descendant of Avraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. (Rom 11:1).

And he admits proudly to his upbringing as a Pharisee:

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." (Acts 23:6).

While in Jerusalem under arrest, Sha'ul answered the crowds regarding the accusations made against him. In these remarks, he describes his own upbringing:

"I am a Yehudi (Jew), born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city (Jerusalem). Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for Elohim as any of you are today. (Acts 22:3)

Who was Gamaliel, the teacher who trained Sha'ul? Gamaliel was one of the most famous and greatest of all the Pharisees throughout history. Gamaliel the Elder or Rabban Gamaliel I, as he was known, was a leading authority in the Sanhedrin in the mid-1st century CE. He was the son of Simeon ben Hillel and grandson of the great Jewish teacher Hillel the Elder, and died twenty years before the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE). He fathered a son, whom he called Simeon, after his father, and a daughter.

Jewish education (then in Sha'ul's time and today) is not interested in philosophy but in religious training. Jewish education had three major stages:

- 1) The first one was called the House of Scribe or the House of Reading (Beth Sepher). This was the starting point, and it focused on the reading of the written law.
- 2) The second level of education was the House of Instruction or the House of Learning (Beth Midrash or Beth Talmud). It focused on the Oral Law.
- 3) The final or third level was advanced studies under a great scholar. The focus here was on principles of interpretation of the law. This was required in order to be ordained as a rabbi. Sha'ul is an example of a Jewish boy who was a disciple under a great scholar Gamaliel.

It was under Gamaliel that Sha'ul learned about the Oral Torah with all its man-made enactments and traditions. Sha'ul was a devout Jewish Pharisee at first; and later on when he accepted Y'shua as Messiah, it was his custom to enter the synagogue on Sabbath and teach Torah:

It happened in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. (Acts 14:1)

He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks. (Acts 18:4)

He entered into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for a period of three months, reasoning and persuading about the things concerning the Kingdom of Elohim. (Acts 19:8)

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Yehudiish synagogue. As his custom was, Sha'ul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures. (Acts 17:1-2)

In his letter to the Philippians, He gives testimony of his zeal when he was among the Pharisees, whom he now refers to as "dogs":

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of Elohim, exult in Messiah Y'shua, and do not rely on human credentials -- though mine too are significant (Acts 3:2-4).

Sha'ul goes on to expound upon his "human credentials"; because if they mean anything at all, then Sha'ul feels as though he is the best of men:

If someone thinks he has good reasons to put confidence in human credentials, I have more: I was circumcised on the eighth day, from the people of Yisrael and the tribe of Binyamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews. I lived according to the law as a Pharisee. In my zeal for Elohim I persecuted the congregation. According to the righteousness stipulated in the law I was blameless. But these assets I have come to regard as liabilities because of Messiah. More than that, I now regard all things as liabilities compared to the far greater value of knowing Messiah Y'shua my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things--indeed, I regard them as dung!--that I may gain Messiah, and be found in him, not because I have my own righteousness derived from the law (i.e. man's law codes), but because I have the righteousness that comes by way of Messiah's faithfulness--a righteousness from Elohim that is in fact based on Messiah's faithfulness (Phil 3:4-9).

As a Pharisee, Sha'ul lived according to the law (their law): the law of the Pharisees. Not according to Elohim's Law. (Do not be mistaken about what he is saying here.) Sha'ul is talking about human credentials. As living by human law, he was blameless. (But according to Elohim's Law, he was a murderer! because he participated in the unlawful execution of Steven.)

As for living according to the law as a Pharisee, he was the best. But he came to understand that there is no value in living according to even the best of human standards and man's very best law code. In Messiah, he considers all of that "rubbish" or "dung"; or in today's vernacular, all man's achievement based on man's laws is "a pile of rubbish" or "hogwash"! Now that he belongs to Messiah, he has discovered that the righteousness that comes from Elohim is based on Messiah's faithfulness. Thus, the faithfulness to the written Scriptures which Messiah modeled in his life for his disciples is the only true way to live for Elohim. This is Elohim's righteousness: walking as Messiah did in obedience to the written Law of Moshe.

Yet, all of Sha'ul's own human achievement accomplished for him nothing. His entire Pharisee commandment-keeping amounted to nothing. Human credentials are worthless in the sight of YHWH. It is only in living in faithfulness to YHWH's commandments that Sha'ul finds contentment.

The Way of the Pharisees:

Sha'ul testifies of himself that he "progressed in Judaism" because he was more zealous than his peers. The life of a Pharisee was a stark contrast to the walk of the Messiah and the walk of faith which he taught his disciples. Sha'ul claims in Gal 1:14 that he was "*more exceedingly ardent for the traditions of my fathers.*" What are these "*traditions of the fathers*" he is speaking of?

For centuries now, Christianity has misunderstood and has been misrepresenting what Sha'ul is teaching here in Galatians and in his other letters; thus major confusion surfaces when his words are interpreted!

Sha'ul was comparing and contrasting the Torah (the Law of Elohim as stated in Scripture) with the Torah of the Pharisees (the man-made laws, traditions, customs and practices which men made up!). The Pharisees' Torah came to be called "the Oral Law". So Sha'ul is drawing from his own experience of being taught Pharisaic Law to show the stark differences between Pharisaic law and Scriptural Law.

The "*traditions of the fathers*" which Sha'ul is referring to here are not the teachings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as many Christians think. The "*traditions of the fathers*" were the teachings and laws of the Pharisees, the concoctions of men's imaginations. The "*traditions of the fathers*" are man-made laws known as the "Oral Torah" – not what Moshe wrote down in the five Books of the Torah. Thus, Sha'ul is not teaching that the Torah of Scripture is worthless and done away with in Messiah. Sha'ul's point is that the Oral Torah (man-made laws) of the Pharisees is being done away with in Messiah. This is not to say that there is much wrong with the Oral Torah. However, the problem arises when the "tradition" of the Oral Torah is placed above that of the written Torah, Father's Torah.

The fact that there are actually two Torahs (the written Torah and the Oral Torah) is well known by the Jewish Rabbis, but not understood at all by most Christians. The famous Pharisee Shammai said so:

*A certain Gentile came to Shammai: The Gentile said to him, How many Torahs do you have? (Shammai) answered: **Two**. The written Torah and the **Oral Torah** (Torah She-Be'al Peh) (Babylonian Talmud, Sabbath 31a).*

Thus, most Christians and those opposing Sha'ul's teachings do not have the foggiest idea what this is all about that Sha'ul is speaking of when he talks

about the "law". We must discern between the two Torahs which Sha'ul was trained in.

But in his former life as a Pharisee, Sha'ul was zealous (exceedingly ardent) for the man-made laws and traditions of the religion of Pharisaic Judaism. And the righteousness that he had then, which he calls, "*my own righteousness derived from the law*" is the righteousness of following the commandments of men (Pharisaic Judaism), the Oral Torah! In Messiah, all of men's own righteousness based on the keeping of their own made-up commandments, amounts to nothing at all. The righteousness of YHWH, on the other hand, is based on doing what YHWH has commanded. And he said, "*do not add to what I have commanded, and do not take away from it*" (cf. Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32).

The Pharisees had so many of their own made-up laws that it is easiest for us to understand them by separating them into several categories:

- 1) The first is the "**halacha**" or the Pharisaic law based upon their interpretation of Scriptural law.
- 2) The second is "**minhagim**" or Pharisaic customs that have become law.
- 3) The third is "**takanot** and **gezerot**" or enactments and decrees of the Pharisees that take on the authority of law.
- 4) And the fourth is the "**ma'asim**", which are deeds or works of the Pharisees which through their repeated exercise become law for all Yisrael.

Halacha:

The word halacha (halachot in the plural) means "to go, to walk". It is a common metaphor for the "way one conducts himself" or "the manner in which one lives his life". The metaphor of walking transcends many languages and is understood in many tongues as referring to one's lifestyle. The halacha, then, are the commandments and instructions of Scripture which YHWH has commanded us to do. Thus, when Yochanan tells us:

The one who says he resides in God ought himself to walk just as Y'shua walked (1 John 2:6).

We understand that he means we who belong to YHWH should live our lives as Messiah lived his, doing the very things that Messiah did. Our walk or behaviour should be the same as Messiah's walk and behaviour. For

example, if Messiah kept the Sabbath day (and he did!), then we should also keep the Sabbath day.

It is one thing to "walk" according to the Scripture commandments, and quite another to "walk" according to Pharisaic commandments. The Pharisees then, and the Rabbis of Judaism since then and to this day, establish their own halachot based on their own (private) interpretations of Scripture. The **Pharisees and Rabbis, and even Christian theologians** throughout "Church history", have made a habit of taking a simple Scripture commandment or statement and **twisting, distorting, re-interpreting or outright changing or adding to the plain meaning of a statement of writ.**

An example of Pharisaic halacha: The Scripture commands us that no work (occupational labour, chores, everyday busy-ness tasks) is to be done on the Sabbath. The Rabbis break "work" down into 39 different categories and additional subcategories which one is not allowed to do on the Sabbath, to the point of being absurd. From the re-interpretive twisting of the intended meaning of "do no work", they regard flipping a light switch as building (because you are connecting a circuit), and forbid it on the Sabbath.

Another example is taking Exod 35:3, "*do not kindle a fire on Shabbat*", and reinterpret it to mean that one should not start a fire on Shabbat; but as long as you start the fire before Shabbat, the burning of a fire is okay.

A classic example of a Rabbinic halacha is where they take Exod 23:2:

You must not incline after the majority into evil things; in a lawsuit you must not offer testimony that agrees with a crowd so as to pervert justice.

This is clearly an instruction not to pervert justice just because the majority of others pervert it, and snatch out the phrase "*incline after the majority*". They ignore all else, including the context in which these words were spoken; and they rip out that single phrase, "*incline after the majority*". They interpret this phrase to mean a halacha which instructs men to do what the majority of the Rabbis consent on. Thus, if the majority of Rabbis agree that one should change his underwear twice a day, then it is law in Israel. (This is an absurd example, but this accurately illustrates the thinking of the Rabbis).

There are many hundreds of other such halachot of the Pharisees and Rabbis which are derived from the twisting, distorting, adding to or taking away from the written Word of YHWH. Even though YHWH emphatically commands us, "*do not add to what I have commanded, and do not take away*

from it" (cf. Deut 4:2 and Deut 12:32), this is precisely what Oral Rabbinic Law does. Is it any wonder why Sha'ul, who came out of this religious system, says that all of that is "rubbish" or "a pile of dung" (see again Phil 3:8)?

Minhag:

The word minhag (plural is minhagim) means "custom". Customs, while not commanded by Scripture, are the common way of life and the accepted practice of people based on the repeating of a behaviour induced by some circumstance. The historical record of Scripture references some customs:

She died a virgin. Her tragic death gave rise to a custom in Yisrael. Every year Yisraeli women commemorate the daughter of Yephthah the Gileadite for four days (Judges 11:39-40).

And another:

Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, the Jews took it upon themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never cease to be celebrated by the Jews, nor should the memory of them die out among their descendants (Esther 9:26-28).

Even the pagans had their customs:

So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until their blood flowed (1 Kings 18:28).

Not to be outdone, and to further establish their own authority to make law and control all Israel, the Rabbis concocted their own customs for all Israel and made them binding upon all. The requirement upon all Jewish males to wear a kippah (also called a yarmulke or skull cap) is an accepted minhag. Males not wearing the kippah are considered to be transgressing the Law. This Law for Jewish males also stipulates that one may not walk four cubits without covering his head, nor can one make a blessing without wearing a kippah.

Another example of a minhag is the conflicting custom of eating beans and rice during the feast of Unleavened Bread. The Ashkenazi Jews forbid the eating, while the Sephardic Jews permit the eating during the Feast. Members of each sect of Judaism are required to obey the custom of the sect they belong to. The absurdity of declaring this custom to be "Law in Israel" is self-evident.

Such customs gave rise to a common saying in among the Rabbis in Israel, "*minhag Yisrael torah hi*" which translates as, "*a custom of Israel is Torah*". Even though the TaNaCh (Old Covenant) lists the commandments and sayings of YHWH as "Torah", the Rabbis have added to "their torah" any of their own established customs!

Takanah and Gezerah:

The word takanah (plural is takanot) means, "to become straight, to make right, to put in order, to fix, to repair, to arrange, to establish, to enact." The word gezerah (plural is gezerot) means, "Decree." Thus, the "takanot and gezerot" are the enactments and decrees of Pharisaic law. They are "the commandments of the Rabbis".

The Scribes and Pharisees before the time of Messiah (and the Rabbis afterward) saw a need to construct additional commandments. As they assumed the role of authoritarian leadership in Israel, the Scribes and Pharisees enacted their own laws for all Israel; which were designed to enforce their own right of authority to interpret and apply law – and even create new law for Israel. Under the guise of "guarding" the Torah which the Scriptures command, they began to "guard" the Torah by enacting additional laws in an act which they termed, "making a fence around the Torah".

In an article entitled, "*Adding, Uprooting, and Rabbinic Authority*", Rabbi Baruch Paz wrote:

*Some rabbinical ordinances were enacted not for the purpose of protecting the laws of the Torah, but because the Rabbis saw an independent need to enact them; others, though, were enacted as preventative measures, safeguards to prevent people from violating actual commandments of the Torah. **At times the Rabbis even saw fit to uproot a Torah law in order to erect one of these safeguards...*** (Cited from Galatians by Avi ben Mordecai, pg. 67).

These "commandments of the Rabbis" were often in conflict with the written Word of YHWH. The Scripture commands us to guard the Torah:

Observe them carefully (Hebrew: literally, "Guard them"), for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut 4:6).

Guard his rules and commandments that I am setting forth today so that it may go well with you and your descendants and that you may enjoy longevity on the land that YHWH your Elohim is about to give you as a permanent possession (Deut 4:40).

The meaning here is that one should guard the Torah by practicing it and by teaching it. The Pharisees, however, intentionally misinterpreted this by suggesting that it meant that they should construct additional laws around the Torah to insure that the Torah would not be transgressed. This they did in clear transgression of another instruction of Scripture:

Do not add a thing to what I command you nor subtract from it, so that you may guard the commandments of YHWH your God that I am delivering to you (Deut 4:2)

Thus, in some cases, the very act of "building a fence around the Torah" in order to "guard the Torah" was a transgression of the Torah, as it was adding to the Torah, or in some cases, removing from the Torah to erect the fence. The takanot and gezerot, or "commandments of the Rabbis" are these transgressions of YHWH's Word.

Messiah Y'shua rebuked the Pharisees for their commandments which contradicted the Word of YHWH. The commandment to wash one's hands before eating is a Pharisaic takanah. It is **not** a commandment of Scripture. They taught that one could cause food to become "unclean" by transference of substance from unwashed hands to the food. Thus, they required a ceremonial washing of hands before eating.

Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Jerusalem to Y'shua and said, "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition (Hebrew, takanot) of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat." He answered them, "And why do you disobey the commandment of YHWH because of your tradition (Hebrew: takanot)?" (Matt 15:1-3).

The word "tradition" used here, in the Shem Tov Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, is takanot.

So it is critical to the correct understanding of Y'shua's message that we understand he is talking about the "commandments of the rabbis" here. This is a direct rebuke of the Pharisees who made up their own law; which in their view superseded the Scriptures.

Mark's account of this saying cites an additional detail of interest:

"...Thus you nullify the word of YHWH by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this" (Mark 7:13).

Y'shua is suggesting here that the Pharisees commonly practiced this error of replacing the written word of Elohim with their own commandments. And we see over and over again how the Pharisees had laid a heavy burden upon Israel by requiring them to obey Pharisaic Law.

Y'shua concluded the matter of washing of hands by saying:

What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person" (Matt 15:11).

Washing one's hands before eating may be a good suggestion. But it certainly is not a requirement of ethical proportion. It is **not** commanded by YHWH.

Ma'aseh:

The word ma'aseh (plural is ma'asim) means, "work, do." This word is used in the TaNaCh to reference any work, action or deed done by YHWH or by man. For example:

YHWH your God will make the work (Hebrew, ma'aseh) of your hands abundantly successful and multiply your children, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil (Deut 30:9).

In the New Covenant, its Greek equivalent (ergon) has a similar usage. It could be used of man's works or of YHWH's works:

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

They sang the song of Moshe the servant of YHWH and the song of the Lamb: "Great and astounding are your deeds, YHWH God, the All-

Powerful! Just and true are your ways, King over the nations! (Rev 15:3)

However, the Pharisees (and after them, the Rabbis) attributed to this term special nuance. Another Pharisaic invention – the ma'aseh – is a law created for all Israel based on the repeated actions of a Pharisee. The thinking goes something like this: if one so pious as a Pharisee (and later, a Rabbi) consistently performs an action, said action must have great merit. Therefore, this action of the Pharisee becomes law for all in Israel.

A ma'aseh, in Pharisaic thinking, is an action, work or deed of a Pharisee; which by its repetition has become law for all of Israel. These works were common among Pharisees and Rabbis, as Nehemia Gordon explains.

Note that:

learning precedents from the action of the Rabbis is a standard method used to derive religious law. There is no need for biblical proof because Rabbinic precedent is even better! (from Mordecai, Galatians, pg. 82).

In their thinking, Pharisaic authority (and rabbinic authority) does not need the agreement of Scripture; **because Pharisaic authority supersedes the authority of Scripture!**

There were many ma'asim in the Oral Law of the Pharisees. These ma'asim (the deeds, actions or works of the Pharisees which became law in Israel) became known as ma'asim hatorah or "works of the law". Not to be mistaken for the "works of YHWH", the phrase "works of the law" as used by the Pharisees and Rabbis today (and as used many times by Sha'ul in his letters of the New Covenant) are a reference to the made-up laws of the Pharisees.

The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus explained the difference between the Pharisees and the Sadducees by the observance of man-made traditions:

What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the Torah of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers... (Book of Antiquities 13.10.6).

For all their failures, at least the Sadducees had it right about not being waylaid by the Oral Traditions of the Pharisees!

There is a great deal of confusion among New Covenant Scholars, Writers and Preachers when it comes to Sha'ul's usage of the term "law" and his usage of others phrases such as "*works of the law*" and "*under the law*". Most of those unlearned New Covenant "Scholars" **haven't a clue** that Sha'ul uses the term "law" in **at least three different ways** in his letters:

- 1) When he speaks of the "law" as righteous, spiritual, good and holy (set-apart), he is referring to **the Law of Moshe** as written in Scripture.
- 2) When he speaks of the "law of my members" and similar phrases, he is talking about the "law of sin" or the controlling effect of sin on mankind.
- 3) But when he speaks of the "law" as something that has no merit and is worthless and contrary to the work of Messiah, he is talking about the Pharisaic Oral Law, which he was trained in and which when he came to know Messiah he came to realize is worthless.

So when Sha'ul writes that "*as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*" (Gal 3:10), he is speaking about the laws based upon the actions or deeds of a Pharisee which were a part of the Oral Tradition of the Pharisees. Thus, those who are placing their confidence for salvation in the works of man truly are "under a curse" because in doing so, they are rejecting the true righteousness which YHWH has revealed in the commandments which He has given. And when Sha'ul writes, "*a man is not declared right by works of the law*" (Gal 2:16), he is speaking about the Pharisaic man-made commandments; not the Law of YHWH, because it is clear that man's law has no merit toward salvation.

Sha'ul's training as a Pharisee taught him that doing the works, traditions, teachings and practices of the Pharisees (most of which they had made up themselves that were not in agreement with the commandments of Scripture) was the proper way to righteousness and salvation. But when he met Messiah Y'shua on the road to Damascus, his mind and his way of thinking were drastically changed. He realized not only who the true Messiah is, but that all of his training in Judaism was worthless toward salvation; and worse yet, that the way of the Pharisees actually leads to bondage and loss of salvation because their works have no value in YHWH's sight.

Sha'ul's Training in Messiah:

Sha'ul was earmarked by YHWH from when he was in his mother's womb:

But when it pleased YHWH, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by His favor, to reveal His Son in me, that I might bring Him, the Good News, to the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, neither did I go up to Jerusalem, to those who were emissaries before me. But I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. (Gal 1:15-17).

Sha'ul describes his calling in terms similar to the prophet Jeremiah, who was also chosen while in the womb:

YHWH said to me, "Before I formed you in your mother's womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:4,5).

The sovereign control of YHWH is inferred here, who carries out His purposes through men He chooses.

The encounter Sha'ul had with the resurrected Messiah profoundly changed his thinking. But because of his intense and detailed training as a Pharisee, Sha'ul did not consult with the Apostles of Messiah for guidance. **They were not equipped to understand and handle all the issues with which Sha'ul had to then rethink.** The "unlearned" followers of Messiah **did not have the education and training background to understand and refute the false teachings of the Pharisees.** So, Sha'ul's response to the revelation was to go to Arabia.

Why Arabia? He realized that the only source of answers to his many questions was the Scriptures. It was at Sinai that the Instructions of Scripture were given to Israel through Moshe. This, for Sha'ul, was the logical place to go to get clarity. Sinai would provide the setting and atmosphere where Sha'ul could petition Y'shua for understanding of the Scriptures of YHWH, and then immerse himself in the Written Word.

Fear of Sha'ul in the Assembly:

Then after three years (studying at the feet of Y'shua the Written Torah) I went up to Jerusalem to learn from Kepha, and remained with him for fifteen days. And I saw no other of the emissaries except Yacov, the brother of the Master. And what I write to you, see, before

YHWH, I do not lie. Then I went into the districts of Syria and of Kilikia. And I was still not known by sight to the assemblies of Yehudah which were in Messiah, but they were hearing only that, "The one who once persecuted us now brings as Good News the belief which he once ravaged." So they were praising YHWH in me. (Gal 1:18-24).

Following his stay at Sinai, Sha'ul paid a visit to Jerusalem to meet with Kepha and the other emissaries of Messiah. The events as recorded in Acts 15 take place at this time. Sha'ul's understanding of the need for the Gospel to be proclaimed to the Gentiles was already superior to Kepha or Yacov's and the others'.

As a result of Sha'ul's limited exposure with the other emissaries for several years, the followers of Messiah still did not know him; but they had heard good things of him and were "*praising YHWH*" on account of his change of allegiance.

If you were trained in isolation for three years by YHWH/Y'shua, would you not be the best Scholar of Torah in the history of man and write such intriguing mysteries and teaching that the average man would hardly understand unless thoroughly grounded in the Written Torah of YHWH?

A few notes, in closing

While we come across strongly as against the Oral Torah, the truth is that the Oral Torah isn't all bad. In fact, we would venture to say that much of it is quite useful and much of it is edifying. While Oral Torah (or any other tradition, for that matter) does not contradict Torah, there is nothing wrong with it. However, the moment it does contradict Torah, it should be rejected. It must never take a place in a community where it is equal or greater than Father's Torah, written down by Moshe. It must always be a tradition that is superceded by Torah.

Further more, it is clear to note that, even Y'shua, mostly, adhered to all customs and traditions of His time, where they did not contradict Torah. Y'shua, in fact, only "rocked the boat" in one area and that is the healing on the Sabbath. All other altercations with the Pharisees or the Scribes were all about His disciples, not Him. Now, let's also be clear that the Oral Torah is by no means needed in the life of a believer, yet, if you do read the Talmud and choose to adapt some of the instructions in there, as your own tradition (there are many good things in there), then there is no problem with that, as long as you always test it to the Torah.

Finally, we see that Sha'ul, even after becoming a Believer in Y'shua, didn't break the Oral Torah, but kept all the traditions of the elders, as he grew up.

while Sha'ul said in his own defence, "Neither against the Torah of the Yehudim, nor against the Set-apart Place, nor against Caesar did I commit any sin."⁷⁷

Torah of the Yehudim = Oral Torah

Set-Apart Place = Temple = Written Torah

Caesar – Governing laws by the government of the day

So, it is important to note this. Sha'ul did not throw away his identity as a Pharisee, and stopped keeping all the traditions he learnt from his youth. All he did was to re-prioritise these, to put them in their right place, below Father's written Torah.

Conclusion

There are a growing number of people debating over Sha'ul these days, but Kepha himself told us that Sha'ul's letters were extremely difficult to understand (2 Peter 3:15-16); and Sha'ul's words were (and still are today) twisted by 1) **the untaught and unstable, inclining them to Torahlessness** (lawlessness); and 2) those supposed "scholars" who are totally against Sha'ul's teaching, implying that he is the "father of the Roman Catholic Church" and that Sha'ul's letters are not inspired by the Holy Spirit at all.

Rav Sha'ul was a **MASTER** par excellence of the Torah. He grounded his teachings from out of the TaNaCh but never mentioned the Scripture that he was quoting or to which he is alluding to as he assumed the reader/hearer thoroughly knows the Old Covenant and the Written Torah in great depth. He expects the readers (even today) should have studied the Written Torah (as he did) by the time they read his letters to the different "churches"! If you do not know the Torah of YHWH, you will never be able to understand Sha'ul's teachings, period! Now, go and study Torah as the Bereans did...

*Something mind-boggling is happening right now before our eyes!
What can only be seen as a sovereign work of the Ruach HaKodesh is breaking forth as Christians around the world are working to **return** to their **historical Hebrew foundation**. After being **stained** for more than eighteen*

⁷⁷ Acts 25:8

centuries by Judaeophobia, anti-Judaism, and anti-Semitism, many Christians are being impacted by an unprecedented revolution of restoration. Scholars, clergy, and laity from virtually every nationality, ethnicity, and denomination are reconnecting their faith in Messiah Y'shua with its historical Hebraic Roots in the **Torah**. **HalleluYAH**

We inform – You choose⁷⁸

Never be guilty of: "**By your traditions you make the Word of God of non effect**"⁷⁹

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. Prov 25:25
Thank you that we may minister to you from the Southern point of Africa – population ratio-wise the largest group of Messianic Judaism followers in the world.

Contact us for **Distance Learning** in your **Own Time** from your **Own House**. You do it by submitting your **Assignments Electronically** to us in either one of the field of:

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That 'narrow way' is the path of Torah,
which is the mission of the Believer...
to continuously direct you to the Crucifixion Stake.

⁷⁸ The truth of the Torah makes you see the mistranslations in the New Covenant. It's amazing how you can look at the epistles of Rabbi Paul one way and it looks like he's leading the body of Messiah away from Torah; when in reality, he's leading them to Torah. A paradox of vantage point. Let us remember, the intent of the law maker constitutes the law. We need to walk a mile or two in our Hebrew Messiah's shoes

⁷⁹ **Matt 15:3** *But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?* **Matt 15:6** *And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.* **Mark 7:9** *And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*

***"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things,
you develop the habit in little matters of Torah.
Excellence is not an exception,
it is a prevailing attitude."***

PLEASE BE SO KIND TO DISTRIBUTE A COUPLE OF THESE BOOKS
AS PART OF YOUR TITHING