

The Messianic, Torah observant, Hebrew roots and similar assemblies are now well established under the Christian umbrella. The rise and continuing tsunami of this division has been, and is remarkable.

To fully comprehend just how far and wide this movement has reached, please search with your favorite browser. Sufficient to say, the Messianic movement is a surging wave of change which they feel is a return to true discipleship and worship based on strict observance of Scripture.

It is not our purpose to survey the differences between these variations of the Hebrew roots persuasion, but rather review the basis of the rapid rise and research some of their core claims made against the mainstream. For the purposes of our present exercise, we shall simply use the term Messianic to embrace all with Jewish leanings.

It is a growing feature of social media to see the "Shabbat Shaloms" and isolated scripture memes supporting Law observance that enthusiastic Messianics are posting. They are flooding the market so to speak. Many of these brethren have an infectious enthusiasm for their cause. This may be fueled by their view that they are more in obedience to God and perhaps coupled with their sense of "liberation" at having freshly escaped and separated from the unlawful Sunday worship mainstream Christianity. The call to "come out from among and be ye separate" is often aimed at Sunday worship Christians.

It is acknowledged that, for now, the Messianics are not demanding a return to Law observance for redemption and righteousness. They readily affirm they too rely on faith in Christ alone for deliverance from sin and death. But, once we are saved, they claim it is imperative we obey the Christ who told us to keep His commandments. The combination of the common faith in Christ position and the many Scriptures which call for Law keeping persuade many to heed their message. Here are just a few New Testament passages you will find posted on social media from Messianic adherents, and as stand-alone passages they can be very soul searching for the non-Messianics;

[If ye love me, keep my commandments. Joh 14:15](#)

[Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. Joh_14:23](#)

[If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. Joh_15:10](#)

[And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Mar_7:9](#)

The Messianics have volumes of Scripture to support their Law keeping ambitions including Sabbath observance. Let's face it, most of the Old testament and the New is Jewish and this alone gives them grounds for their point of observance. But is this volume of Scripture the only sound basis of a worthy walk? The appeal to live like our Savior Christ is very strong for this group. He kept the Sabbath, He kept the Passover so why shouldn't we? This is a strong argument, superficially. Many of them feel they are closer to their Messiah when the live

like He did, do what He did, and even dress like the Jews. If doing those things was the only way to be close to our Lord, they might have a point.

In this series we shall examine the following, along with other issues related to the Messianic point of view;

1. The Sabbath; is Saturday the Lawful worship and fellowship day for us? And what about traditional holidays like Christmas?
2. The Law; should Christians obey, and live out the Law to be faithful and obedient?
3. Spiritual Israel; are we offspring of the lost ten tribes, does faith in Christ make us the true Israel of God or a Jew inwardly?
4. Commands; if we find a command in God's Word, then obviously, we need to obey it but is this true?
5. Come out from among them and be ye separate. The call to leave every denomination that does not meet on Saturday.
6. How should we walk worthily today? We want to please our Lord but how does daily living show our faith, what things are appropriate for us today.

While this undertaking will not be a complete examination of all that needs to be addressed regarding the Messianic surge, it should suffice as a springboard for further research. Let us begin by reminding ourselves of this passage from Paul, The advice here is as crucial today as when it was first penned;

Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2Ti 2:15

We are responsible for our walk. We are responsible for what we think, do and say as we follow our Lord. I will do my best to present some Scriptures according to the Bible study rules, but I am not the director of your conscience, neither should you believe me or anyone else who might appear to have convincing arguments.

I realize that finding a Godly pathway is not easy with the myriad of voices out there, but we can find the way that is appropriate for today. Is it the Messianic, Law abiding Sabbath keeping way? We hope to find out.

It could be said that the Hebrew roots, Messianic and alike movements had their “roots” directly or indirectly in the British Israel or Anglican Israeli persuasions that were imbedded in English religious thought for centuries. William Blake’s poem from the preface to his epic Milton (published 1808) begins, “And did those feet in ancient time walk upon England’s mountains green”. It is suggested Christ walked there to visit the lost ten tribes.

While many Messianics might find such a suggestion abhorrent, the fact remains, the inclination to observe those things originally given to Israel is in harmony with this line of thinking. Whether some think we are the direct descendants of Israel, or the “spiritual” equivalent, matters little in the rush to take on board those things originally given directly to, and specifically for, the entire nation of Israel.

It could also be said that our very own traditions are the basis of the British Israel, Hebrew roots Messianic leanings. The original idea that “the church” replaces Israel was first penned not long after the New Testament era and most denominations include in their worship, features of the Israeli Old Covenant system. We have Temples, mercy seats, holiness tables, priests or pastors, incense, confession, and our “christian” holidays, no matter how pagan inclusive, are timed around Jewish ones, like Easter and Passover. Our traditions which started early have spawned this rush to take on Jewish roots and paraphernalia.

Not only so, but many a preaching and sermon is about or taken from the life of our Savior, and why not, we certainly love Him. However, while He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, we have overlooked the fact he was a Jew, lived in Israel, and ministered to Israel. Of course He obeyed the Law, of course He observed the Sabbaths, of course He answered questions about the Law, of course He taught His disciples how to pray an earthly kingdom prayer and of course He was born, lived and died in harmony with the Jewish festive calendar. But does this of itself, demand we do and live like Messiah? No! Scriptures written after His life give directions as to how Gentiles should live.

While He did help some Gentiles during his ministry, those Gentiles were to be blessed with Israel, not to replace her or to assume Israel’s mantel. And further, they were not commanded to observe all that Israel was to observe. Here are very important statements about our Lord’s ministry;

[And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. Mat 15:22](#)

[But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24](#)

[Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: Rom 15:8](#)

Nothing could be clearer, Christ ministered to Israel, and when he gave a command it was to them, not necessarily to us today. Certainly, some things could be applied to this time,

but Christ's earthly ministry was directed to the Jewish nation, that very nation which was given the Law and bound in covenant to keep it.

The Bible is not a theological, pick and choose, buffet. It is ungodliness (wrong worship) in the extreme, to jump into God's Word and smash and grab each and every command as if it was ours to obey. A wild bull in a glassware display is a suitable picture of this type of teaching. We can find an example of teachers just like this. They were using a Biblical term incorrectly and creating a mess in the lives of believers;

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 2Ti 2:15-18

Paul had no hesitation identifying the misuse of a wonderful aspect of salvation, namely resurrection, as "profane and vain babblings", "ungodliness", cancer, error, and an overthrowing, or subversion of the faithful.

We must be warned from this passage. Those who take truths out of context, abuse and misuse Scripture because they disregard the Bible study rules are not doing us a service. They appear to have Scripture on their side, but misused Scripture is a trap and it subverts, overturns those who are led away with them; led away into ungodliness.

Just as Hymenaeus and Philetus were teaching truth out of place, so Paul also warns of those who seek to be teachers of the Law out of place;

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. 1Ti 1:3-11.

The Law is not made for a righteous person and those who misuse the Law are engaged in "vain jangling" (babble) having swerved aside, or missed the mark.

Too frequently we, the non-Messianic, Torah observant faithful, are reminded by them of Scriptures which apparently demand that we observe Christ's commands and the Law as an obedient walk. Before we examine this and find commands which the Messianics are not obeying, and Laws they are not observing, making their position at least, unsubstantiated, and at worse hypocritical, we need to examine the "spiritual Israel/Jew" and the "lost ten tribes" ideologies. According to those enthralled in such positions, the role of Israel and Law obedience are demanded.

The words "spiritual Israel" do not occur in the 18 translations I have at my disposal. This is insufficient evidence to dismiss the term, but we can certainly find passages supporting true worship in the spirit. Let's begin there.

The Lord compared formal worship with true worship in spirit and truth in his encounter with the Samaritan woman;

The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming — and now is here — when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Joh 4:19-24

The location of worship was not important, and legalistic offerings according to the Law, were not worship. Worship from the heart with all being and might was required. The first thing the Lord required of Israel was love from the heart;

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deu 6:4-5

When the Lord was challenged as to which is the greatest commandment in the Law, his response was to endorse the true worship the Law demanded;

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Mat 22:35-40

Paul did not demand believers were to observe the Law, he said the same things as the Lord;

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom 13:9-10

The writer of Hebrews speaks much the same when referring to sacrifices other than those of bulls and goats, sacrifices from the heart:

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16

When Hebrews was written, the animal sacrifices were still offered in the Temple, but for the believer the sacrifices of the lips moved by love and thankfulness were required and these sacrifices were to be accompanied by beneficial services to others.

Paul urged the Romans to “present your bodies a living sacrifice” and in that letter he fully expounded the objectives of the Law. It was to show sin as sin, Roms.3:19-20. The Law worked wrath, Roms.4:15. The Law was never the basis of any promise of inheritance, 4:13 and Gals.3:18. And most importantly, through Christ, believers were delivered from the Law to serve in newness of spirit, the very worship Christ wanted to see;

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Rom 7:6 (cp/2Cor.3).

The ultimate objective of the Law was Christ. Every offering, every Feast day; holy day, pointed to Christ and faith in Him.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Rom 10:4

Paul repeats this in Galatians writing that the Law was a schoolmaster leading people to Christ, and once Christ was claimed, then the school master was to be left behind;

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:24-26

Earlier in this very chapter he had, in exasperation, cried to them as “foolish Galatians”. He demanded them to answer this question:

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal 3:3

Not once did Paul demand or remotely suggest that these Galatian believers were to go back to observing the Law as a means of an obedient walk, to be made perfect (mature) in Christ or to obey Christ’s commands. Law observance for faithful service was not an option for the believer according to Paul.

Yes, Paul observed the Feast days, he was a Jew ministering primarily to Jews, and the council in Acts 15 prescribed four necessary things for the believing Gentiles to observe who were in fellowship with Jews. We shall look at these matters soon.

The Lord wanted worship in spirit and truth, and Paul writes very clearly that observation of days, and months and times and years was nothing other than bondage, those things being weak and beggarly elements, Gals.4:9-10.

Paul spurned his Israeli heritage in order that he might win Christ, see Phils.3. Those things which he held dear were to be cast aside. He had no confidence in the flesh, and the flesh was Jewish and Law status and observance, and true worship rejected fleshly indulgence.

True worship stemmed from a circumcised heart (Deut.10:16, 30:6, Jer.4:4) not the circumcision of the Law;

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Php 3:3

If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings. Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body — a wisdom with no true value — they in reality result in fleshly indulgence. Col 2:20-23 NET

The Law is not made for a righteous person and those who demand Law observance for believers today are engaged in "vain jangling" (babble) having swerved aside, or missed the mark. Not only so, they are exposing believers to indulgence in the flesh.

Our Heavenly Father is worthy of all praise and adoration, but our worship is to be from the heart, given with thankfulness in sincerity. This is worshipping in the spirit which was the essence of the Lord's words to the Samaritan woman so long ago. The place and formal practices of worship were not the essentials. However, while we recognize right worship and seek to offer the same to our God, worshipping in true spirit does not provide any basis for the claim that we are thus "spiritual Israel".

The term spiritual Israel is a fallacy and often Messianics will turn to Romans 2 in an attempt to establish this error. Many of them believe that Romans teaches that Gentile believers are Jews in the heart; spiritual Jews, because of their faith. Here is the passage; **For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 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.** Rom 2:28-29.

One of the greatest slip slides to falsehood is found when isolated texts are the building block of doctrine, this is a Bible study disaster. If this is how some use the Romans section above, then it is an expository error leading to falsehood. The immediate, near and remote contexts will not permit anyone to claim from Romans 2 that any believer is a spiritual Jew or Israelite.

The assumption that Paul is talking to everyone in this passage is the first basis of error, being a complete disregard for the immediate context. Paul is not saying that anyone who believes is a Jew inwardly, whose circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not of the letter. In this passage Paul is specifically speaking to the Israelis. This section begins here: **Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,** Rom 2:17-19.

Paul makes the accusation that Jews, not Gentiles, who teach the Law but break it are dishonoring God, cause His name to be blasphemed and in fact, turn their own circumcision to uncircumcision. Paul and John the Baptist have much in common in this regard. John made this claim against the hypocrites who boasted in their genealogy; **And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.** Mat 3:9

In Romans 2:17 to :29, Paul is directing his words to Israelites. He is telling Jews, that a Jew is not one outwardly; of clothing and genealogy, but one who is circumcised in heart. The prophets spoke of this, see Jer.4:4, 9:26, Deut.30:6 and others.

Paul had already addressed the Gentiles earlier in chapter 2. He keeps Jew and Gentile separate even in matters of the heart. He did not write that a Gentile of conscience was a Jew inwardly, but he did write about the heart; **For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts** Rom 2:14-15a.

Paul keeps separate the Gentile and the Israelite, he does not write that when both believe they are “true”, “inward” or “spiritual” Jews. The dispensational differences between these God made classes remains to the fore in Romans. Paul clearly states that they were not equal in dispensational standing before God. Look at these verses further showing Israel’s advantage and position, at that time;

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, Rom 3:1

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16

Here is another passage where Paul writes of the dispensational advantage and prior position held by Israel, at that time;

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. Rom 2:9-11.

The fact that there is no respect of persons with God does not mean that there was no dispensational difference between a believing Jew and Gentile when Romans was written. The Jew was first before Acts 28, the Gentile was second. Certainly, they were in equal need of the Savior and there was no difference in that both could call upon Him for salvation; **For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom 10:12-13**

There is no difference in salvation by faith, but in the very same chapter 10 and leading on into 11, the significant dispensational differences are further emphasized. Paul writes that the Gentiles were only included in Salvation, at that time, because Israel (nationally) had stumbled. Israel had provoked the Lord and He used the Gentiles to provoke Israel to repentance.

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Rom 10:19

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall (stumbling) salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Rom 11:11 (:13-:14).

Not only so, the Gentiles were not to boast but to fear, for they were supported by the root and indeed, were obligated to support Israel financially because they were partaking of the root and fatness; Israel’s spiritual things, see Roms.11:17 and 15:27.

Nothing in Paul’s letter to the Romans supports the concept that Gentile believers are “spiritual” Israel, and obliged to obey the Law including Saturday observance. Indeed, a careful examination proves quite the opposite, that while all needed the Savior, the Jews had a prior position and the Gentiles were included to provoke that nation.

These lessons are designed to expose the unscriptural demands for Sabbath and Law observance made by the Messianic, Hebrew roots and Torah observant arms of Christianity. These lessons are not aimed at those Messianic Jews who recognize our Lord Christ Jesus as Israel's Messiah. He is Israel's Messiah, but today He is the Head of the church which is His Body.

So far, we have seen that worship in true spirit, from a thankful heart, is no basis for the idea we are "spiritual" Israel. We have also seen that Paul's letter to the Romans does not provide any basis for that either. Believers then and now, do not replace Israel, or become by faith, a spiritual equivalent. While Jew and Gentile were both saved by faith, the marked dispensational differences between them stands out in all Scripture given before Acts 28,

Romans shows quite clearly that the distinctions between the Israeli believer and the Gentile believer, at that time, were quite conspicuous and not only so, was the cause of some friction. Paul expressed the desire that when he arrived in Jerusalem, the offering he brought from the Gentile assemblies would be accepted by the Israeli assemblies there. There must have been a chance of ill feeling towards a gift given by the Gentiles;

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; Rom 15:30-31.

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem there was certainly some animosity against him because he was accused of teaching the dispersed Jews things contrary to the Law, and polluting the temple with a believing Gentile, see Acts 21:27-36. Paul had access to the Temple, but his friend Trophimus did not, yet both had called upon the Lord for salvation.

The inclusion of the Gentiles resulted in friction from the beginning, and we read about this often. In Acts, the believing Jews were astonished that the Gentiles were included, see Acts 10:45, and the unbelieving Jews were envious because other Jews and Gentiles were responding to the message, see Acts 13:45-46. Look at this verse;

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. Act 17:5

We saw from Romans, that God had included the Gentiles as a provocation, and it was effective but did not bring the desired, positive result. The Jews oftentimes disrupted the ministry to the Gentiles but this deteriorated so much that eventually Paul writes to the Thessalonians that the unbelieving

Jews added to their sins by forbidding the word to be preached to the Gentiles, see 2Thess.2:16.

Not long after the first Gentiles were included, some of the believing Jews started to demand that they were to be circumcised and keep the Law. They have their modern-day equivalents in the Messianic and Torah observing believers who are demanding the faithful do the same. What would Paul's answer be to the modern day Messianics? The same answer he gave them back then with the same warnings to Christians he gave back then.

The demand that the Gentile believers be circumcised and keep the Law, including the weekly Sabbath, certainly had a basis in the Law. The Law catered for those Gentiles living among Israelites in the Land prior to Christ, but did that apply now that righteousness by faith in the true Lamb was effective? If it did, then why did Paul so vehemently oppose it?

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal 3:1-3.

Perfection does not mean sinlessness, it means maturity and Paul emphasizes to the Galatians that they did not begin their walk by observing the Law and likewise they will not go on to maturity by keeping it either. Paul is clearly saying that once saved, those Gentile believers were not to go back to the "weak and beggarly elements" as a sign of growth or to cave in to the demands of those he calls the "judaizers".

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Gal 4:8-11

But the Messianics will argue that since Paul observed the Law including the Feast days, so should we. This is a futile, indeed, stupid argument and rejected by Scripture as we shall see. Paul did such things because he was a Jew whose ministry included the Jews. He would have no audience in the synagogues if he was lawless. Consider how James advised Paul to join with some oath takers, and the reasons for it, see Acts 21:19-26. What is particularly important here are the words of James, please note the difference. Paul observed the Law as a believer but the Gentiles did not observance such as a believer;

Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly,

and keep the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Act 21:24-25

James wanted Paul's actions to counter the false accusations against him made by the unbelieving Jews to the believing Jews. By joining himself to the four men who had a vow and observing what the Law demanded for such vows, Paul was demonstrating that he "walked orderly and kept the Law". James goes on to say that the Gentiles were to observe "no such thing". Obviously, James and Paul did not see the Gentile believers as a "spiritual" equivalent to Israel.

James and Paul are both very clear, the believing Gentiles were not to observe the Sabbath or the rest of the Law, except for the four things determined by the council at Acts 15. Those four things did not include observance of Saturday or the Feasts, but three focused on what was eaten, and one on sexual immorality.

Paul had arrived in Jerusalem after many years' absence, and James advised him to join with brethren who had taken a vow, see Acts 21:17-26. The purpose of this was to negate the false testimony being circulated against him. James wanted the Jews to recognize that Paul "walked orderly and kept the Law", Acts 21:24. So far as the Gentile believers were concerned, they were only obligated to keep the four things determined at the council of Acts 15.

There is a connection between Paul and the believing Gentiles here. Paul did something so that the believing and unbelieving Jews would recognize he was inoffensive, and the four things the believing Gentiles were asked to keep were also things to satisfy the demands of the believing Jews and thus be inoffensive.

It was believing Jews who were pressuring the believing Gentiles to comply with the Law. *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Act 15:1*
But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Act 15:5-6

Our early brethren had met the same problems the Messianics are creating today, that is, the demand that believing Gentiles should observe the Law. The Christian leadership gathered to resolve the issue so let us take heed of their deliberations.

Paul is the great exponent of justification by faith through grace without the Law and the powerful opponent of circumcision for salvation, but it is Peter who dismisses the Messianic demand;

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Act 15:7-9
But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Act 15:11

This dismisses the need of circumcision of the Gentile for salvation despite the fact Moses wrote in the Law that Gentiles were required to be circumcised in certain circumstances, see Ex. 12:48 & compare Num. 15:15-16.

Peter's comments regarding the imposition of circumcision and the Law on the believing Gentiles is an essential consideration for all those under the influence of the Messianics. Look at these words of an inspired apostle;

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Act 15:10-11

Peter recognizes that the Law was a yoke (an instrument of hard labor) that the very nation to whom it was given found unbearable. To demand that the Law contained in circumcision

be inflicted on the Gentiles was tempting God. This word “tempt” includes the thought of trying, testing, proving and even disciplining. Peter’s point is that since God had clearly given the Gentiles gifts without the obligatory Law observances, indeed, even without water baptism, see Acts 10:44-48, then it would be tempting, even correcting God to impose that which God did not require.

After Peter had spoken about the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit without Law and baptism, Paul and Barnabas confirmed the exact same thing among the Gentiles in their witness. The Gentiles outside the nation of Israel were also blessed with the blessings of faithful Abraham despite the fact they were not water baptized or Law observant; **Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Act 15:12**

James steps up and concludes the matter. He begins with Peter’s preaching to Cornelius and quotes prophecy to confirm the point that God knows His works, and his works in this context are the inclusion of the Gentiles without circumcision, Sabbath or Law observance. Listen carefully to James;

Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Act 15:19-21

James did not want anyone to cause trouble by imposing the Law upon the believing Gentiles and in so doing discipline God. Others were preaching Moses, but the proof was clearly before their eyes; Gentiles without circumcision and the Law, had been saved and given supernatural gifts.

Four necessary things were determined upon the believing Gentiles, and four things only. These four things were more a concession to the believing Israelis than a binding to the Law for the Gentiles. It was the believing Israelis who had made the demands;

And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: Act 15:23-24

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. Act 15:28-29

When the Gentiles observed these things, the Israeli believers would be assured the Gentiles had cut themselves from their pagan past and were trying to practice the walk of a redeemed child of God.

We notice the believing Gentiles were not obliged to use the sacred name; to insert into their native tongue the Hebrew word. Indeed, of the 3500 plus manuscripts of the N.T. at

our disposal, I know not of one incidence where the Greek words for God, Jehovah or Messiah were erased and the Hebrew words substituted.

The Gentile believers were not required to observe the Sabbath days. This includes Saturday and every other Feast Sabbath day.

The Gentiles were not required to observe; that is keep all The Law demanded. This does not mean The Law ceased to be a benchmark of God's moral and social standards.

The Holy Spirit confirmed that these four things were the only burden the believing Gentiles were to carry, and if they observed these, they would do well. They would not be saved by keeping them, they would not grow as Christians by keeping them, they would do well and the offended Israeli believers should be satisfied, just as they could have been when Paul joined himself to the Law observing Israeli brethren.

These things are certain. The believing Gentiles were not asked to observe the Sabbath; not asked to be circumcised; not asked to wear Jewish paraphernalia; not asked to use Hebrew words for God; not asked to keep Feast days; not asked to build Jewish synagogue replicas; not asked to "preach Moses"; not asked to leave hair long in observance of vows, in fact, they were only asked to observe four things which promoted acceptance among the Israeli believers, acceptance in their own communities and relationship choices which honored God.

The council meeting of Acts 15 came about because Israeli believers were demanding that Gentile believers had to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. They had already “troubled” the assemblies at Antioch and Galatia, and had done so without the authority of the Jerusalem leadership;

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: Act 15:24 (see Gals. 1:7, 5:12 and 6:17)

The preaching of circumcision and the Law among the Gentile believers was without divine authority which came through the leadership at that time. While circumcision and the Law foisted on the Gentiles appeared to be the right thing to do, it was not. Worse still, it subverted the hearers. The original word for subvert means “a packing up to remove”, and the abuse of Scripture by those believing Israelis, was turning the Gentile believers away from the truth.

This is exactly what is happening today, Gentile believers are being subverted. When the Messianic and Torah observant believers, who fail to use Scripture carefully, demand other Gentile believers observe the Sabbath, use sacred names and keep the Law, they are packing them up away from the truth for today.

Satan uses God’s Words to subvert and deceive, and his puppets for the abuse of God’s Words today are those who demand Sabbath observance and Law keeping. The preaching of Sabbath observance and the Law among Gentile churches today, is not only against divine authority, it is also against the present will of God and thus opposes God.

These strong words don’t seem reasonable to those who read the commands to observe the Sabbath and keep the Law, such commands can be found in the Bible. But are those commands given to us today? If not, then they can be used to subvert and deceive. When other believers demand we keep Sabbaths and Laws not given us, then those believers are being used to lead us away from the truth.

All Scripture is for us but not all of the Bible is about us, and this includes commands and instructions found in the Old and New Testament. The four things determined at the council meeting of Acts 15 are not in force today because the circumstances have changed. This is not unusual. Here is an example of a commission which altered.

The command given to the twelve in Matthew 10 is a specific command for a specific time. It is not a command for us to obey today;

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 10:5-6

Later, this command was changed. Here is the same Lord commanding the same disciples, but now they are to include the Samaritans;

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses

unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Act 1:8

Later again, Peter needed a vision and direct divine instruction to go preach to a Gentile, see Acts 10-11. Would Peter have been faithful if he had stuck to the original commission and refused to speak to the Samaritans, and Cornelius? No! Conversely, when we keep instructions originally not given us, and ignore the changes the Lord has made, we are not being faithful, quite the contrary.

While the Lord does not change as to character and being, he does change sets of instructions. Back in the time of Acts, Gentile believers were joined with Israel and enjoying Israel's hope and blessings. They were saved to provoke Israel and were asked to observe four things. Back in that time, Paul certainly endorsed those four things and delivered them to the assemblies for enactment;

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: Act 15:28-30

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Act 16:4-5

The letters from the council were divinely appointed instructions for the Gentile believers at that time, and they did not include Sabbath observance or Law keeping but four things only. Should we Gentile believers observe those four things today? The answer is clearly and emphatically no, and here is why.

At Acts 28, the nation of Israel was let go, they were nationally dismissed for a time and those four things, which were necessary while Israel was God's people, have been abolished.

The Apostle Paul was given the truths for today which included all the wonderful redemption truths, but which included the abolition of the four necessary things he had previously delivered and enacted among the Gentile assemblies. Here is the truth for today, given us through Paul;

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we

both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; Eph 2:11-19

The original word for decrees in Acts 16, is the same original word for ordinances in Eph.2. Today, in the present dispensation of the grace of God, the Law, contained in these four necessary things, has been abolished. Those decrees have been put aside with Israel. To observe anything that God has rendered inoperative is to oppose the will of God, and to subvert, that is "pack up and remove" believers from the truth.

There is no advantage, or faithful worship in being a Jew, or playing at being a Jew today, there is no faithfulness in wearing Jewish apparel or building Jewish-like places of worship, and there is no faithfulness in observing Sabbaths or keeping the Law. Doing such things is ignoring the changes the Lord has made.

It is ungodly disobedience to follow things God has set aside.

Paul is reminding the Ephesians that previously there was a middle wall which stood between the Israeli and Gentile believers. He reminds them that previously Christ was raised to Israel, they were without Him. Previously the Gentiles had no hope of their own, they were to be blessed with Israel and enjoy all the Covenants given to Israel foretold.

But now, when Ephesians was written, not when the four necessary things were written, now, once Israel had been set aside nationally, the enmity; the conflict between the Israeli and Gentile believers had been abolished. The Law contained in those ordinances were a matter of enmity, and those ordinances were no longer in force.

The cross in this passage is not about sin and sins, it is about the removal of the dissonance between Israeli and Gentile believers.

Paul had arrived in Jerusalem after many years' absence, and James advised him to join with brethren who had taken a vow, see Acts 21:17-26. The purpose of this was to negate the false testimony being circulated against him. James wanted the Jews to recognize that

Paul “walked orderly and kept the Law”, Acts 21:24. So far as the Gentile believers were concerned, they were only obligated to keep the four things determined at the council of Acts 15.

There is a connection between Paul and the believing Gentiles here. Paul did something so that the believing and unbelieving Jews would recognize he was unoffensive, and the four things the believing Gentiles were asked to keep were also things to satisfy the demands of the believing Jews and thus be inoffensive.

It was believing Jews who were pressuring the believing Gentiles to comply with the Law. *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Act 15:1*
But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. Act 15:5-6

Our early brethren had met the same problems the Messianics are creating today, that is, the demand that believing Gentiles should observe the Law. The Christian leadership gathered to resolve the issue so let us take heed of their deliberations.

Paul is the great exponent of justification by faith through grace without the Law and the powerful opponent of circumcision for salvation, but it is Peter who dismisses the Messianic demand;

And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Act 15:7-9
But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Act 15:11

This dismisses the need of circumcision of the Gentile for salvation despite the fact Moses wrote in the Law that Gentiles were required to be circumcised in certain circumstances, see Ex.12:48 & compare Num.15:15-16.

Peter’s comments regarding the imposition of circumcision and the Law on the believing Gentiles is an essential consideration for all those under the influence of the Messianics. Look at these words of an inspired apostle;

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Act 15:10-11

Peter recognizes that the Law was a yoke (an instrument of hard labor) that the very nation to whom it was given found unbearable. To demand that the Law contained in circumcision be inflicted on the Gentiles was tempting God. This word “tempt” includes the thought of trying, testing, proving and even disciplining. Peter’s point is that since God had clearly given the Gentiles gifts without the obligatory Law observances, indeed, even without

water baptism, see Acts 10:44-48, then it would be tempting, even correcting God to impose that which God did not require.

After Peter had spoken about the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit without Law and baptism, Paul and Barnabas confirmed the exact same thing among the Gentiles in their witness. The Gentiles outside the nation of Israel were also blessed with the blessings of faithful Abraham despite the fact they were not water baptized nor Law observant; **Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. Act 15:12**

James steps up and concludes the matter. He begins with Peter's preaching to Cornelius and quotes prophecy to confirm the point that God knows His works, and his works in this context are the inclusion of the Gentiles without circumcision, Sabbath or Law observance. Listen carefully to James;

Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. Act 15:19-21

James did not want anyone to cause trouble by imposing the Law upon the believing Gentiles and in so doing discipline God. Others were preaching Moses, but the proof was clearly before their eyes; Gentiles without circumcision and the Law, had been saved and given supernatural gifts.

Four necessary things were determined upon the believing Gentiles, and four things only. These four things were more a concession to the believing Israelis than a binding to the Law for the Gentiles. It was the believing Israelis who had made the demands;

And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: Act 15:23-24

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. Act 15:28-29

When the Gentiles observed these things, the Israeli believers would be assured the Gentiles had cut themselves from their pagan past and were trying to practice the walk of a redeemed child of God.

We notice the believing Gentiles were not obliged to use the sacred name; to insert into their native tongue the Hebrew word. Indeed, of the 3500 plus manuscripts of the N.T. at our disposal, I know not of one incidence where the Greek words for God, Jehovah or Messiah were erased and the Hebrew words substituted.

The Gentile believers were not required to observe the Sabbath days. This includes Saturday and every other Feast Sabbath day.

The Gentiles were not required to observe; that is keep all The Law demanded. This does not mean The Law ceased to be a benchmark of God's moral and social standards.

The Holy Spirit confirmed that these four things were the only burden the believing Gentiles were to carry, and if they observed these, they would do well. They would not be saved by keeping them, they would not grow as Christians by keeping them, they would do well and the offended Israeli believers should be satisfied, just as they could have been when Paul joined himself to the Law observing Israeli brethren.

These things are certain. The believing Gentiles were not asked to observe the Sabbath; not asked to be circumcised; not asked to wear Jewish paraphernalia; not asked to use Hebrew words for God; not asked to keep Feast days; not asked to build Jewish synagogue replicas; not asked to "preach Moses"; not asked to leave hair long in observance of vows, in fact, they were only asked to observe four things which promoted acceptance among the Israeli believers, acceptance in their own communities and relationship choices which honored God.

1. The Sabbath; is Saturday the Lawful worship and fellowship day for us? And what about traditional holidays like Christmas?
2. The Law; should Christians obey, and live out the Law to be faithful and obedient?
3. Spiritual Israel; are we offspring of the lost ten tribes, does faith in Christ make us the true Israel of God or a Jew inwardly?
4. Commands; if we find a command in God's Word, then obviously, we need to obey it but is this true?
5. Come out from among them and be ye separate. The call to leave every denomination that does not meet on Saturday.
6. How should we walk worthily today? We want to please our Lord but how does daily living show our faith, what things are appropriate for us today.

Next lesson. Sabbath given to Israel, Israel's hope, the Gentiles had no hope apart from Israel. The Law given to Israel, identifying them as God's elect.

So far, we have seen that worship in true spirit, from a thankful heart, is no basis for the idea we are “spiritual” Israel. We have also seen that Paul’s letter to the Romans does not provide any basis for that either. Believers then and now, do not replace Israel, or become by faith, a spiritual equivalent. While Jew and Gentile were both saved by faith, the marked dispensational differences between them stands out in all Scripture given before Acts 28,

Romans shows quite clearly that the distinctions between the Israeli believer and the Gentile believer, at that time, were quite conspicuous and not only so, was the cause of some friction. Paul expressed the desire that when he arrived in Jerusalem, the offering he brought from the Gentile assemblies would be accepted by the Israeli assemblies there.

There must have been a chance of ill feeling towards a gift given by the Gentiles;

[Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; Rom 15:30-31.](#)

When Paul arrived in Jerusalem there was certainly some animosity against him because he was accused of teaching the dispersed Jews things contrary to the Law, and polluting the temple with a believing Gentile, see Acts 21:27-36. Paul had access to the Temple, but his friend Trophimus did not, yet both had called upon the Lord for salvation.

The inclusion of the Gentiles resulted in friction from the beginning, and we read about this often. In Acts, the believing Jews were astonished that the Gentiles were included, see Acts 10:45, and the unbelieving Jews were envious because other Jews and Gentiles were responding to the message, see Acts 13:45-46. Look at this verse;

[But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. Act 17:5](#)

We saw from Romans, that God had included the Gentiles as a provocation, and it was effective but did not bring the desired, positive result. The Jews oftentimes disrupted the ministry to the Gentiles but this deteriorated so much that eventually Paul writes to the Thessalonians that the unbelieving Jews added to their sins by forbidding the word to be preached to the Gentiles, see 2Thess.2:16.

Not long after the first Gentiles were included, some of the believing Jews started to demand that they were to be circumcised and keep the Law. They have their modern-day equivalents in the Messianic and Torah observing believers who are demanding the faithful

do the same. What would Paul's answer be to the modern day Messianics? The same answer he gave them back then with the same warnings to Christians he gave back then.

The demand that the Gentile believers be circumcised and keep the Law, including the weekly Sabbath, certainly had a basis in the Law. The Law catered for those Gentiles living among Israelites in the Land prior to Christ, but did that apply now that righteousness by faith in the true Lamb was effective? If it did, then why did Paul so vehemently oppose it? *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal 3:1-3.*

Perfection does not mean sinlessness, it means maturity and Paul emphasizes to the Galatians that they did not begin their walk by observing the Law and likewise they will not go on to maturity by keeping it either. Paul is clearly saying that once saved, those Gentile believers were not to go back to the "weak and beggarly elements" as a sign of growth or to cave in to the demands of those he calls the "judaizers".

Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Gal 4:8-11

But the Messianics will argue that since Paul observed the Law including the Feast days, so should we. This is a futile, indeed, stupid argument and rejected by Scripture as we shall see. Paul did such things because he was a Jew whose ministry included the Jews. He would have no audience in the synagogues if he was lawless. Consider how James advised Paul to join with some oath takers, and the reasons for it, see Acts 21:19-26. What is particularly important here are the words of James, please note the difference. Paul observed the Law as a believer but the Gentiles did not observance such as a believer;

Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Act 21:24-25

James wanted Paul's actions to counter the false accusations against him made by the unbelieving Jews to the believing Jews. By joining himself to the four men who had a vow and observing what the Law demanded for such vows, Paul was demonstrating that he "walked orderly and kept the Law". James goes on to say that the Gentiles were to observe "no such thing". Obviously, James and Paul did not see the Gentile believers as a "spiritual" equivalent to Israel.

James and Paul are both very clear, the believing Gentiles were not to observe the Sabbath or the rest of the Law, except for the four things determined by the council at Acts 15.

Those four things did not include observance of Saturday or the Feasts, but three focused on what was eaten, and one on sexual immorality.

Our Heavenly Father is worthy of all praise and adoration, but our worship is to be from the heart, given with thankfulness in sincerity. This is worshipping in the spirit which was the essence of the Lord's words to the Samaritan woman so long ago. The place and formal practices of worship were not the essentials. However, while we recognize right worship and seek to offer the same to our God, worshipping in true spirit does not provide any basis for the claim that we are thus "spiritual Israel".

The term spiritual Israel is a fallacy and often Messianics will turn to Romans 2 in an attempt to establish this error. Many of them believe that Romans teaches that Gentile believers are Jews in the heart; spiritual Jews, because of their faith. Here is the passage; **For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 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.** Rom 2:28-29.

One of the greatest slip slides to falsehood is found when isolated texts are the building block of doctrine, this is a Bible study disaster. If this is how some use the Romans section above, then it is an expository error leading to falsehood. The immediate, near and remote contexts will not permit anyone to claim from Romans 2 that any believer is a spiritual Jew or Israelite.

The assumption that Paul is talking to everyone in this passage is the first basis of error, being a complete disregard for the immediate context. Paul is not saying that anyone who believes is a Jew inwardly, whose circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not of the letter. In this passage Paul is specifically speaking to the Israelis. This section begins here: **Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,** Rom 2:17-19.

Paul makes the accusation that Jews, not Gentiles, who teach the Law but break it are dishonoring God, cause His name to be blasphemed and in fact, turn their own circumcision to uncircumcision. Paul and John the Baptist have much in common in this regard. John made this claim against the hypocrites who boasted in their genealogy; **And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.** Mat 3:9

In Romans 2:17 to :29, Paul is directing his words to Israelites. He is telling Jews, that a Jew is not one outwardly; of clothing and genealogy, but one who is circumcised in heart. The prophets spoke of this, see Jer.4:4, 9:26, Deut.30:6 and others.

Paul had already addressed the Gentiles earlier in chapter 2. He keeps Jew and Gentile separate even in matters of the heart. He did not write that a Gentile of conscience was a Jew inwardly, but he did write about the heart;

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts Rom 2:14-15a.

Paul keeps separate the Gentile and the Israelite, he does not write that when both believe they are "true", "inward" or "spiritual" Jews. The dispensational differences between these God made classes remains to the fore in Romans. Paul clearly states that they were not equal in dispensational standing before God. Look at these verses further showing Israel's advantage and position, at that time;

What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, Rom 3:1

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16

Here is another passage where Paul writes of the dispensational advantage and prior position held by Israel, at that time;

Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. Rom 2:9-11.

The fact that there is no respect of persons with God does not mean that there was no dispensational difference between a believing Jew and Gentile when Romans was written. The Jew was first before Acts 28, the Gentile was second. Certainly, they were in equal need of the Savior and there was no difference in that both could call upon Him for salvation;

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Rom 10:12-13

There is no difference in salvation by faith, but in the very same chapter 10 and leading on into 11, the significant dispensational differences are further emphasised. Paul writes that the Gentiles were only included in Salvation, at that time, because Israel (nationally) had stumbled. Israel had provoked the Lord and He used the Gentiles to provoke Israel to repentance.

But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. Rom 10:19

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall (stumbling) salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Rom 11:11 (:13-:14).

Not only so, the Gentiles were not to boast but to fear, for they were supported by the root and indeed, were obligated to support Israel financially because they were partaking of the root and fatness; Israel's spiritual things, see Roms.11:17 and 15:27.

Nothing in Paul's letter to the Romans supports the concept that Gentile believers are "spiritual" Israel, and obliged to obey the Law including Saturday observance. Indeed, a careful examination proves quite the opposite, that while all needed the Savior, the Jews had a prior position and the Gentiles were included to provoke the nation.

The spiritual, Israel, messianic torah observant movement is not only outside of Paul, but indeed opposes everything he wrote under inspiration.

Too frequently we, the non-Messianic, Torah observant faithful, are reminded by them of Scriptures which apparently demand that we observe Christ's commands and the Law as an obedient walk. Before we examine this and find commands which the Messianics are not obeying, and Laws they are not observing, making their position at least, unsubstantiated, and at worse hypocritical, we need to examine the "spiritual Israel/Jew" and the "lost ten tribes" ideologies. According to those enthralled in such positions, the role of Israel and Law obedience are demanded.

The words "spiritual Israel" do not occur in the 18 translations I have at my disposal. This is insufficient evidence to dismiss the term, but we can certainly find passages supporting true worship in the spirit. Let's begin there.

The Lord compared formal worship with true worship in spirit and truth in his encounter with the Samaritan woman;

The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you people say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You people worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. But a time is coming — and now is here — when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Joh 4:19-24

The location of worship was not important, and legalistic offerings according to the Law, were not worship. Worship from the heart with all being and might was required. The first thing the Lord required of Israel was love from the heart;

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deu 6:4-5

When the Lord was challenged as to which is the greatest commandment in the Law, his response was to endorse the true worship the Law demanded;

Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Mat 22:35-40

Paul did not demand believers were to observe the Law, he said the same things as the Lord;

For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Rom 13:9-10

The writer of Hebrews speaks much the same when referring to sacrifices other than those of bulls and goats, sacrifices from the heart:

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16

When Hebrews was written, the animal sacrifices were still offered in the Temple, but for the believer the sacrifices of the lips moved by love and thankfulness were required and these sacrifices were to be accompanied by beneficial services to others.

Paul urged the Romans to “present your bodies a living sacrifice” and in that letter he fully expounded the objectives of the Law. It was to show sin as sin, Roms.3:19-20. The Law worked wrath, Roms.4:15. The Law was never the basis of any promise of inheritance, 4:13 and Gals.3:18. And most importantly, through Christ, believers were delivered from the Law to serve in newness of spirit, the very worship Christ wanted to see;

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. Rom 7:6 (cp 2Cor.3).

The ultimate objective of the Law was Christ. Every offering, every Feast day; holy day, pointed to Christ and faith in Him.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Rom 10:4

Paul repeats this in Galatians writing that the Law was a schoolmaster leading people to Christ, and once Christ was claimed, then the school master was to be left behind;

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal 3:24-26

Earlier in this very chapter he had, in exasperation, cried to them as “foolish Galatians”. He demanded them to answer this question:

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Gal 3:3

Not once did Paul demand or remotely suggest that these Galatian believers were to go back to observing the Law as a means of an obedient walk, to be made perfect (mature) in Christ or to obey Christ's commands. Law observance for faithful service was not an option for the believer according to Paul.

Yes, Paul observed the Feast days, he was a Jew ministering primarily to Jews, and the council in Acts 15 prescribed four necessary things for the believing Gentiles to observe who were in fellowship with Jews. We shall look at these matters soon.

The Lord wanted worship in spirit and truth, and Paul writes very clearly that observation of days, and months and times and years was nothing other than bondage, those things being weak and beggarly elements, Gals.4:9-10.

Paul spurned his Israeli heritage in order that he might win Christ, see Phils.3. Those things which he held dear were to be cast aside. He had no confidence in the flesh, and the flesh was Jewish and Law status and observance, and true worship rejected fleshly indulgence. True worship stemmed from a circumcised heart (Deut.10:16, 30:6, Jer.4:4) not the circumcision of the Law;

For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Php 3:3

If you have died with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world, why do you submit to them as though you lived in the world? "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" These are all destined to perish with use, founded as they are on human commands and teachings. Even though they have the appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship and false humility achieved by an unsparing treatment of the body — a wisdom with no true value — they in reality result in fleshly indulgence. Col 2:20-23 NET

The Law is not made for a righteous person and those who demand Law observance for believers today are engaged in "vain jangling" (babble) having swerved aside, or missed the mark. Not only so, they are exposing believers to indulgence in the flesh.

Brian R Kelson

brianActs28@gmail.com

www.acts28.net

Paul certainly not a Messianic when it comes to demanding believers follow and obey the Law, neither did he engage in the sacred name ideology, he wrote and spoke in multiple languages

After faith revealed, Christ's commands before his sacrifice

Fail in one point of the law

next lesson, Paul feasts,

we are the circumcision, the judaisers, the four necessary things.

debunk spiritual Israel, lost ten tribes

He is even harsher when it comes to those who seek to be teachers of the Law

The redemption plan includes salvation and restoration of Israel which is yet to take place, but we are not part of that plan.

The Gospels and Acts contain masses of Scripture which show observance of the Sabbath and the Law but are those ministerial obligations ours today?

Oftentimes traditional Christians are further challenged by the Messianics when the pagan holidays, mostly dragged in by the Catholic church, are contrasted to the Biblical holydays readily found in Scripture. More on this later.

How are these Messianic groups rallying so many traditional Christians to their cause? Since the Hebrew roots beginnings around the 1970s, they, the Messianics and Torah Observants have surged in numbers. It is my belief that when the Bible study rules are overlooked or forgotten, the traditional Christian is more easily persuaded by the Messianics that they have the weight of Scripture for their position, and superficially, they do.

How do the Bible study rules help us when we are challenged to consider the claims of any Christian group, including the Hebrew roots/Messianic adherents? What are the Bible study rules? What scriptural evidence is there for such rules?

The first things a committed Christian will learn should they attend a theological college of their choice, are the principles of hermeneutics. The word 'hermeneutics' comes from the ancient Greek, *hermeneuein* and means 'to utter, to explain, to translate'. It is a discernment process for every facet of living but more importantly, by which God's Word is understood. One of the first and basic rules of Bible discernment is to apply the questions, who, what, when, where and why? To whom and by whom was it spoken, then when, where and why was it spoken.

Some might insist that such rules are the invention and instrument of those who not wish to obey the Lord but as those who wish to present themselves approved, we want to obey those instructions and commands specifically given us, today. Many hold God's Word as a faith feast of everything within its pages and to some extent this is true, as Paul writes; All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly

furnished unto all good works. 2Ti 3:16-17

See also 2Pet.1:19-21, 2Sam.32:2 Acts3:18 et al.

However, this verse does not authorize and anyone to barge through Scripture taking every command and every promise as their own. Before Paul wrote this

In the history of biblical interpretation, four major types of hermeneutics have emerged: the literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical.

1. The Sabbath; is Saturday the Lawful worship and fellowship day for us? And what about traditional holidays like Christmas?
2. The Law; should Christians obey, and live out the Law to be faithful and obedient?
3. Spiritual Israel; are we offspring of the lost ten tribes, does faith in Christ make us the true Israel of God or a Jew inwardly?
4. Commands; if we find a command in God's Word, then obviously, we need to obey it but is this true?
5. Come out from among them and be ye separate. The call to leave every denomination that does not meet on Saturday.
6. How should we walk worthily today? We want to please our Lord but how does daily living show our faith, what things are appropriate for us today.

While this undertaking will not be a complete examination of all that needs to be addressed regarding the Messianic surge, it should suffice as a springboard for further research. Let us begin by reminding ourselves of this passage from Paul, The advice here is as crucial today as when it was first penned;

Study earnestly to present yourself approved to God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. 2Ti 2:15

We are responsible for our walk. We are responsible for what we think, do and say as we follow our Lord. I will do my best to present some Scriptures according to the Bible study rules, but I am not the director of your conscience, neither should you believe me or anyone else who might appear to have convincing arguments.

I realize that finding a Godly pathway is not easy with the myriad of voices out there, but we can find the way that is appropriate for today. Is it the Messianic, Law abiding Sabbath keeping way? We hope to find out.

Brian R Kelson

brianActs28@gmail.com

www.acts28.net

While I believe we should all maintain a Berean spirit and search and see, Acts 17:11, the method of using isolated texts which appear to demand an observance of the Law, and the constant use of such, does not make for reasoned discussion.

It might be that the success of these movements is largely based on the wide divisions within Christianity itself. Who has "the truth" and can we ever find it anyway? Many believers are church hopping trying to find a place of worship and doctrine which makes them feel comfortable, rather than spending the hours it takes to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Why are so many Christians succumbing to the lure of the Messianic and Torah observant zealots? There are a number of reasons, but for now we shall look at one of their most effective lures; the pagan holidays or pagan colored Jewish Feasts that are deep-rooted in the "Christian" calendar. Once it can be shown that our Christian holidays are discolored with pagan influence or date, it provokes the listener to open their ears to the Messianic point of view.

The Messianics argue that since the holidays are impregnated with pagan influence, then perhaps the entire orthodox Christian system is out of step and a return to Sabbath observance and Law obligations is the true walk of faith. While there might be some validity in the criticism of current holidays, the criticisms can't be used to turn the faithful back to that which God has placed aside with Israel. An error must not be used to leap frog into deeper error.

In the Gospel and Acts period times, the "Christian" holidays were the specific days divinely appointed for the nation of Israel to observe. Paul and others observed these set Feast because they were Israelites, and they were looking for the earthly hope the Feasts predicted.

A concise overview of these Feast or holydays can be found in Lev.23. The Feasts included the weekly Sabbath; our Saturday, as well as the annual Feasts. These are, Passover and Unleavened Bread (our March-April), Weeks or Pentecost (our May-June), Trumpets (our late Sept-Oct), Atonement (Oct.), and Tabernacles/Booths (Oct.). It is important to note the Bible study rules of who, what, when, where and why. These Feasts were given to Israel as these verses clearly show;

[Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Lev.23:2](#)

[And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD. Lev.23:44](#)

These Feasts looked back to Israel's great deliverance from Egypt, Lev.23:43, and they looked forward; predicted, or anticipated the great future deliverance of Israel which remained God's people until Acts 28. They were being fulfilled during the Gospels and Acts periods.

The True Passover Lamb died at Passover and rose again on the day of first fruits of Unleavened Bread, Lev.23:9-14. Israel's greater deliverance had begun.

At Acts 2, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit was given to Israel just as it was back at Sinai. Another step in Israel's deliverance taken. Acts 2 is Israel and not "the church".

Trumpets were sounded when Israel entered the Promised Land under Joshua (Jesus), and the fulfillment of this Feast was the very next event the believers, back at that time, were expecting. They clearly understood that the greater Joshua was about to come with Trumpets to save and re-gather Israel into their Promised Land. Paul, in his letters before

Acts 28, writes about this hope of that time;

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 1Th 4:16-17 see all verses 13-18 and 1Cor.15:50-58. See also Rev.8:6 through to 11:15.

The Christian community up until Acts 28, were looking for the Lord's return to the earth at Trumpets, but Israel was nationally set aside at Acts 28, and these Feasts were set aside with them. Israel's deliverance through the fulfillment of the Feasts, was postponed. The Feasts or Jewish holydays are not associated with the current calling; they do not reveal the hope of the church which is His body, the calling in view today. When we observe these Feasts, we are reversing what God has done. We are observing something never given to us in the first place, and something He put aside for a time.

Many of these Feasts have been carried across into the "church" calendar, unfortunately. The Christian community, having failed to see the change of dispensation given after Israel and her Feasts were set aside at Acts 28, continued to observe them. Today, Passover is obscured because at some point, it had an unfortunate name change to Easter. Whether or not the word Easter can be linked to Ishtar the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of fertility, sex and war with her bunnies and eggs is for others to research. The fact remains, Easter is really Passover. Chocolate bunnies and eggs are not found in Israel's Feasts, so Easter is criticized as Passover being paganized and rightfully so, but this does not justify the demand to observe the weekly Sabbath and the annual Feasts.

Not only have we included Israeli Feasts which are not associated with our calling, but we have added Dec.25th. If we want to follow the Jewish Festive calendar then we should never have included Dec.25th since there is no Feast given through Moses which speaks of the Lord's birth. Christmas is a calendar insertion, inconsistent with the Feasts and of very questionable origins. What do trees, yule tide logs, Santa and all the other trimmings have to do with Israel's past and future deliverance or the Lord's birth? We can understand how the Messianics would identify Christmas as a pagan influence, but again, this does not justify the demand to return to, and observe those things associated with Israel. The church which is His body does not replace or in any way become, spiritual Israel.

There are those within our Christian community who are opposed to and expose these holiday trappings totally unrelated to the Lord's birth, death, burial and resurrection but to go beyond exposing these issues and demand a return to something God has placed aside is unwarranted and unbiblical. This is further emphasized when we examine the weekly Sabbath.

I spent some time living in Ecuador and beside a main highway there was a dominating and intimidating billboard. On that board was an image of Christ, and the Lord was glaring and pointing accusatively at those driving by. The text underneath read;

[Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exo 20:8](#)

The billboard was nothing more than a manifestation of misplaced zeal. The order to keep the Sabbath day (Saturday), was never given to the indigenous people of Ecuador in the first place. I've met the pygmies down near the Amazon river and when the Law was given to Israel, in the Promised Land, there was no way they were ever going to hear it via Facebook, Instagram, drum beat or carrier pigeon. But even if there was some way to cross the Atlantic, the Lord did not give the command in Ex.20:8 to the Ecuadorians. And now, thousands of years later, someone who fails to apply even the simplest of Bible study rules, decides that the Incas need to keep the Sabbath.

This epitomizes the error of the Messianic, Torah observant and other Sabbath keeping movements. They transfer; transpose the commands given to the nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel, to those not included in the original command given by God. They take what was given to Israel, and without any Scriptural authority, apply the things of Israel to the Church, the Incas, the Eskimos and everyone else. These groups are not the "spiritual" equivalent, or continuance of Israel.

It is a basic rule of Bible study to ask, Who, What, When, Where and Why. The following plain statements of Scripture are clear for all to consider, especially if we follow those simple Bible study guidelines.

We looked at the Feasts which were given to the nation of Israel by God through Moses. These are the words of the Lord;

[Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts. Lev.23:2](#)

[And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD. Lev.23:44](#)

Israel was to keep these Feasts, not any Christian denomination. During the Gospel and Acts periods, The Lord and His disciples observed these Feasts, the weekly Sabbath and the Law. This fact does not authorize anyone to demand Christians today should do the same.

The weekly Sabbath and Israel are inseparable. When the Lord provided manna for His people, the first account of the weekly Sabbath observance is recorded;

[And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the](#)

rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD:..... Exo 16:23
See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath,..... Exo 16:29
So the people rested on the seventh day. Exo 16:30

The first occurrence of the Sabbath was in a context of provision for Israel, a prophetic picture of future provision for Israel when the Lord rules among them. It is clearly written; the Lord gave Israel the Sabbath. Later, the Lord further strengthens this relationship between Himself and Israel by emphasizing the sanctity of the Sabbath. Again, he is speaking to Israel, not the Ecuadorians or the church which is His body. Notice in these commands to Israel, the conditions are given as to when a Gentile, a stranger, was to observe it;

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Exo 20:8-11

Gentiles within Israel's gates were to cease from labor on the weekly Sabbath. In this passage it is easy to skip over the parts that say, "speak unto the children of Israel", and "ye (Israel) shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy unto you (Israel)", and "thy stranger that is within your gates", but skipping over such parts is what the Messianics and the like want you to do. Look at this passage and while we do, let's apply those Bible study guide questions; And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. Exo 31:12-17

The Sabbath is holy "to Israel" and those Israelis who defile it shall surely be put to death. No American or Ecuadorian or anyone else living today, will be put to death for defiling it. Let us not water down the Lord's commands, if we keep the Sabbath, then let's stone those who defile it, it is equally commanded.

The children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath for a perpetual covenant. Gentile believers today do not affirm, ratify, or continue any cutting or

agreement with the God of Israel by observing the Sabbath because such a covenant was not made with them in the first place.

Finally, the weekly Sabbath is a sign between The Lord (Jehovah which is YHWH with vowels added) and Israel. It is not a sign between the God of Israel and any Gentiles, believers or non-believers, living today.

That sign in Ecuador, and I'm certain there are many like it around the world, tries to intimidate believers from every piece of the Christian jigsaw into embracing something never given them. The threat implied by the sign is that failure to observe the weekly Sabbath is disobedience; is a failure to be a true Christian. This is not true, the threat is based upon a false premise that we are Israel, and mixing the things of the church Israel with the church which is His body is fusing and confusing God's purposes which leads to ungodliness or wrong worship.

We have examined the Word of Truth and found that the weekly Sabbath was a covenant with, a sign for, and a lawful obligation on the Nation of Israel, not the church which is His Body. We have also found that the other Sabbaths associated with Israel's annual Feasts, were also appointed to Israel.

The Sabbaths are inseparable from our Heavenly Father's earthly purposes for his people Israel and eventually, the entire world. The first Sabbath was observed in creation, when man had dominion in Paradise. That first Sabbath was prophetic, it looks forward to that day when dominion will be restored in the earth, through the Lord, the last Adam. He will reign on earth and the land of Israel will be like Eden in that day. Is.51:3. The Sabbath belongs with Israel and this aspect of the Lord's glory, it is not associated with God's heavenly purposes and our Savior's glory there.

Does it really matter whether we observe the Sabbath days or not? After all Paul did write this:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it..... Rom 14:5-6a
For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom 14:17

I'm not sure this passage refers to freedom of choice as regards the Sabbath day. Paul is simply saying some prefer certain days over other days, and not in a religious sense, so we can't argue that Sabbath observance is an option one way or another. When he wrote to the Galatians, he pronounced as bondage the practice of observing days religiously. This is an important passage because in Galatia, the Jewish zealots were demanding the Gentile believers be circumcised and keep the Law, which would include, "days, months, times and years";

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Gal 4:9-11

It is also true we cannot defend Sabbath observance because of the weaker brother argument in Corinthians. There, Paul is saying food does not commend any believer to God but for the sake of the weaker brother, consideration must be given so the weaker does not stumble, see 1Cor.8:7-13 The Messianics are not saying the Sabbath can be ignored for the sake of weaker brothers, they demand it is observed as an obedience to the Lord's commands so that we will be commended to God.

So how did the Messianics and Torah observants gain so much power and influence among the Christian community? The answer is very simple. We prepared the fertile ground for them. When we, the Christian community failed to appreciate that the Lord was a minister to Israel, we took things belonging to Israel and transferred them to our calling today. The Lord spoke to and about Israel in His earthly ministry;

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: Rom 15:8
But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24

When we continue to seek "the words of Jesus" as found in the Gospel records, we are bringing dispensational truths, (like Sabbath and Law observance) from a previous earthly purpose, into the present heavenly one; this is not comparing things that differ. When we bring into today things that God has set aside in the past, we are not obedient but creating confusion. What was right and obedient in one dispensation, may not be so in another.

The Lord's ministry to Israel was continued by his disciples all through the book of Acts. The Acts period is all Israel; promise, prophesy and power. Those Gentiles included during the time of the Gospels and Acts were to be blessed in the earthly Kingdom;

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Mat 8:10-11

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Rom 15:8-10

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43. See also Gals.3:8-9.

The words of Jesus to and about us today, are found in some of the letters of Paul, but we must be very careful with Paul. He ministered in two different dispensations. Paul wrote during the Acts period, while Israel remained the People of God. During that time, he wrote Galatians, Romans, Hebrews, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians in which letters 190 quotes of the Old Testament, and references to the Feasts and the Sabbath days can be found. However, Israel, as a nation, continued to reject the appeals to repent, and at Acts 28, that nation, and the things associated with her, were put aside.

Paul wrote other letters after this national setting aside of Israel and these are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. In

these letters there are scant references to the O.T., and the dispensational truths are not promise, prophesy and power. Not only so, the word Sabbath only occurs in a very strong negative context, where it is placed against our present relationship with Christ as Head, and linked with those things which will rob us of our reward;

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Col 2:16-19

The words of Jesus about us today, are not found in Scriptures prior to Acts 28, they are found in Paul's letters written after Israel was set aside, and the Sabbath was set aside with her.

Because we have failed to see these differences in the purposes of God and the words of Christ, and have assumed that Christ came to start our "church", we have given the Messianics the tools to undermine the Word of God rightly divided and to lead believers away from the truths and worthy walk of today.

Why is Sabbath observance out of place today? We have searched the Scriptures and found many reasons why Law and Sabbath observance are inappropriate for the church. The Scriptures are clear, the Sabbath belongs with Israel and the earth, and does not belong with the church and heaven.

This final lesson emphasizes the place of the Sabbath with Israel by comparing its beginning, that is, its time from the foundation of the world, and our calling's time, before the foundation of the world. Here are some simple comparisons to get us started. They might seem obvious at first, but they are important.

The Sabbath is found in Genesis, but the church which is His body is not found in Genesis, it is purposed before Genesis.

The Sabbath is featured from the foundation of the world, not before, but the church is found before the foundation of the world, and is not featured in Bible records until Israel is put aside at Acts 28.

The Sabbath is structured by time; time determines the 7th day, and other Sabbaths, but our calling goes back before time, and is not served by the observance of time, days, months, years or seasons.

These essential comparisons are very important because they further show where the Sabbath belongs. It fits squarely into the earthly purpose which was unveiled from the foundation of the world. This earthly purpose remained in place up until Acts 28.

The 7th day of Genesis is prophetic, it looks forward to the end and it is further emphasized by the 7s associated with Israel, we have the 7th day, the 7 months of Israel's Festive calendar, the 7th year, the 49th and 50th years, and maybe the 7th millennium. All these 7s relate to the restoration of paradise, sin and death removed and man enjoying dominion. The Sabbath is from the foundation of the world and is a feature of Israel and the earth.

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he revealed something entirely new, something he had not shared with them before, because God's purposes changed when Israel was placed aside. Now he told them **when** they, as Christians, had been chosen in Christ for special blessings in a special place. They as members of the church, were chosen to this newly revealed calling **before** the foundation of the world; before the land appeared out of the water, before Sabbaths, Abraham and new moons. These newly revealed blessings were nothing like Israel's. This new calling and its blessings in heaven are in stark contrast to the blessings associated with the Law, Sabbath, Israel and the Land; [Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him..... Eph 1:3-4](#)

Israel, the Law and The Sabbath, all incorporated into that glorious earthly Kingdom yet to come, were revealed from the foundation of the world as these passages will show;

[Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Mat 25:34 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; Luk 11:50](#)

[For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished \(accomplished\) from the foundation of the world. Heb 4:3](#)

See also Hebrews 9:25-26.

There is an earthly purpose, revealed from the foundation of the world, and there is a heavenly purpose, prepared before the foundation of the world and kept hidden in God until Paul was chosen to reveal it as recorded in Ephesians and Colossians.

The Sabbath and Law observance only belong in the earthly purpose from the foundation of the world and before Acts 28, believers were to be blessed with Abraham, both in the Land and Heavenly City which would descend to earth. During this time, the feasts and the Sabbath were observed. This was a purpose revealed from Genesis; from the foundation of the world.

But now, after Acts 28, things had changed, the blessings are all spiritual, in front of God's face, in the heavenly places. Paul alone reveals a purpose that was prepared before the foundation of the world, before Genesis. This present purpose is not reflected or anticipated in The Law or Sabbath observance.

The Sabbath is the 7th day, first recorded in Genesis, and the Sabbath does not exist without time. Creation was recorded in days; the evening and the morning, and in those days the elements of time were created. Time, from seconds to seasons, began in Genesis, from the foundation of the world;

[And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: Gen 1:14](#)

Was there any time before the foundation of the world? I do not believe so. It is difficult to imagine anything without a beginning, but God did not create Himself or have a beginning. To imagine God having a beginning and an ending is only imagined from us who live in time. God has revealed Himself in this sphere of time, but is outside of time. Christ said He was the beginning and the ending (Rev.1:8), but this was to express His eternal existence, God has no beginning and has no ending.

Time was introduced and belongs with the earth, the creation of Genesis. Do not expect alarm clocks in heaven. When time was created so was Adam who was a

picture of the One coming to undo Satan's damage. The Sabbath looks forward to that great restoration of paradise, peace and the Last Adam having righteous dominion on the earth.

The Sabbath belongs on the earth, with Israel, and is fixed in time and denotes the time when the restoration will be complete. It will not fit into a purpose given us in Christ by God the Father, which goes back before time, before the foundation of the world.

We must not observe a day made of time and, by such observance, place it in our timeless calling in heaven.

We have examined the Word of Truth and found that the weekly Sabbath was a covenant with, a sign for, and a lawful obligation on the Nation of Israel, not the church which is His Body. We have also found that the other Sabbaths associated with Israel's annual Feasts, were also appointed to Israel.

The Sabbaths are inseparable from our Heavenly Father's earthly purposes for his people Israel and eventually, the entire world. The first Sabbath was observed in creation, when man had dominion in Paradise. That first Sabbath was prophetic, it looks forward to that day when dominion will be restored in the earth, through the Lord, the last Adam. He will reign on earth and the land of Israel will be like Eden in that day. Is.51:3. The Sabbath belongs with Israel and this aspect of the Lord's glory; it is not associated with God's heavenly purposes and our Savior's glory there.

Does it really matter whether we observe the Sabbath days or not? After all Paul did write this:

One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it..... Rom 14:5-6a
For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom 14:17

I'm not sure this passage refers to freedom of choice as regards the Sabbath day. Paul is simply saying some prefer certain days over other days, and not in a religious sense, so we can't argue that Sabbath observance is an option one way or another. When he wrote to the Galatians, he pronounced as bondage the practice of observing days religiously. This is an important passage because in Galatia, the Jewish zealots were demanding the Gentile believers be circumcised and keep the Law, which would include, "days, months, times and years";

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Gal 4:9-11

It is also true we cannot defend Sabbath observance because of the weaker brother argument in Corinthians. There, Paul is saying food does not commend any believer to God but for the sake of the weaker brother, consideration must be given so the weaker does not stumble, see 1Cor.8:7-13. The Messianics are not saying the Sabbath can be ignored for the sake of weaker brothers, they demand it is observed as an obedience to the Lord's commands so that we will be commended to God. These demands are false, based upon a failure to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

So how did the Messianics and Torah observants gain so much power and influence among the Christian community? The answer is very simple. We prepared the fertile ground for them. When we, the Christian community failed to appreciate that the Lord was a minister to Israel, we took things belonging to Israel and transferred them to our calling today. The

Lord spoke to and about Israel in His earthly ministry;

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: Rom 15:8

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mat 15:24

When we continue to seek "the words of Jesus" as found in the Gospel records, we are bringing dispensational truths, (like Sabbath and Law observance) from a previous earthly purpose, into the present heavenly one; this is not comparing things that differ. When we bring into today things that God has set aside in the past, we are not obedient but creating confusion. What was right and obedient in one dispensation, may not be so in another.

The Lord's ministry to Israel was continued by his disciples all through the book of Acts. The Acts period is all Israel; promise, prophesy and power. Those Gentiles included during the time of the Gospels and Acts were to be blessed in the earthly Kingdom;

When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. Mat 8:10-11

Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. Rom 15:8-10

Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people. Deu 32:43. See also Gals.3:8-9.

The words of Jesus to and about us today, are found in some of the letters of Paul, but we must be very careful with Paul. He ministered in two different dispensations. Paul wrote during the Acts period, while Israel remained the People of God. During that time, he wrote Galatians, Romans, Hebrews, 1&2 Thessalonians, 1&2 Corinthians in which letters 190 quotes of the Old Testament, and references to the Feasts and the Sabbath days can be found. However, Israel, as a nation, continued to reject the appeals to repent, and at Acts 28, that nation, and the things associated with her, were put aside.

Paul wrote other letters after this national setting aside of Israel and these are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1&2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. In these letters there are scant references to the O.T., and the dispensational truths are not promise, prophesy and power. Not only so, the word Sabbath only occurs in a very strong negative context, where it is placed against our present relationship with Christ as Head, and linked with those things which will rob us of our reward;

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Col 2:16-19

The words of Jesus about us today, are not found in Scriptures prior to Acts 28, they are found in Paul's letters written after Israel was set aside, and the Sabbath was set aside with her.

Because we have failed to see these differences in the purposes of God and the words of Christ, and have assumed that Christ came to start our "church", we have given the Messianics the tools to undermine the Word of God rightly divided and to lead believers away from the truths and worthy walk of today.

Observing the things belonging to Israel when Israel has been set aside is not, I believe, walking in a worthy fashion. While such observances have a show of wisdom and servitude, they are embracing things put aside with Israel and not carried over into today's wonderful calling.

We conclude with those words of Paul in Colossians where he warned against religious observances like these;

Therefore do not let anyone judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or of a new moon or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. Let no one rule against you (defraud you, beguile you of your reward), desiring to do so in false humility and in worship of the angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, in vain being puffed up by his carnal mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, supported and joined together by joints and ligaments, grows with the growth of God. If you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you submit to regulations-- "Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch," which things are all for corruption with the using, according to the commands and teaching of men? These things indeed have a reputation of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and severity on the body, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh. Col 2:16-23

We have died together with Christ from the basic elements, therefor "do not handle, nor taste, nor touch" have no place in our worship or daily living.

Those who demand such things might indeed be defrauding us of our reward. They are not out judge but judge against us because we do not observe the shadows like the Sabbaths, new moons or other Jewish Festivals. These things anticipate coming glory for Israel, they do not reflect any coming glory for the church which is His Body. Observance of such things put aside with Israel, jeopardizes our reward.

Brian R Kelson

brianActs28@gmail.com

www.acts28.net