

The Law Apologetic

It's about our identity. We have a choice. Our choice is both mental and physical. We choose to be followers of Yeshua the Messiah. We can't just say we follow Him and be done with it. We can't take a label we don't deserve and our actions show who we really follow. This is similar to stolen valor, when people claim to have been in the military but never were. We know what fraud is, but claiming to follow Yeshua and not really doing it has consequences:

Slide 2 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (Mat 7:21-23)

Still 2 Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, For YHVH has heard the voice of my weeping. YHVH has heard my supplication, YHVH receives my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed. (Psa 6:8-10)

This one doesn't need a lot of unpacking and is quite frightful. I've included the reference from the all caps and it says the same thing. It's a psalm of David. People who lived their lives faithful, preaching, teaching, and working in the Name of the Son, are going to find out they were never known by Him. If we include the reference, the people who do iniquity, i.e. those who practice lawlessness, are enemies. This looks to me to be very, very important information. All believers need to figure out what this means and do the opposite. Nobody should want to be found like this. Being a fraud in this life is sin, but being a fraud about following Yeshua looks to have the worst of consequences.

Slide 3 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. (2Th 2:7-12)

Paul adds on and says the lawless one is bringing a deception of wickedness for those who did not receive the love of the truth to be saved. Paul is tying lawlessness to salvation. There's no other way to read this or to understand what the Messiah said. In the simplest of terms, we who want to be saved, meaning to enter eternal life, must reject lawlessness or get rejected by the Messiah when He returns. I've seen all sorts of debates where "Christians" tell us we don't have to follow the law

anymore. Sometimes they will even say it's optional, that we can do it if we want as long as we don't tell anybody they have to do it. What do you think? Should we tell people they have to do it? I think if we don't warn them, then we risk incurring some of that wrath ourselves.

So this message is effectively over right now. It's not refutable that lawlessness will get one smote. That means to avoid being smote, we must follow the law. How does this relate to salvation? Simple: following the law is evidence of the saving grace of Yeshua.

Slide 4 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. (Jas 2:14-26)

James has expressed this better than anyone could. The brother of Yeshua tells us the recipe. We can't just say we're saved by faith. It must be accompanied by works, evidence of a changed heart and a contrite spirit, or it's death. Folks might say the works are just to be kind because of the example given, but that's not the point. And it starts with Abraham, right?

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

Still 5 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua. For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:24-29)

Our identity is in Abraham. This is incredibly important. Being literally descended from Abraham made Israel a nation through bloodline, sure. But the real identity is in how one lives. Abraham's faith drove his actions to obedient even when it made no sense and would have caused immense heartache. That's what Yahweh is looking for. That was ultimately exemplified in His Son, who obeyed to death. This death was foreshadowed with Abraham and Isaac. Moses also followed this pattern, even volunteering to be blotted out of the book of life to mediate for Israel. Yahweh's desire is to have an obedient family that trust Him and follow Torah. This theme runs through the entire bible. It does not stop and become the opposite of this at some unspecified time in the New Testament.

Following up on James' message, Abraham was justified by works. Those works focused on offering Isaac, but they include keeping Torah. Abraham was called out of idolatry into the light. He is our adopted father if we accept Yeshua as the Messiah and we must do the same exact thing. We must leave paganism – LAWLESSNESS – and do the deeds of Abraham. We must obey.

Our identity today, as grafted in believer in Yeshua, is the same as Abraham's identity. It's the same as Moses' identity. It's the same as Stephen and Paul's identities. We are not patriarchs by any stretch. We were gentiles looking for scraps under the table who were then grafted into the family of Yahweh through the blood of Messiah. We become heirs according to the promise given to Abraham through Yeshua. We have no right to be grafted into this vine. Yahweh chose us and we must show our gratitude and faith by learning His ways and *doing them*.

The concept that the apostles were teaching against Moses began in the early days of the New Testament. They were accused of this. Granted, we do have a change in the law with Yeshua, for sure. But they did not teach it was nullified or erased. It was a change. We know there was a change because of Jeremiah 31:31-34, that the New Covenant will have the law written on hearts. And the New Covenant is with Israel and Judah. So we have to have a way to be connected to either Israel or Judah and we have to be internally compelled to keep the Torah. And we can't follow a gospel that tells us the law was done away with. That would be a different gospel. But how do we test this? We have numerous verses that show us the Torah continues all the way to the end. Our tag-ling scripture is from Revelation showing the remnant keep the Torah and believe in Yeshua. In the spirit of "works", though, do we have anything in the New Testament to show the apostles still keeping Torah after accepting Yeshua? Why yes, yes we do.

Slide 6 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, including both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came up to him

and dragged him away and brought him before the Council. They **put forward false witnesses** who said, "This man incessantly speaks against this holy place and the Law; for we have heard him say that this Nazarene, Yeshua, will destroy this place and alter the customs which Moses handed down to us." And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel. (Act 6:8-15)

The begins Stephen's speech where he basically recites the history of Israel. He makes is absolutely certain that he has not broken covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He does NOT reply to them that "yep, we don't do that Torah stuff anymore, you're right". It plainly and directly says the people accusing them of this were false witnesses. And after reciting his fealty to Torah, Stephen says the following:

Slide 7 "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it." (Act 7:51-53)

Not only does Stephen reject the notion that he has abandoned Torah, he convicts them of breaking it. At which case they kill him. Understand the people who broke the Torah were the ones accusing Stephen of breaking the Torah. And Stephen dies a martyr – one who believed in Yeshua and kept the Torah.

Slide 8 When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago **I went up to Jerusalem to worship**. Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city itself did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot. Nor can they prove to you the charges of which they now accuse me. But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect **I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets**; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men. Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings; **in which they found me occupied in the temple, having been purified**, without any crowd or uproar. But there were some Jews from Asia— who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me. Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, 'For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.'" (Act 24:10-21)

Paul wrote for people to take up a collection in his letters. Much of that was literal food, but also money. Paul did not bring that to the apostles but to the temple, where the storehouses are. He followed Torah in deed. And they found him in the temple being purified. That means when Paul got back to Jerusalem, he went to worship at the Temple just as one who follows Torah would do in that time period. Paul was also accused of nullifying the Torah or teaching contrary to Torah, but he tells up plainly he did not do that, believing in all of the Torah and the prophets, and he showed in deed, but doing Torah.

Paul's trip to the Temple and Stephen's testimony, by the way Paul held the coats while they stoned Stephen, show without any hint of a doubt that the apostles continued to follow Torah after Yeshua's ascension and the sending of the Ruach. Stephen and Paul are our examples, brothers and sisters. Of course, Yeshua is our ultimate example. We must believe in Yeshua and keep the Torah if we wish to be in the kingdom. Those who call this salvation by works are mistaken. This is salvation by faith. But faith must produce works. It must produce repentance and a change in heart that results in a change in deed. Let's praise Yahweh He has revealed these things to us, in the Name of His Son, Yeshua.