



MBS006

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE LAW OF MESSIAH



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*For Christ is
the end of the law
unto righteousness
to every one
that believes.
Romans 10:4*

INTRODUCTION

We are beginning a new study titled “The Law of Moses and the Law of the Messiah.” This is a very important subject because many believers are not sure just how they relate to the Law of Moses today. This is especially a problem for Jewish believers. The purpose of this study is to deal with the Scriptures from a Jewish as well as a Christian perspective. This is one of those areas which is crucial in the realm of Jewish missions and Jewish evangelism. It is a problem for the workers at Ariel Ministries and for those working in Jewish missions and witnessing to Jewish people. How the Law relates to us as believers is a very, very crucial issue.

If there is one immediate problem that seems to face the new Jewish believer in the Messiah, it is this relationship to the Law of Moses. This is more of a problem to the Jewish believer in Israel than to his counterpart in the United States, but every Jewish believer faces it to some measure. If I could generalize for a moment, I would say that the average American Messianic believer concurs with a partial keeping of the Law, while the average Israeli believer concurs with the keeping of all of it, excluding those parts dealing with the Temple and its functions. But regardless of the extent, the dilemma is the same: to what extent is the Messianic believer to keep the Law of Moses?

Two factors have developed in the minds and teachings of many believers which have contributed to the creation of this problem. One is the practice of dividing the Law into ceremonial, legal and moral commandments. On the basis of this division, many have come to think that the believer is free from the ceremonial and legal commandments, but is still under the moral commandments. The

second factor is the belief that the Ten Commandments are still valid today, while the other 603 commandments are not. When confronted by a Seventh-Day Adventist, the individual taking this approach runs into problems concerning the fourth commandment on keeping the Sabbath. At that point “fudging” begins, and results in inconsistency.

There is a major problem facing the Messianic believer concerning the Law of Moses, and the solution lies in discovering what the Bible says about the Messianic believer’s relationship to the Law, especially the Ten Commandments.

One thing to point out is the means by which the Mosaic Law was given. Everyone knows that Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai from the hand of God. Ten of those commandments, those written on the tablets of stone, were written with the finger of God. The other 603 were written down as Moses was commanded by God.

However, there is a Jewish legend and a Jewish tradition that says that Moses received the Law by means of angels. If you read through the Old Testament you will never see that anywhere; for nowhere in the Old Testament is it written that Moses received the Law by means of angels. Yet this has been a very persistent Jewish and rabbinic teaching. Of course, there are many things in Jewish traditions, legends, or rabbinic teachings which do not and are not validated by the Scriptures and sometimes go contrary to the Scriptures. There are things that are contained in Jewish legends and traditions which are validated by the New Testament. One of these is that particular tradition which says that Moses received the Law from God by means of angels. The New Testament validates this in three different places.

For example, in Acts 7:53 we read: *ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not.*

We are told here that the Jewish people received the Law, but the Law was ordained by means of angels.

The second place is found in Galatians 3:19 where Paul writes: *What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.*

For the second time, the New Testament validates the Jewish tradition that the Law of Moses was mediated, given to Moses, by means of angels.

There is a third passage which also teaches this. It is found in Hebrews, a letter specifically written to Jewish believers. In Hebrews 2:2 we read these words: *For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.*

In the context, the writer of Hebrews is clearly speaking of the Mosaic Law. Once again, what I am saying is that the New Testament three

different times validates a Jewish tradition that indeed the Law was given to Moses by means of angels. It is clear, of course, from the Old Testament that the Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God and not by the finger of an angel, but the other commandments of the Mosaic Law were in a different category. They were mediated by means of angels.

We have learned two things about the Law of Moses so far: first, the Law of Moses contains a total of 613 commandments, not merely ten; and secondly, the Law of Moses was mediated by means of angels.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW OF MOSES

Let's move on to another area to answer the question: "What was the purpose of the Mosaic Law?" Let me give you several reasons for the purpose of the Mosaic Law.

A. To Reveal the Holiness of God

The first purpose was to reveal the holiness of God; to reveal the standard of righteousness which God demanded for a proper relationship with Him. Let me emphasize that at no time is it taught in Scripture that the Mosaic Law was the means of salvation. That would make salvation by means of works. Salvation was always by grace, through faith. The content of faith may have changed from age to age; exactly what you had to believe to be saved may have differed from age to age. The Mosaic Law was never for the purpose of giving the Jew a way of salvation.

B. To Provide the Rule of Conduct for Old Testament Saints

The second purpose of the Law was to provide the means or the rule of conduct of life for the Old Testament saints.

For example in Romans 3:20 we read: *because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*

And in Romans 3:28 we read:

We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law.

Both of these points make it clear that no man was justified by the works of the Law. The Law was never, never, never a means of salvation. Rather, the Law always had other purposes; in this case, it provided the rule of life for the Old Testament believer.

C. To Reveal Sin

The third purpose for the Mosaic Law was to reveal sin. Three passages in Romans point this out.

In Romans 3:19-20 we read: *Now we know that what things soever the law says, it speaks to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.*

Paul emphasizes here that there is no justification through the Law; by means of the Law, no Jewish person will be justified. So what is the Law if not a way of justification; a way of salvation? The Law is there to give us the knowledge of sin, to reveal exactly what sin is.

In Romans 5:20 we read: *And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.*

Here again the Law was given so that trespasses might be made very clear. How does one know he has sinned? He knows because the Law said, “You do not do this,” but you did it. Or the Law says, “You will do this,” but you did not do it. That is how you know you have sinned: the Law with 613 commandments revealed sin.

In Romans 7:7 we read: *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

Paul again, for the third time, emphasizes the fact that the Law was given so that sin might be made known. Paul became aware of his sinful state by looking into the Law and knowing that on the basis of the Law containing the righteous standards of God, he fell short. This is the first and third purpose of the Law coming together. Again, the first purpose was to reveal the righteousness of God; to reveal the holiness of God. Thirdly, by showing exactly what sin is, Paul and other Jews became aware of the fact that they fell short of the righteous standards of the Law and became very aware of the fact that they were indeed sinners.

D. To Make One Sin More

The fourth purpose, and this one is strange, but it is there as we shall see, is to make one sin more. Let’s read the passages where Paul speaks of this in the Book of Romans.

For example, in Romans 4:15 Paul says: *for the law works wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.*

In Romans 5:20 he repeats in similar words:

And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.

Let me reiterate: in Romans 4:15: *for the law works wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression. And in Romans 5:20: And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound.*

The picture that he is giving is that the Law came in to cause more sin, to actually make us sin more. How does that work?

Paul explains it in Romans 7:7-13: *What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, You shall not covet: but sin, finding occasion, wrought in me through the commandment all manner of coveting: for*

apart from the law sin is dead. And I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death: for sin, finding occasion, through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me. So that the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good. Did then that which is good become death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might be shown to be sin, by working death to me through that which is good;-that through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful.

Before I deal with this passage, let's read one more in I Corinthians 15:56: *The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law.*

Basically what Paul is saying in Romans 7 and I Corinthians 15 is that a sin-nature needs a base of operation; furthermore, the sin-nature uses the Law as a base of operation. Paul said, "where there is no Law, there is no transgression." He did not mean, of course, that there was not any sin before the Law was given. The term *transgression* is a specific type of sin in violation of a specific commandment. Men were sinners before the Law was given, but they were not transgressors of the Law until the Law was given. Once the Law was given, then the sin-nature had a base of operation. Because as soon as the Law said "you shall not," the sin-nature said, "oh yes I will." Or as soon as the Law said, "you will do this," the sin-nature said, "oh no I won't." The sin-nature suddenly found a base of operation. The Law was used as a beachhead and suddenly all these new commandments were given, and the sin-nature "went to town" more or less, and started doing what it could to cause the individual to violate these commandments and sin all the more.

This is the fourth purpose of the Mosaic Law.

E. To Lead Us to Faith

This led to the fifth purpose, which is found in Galatians 3:24, is to lead us to utter faith.

Galatians 3:24-25 read: *So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

The final purpose of the Law is to lead us to faith. This is a build-up from the fourth purpose. As much as we may try to keep the Law perfectly, because of our sin-nature we will never do it. As Paul said in Romans 7: "as much as I tried not to covet, suddenly I found myself coveting everyone and everything. And I found myself full of the sin of coveting." It caused him to sin more until it drove him to utter faith.

Therefore, the fifth purpose of the Law is to drive one to faith; specifically, faith in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

II. THE UNITY OF THE LAW OF MOSES

It must be understood that the Mosaic Law is viewed by the Scriptures as a unit. The word *Torah*, meaning "law," when applied to the Law of

Moses is always singular, although it contains 613 commandments. The same is true of the Greek word *nomos* in the New Testament. The division of the Law of Moses into ceremonial, legal and moral parts is convenient for the study of different types of commandments contained within it, but it is never divided in this way by the Scriptures themselves. Neither is there any scriptural basis for separating the Ten Commandments from the whole 613 and making only those perpetual. All 613 commandments are a single unit comprising the Law of Moses.

It is the principle of the unity of the Law of Moses that lies behind the statement found in James 2:10: *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all.*

The point is clear: a person needs only to break one of the 613 commandments to be guilty of breaking all of the Law of Moses. This can only be true if the Mosaic Law is a unit. If it is not, the guilt lies only in the particular commandment violated and not in the whole Law. In other words, if one breaks a legal commandment, he is guilty of breaking the ceremonial and moral ones as well. The same is true of breaking a moral or ceremonial commandment. To bring the point closer to home, if a person eats ham, according to the Law of Moses he is guilty of breaking the Ten Commandments, although none of them says anything about eating ham. The Law is a unit, and to break one of the 613 commandments is to break them all.

In order to have a clear understanding of the Law of Moses and its relationship to the believer, Jew or Gentile, it is necessary to view it as the Scriptures view it: as a unit that cannot be divided into parts that have been done away with and parts that have not. Nor can certain commandments be separated in such a way as to give them a different status from the other commandments.

III. THE LAW OF MOSES HAS BEEN RENDERED INOPERATIVE

The clear-cut teaching of the New Testament is that the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative with the death of the Messiah. In other words, the Law, in its totality, no longer has authority over any individual.

First of all, this is evident from Romans 10:4: *For Christ is the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believes.*

Very clearly, Christ is the end of the law, and that includes all 613 commandments; hence, the Law has ceased to function. There is no justification through it.

In Galatians 2:16 we read: *yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*

Furthermore, according to Hebrews 7:19, there is no sanctification or perfection through the Law: *(for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God.*

Thus, it should be very evident that the Law has come to an end in the Messiah and cannot function in justification or sanctification. For the believer especially it has been rendered inoperative. The remaining verses, however, show that the Law has ceased to function at all.

Secondly, the Law was never meant to be a permanent administration but rather a temporary one, as we read in Galatians 3:19:

What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.

In the context Paul is pointing to the Law of Moses as an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant. It was added for the purpose of making sin very clear so that all will know that they have fallen short of God's standard for righteousness. It was a temporary addition until the Seed; that is, the Messiah would come; and now that He has come, the Law is finished. The addition has ceased to function with the cross.

Thirdly, with the Messiah there is a New Priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek, not according to the Order of Aaron. The Law of Moses provided the basis for the Levitical Priesthood. Thus, a New Priesthood required a new Law under which it could operate.

This is clear from Hebrews 7:11-12 and 18. Verses 11-12 state: *Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it have the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.*

Verse 18 states: *For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness.*

The point made in Hebrews 7:11-12 is that only one type of priesthood was permitted and that was the Levitical Priesthood. The Levitical Priesthood could not bring perfection. This is explained in Hebrews 9 and 10 which states rather clearly that animal blood cannot bring perfection; only the Messiah's blood could do that. The Mosaic Law was the basis for the Levitical Priesthood. The writer of the Book of Hebrews said that for the Levitical priesthood to be done away with and be replaced by a new priesthood, the Priesthood of Melchizedek, would require a change of the Law. As long as the Law of Moses was in effect, no other priesthood was valid except the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood.

Was there a change of the Law? Hebrews 7:18 states that the Mosaic Law was "disannulled." And because it is no longer in effect, you can now have a New Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek. If the

Mosaic Law were still in effect, Yeshua could not function as a priest. Because the Mosaic Law is no longer in effect, Yeshua can be a priest after the Order of Melchizedek.

Consequently, the Law of Moses has been “disannulled” in favor of a New Law, which is the basis for the priesthood according to the Order of Melchizedek.

The fourth line of evidence for the annulment of the Mosaic Law zeros right in on the part of the Law that most people want to retain, the Ten Commandments.

Let’s read a very significant passage from II Corinthians 3:2-11: *Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh. And such confidence have we through Christ to God-ward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account anything as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God; who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation has glory, much rather does the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which has been made glorious has not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasses. For if that which passes away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.*

First of all, one needs to see what Paul is saying concerning the Law of Moses. In verse 7, it is called: *the ministration of death*. In verse 9, it is called: *the ministration of condemnation*. These are negative but valid descriptions. In verses 3 and 7 the spotlight is on the Ten Commandments since it is these which are *engraven on stones*. The main point, then, is that the Law of Moses, especially as represented by the Ten Commandments, is a *ministration of death* and a *ministration of condemnation*. If the Ten Commandments were still in force today, this would still be true.

But they are no longer in force, for it states in verses 7 and 11 that the Law has “passed away.” The Greek word used is *katargeo*, which means “to render inoperative.” Since the emphasis in this passage is on the Ten Commandments, this means that the Ten Commandments have “passed away.” The thrust is very clear; the Law of Moses, and especially the Ten Commandments, is no longer in effect. In fact, the superiority of the Law of the Messiah is seen by the fact that it will never be rendered inoperative.

In Ephesians 2:11-16, Paul writes: *Wherefore remember, that once ye, the*

Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

In Ephesians 3:6 we read: *to wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

Basically what Paul is saying in these verses is this: God has made certain covenants with the Jewish people. In fact, there were four unconditional, eternal covenants God made with Israel, and these covenants are referred to as the Abrahamic Covenant, the Palestinian Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant. Other studies deal more extensively with these various covenants. All of God's blessings, both material and spiritual, are mediated by means of these four Jewish covenants which are eternal and unconditional.

At the same time Paul points out that God added a fifth covenant which was temporary and conditional. It is the Mosaic Covenant that contained the Mosaic Law. According to Ephesians 2:15 the Mosaic Law served as *a wall of partition*. This is another purpose of the Law which we did not deal with earlier: to serve as *a wall of partition* to keep the Gentiles as Gentiles, away from enjoying Jewish spiritual blessings. In the Old Testament, if a Gentile wished to become a recipient of Jewish spiritual blessings, he would have to take upon himself the entire obligation of the Law; be circumcised; and live as any other Jew had to live. Only a Gentile as a proselyte to Judaism, could enjoy the blessings of the Jewish covenants; Gentiles as Gentiles could not. If the Mosaic Law were still in effect, there would still be *a wall of partition* to keep Gentiles away. But the *wall of partition* was broken down with the death of the Messiah. Again, the *wall of partition* was the Mosaic Law, and that meant the Law of Moses was done away with. Gentiles as Gentiles, on the basis of faith, can and do enjoy Jewish spiritual blessings by becoming *fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus*. While Gentile believers do not benefit from the physical blessings, they do benefit from the spiritual blessings.

To summarize: the Law is a unit comprised of 613 commandments, and all of it has been invalidated. There is no commandment that has continued beyond the cross of the Messiah. The Law is there and can be used as a teaching tool to show God's standard of righteousness and man's sinfulness and need of substitutionary atonement. It can be

used to point one to the Messiah (Gal. 3:23-25). However, it has completely ceased to function as an authority over individuals.

NOTES

IV. THE MESSIANIC BELIEVER IS UNDER A NEW LAW

The Law of Moses has been disannulled, and we are now under a new law. This new law is called: *the law of Christ* in Galatians 6:2 and *the law of the Spirit of life* in Romans 8:2. This is a brand new law, totally separate from the Law of Moses. The Law of the Messiah contains all the commandments applicable to a New Testament believer.

The reason why there is so much confusion over the relationship of the Law of Moses and the Law of the Messiah is that many commandments are similar to those found in the Mosaic Law, and many believers have concluded that certain sections of the Law have therefore been retained. But it has already been shown that this cannot be the case, and the explanation for the sameness of the commandments is to be found elsewhere.

This explanation can best be understood if it is realized that there are a number of codes in the Bible; such as the Edenic, Adamic, Noahic, Mosaic and Christian. A new code will always contain some of the same commandments of the previous code, but this does not mean that the previous code is still in effect. While certain of the commandments of the Adamic Code were also found in the Edenic Code, it did not mean that it was still partially in force. The Edenic Code ceased to function with the fall of man. The same is true when we compare the Law of the Messiah with the Law of Moses. There are many similar commandments. For example, nine of the Ten Commandments are to be found in the Law of the Messiah, but this does not mean that the Law of Moses is still in force.

Let me illustrate this by using an example which many of us have experienced. I received my first driver's license in the State of California, and, as long as I drove in California, I was subject to the traffic laws of that state. But after a couple of years, I moved to New York. Once I left California, I ceased to be under California traffic law. The traffic laws of that state were rendered inoperative in my case. Now my driving was subject to a new law, the traffic laws of the State of New York. There were many laws which were different. In California I was permitted to make a right turn at a red light after stopping and yielding the right-of-way, but in New York no turn was permitted at a red light. There were many similar laws between the two states; such as, the law demanding that I stop at a red light. When I stopped at a red light, I did not do so in obedience to the State of California as I once had, but in obedience to the State of New York. I proceeded at a green light, not because of California law, but because of New York law. If I went through a red light without stopping, I was not guilty of breaking California law, but New York

law. Many laws were similar, but they were under two distinctly different systems.

The Law of Moses has been nullified and we are now under the Law of the Messiah. There are many different commandments. Under the Law of Moses we would not be permitted to eat pork, but under the Law of the Messiah we may. There are many similar commandments, but they are nonetheless in two separate systems. So if we do not kill or steal, this is not because of the Law of Moses but because of the Law of the Messiah. On the other hand, if I do steal, I am not guilty of breaking the Law of Moses but of breaking the Law of the Messiah.

This understanding can solve many problems among fundamental believers; such as, the issues of women wearing pants, the Sabbath and tithing. If the commandments concerning these things are only based on the Law of Moses and not on the Law of the Messiah, then they have no validity for the New Testament believer.

V. THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM

As we have been saying, the believer in the Messiah is free from the Law of Moses. This means that he is free from the necessity of keeping any commandment of that system. But on the other hand, he is also free to keep parts of the Law of Moses if he so desires.

The biblical basis for this freedom to keep the Law can be seen in the actions of Paul, the greatest exponent of freedom from the Law. His vow in Acts 18:18 is based on Numbers 6:2, 5, 9 and 18. His desire to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost in Acts 20:16 is based on Deuteronomy 16:16. The strongest passage is Acts 21:17-26, where we see Paul, the apostle of freedom from the Law, himself keeping the Law.

The believer is free from the Law of Moses, but he is also free to keep parts of it. Thus, if a Jewish believer feels the need to refrain from eating pork, he is free to do so. The same is true for all the other commandments.

However, there are two dangers that must be avoided by the Messianic believer who volunteers to keep the commandments of the Law of Moses. One danger is the idea that by doing so he is contributing to his own justification and sanctification. This is false and should be avoided. The second danger is in one's expecting others to keep the same commandments which he had decided to keep. This is equally wrong and borders on legalism. The one who exercises his freedom to keep the Law must recognize and respect another's freedom not to keep it ☆

NOTES

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:

MBS002, 003, 005, 007, 015, 018, 026, 027, 040, 062, 080, 087, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 128, 119, 120, 122, 134, 155, 158, 176, 177, 178, 179.

