



ARE COMMANDMENT KEEPERS TRYING TO EARN THEIR SALVATION?

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By George Lujack

Hebrew Roots Messianic believers often get accused of trying to 'earn' their salvation. Some Christian groups go so far as to say that Messianic believers who keep the Tanakh (Old Testament) laws are actually sinning, refusing God's grace, and will be condemned by God for obeying His laws! This article will address the absurdity of the charges thrown at Messianic believers by some members of the Christian faith and will declare that God's laws, all of them, are eternal.

THE CHRISTIAN CONFUSION OF COMMANDMENT KEEPING WITH JUDAISM

ROMANS 10:1-4 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Messiah (Christ) is the end [COMPLETION] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

GALATIANS 3:1-3 (NKJV):

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (NKJV):

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

The Apostle Paul dealt with and wrote about the Jews of His time who began in the knowledge and faith of Yeshua (Jesus) and then, over time, reverted back to their rabbinical elders and teachers who rejected Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah. The Israeli Jewish population would ultimately reject Yeshua (Jesus) and teach (bewitch) others, such as those in Galatia, to not obey the truth of Yeshua (Jesus) who was crucified to die to atone for the sins of the mankind.

It was not law keeping that Paul was admonishing the Jews and Galatians for doing; it was law keeping *with the belief* that they could keep the law to establish their own righteousness, without a need for a Savior!

Mainstream Christian teachings often twist numerous Scripture verses, typically the writings of the Apostle Paul, declaring that God's laws, specifically the non-Ten Commandment laws and the 7th day Sabbath, were abolished or fulfilled. Scripture specifically warns against twisting Paul's words, some of which are seemingly to be hard to understand.

2 PETER 3:15-18 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, *in which are some things hard to understand*, which untaught and unstable [LAWLESS, LAW- IS-DONE-AWAY-WITH MINDED] people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness [IN RIGHTEOUSNESS], being led away with the error of the wicked [LAWLESS]; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ).

SALVATION IS NOT AN *UNCONDITIONAL FREE GIFT* OF GOD; YOU MUST REPENT

ACTS 2:38-40 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

Then Peter said to them, "*Repent*, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ) for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). For the promise [OF SALVATION] is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as YHWH (the Lord) our God will call."

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

ACTS 3:19 (NKJV):

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

REVELATION 3:19 (NKJV):

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Without repentance there is no salvation. Repentance is part of the deal.

YESHUA (JESUS) DID NOT COME TO EITHER ABOLISH OR REPEAT THE LAW

JOHN 18:37 (NKJV):

“For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”

Yeshua (Jesus), during His missionary time on Earth as the Messiah (Christ), did not come for the cause to abolish or repeat His laws already given in the Tanakh (Old Testament). He came to bear witness to the truth of them and die to atone for the sins of mankind.

God’s Tanakh (Old Testament) laws are truths that Yeshua (Jesus) bore witness to and obeyed Himself. If any of God’s laws needed modification Yeshua (Jesus) would have set the example by showing to us how and why His laws were changed or abolished. To the contrary, Yeshua (Jesus) bore witness that all His laws remain in effect, as He Himself obeyed them, all of them.

MATTHEW 5:17-19 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy [THE LAW] but to fulfill [THE PROPHETS’ WRITINGS CONCERNING ME]. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever [JEW OR GENTILE] therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever [JEW OR GENTILE] does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

LUKE 16:17 (NKJV):

“It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.”

BELIEVERS ARE TO WALK AS HE WALKED, TO LIVE AS HE LIVED...

1 JOHN 2:6 (NKJV):

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

Yeshua (Jesus) was without sin (Hebrews 4:15) and therefore followed all of the commandments. Yeshua (Jesus) didn't come to obey the commandments so that we don't have to! Yeshua (Jesus) came to demonstrate how we should live. As true followers of Him, we ought to emulate Him, living as He did as much as humanly possible. It is impossible to walk as He walked by eating all manner of unclean creatures (Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14), getting tattooed (Leviticus 19:28; Deuteronomy 14:1), or discarding any of the lesser or greater commands. God's commandments have not been abolished, nor have they been fulfilled.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

MARK 7:6-7: (NKJV):

He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men [NOT MY COMMANDMENTS].'"

REVELATION 14:12 (NKJV):

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God *and* the faith of Yeshua (Jesus).

REVELATION 22:14 (NKJV):

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

CURSED ARE THOSE WHO FORGET AND REFUSE TO OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS

HOSEA 4:6 (NKJV) [CONDENSED]:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, ... , because you have forgotten the law of your God.

MATTHEW 7:21-23 (NKJV) [WITH INTERPRETATION]:

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will [OBEYS THE COMMANDMENTS] of My Father in heaven. Many [LAWLESS CHRISTIANS] will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your [JESUS’] name, cast out demons in Your [JESUS’] name, and done many wonders in Your [JESUS’] name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you [CHRISTIANS] who practice LAWLESSNESS [DO NOT OBEY MY COMMANDMENTS]!”

There is only one class of people who do things *in His name*, yet Yeshua (Jesus) will turn these away from the kingdom of heaven and say to them that He never knew them: lawless, non-commandment keeping Christians. So, while one cannot earn salvation by keeping the law apart from believing in Yeshua (Jesus), one can certainly lose salvation by refusing to do His commandments.

COMMANDMENT KEEPING IS NOT TO EARN SALVATION; IT IS TO DO THE WILL OF GOD FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE AND TO BE CONFIRMED BLAMELESS BY GOD

LUKE 1:6 (NKJV):

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord *blameless*.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:7-8 (NKJV):

Our Lord Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ), who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be *blameless* in the day of our Lord Yeshua Messiah (Jesus Christ).

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-15 (NKJV):

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may *become blameless* and harmless, children of God *without fault* in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

2 PETER 3:11,14 (NKJV):

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ...

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, *without spot and blameless*.

Yeshua (Jesus) was the only person who was holy, without spot, and blameless. How then can we sinners be found by Him to be without fault, and blameless?

God the Father took out His wrath against sinners on Yeshua (Jesus), so that His judgment would pass over us sinners as we are covered by His Son's blood. Yeshua's (Jesus') blood will cover our sins completely, *if we repent*, so that our sins are no longer visible to God, and are forgotten by Him, and we are seen by Him as blameless.

JOHN 14:15 (NKJV):

"If you love Me, keep My commandments."

The only way to be justified by Yeshua's (Jesus') blood is to repent, live righteously, and obey His commandments. If a person does His commandments, Yeshua's (Jesus') blood covers that person's sins; he or she will be forgiven of them, and be viewed as blameless before God.

HEBREWS 10:26 (NKJV):

For if we *sin willfully* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

If a person refuses to repent and live according to God's commandments *after* receiving the knowledge of them, Yeshua's (Jesus') atonement blood sacrifice will not cover that person's sins, he or she will be held in judgment, and will not be blameless before God.

**OBEYING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS IS NOT "EARNING SALVATION;"
IT'S SHOWING HONOR, LOVE, AND RESPECT FOR YESHUA (JESUS)
BY LIVING RIGHTEOUSLY, ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL IN HEAVEN**

JOHN 14:15 (NKJV):

"If you love Me, keep My commandments."

