

# OpenTheo

## Torah Observance (Part 3)



### Torah Observance - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg explores the New Testament teachings on Torah observance, focusing on the examples of Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Gregg emphasizes that the law was not destroyed but fulfilled through the prophets, and that Jesus emphasized the importance of Sabbath observance. He discusses Peter's revelation that Gentile believers should not be burdened with the requirements of the Torah and highlights Paul's teaching that the law no longer has power to restrain sin. Gregg concludes by emphasizing that Christians are guided by the spirit, not the law, and warns against demonic teachings that distort the role of the Torah in the faith.

### Transcript

So, looking at the New Testament and specifically on what is said relevant to observance of Torah, I want to talk about the example and teaching of Jesus, I want to talk about the example and teaching of Peter, and the example and teaching of Paul. I also want to talk about James and the decision of the Jerusalem Council. All these are relevant.

Now, Peter, James, and John are considered to be the pillars of the early Jerusalem church. And Peter and James are usually much more heroes, I think, of the Torah observance movement, because many times it is argued that Paul is the one who began to steer people away from Torah observance. Now, some Torah observance people insist that Paul was Torah observance.

Others have actually read his writings and realized that he was not Torah observant and did not advocate Torah observance. But, so they begin to see him as, actually, there's one, did I mention there's one group out there that think that Paul was the false apostle that Jesus refers to in speaking to the Ephesian church in Revelation chapter 2, where it says the Ephesian church had tested those who say they are apostles and are not and found them to be false. And they connect that with the fact that in 2nd Timothy, Paul says, all those in Asia have deserted me.

And so they say, look, Paul said at the end of his ministry, all those in Asia, that would include Ephesus, had deserted him, and Jesus commends the Ephesian church for having

tested false apostles and rejected them, so Paul must be one of those false apostles. Pretty wild stuff. I've written a whole article refuting that.

It can be refuted on about 100 points. But the point here is, that's how far it goes sometimes. Sometimes Paul is seen as a supporter of Torah observance.

By some groups and other groups see him as the enemy of Torah observance and just say, hey, don't go with him. He's trouble. But I want to talk about Peter and James as well as Paul.

But first, Jesus. We already saw that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

For surely as they do, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matthew 5, 17, 18. Now we've made quite a few points of this.

I won't linger on it so much now, but I just want to point out that Jesus said that his mission, what he came to do, was to fulfill the Torah and the prophets. It's not hard to understand how he fulfilled the prophets because we understand that prophets predict things and we know what it means to fulfill prophecy. It's kind of a term we're familiar with as Christians.

Jesus, you know, this happened that it might be fulfilled, which was written in the prophet Isaiah, or that might be fulfilled, which was written in Micah the prophet or whatever. A prophet predicts something and then when it happens, that's fulfilling it. Now Jesus said he came to fulfill the prophets but also the law, which suggests that the law was predicting something.

The law was predicting something along with the prophets. The law in its own way was prophetic. The prophets spoke verbally predictions about the Messiah.

The law spoke ritually about the Messiah. The offering of animal sacrifices foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice. The Passover foreshadows Christ as our Passover says in 1st Corinthians 5-7.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadow the spiritual sacrifices also of the Christian church in the new covenant. There's many ways in which we see that the laws foreshadowed spiritual things and those things were fulfilled in Christ and as since they are fulfilled, they are no longer in the same place they were. There has been a change of the law as we read in Hebrews 7-12 and Jesus fulfilled it.

He came to do it, which means that's what he did. He didn't come to do it and then fail to do it. He came to do it and did it.

He fulfilled the law. We saw in 1616 of Luke, the law and the prophets were until John, Jesus said. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone's pressing into it.

So the law was preached and the prophets were preached until the time of John the Baptist. That signaled a new era where something else, not the Torah and the prophets, is being preached. He said that the temple worship, which was the core of Torah observance, was going to be passing away and was already beginning to.

When he was talking to the woman at the well in John 4 verse 21, he said to her, woman believe me the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, meaning Mount Gerizim, nor in Jerusalem, meaning at the temple, worship the father. And then verse 23 and 24 he said, but the hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the father in spirit and in truth for the father is seeking such to worship him. God is spirit.

Those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. Now, arguably a person could worship at the temple and still be worshipping in spirit and truth. A person could be spiritual and there were Jews who did.

So in fact, I would think the early church in Jerusalem, which kept going to the temple until the temple was destroyed, probably were worshipping God in ritual and in spirit and in truth because they were spirit filled people. But Jesus is not simply saying the temple and its rituals are going to continue, but I'm going to add a spiritual dimension to it because he says the time is coming when people will not worship at the temple. They will not worship at Gerizim and they didn't.

The Romans came and destroyed both temples in the Roman, in the Jewish war from 66 to 70 AD. Both temples were destroyed. Neither has been rebuilt so far.

At least I don't think the Samaritans have built another temple. They might have. There is a Samaritan religion still.

I don't know very much about it, but their temple was destroyed too. And the temple in Jerusalem, which is the one that God authorized, has not been rebuilt. So Jesus was talking about the end of ritual sacrifices and ritual worship and the replacement of it with spiritual worship merely.

The woman had asked, where are we supposed to worship God? Where are we supposed to be? In Mount Gerizim? That's where my people worship. Are you Jews? You worship in Jerusalem. Which is it? And she said, neither one.

And so Jesus said the temple system, which is the Torah system, was on the way out and it was not going to be a permanent thing. Now in his behavior, some say, well, Jesus was Torah observant. Well, in measure he was because he was born under the law.

He was circumcised, though he didn't have a choice about that. No Jewish boy had a choice about whether he was circumcised or not. Jesus was born under the law.

His parents circumcised him. And they devoted him at the temple on the 40th day of his life, as was also required under the law. All the rituals of the law were performed upon him in his childhood.

And as an adult, he lived in a Jewish society where he largely fit in. We know of him going to the temple for some festivals. We know of him, you know, more or less fitting in with Jewish culture.

And therefore, we have to assume probably on balance, he was more likely to be Torah observant in his actual habits than otherwise. So we don't have much witness to it. For example, we don't have any witness of Jesus keeping the Sabbath.

Now, this is an area where Seventh-day Adventists and I have had disputes. They say, we keep Sabbath because Jesus kept Sabbath and Paul kept Sabbath. I say, really, where do you find that? Well, look here.

As his manner was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath. Okay? They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and preached. Paul did, Jesus did, so they were Sabbath observant.

Well, it's true they observed the fact that it was a Sabbath and they knew they'd find some Jews in the synagogue and they went there and preached to them. But they did the same kind of work every other day, too. They weren't doing something, they weren't keeping Sabbath.

The Sabbath law did not institute the synagogue. Preaching in a synagogue was not part of the Sabbath command. The synagogues didn't come until hundreds of years after the law was given.

This was not Sabbath observance according to Torah. It was evangelistic strategy. During the days that weren't the Sabbath, he preached on the hillsides and the street corners and wherever people listened, and on Sabbath he went to where they were in the synagogues.

So did Paul. They did the same work seven days a week. That's not Sabbath keeping.

The Sabbath law was you do your work for six days and on the seventh day you don't do it. And that's why Jesus told the Pharisees that the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath. Why? Because they did the same work on the Sabbath as they did the other six days.

They didn't work all only on six days and then rest. They worked all seven days. So did

God, Jesus said in John chapter 5. God does the same thing and that's why Jesus said he did.

In other words, he did the opposite of observe the Sabbath. He did not stop doing his normal activities on the Sabbath any more than the priests in the temple did. But that's okay.

They profaned it but they were guiltless and so was he. We never read that Jesus encouraged Sabbath keeping, nor do we ever read that he kept the Sabbath. We do read in one place that he broke the Sabbath though.

Now this statement is anathema to Torah observers and even to some Adventists who aren't entirely into Torah observance because the Sabbath is their badge. You know, Jesus kept the Sabbath. We keep Sabbath.

Well, I'm afraid the Bible says he broke the Sabbath. No, it doesn't. He never knew that.

That make him a... he couldn't die for our sins if he broke Sabbath because he'd be sinning. Well, that's your interpretation. The Bible says he broke the Sabbath.

Where does it say that? It says that in John chapter 5 verses 16 through 19. It says, For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill him because he had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My father has been working until now.

That means my father doesn't stop working because, you know, oh the clock ticked, you know, six o'clock Friday night and Sabbath. I guess I have to not work. No, my father works now.

He's still working now. It's Sabbath but he hasn't stopped. I'm not stopping.

My father works until now and so do I. Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him because he not only broke the Sabbath, John says, which is an affirmation that he did, but he also said that God was his father making himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, Most assuredly I say to you the son could do nothing of himself but what he sees the father do. Whatever he does the son does also in the same manner.

I'm God's son. I learn my work habits from him. He works seven days a week.

So do I. The son does whatever his father does. I'm the son. The father doesn't stop on Sabbath.

I don't stop on Sabbath. He broke the Sabbath. He profaned the Sabbath just like the priest did.

Now, of course, he was saying, Oh, Jesus never break the Sabbath, but he's it says he

did. Now what usually the argument is given by Torah observing people is he didn't exactly break the Sabbath, the Lord's Sabbath. He broke the Pharisees' traditional sensitivities about the Sabbath, which were really not authoritative.

Well, it could have said that, but it doesn't say that. It says he broke the Sabbath. Now I'll tell you what, the next thing is, and he said that God was his father making himself equal with God.

There's two groups that hate this verse. One of the seven day Adventists and Torah observing people. The other are Jehovah's Witnesses.

Because when you say it says he made himself equal with God, they'll say, No, it doesn't say that. It says they thought he was making himself. They said he called himself God his father and they thought he was making himself equal with God.

And that's why they want to stone him. He wasn't really doing that. Well, you know, I don't think our Bible providers were incapable of expressing what they wanted to say.

What it says, listen to the sentence. What does a sentence like this mean? Because he not only broke the Sabbath, but he also said that God was his father, thus making himself equal with God. Now, is there anything in there about the Pharisees' opinions about anything? No, no, no mention of the Pharisees' opinions.

John, the author, the narrator, is telling us what Jesus did. Two things. He broke the Sabbath and he made himself equal with God by saying that God was his father.

That's John's opinion, not the Pharisees' opinion. And I'll accept John's opinion before I'll accept that of, you know, Ellen G. White or some other modern teacher who says, No, he'd never do that. Well, you weren't there.

John was. He said he did. So Jesus never taught us that we should keep the Sabbath.

There's no record that Jesus ever did keep the Sabbath, though he probably did on occasions. We just don't have any record of it. It's apparently not important enough to mention.

And thirdly, he broke the Sabbath at least once, and I have reason to believe probably very often he did. I mean, he healed on the Sabbath numerous times. And if this was breaking the Sabbath, when he healed the man at the pool, then healing the woman who was bent over would be similarly breaking the Sabbath.

And so would the man with the withered hand who was healed on the Sabbath. And the man born blind that carried, you know, that was healed at the pool of Siloam. All these happen on the Sabbath, and all the Jews accused Jesus every time of breaking the Sabbath.

And we said, Well, they were just too picky about it. That wasn't breaking the Sabbath. But on this occasion, John said it was.

It was the same kind of thing. Jesus did his regular work on the Sabbath regularly, just like the priests did their regular work on the Sabbath regularly. That is, as Jesus used the term, profaning the Sabbath, but they're blameless.

Now, let me just say this what profane means. We think of profanity as like bad language. Profane is an old English word that means common.

Profane means common. To profane something means you treat it as if it's common, not as if it's sacred. To say they profaned the Sabbath is not saying they did something naughty on the Sabbath.

It means that they treated the Sabbath as a common day, just like any other day. They didn't treat it as a sacred day. And that's what Jesus and the priests did.

And apparently the disciples too. But that is, of course, what the law says not to do. That's exactly what the commandment on Sabbath says don't do.

Don't treat the Sabbath as a common day. Treat it as a holy day. You should keep it holy.

Holy, holy means separate, unlike the other. Priests don't. Jesus didn't.

God doesn't. And as far as we know, the disciples did not. So Jesus on the Sabbath broke it.

He defended his disciples when they broke it. We talked about that earlier. I won't take the time to do that again.

That's Matthew 12, verses 1 through 7. That's when they were picking grain and eating on the Sabbath. And he said that's like when David ate the showbread, which by the way was a breach of the law. But no one condemned David for that.

And Jesus is saying then my disciples can breach that law and be condemned too. They're working under my oversight, just like your priests work under the temple and I'm greater than the temple. I'm the Lord of the Sabbath, even of the Sabbath.

So that's when he defended them in Matthew 12. And of course, as we said, he said he was the Lord of the Sabbath. So, oh, another thing Jesus said there in Matthew 12 that's of interest.

He said, therefore, it is lawful, Matthew 12, 12, therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. He said, if you have a lamb that falls into a ditch, you're not supposed to bear a burden on the Sabbath. You would do it to save the lamb, certainly.

And this is a man we're talking about, more important than a lamb. Therefore, it's okay. It's lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Okay, and what am I supposed to do the other six days? Bad? No, I'm supposed to do good every day. The Sabbath is like every other day. If what you're doing is good, you're not breaking it because it's lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

Now, not necessarily under the Torah law. Jesus is kind of, in a sense, rewriting Torah, rewriting Sabbath. Okay, under Torah, you couldn't do good.

You're not supposed, if you're a doctor, you're not supposed to work healings on the Sabbath. You're not supposed to do any work, although most work we hope is good. Supporting your family is a good thing.

You know, harvesting grain, of which you're going to give a tenth to the temple, so that's a good thing, but you're not supposed to do it on the Sabbath. The Sabbath law forbade all work on the Sabbath. Jesus said, nah, as long as you're doing good, like every other day, what you're supposed to do, it's lawful.

So Jesus certainly did not reinforce anything like a once a week Sabbath observance. He also said, interestingly, in John 7, 22, that circumcision preempts Sabbath keeping. He said, Moses therefore gave you circumcision, not that it was from Moses, but from the fathers, and you circumcised a man on the Sabbath.

Now, he's not saying they're doing the wrong thing. In fact, he's saying they're doing the right thing because that's the same principle he goes under. He says, I made a person every bit whole on the Sabbath.

You yourselves know that circumcising a man on the Sabbath is okay. Why? Because there's a law of circumcision that on the eighth day, every Jewish boy is to be circumcised. Well, obviously, one out of every seven Jewish boys is going to find the seventh, eighth day of his life to be on the Sabbath.

I mean, a seventh of the population, by the law of averages, is going to have to be circumcised on the Sabbath day. And he says, what? There's a conflict. Are you going to keep the Sabbath? He seems to indicate that circumcision is the kind of thing that would be breaking the Sabbath if there wasn't a law commanding it, but the circumcision command preempts the Sabbath command, so you'll break the Sabbath to circumcise.

And what he's saying is, I broke the Sabbath to do something more, to heal a man. That's better even than circumcising. The interesting thing is that the New Testament teaches clearly that circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing.

Paul says that three times in his writings, and yet it's more than Sabbath. It's more than Sabbath so that you'd break the Sabbath even under Torah to keep circumcision. Now, if



circumcision is more important than Sabbath and circumcision is nothing, then Sabbath is obviously not going to be much in the New Covenant because it foreshadows spiritual rest.

I think Hebrews 9 goes into that. We won't go into that right now. So, other ways that Jesus ignored the law.

It was against the law to touch unclean things. There was a certain penalty if you did. It wasn't the death penalty, but it was a penalty.

If you touched a leper, Jesus touched lepers, you'd be unclean and you couldn't associate with people or at the tabernacle until you were clean. Now, some contact with unclean things and people would make you unclean just till sundown, then you'd wash yourself and you can start all over the next day, but some were for a whole week. If you touched a dead body, you'd be unclean for a week.

That can really interrupt your social life and religious life. It's very inconvenient. Jews wanted to avoid being unclean because touching those things obviously carried a penalty.

It was against the law to touch them. There was not impunity to touch them. Jesus touched lepers.

That was against the law. Jesus let a woman who had an issue of blood touch him. That too would have made him unclean under the law.

He touched dead bodies on more than one occasion and he didn't have to, you know. He could have just spoken. When Lazarus rose, he didn't touch him.

He just said, Lazarus, come forth, but when he went to Jairus's house, it says he stretched out his hand and touched her and said, Talitha cumi, little girl arise. He could have done that without touching her. He's just being provocative, just like when he did his miracles on the Sabbath in front of the Pharisees.

He's being provocative, but he's saying, listen, I'm going to touch her along with raising her. He could have done it without the touch. Likewise, the young man, the son of the widow of Nain, Jesus reached out and touched the coffin, which would have made a Jew unclean.

Even if you were near a person who was dead, you'd be unclean. If someone died next to you in battle and you didn't even touch him, you're unclean. I mean, let's face it, being near or touching a dead body was forbidden.

Jews had to be near dead bodies sometimes. They had to bury their dead and so forth, but they had to observe the penalty of being unclean for a period of time. Jesus touched

those bodies.

Jesus touched lepers. Jesus touched a woman with an issue of blood, all of which would make a person unclean, but he didn't act unclean. He didn't say, okay, I'm going to recuse myself from any normal activities or social activities.

I'm not going to go to the temple or tavern. He ignored that, ignored the laws of clean and unclean. In fact, he made a statement, very controversial at the time, about foods because to Jews, their diet is very special.

Only certain foods are kosher and other foods are unclean, and there are Torah observant people who say we should observe that diet. However, Jesus made a statement to his disciples that seemed to change that for them, for people following him. He said to them, are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into a man from outside, meaning whatever you eat, cannot defile him? That certainly is contrary to the law.

If you ate unclean food, you'd be defiled under the Torah. He says, are you that much without understanding? I think Torah observant people have to be asked that. Are you still without understanding of the new covenant of Jesus, of what the Bible teaches? What goes into your mouth, he said, cannot defile you.

He's talking there about eating with unwashed hands, but the statement's sweeping enough to include any kind of food, and Mark recognized that because Mark says, thus he declared all foods clean. That's in Mark 7, verses 18 and 19. By saying that nothing that goes in your mouth can defile you, Jesus declared all foods clean.

That certainly is contrary to the Torah. Torah does not recognize all foods clean. Jesus did.

Jesus made a similar statement to the Pharisees on another occasion in Luke 11, 41. He said, but give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you. Of course, Paul later on would tell Titus to him that is pure, all things are pure.

It's a pure heart, not a pure diet that matters to God. Paul said, we're not talking about Paul yet, we're going to talk about Peter next, but Paul said, I am persuaded by the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself. That's Romans 14, 14.

That's a pretty big statement. So who's telling me that foods are unclean? Jesus said they're not. Paul said they're not.

I don't know anyone I walk around today who ranks at their level to tell me the opposite. Even Moses doesn't rank at their level. He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is even greater than John the Baptist, who didn't, he pronounced the coming of the kingdom, but didn't get to enter the kingdom.

Moses didn't enter it. Elijah didn't. No one in the Old Testament entered it.

The greatest of the Old Testament are still not as great as the least in the kingdom. And so any, you know, Paul certainly ranks higher than Moses to the Christian, not to the Jew, of course. And so Jesus and Paul both tell us all foods are clean.

Who is it who tells me otherwise? I don't believe him. I don't acknowledge his authority. Now what about Peter? Usually the Torah observer people like Peter well enough.

He didn't say those things Paul said, or did he? Galatians 2, 14 is very interesting because when Paul says that when Peter came to Antioch and he and Paul and Barnabas and others were there, Peter recognized that it's not necessary to separate from Gentiles for table fellowship. The Jews would never eat at the same table or even go to the house of a Gentile because the Gentiles did not observe clean and unclean rules. And if a Jew would have contact with them, they felt this would make them unclean.

But Peter knew better as Paul did and Barnabas did. And when Peter came to this Gentile church, largely Gentile, not entirely, in Antioch, he ate freely with the Gentiles without compunction. But some Judaizers from Jerusalem came to visit and when they came to town, Peter knew that they didn't think it was okay to eat with Gentiles, so he withdrew from table fellowship with the Gentiles.

And Paul was incensed at this what he called hypocrisy. Now before I go further, I should probably deal with the question. How was Peter more hypocritical in this than Paul was when he said to the Jews I become like a Jew? Wasn't Peter just doing that? Peter when he was with Gentiles, he was like Gentiles.

When the Jews came over, he was not like the Gentiles. He was like a Jew. Is that what Paul did? No, Paul was very overt and outspoken about his view that Christians do not have to keep Torah.

But he wouldn't rub it in the faces of Jewish company. Now Peter on the other hand was living in a time where the gospel was very much in dispute in this very matter. This is just before the Jerusalem council.

The Jerusalem council laid the whole thing to rest, but before that happened, there was dispute in the churches whether the Gentile Christians should be circumcised or should be accepted without being circumcised. And Paul and Barnabas were strong on the point that the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised, and Peter held that view too. But when Judaizers came who held the other view, Peter acted like they were right.

Paul says I had to rebuke him because the gospel itself was being compromised. That the message of the gospel should not be tainted. I had to rebuke Peter.

But when he rebuked Peter, listen what he said. He says, when I saw, this is Galatians

2.14, when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, if you being a Jew live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? Now what's interesting here of course that Paul is saying you shouldn't compel Gentiles to live as Jews, which is a rebuke to all Torah observant advocates. How can you require Gentiles to live like Jews? But what's even more remarkable, he says to Peter, you're a Jew and you don't even live like a Jew.

You live like a Gentile. So was Peter Torah observant? Apparently not. Paul knew him personally.

Those who tell me that Peter is Torah observant have never met Peter. Paul knew him personally. He said, you know, you don't live like a Jew.

You actually live like a Gentile. So it's inconsistent for you to try to get Gentiles to live like Jews. But you see, both statements are very important.

It's wrong to try to impose Torah on Gentile believers. But Peter himself clearly was not Torah observant as a Christian. He lived like a Gentile.

This is an unanswerable statement. If Peter lived Torah observant, he could have said to Paul, hey, what do you mean I live like a Gentile? I'm Torah observant. Now at an earlier time, Peter was Torah observant even as a Christian.

And you might remember in Acts chapter 10, before Peter understood these things, that he was on a housetop praying and he saw a vision. And in that vision, something like a sheep suspended by four corners full of animals, apparently many of them unclean animals, was lowered down from heaven. And a voice from heaven said, arise, Peter, kill these animals, eat them.

And apparently they were unclean animals. Peter at that point was Torah observant. This is when he learned not to be.

And he said, not so, Lord. Now that's interesting. I obey the law.

I don't obey the Lord. You know, the Lord told me to do it, but I've got a law telling me not to. Not so, Lord.

Sorry, Lord, can't obey you in this because I've never eaten anything unclean. I'm Torah observant. And Jesus rebuked him.

In fact, this happened three times. Peter takes, he's a slow learner. And eventually he got the message very slowly.

But each time Jesus said, what I have cleansed, don't you call common. Don't you call unclean. Now, of course, we know from this story that Peter was being prepped to have a new view of Gentiles because he was about to be sent to the house of a Gentile,

uncircumcised man, a man into whose house Jews would not generally go.

And Peter was being told by the Lord to go to this man's house. So the law said not to, but the Lord said to. And Peter had to decide, am I going to be Torah observant or Jesus observant? And Jesus, no, Lord, I can't do what you're telling me to do because I'm Torah observant.

And Jesus said, I said they're clean. Who gives you the authority to say they're unclean if I say they're clean? Don't call what I have cleansed common or unclean. That's when Peter stopped being Torah observant.

He realized, oops, I'm supposed to be Jesus, not Torah. By the way, this is a side issue, but I think it's important. When Jesus was at the last supper with the disciples, he said, this cup is my blood.

This bread is my flesh. You know, there's certain Christians who think he's being literal about that. The apostles certainly didn't take it literally.

Peter would have said, not so, Lord. I never drink blood. I never eat human flesh.

It's clear Peter by taking the cup and so forth without protest, he didn't take it literally as the blood and body of Jesus, and rightly not. But you see, we see later on when he did, was literally told to eat something unclean, he protested and he said, I've never eaten anything unclean. Well, if he'd been taking Eucharist every day or every week, all those years prior to that, how can you say I've never eaten anything unclean if he's not thought he'd been drinking blood, you know, every other day.

Eating human flesh, those are certainly unclean. It's obvious that the Eucharistic elements were not viewed by the apostles as being literally the blood and body of Jesus, or else this kind of protest would have been launched much earlier by Peter. But here he realizes, I can't do that.

Oops, I need to do that. I need to eat unclean. Of course, Jesus was not at this point really making a lesson about animals, but about people.

The unclean animals were a type of the Gentiles. But let's face it, Jesus did technically tell him to eat these unclean animals. If Peter had not protested and had obeyed under Christ's command, he would have eaten unclean animals.

But of course, the main point was other than about animals, but it was not absent from the situation. How about circumcision? When the Jerusalem council met shortly after the writing of Galatians, I believe, Paul and Barnabas and Peter and others were gathering with the apostles in Jerusalem, where James was kind of the president, the overseer of the council. And they gathered to discuss this very question.

The question is, do Gentile Christians need to become Torah observant? Now you might say, no, I thought it was just about circumcision. We have to understand what's going on here. For many years after Pentecost, all the Christians were Jewish.

And then some Gentiles started getting converted. And the question is, can they be Christians without being Jewish? You see, it was always, even in Old Testament, possible for a Gentile to become Jewish. He could be circumcised and keep the law.

And he could be like a native of the land, is the term the Bible used, like an actual Jew. And he could then eat Passover and he could do all the Jewish things. He could be part of the Jewish society, could be what we call a proselyte.

That was never forbidden. That was always a possibility. A Gentile could always become a Jew, but it meant get circumcised.

Now, when they said, should the Gentile Christians be circumcised, should they become proselytes? Is it possible to become a follower of the Jewish Messiah without being a Jew? Gentiles can become Jews by becoming proselytes, and then we can accept them in the church. But these are uncircumcised. When they asked, must Gentiles be circumcised? There's a much larger question here.

Are Gentiles under these Jewish laws? That's the question. The question was that of Torah observance. Circumcision just being the first step of a Gentile becoming Torah observance.

Paul, remember, said in Galatians, you who get circumcised know that if you get circumcised, you are then obligated to keep all the law. Because a proselyte, a Gentile, becomes a Jew and gets circumcised, he is taking on the yoke of the entire law. That's understood.

So when they met at the Jerusalem Council, they said, the Gentiles be circumcised, it's really a bigger question. Should they become Jewish? Should they be forced to be proselytes? Should they be put under the Torah? That's the question. And at that council, Peter gave testimony, though the decision was announced by James later, but Peter's testimony was this, in Acts 15, 7 through 9. Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. We say that God does not make a distinction between circumcised people and uncircumcised people, meaning Torah observant people and non-Torah observant people. God made no distinction.

He gave them the same Holy Spirit and even then they weren't required to be

circumcised. But that was what was being questioned, should they be or not? He says, hey, I say no. God didn't make a distinction in giving them the Holy Spirit.

I don't think he can make some distinction afterward, whether they're circumcised or not. Interestingly, at that same council, the next verse, Acts 15, 10, Peter said, Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? He said it was a burdensome yoke to be under all these 613 laws. Nobody could keep them all, not because they were impossible to keep, they're impossible to remember.

It'd be hard to remember all those laws. None of them were really hard to actually do if you were inclined to be obedient. It's just that who can remember them all? You're going to break them all the time without knowing.

It's sort of like the laws in this country. If someone wants to arrest you, there's a law in the books that forbids something you're doing. There's laws that at some stage, you're going to be put in jail if you spit on the sidewalk, but no one knows that law's on the books and it's not enforced.

But it's like that. 613 laws, the Jews were breaking them all the time. They just didn't know all of them probably.

The Pharisees, the legal scholars knew probably all of them, but the average Jew is a fisherman or a tax collector. He didn't know much. He knew some of them.

But Peter said, That's a crushing burden. We as Jews haven't been able to, why should we put that on them? Why will you test God by trying to put the Gentiles on? What an interesting statement. When Satan told Jesus, why don't you just jump off the temple here? Because God has said his angels will support you and protect you.

It's written, you shall not test the Lord your God. Jesus rebuked Satan by saying, hey, testing God is not okay. Peter says, we're God.

If we try to put Gentiles under the yoke of bondage, how is that any different than what Torah observant people are trying to do when they're trying to put Gentiles, Christians under the law? It's not different. It's the same thing. It's the exact same thing.

It's just 2000 years later. Now, how about James? He was at the Jerusalem Council too. We see that Peter was not Torah observant.

He lived like a Gentile. And when it came to speaking up on it, he spoke in favor of Paul's doctrines on this, which were Gentiles should not be under the law. But what about James? He was like the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Peter was first, then Peter had to go undercover when Herod tried to kill him. And James

apparently stepped up and became the leader where Peter had been in the Jerusalem church. Well, James was the superintendent presiding over the Jerusalem Council deciding this issue.

And what James came up with at the end, after all the testimony, Paul and Barnabas, Peter had all spoken and others probably. It says James spoke this in Acts 15, 19 through 21. This is kind of the decision of the council.

It's official. The apostles have made the decision. No one has the right to reverse it.

James said, therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city being read in the synagogues every Sabbath. Now, the way a Torah observer people read this, they say he did put them under the law, but he didn't want to put it all on them at one time.

Right now, we're just going to ask you to keep these four Torah commandments, but you'll be in the synagogue and you'll hear these week by week and you'll learn the whole Torah eventually. That's how Doug Hampton, for example, understands this. Totally wrong.

First of all, the four things that are mentioned are not all Torah laws at all. Certainly, abstaining from blood is Torah. Fornication would violate the Torah also, if we mean fornication seen in terms of especially temple prostitution.

And to avoid meat sacrificed to idols, that's not technically forbidden in the Torah. Worshiping idols is, but a person who didn't worship idols could accidentally eat meat sacrificed to idols that was sold in the marketplace, and there was never an actual command in the Old Testament. Apart from forbidding the worship of idols, there's never a command that says you can't eat any animal that's been sacrificed to idols.

But this is certainly things strangled. There's no specific mention in the law of things strangled, although probably this refers to the fact that a strangled animal has not been drained of blood adequately, and that would sort of fall within Torah. But let's face it, if they're saying, we're going to put you under the Torah gradually, we'll give you these four things first.

If you can get that squared away, you can be in the synagogue and hear Moses taught every week. That's not what he's saying. If he wanted to say, let's put them under a little bit of Torah, they'd certainly start, they wouldn't put things strangled in there above something like circumcision, which none of the Gentiles were.

There are things that were more fundamental to Torah observance, although everything in the Torah was kind of required. What they're saying is, we don't want to put these



people under the yoke of bondage at all. But there are things that Gentiles, in their societies, often do very offensive to Jews.

And there are many Jews in all these cities who've been taught for generations in the synagogues from the Torah. And they've got these ingrained sensitivities, and they hate Gentiles because Gentiles worship idols, they fornicate, they eat blood, they do all kinds of gross things. And let's ask these Gentiles, please don't do those things, because there's many people in your town who have been going to the synagogue for generations, and this is something that is highly offensive to them.

And this is his point, and we know it's his point because they wrote a letter to the Gentiles, and Paul and Barnabas were charged with carrying this letter to the Gentile churches, and they did. One of the churches they carried it to was the Corinthian church. Of course, Paul established the Corinthian church after this on his second missionary journey, and he taught them these things.

It specifically says they delivered the letter from the Jerusalem Council. But when Paul left Corinth 18 months later, they were confused because Paul had apparently said all things are lawful. And so some of the Corinthians were saying, I guess it's okay to fornicate because all things are lawful.

And Paul had the right to correct that in 1 Corinthians 6. He says, now wait a minute, wait, all things are lawful, but not all things are edifying. He says food is for the belly, and the belly is for food, but the body is not made for fornication. What he's doing is he's put a finer point on those four things.

Three of those things had to do with what you eat or don't eat, blood, things strangled, meat, sacrifice, idols. That's food. God doesn't really care so much about what goes into your mouth.

Jesus said everything's clean, but fornication, that's on the list too, and that's not in the same category. There is a difference between ritual laws and moral laws, and fornication is immoral. He says, sure, your body was made for food, food was made for the body, God's going to destroy both of them.

They're not permanent issues. God doesn't make a big issue about what you eat, but he will make an issue of a fornication, he says. And he teaches against fornication as a corrective to apparently then he did deliver the rules to them, but he must have said, and this is where they got mistaken, he must have said, listen, James and the council there have asked you to keep these things between ourselves, the food restrictions.

It's not that God cares about these things, but we don't want to offend other people. So abstain from these things. And they made the wrong inference, I guess fornication is that way too.

He said, head right back, no, fornication is different. You're not supposed to, that does offend God, the food things don't. But when he went on in Corinthians in chapter 8 through 10, he points out you can eat it, even meet sacrificed idols, but if it stumbles somebody, don't do it.

See, that was James' concern too. If you're going to offend somebody, don't do it. And the Jews who've been schooled in the law of Moses for generations, as James points out, they're in every city and you're going to offend those people if you're doing these typically Gentile things, eating meat, sacrificed idols and blood and things like that.

You're going to kind of turn off the Jews and make them unreachable. And he taught the Corinthians that, but then he had to correct their misunderstanding. They thought that included fornication.

And he had to say, no, fornication, that's not the same as the food things. Food things, non-issue. Fornication is an issue.

But you see, he's working from this Jerusalem Council decree and he's basically saying even the three things about food aren't really issues to God, they are issues to people. And you don't want to offend people unnecessarily because then you'll find it harder to reach them. That's how Paul understood this.

James, when he wrote the letter, said this in Acts 15, 23 through 29. James said, Greetings, since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you, Gentiles, with words unsettling your souls, saying you must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment. It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who are prophets from the Jerusalem church, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. In other words, if you don't trust Paul and Barnabas saying that we agree with you, we'll send some of our own prophets from our own church to confirm what we're saying here. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.

If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. No other things are required of you with reference to the law. That's what we've been here discussing at the Jerusalem council, whether you should be under the law.

We decide no, we'd like you to observe these four things, but no other things are being laid upon you. Notice several things he says. He said that those who went and taught that they had to be circumcised, he says we didn't send them out.

James and the council distanced themselves from these. We didn't authorize this. These people are not speaking for us.

Clearly he didn't want to be known for being the promulgator of this particular message. James says we didn't send those people. And he did endorse Barnabas and Paul.

These are faithful brothers who've hazarded their lives to the gospel. Now Barnabas and Paul were strongly teaching against Torah observance. James endorsed them.

He also sent Judas and Silas, two prophets, to confirm it. So inspired, spirit-filled prophets agreed with the Jerusalem council and were sent to confirm it. He also says in verse 28, it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to not lay anything else.

So this decision was not just the opinion of a few guys. This was God revealing his mind by the Holy Spirit and it was the none less than the apostles who made the decree and their decisions are final, by the way, in the church and should be. Jesus gave them that authority.

And he's asked that they restrain from four practices, two of which are in the Torah, and said that nothing more was required with reference to ceremonial issues. That's what James said. That's what the official decision of the church in Jerusalem was.

Now the church in Jerusalem was Torah observant. The Jewish church in Jerusalem went to the temple. They did Torah things and it'd be hard not to because the whole city was temple-centered.

If some group of Jews just decided to flout those things, it would really look offensive to their neighbors. So like Paul, when he's with the Jews, he acts like a Jew. So did the Christians in Jerusalem.

They were with the Jews all the time. They act like Jews. But writing to the Gentiles who are not with the Jews just avoid some of these things that Jews really find offensive.

Apart from that, nothing else is required. That's the Holy Spirit's decision and ours. So Peter and James and Jesus all were not only... Well, James was Torah observant because he lived in Jerusalem.

Peter probably was when he was there too. But when Peter was in Antioch, he lived like a Gentile. All these apostles had sort of the same method.

When I'm with the Jews, I'll avoid offending them. When I'm with Gentiles, I'm free from the law. You can't have that position if you're under the Torah.

Okay, finally, Paul. We've talked about Jesus. We've talked about Peter.

We've talked about James. Let's talk about Paul. What did Paul say? Well, in Philippians

3, verses 4 through 8, which we read earlier under the support for Torah observance, Paul said that he had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

He had been a keeper of the Torah down to the last detail. He was circumcised the eighth day. He was, you know, a keeper of the law, blameless.

And yet he said as a Christian, he counts that dumb. He counts that as worthless. He doesn't think it was a bad thing.

It's just not worth anything. It's like fertilizer in your garage. It's not worth much.

Cows produce it for free. Most people had a cow in those days, or goats anyway, and sheep. Animals produce that stuff.

You get it for free if you want it. But it's not worth much. And Paul said all that Torah observance, that wasn't worth much compared to the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I count all those things as rubbish. So Paul did not seem to really praise Torah observance, though he lived in it as a staunch follower. He said that such observance does not have any value in subduing the flesh.

I won't read this long passage, but in Romans 7, he talks about how when he was under the law, the motions of sin were stirred up by the law. Where he was looking to be a holy man, he found the law stirred up the wrong kind of instincts in him. The law did not have the power to restrain sin in him.

Later in Colossians 2, he's writing to Colossian Christians who were somewhat mixed up in Judaizing and somewhat mixed up in Gnosticism and other stuff, but he said, you know, you're following all these rules, touch not, taste not, handle not. He says these have no value in restraining the flesh. They have a sort of a show of self-willed worship and false humility, but they don't have any value spiritually.

Paul didn't consider that rituals are spiritual. I mentioned earlier, Paul referred to the rituals of Judaism as the stoicheia, again the Greek word, the basic elements. Some translations use the word rudiments.

I'm not a drummer, but I know my son took drum lessons. I know that the drum teacher, I suppose this is common among drum teachers, they want to teach the drum students the rudiments. There's a certain number of them.

I forget the number of rudiments, 15, 20, or something like that. There's certain rudiments of drumming. They're like, you get those down and then you can combine them in different ways, you can be a great drummer.

That's like the alphabet. Get the alphabet down, you combine the letters in different

ways, and you can make words and thoughts and make sense. But you have to get the rudiments down first.

Stoicheia is sometimes translated rudiments, sometimes elements, but it basically means, you know, kindergarten stuff. And he referred to them that way in Galatians 4, verses 1 through 5. Let me just read this passage. It says, Now I say that the heir, as long as he's a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is the master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.

Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the stoicheia of the world. Now Paul's stoicheia of the world were in Jewish practices. The Galatians' stoicheia of the world are probably in pagan practices, but rituals are stoicheia.

They're not, they're not, they're greasy kid stuff. They're not, they're not the stuff of men. They're not solid food.

They're baby food. He says, We were kept under those things when we were children. But he says, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons instead.

But now, after we have known God, or rather known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly stoicheia, to which you desire again to be in bondage? Now they were turning to Jewish law. He called those the weak and beggarly stoicheia. He says, You observe days and months and seasons and years.

I'm afraid for you, lest I've labored in vain for you. Torah observing people observe days and seasons and years. Now they'll say, Paul's talking about pagan ones here, but he's not.

Anyone who wants to can read Galatians and see he's talking about Judaizers trying to put the Jews, the Christians under Jewish law. Circumcision is the one most often mentioned, keeping days and years and so forth. That's also Jewish observance.

These are the ABCs. God had Israel do this when they were children. He said, But even though someone is the heir to a state, when they're a child, they're not really better than a slave.

We were in bondage, like in slavery, under the law, because a child is under the authority of babysitters and guardians. When humanity was in an infancy, God put us under rules. Babysitters.

Hank Hanegraaff, I think, wisely has compared the law to training wheels on a bicycle. You see, when a child doesn't know how to keep his balance, hasn't developed balance, you need training wheels so you don't fall over and get hurt. But the idea is he's going to

learn to ride that bike and keep balance from internal control.

His internal gyroscope is going to be calibrated to the point where he doesn't need the training wheels. He'll stay balanced without them. And the law is like the training wheels.

People who didn't have inward calibration to have a balanced moral and Christian godly life, they needed the training wheels to keep them from falling over too far. But the training wheels are not needed when you learn how to ride a bike. When the law is written in your heart.

And so Paul says we were children until Jesus came. And now we can put away the training wheels. We're not under the guardians.

The stoicheia, we've already learned those. We don't need to relearn them. Don't go back there.

That's going backward. He says, if you're keeping days and festivals, I'm afraid I've labored in vain for you. Now that's a freaky thing to say because it means you guys became Christians, but it was all in vain if you go back to Judaism, if you go back to Jewish law keeping.

We've read some of this other I'm going to pass. Of course, we mentioned it in Romans 10, 4, Paul said Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul said in Romans 3, 21, that the gospel presents a righteousness of God apart from the law.

Romans 3, 21 says, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed being witnessed by the law and the prophets. It means the law and the prophets predicted this and bore witness to it. Moses and Elijah did give their endorsement to Jesus.

They bore witness that he's Messiah, but then they went away. The righteousness is apart from that law and the prophets. It was witnessed by it, but it's not part of it.

Okay, let's, I'm going to pass over a few things. I'm going to point out how Paul felt this was like it was dangerous, and then I think I'm going to quit today. I've got more notes and I could do another session, but I don't know that I'll do that tonight.

Probably a Q&A tonight. You can get the notes, obviously, and therefore you won't miss out on what else follows. Speaking about circumcision, in Romans 2, in fact, I want to give more than is in my notes from Romans 2 because this is very important.

Romans chapter 2, Paul is rebuking the attitude of Jews who think that they are better than Gentiles because they're Torah observant. Because the Jews have the law and the Gentiles don't. They think that they're better than the Gentiles.

But Paul says in verse 12 of Romans 2, for as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many have sinned in the law will be judged by the law. So whether you have the law or not, you're going to be in trouble if you sin, Jews included. Even if they have the law, they'll be judged by it.

But then he says in parentheses, for not the hearers of the law are just inside of God, but the doers of the law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having a law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness between themselves, their thoughts accusing or else excusing them. Now most people think that passage, Paul is saying, even the pagans have sort of knowledge of God's law.

Even the pagans know it's wrong to murder and steal and commit adultery. They know it. They don't follow it, but they know it.

It's written in their hearts. When you find pagans who don't have the law doing these things, it shows it's written in their hearts. And most commentators, all of them I think that I know of, have said what Paul is saying is that even the Gentiles have an innate instinctive knowledge of the moral code of God.

Well I think that is true, but I don't think Paul's saying that here, and this would be a very strange place for him to say it. It's not really the point he's working on. He's working on the point that some people are righteous before God without keeping the law.

Those people are Christians. Now the Jewish Christians were looking down on the Gentile Christians, and Paul said, look at these Gentiles, that is the Gentile Christians. They have never been under the law.

They don't have the law, but they do. They obey the law from an inward impulse. The law is written on their hearts.

I once thought the more traditional view of this passage, so a friend of mine said, where in the Bible does it say ever that unbelievers have the law written in their hearts? It's the Christians who have the law written in their hearts. Paul says these Gentiles have the law written in their hearts. They're Christians.

They don't have the law. They're not circumcised. They don't care about the law.

They're not observant, but they're more righteous than you are, even in terms of moral things that the law would describe, and he goes on. He says in verse 17, indeed you're called a Jew, and you rest on the law, and you make your boast in God, and you know his will, and you approve of things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law. You're confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having a form of knowledge and truth in

the law.

He says, but you who teach another, do you not teach yourself? And then he challenged them to ask, are you really keeping the law? And many times Jews don't, but in verse 26, he says, therefore, if an uncircumcised man, that is a Gentile, a Christian, keeps the righteous requirements of the law, that has to be a Christian, because Paul said in Romans 8 that the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us when we walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. So it's Christians who walk in the spirit, it's Christians who see the righteous requirements of the law fulfilled in them. He says, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, he's a Christian who's not circumcised, not a Jew, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? In other words, he's not circumcised, but it's as good as if he is.

He doesn't have to be circumcised. What he already is doing is as good. And he says in the next verse, and will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who even with your written code and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? Now he's saying a Gentile who's not circumcised and therefore not Torah observant is actually keeping the heart of the law from an inward impulse better than you who have the written law.

And then he says in verse 28, for he is not a Jew who's went outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward and in the flesh, but he is a Jew who's one inwardly. And circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from in but God. He said something similar to that in to the Philippians.

In Philippians 3, 3, he said, we are the true circumcision who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, meaning in a fleshly circumcision. We're the true circumcision, not who are physically circumcised, but who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ, who are Christians. That's Philippians 3, 3. I won't read all the scriptures I have here in the notes because our time is now essentially over, but I want to make something very clear.

Paul denounced in strong, strong terms, those who would impose the Torah as a duty upon Gentile believers. Let me just read some of the passages where he did so. First Timothy 1, 7 through 9, Paul speaks of false teacher who desiring to be the teachers of the Torah, understand neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

He's basically saying that those who are Judaizers, they want to teach the Torah, but they really don't know what they're talking about. They don't understand what they're talking about. He calls them false brethren in Galatians 2, 4. He said this occurred because certain false brethren, he means in the church in Jerusalem, they were recognized as Christians in the church in Jerusalem, but Paul said they're false.

They were false brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth to spy out our



liberty, which we have in Christ that they might bring us into bondage. They wanted to put the law on our converts. These people are false Christians, false brothers.

He called this demonic teaching in First Timothy 4, 1 through 3. He said the spirit speaks expressly that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Now he may not have been talking about Judaizers, although he had always had them somewhat in the back of his mind because they were always pestering him. He might have been thinking of some kind of Gnostic, you know, people putting these kinds of rules on people, especially forbidding to marry.

That wouldn't be an aspect of Judaism. But forbidding to eat any foods, he said, was wrong because God has made these foods to be accepted. And he said it's a doctrine of demons to teach Christians not to eat certain foods.

Now, of course, he's talking about for ritual righteousness type spiritual purposes. I might tell you not to drink so much Coca-Cola, but I wouldn't have such a reason as saying this is a matter of morality. Or spirituality, it's just a matter of stewardship of your body.

Paul said in Galatians 5, 2 through 4, and this is very strong, indeed, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, meaning if you become Judaized, if you become a proselyte, Christ will profit you nothing. And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. If you have become, excuse me, you have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by the law, you have fallen from grace.

I don't know of any stronger language in any one of Paul's epistles. You have fallen from grace. You're estranged from Christ.

Christ profits you nothing. Who? Fornicators? Murderers? No. You get circumcised as a Gentile.

Why is that being alienated from Christ? Why will he profit you? Because you're choosing a different faith system, a faith system that those who crucified Christ embraced and continue to embrace. And not what Jesus said to him, you're not following Christ, you're following the code that his enemies followed. Now, by the way, his friends followed it too, and he followed it to some measure, I'm sure, in his early life.

It's not that the code was bad, it's that it didn't keep people from being bad who embraced it. People could embrace that code and still be murderers of the Messiah. It's a different life.

It's not the Christian life. You choose to follow Christ or you choose to follow the law. You

can't really be having two masters.

You can't serve two. I'm going to just, I think I've covered most of this. The notes are very thorough.

This much I'll say, Galatians 1, 6 through 7. Paul said, I marveled, writing to the Galatians who are now being Judaized and following these teachers. I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you, meaning you're turning from Christ. They didn't know they were.

They thought they were adding, you know, Torah observance to be kind of go up a notch from their previous Christian position. I'm going to be a superior Christian by keeping the Torah. No, you're turning away from him who called you.

Turn away from Jesus and in the grace of Christ to a different gospel. And he says, it's not really altogether different, but there are some who are troubling you and perverting the gospel of Christ. Who might they be? The Judaizers he's talking about.

Those who tried to put Gentile Christians under Torah, they are perverting the gospel. They're causing those to depart from him who called them in the grace of Christ. That's what Paul says.

The next two verses, he says, verses eight and nine, but even if we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed, anathema in the Greek. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you've received, let him be accursed, anathema. Preaching Torah observance to Christians is another gospel, Paul said.

It's a perversion of the gospel and those who preach it, as far as Paul is concerned, are accursed. I'm not sure if that means damned, but it doesn't sound very far removed from it. So it's a very important thing that we do not get swallowed up by this.

Now in closing, I just want to say, well, then does that mean Christians are lawless? No, we already saw Paul said this. He says, I'm not without law to God. I'm not under the law, the Torah.

I'm not without law to God. I'm under the law of Christ. A Christian obeys Christ.

That is far from being lawless. I cannot murder, not because the Torah said it, but because Jesus said it. I'm under orders to follow his instructions, to continue and observe all things that he's commanded, to continue in his words and be a disciple.

That's what being a disciple is. I can't commit adultery. I can't steal.

I can't, you know, dishonor my parents. I can't do any of those things because Christ

actually spoke about those things. What if I, do I have to keep the Sabbath? Well, Jesus never spoke about that.

A different religion did, but I'm not in that religion. I'm a follower of Christ and he never said a thing about that or any of the other ceremonial laws. So following Christ doesn't mean you'll live a lawless life.

It means you'll live a non-ceremonial life. At least you won't be embracing the ceremonies of Judaism. There are Christian ceremonies that Christians observe, and I don't think there's any harm in it.

I don't think they're necessary. I've never followed the Christian calendar any more than the Jewish calendar. It's all traditions of men, but I don't think it's evil.

I don't think it's hurtful. If you do, that's fine with me. As far as I know, it'd be fine with Paul too.

The main thing is, is it fine with Jesus? If it is, it's cool. But the idea here is Jesus taught us to love one another. He said, if you do to others what you want them to do to you, this is the whole law and the prophets, he said in Matthew 7, 12.

And he said similar things elsewhere. And so did Paul in Galatians 5 and in Romans 13. They said, you know, whoever has, loves his neighbors as much as has fulfilled the law.

That's the term used. Fulfill the law. How? By loving your neighbors, you love yourself.

Well, can I love my neighbor as myself and eat pork? As far as I know, I can't think of anything about it would be unloving to my neighbor to do that. How about if I don't go to Jerusalem on Feast of Tabernacles? Can I still love my brother if I don't do that? Yeah, I can love my brother and going to Feast of Tabernacles has nothing to do with loving my brother as near as I can tell. In fact, none of the ceremonies of Judaism have anything to do with loving my brothers or loving myself.

It's the ceremonies of the law that are no longer there. The moral code, that is to say the essential righteousness, that's a reflection of God's own character. Of course I'm supposed to be like God.

That's what Jesus, Jesus was like God. And he said, I've given you an example that you should do as I have done. Christ is our example.

We're supposed to become like him, obey him, follow him. We won't be living a lawless life. We're not iniquitous.

We're not lawless. We are followers of a king and actually Jesus indicated if you're his followers, your righteousness will, as it must, exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees because they measure theirs by a different code. Ours actually is a code

that matters to God and that is love your neighbors, you love yourself.

If you do that, then you fulfill the law. But obviously that has very little to do with what food you eat or where you're circumcised or whatever. That's nothing to do with loving your neighbors, you love yourself.

And that's what Jesus said. All the law is fulfilled in this one commandment. Paul said in Romans 13, all the commandments, you should not kill, you should not murder, you should not commit adultery, you should not steal, and if there is any other commandment, it is all fulfilled in this one word, love your neighbors, you love yourself, he said.

So if I love my neighbors as I love myself, I won't be harming anyone. In fact, Paul says that in the same passage, love does no harm to his neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law, he says.

So I don't need the Torah to love my neighbor. I need the Spirit of God who, through whom the love of God is shed abroad in my heart. I need this love of God, I need the Spirit of God who produces the fruit of love.

And if I have the Spirit of God, I'm walking in the Spirit, I will fulfill the righteous requirements of the law, but not the ceremonial ones. So this is the, this is, I believe, the New Testament witness, as well as the Old Testament witness. I think it's consistent in both Testaments about Torah observance.

And the bottom line, of course, is does a Christian have to be a Torah observant? Not according to Scripture. And if they speak not according to this word, there's no light in them.