

Just for clarification: In my presentations I am using YHVH (Yahuwah) instead of LORD, which is a title and not a name and I am using Yahusha instead of Jesus, which is not a translation but a transliteration and really has no meaning, neither in Hebrew nor in English! YHVH (Yahuwah) and Yahusha are the actual original names and the true nature and character of them.

Searching for Answers! Many of us possess the deep rooted desire to find out the truth about life's purpose, who am I, why am I here? There is much confusion, division, and disagreement especially in religion. Religious people are divided into hundreds of different denominations, wearing different names, worshipping different ways and teaching different doctrines.



Finding the right answer, finding the truth, especially in matters of eternal salvation is a personal responsibility and a biblical command!

In 1. John 4:1 Paul states: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of Elohim: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

It states in Hosea 4:6 “**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge!**” If we don't want to be destroyed, we must seek the knowledge that it is talking about, we must seek for answers. It is our obligation to look and to search for it!

2. Timothy 2:15 gives us the advice: “**Study to show thyself approved unto Elohim, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**”

We must dig deep into the Scriptures, starting in Genesis 1:1 and not in the middle of the Bible. Under no circumstances must we be satisfied until we have found our answers directly from the Word of Yahuwah!

In Matthew 7:7 Yahusha promises us by saying: “Ask, Seek, Knock!” This would prove that we are truly interested to find answers to our questions!

There are so many different opinions and interpretations In Christianity in reference to biblical doctrines as there are denominations!

? Feast days?
? Weekly Sabbath?
? New Moons?
? Barley or Equinox?
? Trinity?
? Crucifixion day?
? Name of God?
? Romans 14?

In other words
CONFUSION!

Colossians 2?
 Ephesians 2?
 Acts 15?

A person in a light blue shirt and dark tie holds a white sign with several question marks.

It is not enough to sit in a church and listen to someone preach a sermon, it is our responsibility to start asking questions and require a “Thus saith YHVH”! Nothing less will do!

Our message today deals with:

Acts Chapter 15!

Again and again people are trying to use Acts chapter 15 to do away with the Law of Moses, the Torah, specifically the weekly Sabbath, the New Moons, the Feast days, the dietary laws and other things they don't want or they don't like etc. Are those people right? Is Acts 15 doing away with the Law of Moses, the Torah, the Sabbath, New Moons and Feast days?

Let's find out what Acts Chapter 15 is really all about! Let's be very clear: It doesn't matter what others do or believe, but it does matter what Scripture says. We are not worshipping people, churches or denominations, we are worshipping YHVH, the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and He is the final authority and He has the last word.

According to the apostles, Gentile believers have been grafted into the family of Israel, brought near to the covenants of promise, and become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel. The dividing wall of partition is removed, and both Jewish and Gentile believers are as one new man, a spiritual temple being built together on Messiah. **Together, Jewish believers and Gentile believers create the Israel of Elohim.**



What is the bottom line with Yahuwah according to Peter in Acts 10:34-35? What is important? Peter opened his mouth and said, "Of a truth I perceive that Elohim is no respecter of persons,

.....in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

That simply means, that Yahusha is no respecter of persons!

He shows no partiality!

He shows no favoritism!

He makes no difference between Jew and Gentile, free and bond, male and female, neighbors and strangers, between friends and enemies!

This truth was not self-evident to the first believers at that time. Some insisted that Gentiles could not be part of Israel and the kingdom or even inherit eternal life unless they underwent **conversion and became Jewish** after coming to the faith.

In Acts chapter 15, believers from among the Pharisees charged that the Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and compelled to keep the Torah in order to be saved! They said in Acts 15:5: **"...it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."**

By "circumcision," they meant a legal conversion to Judaism. By "ordering them to keep the Law of Moses," they meant compelling the

Gentiles to keep the Torah (*the Written and Oral Torah*) as Jews and the Oral Torah was to them even more important than the written one.

That was salvational to them!

We must understand what circumcision meant as a kind of physical identifying mark to the Jews of the New Testament times that they were part of Israel and Elohim's people, be approved and part of the remnant!

Also remember that during the reign of Antiochus, there was an attempt to force them to not practice it and this caused them to lose their identity as children of Abraham. This was one of the signs along with the weekly Sabbath and the Passover that they were His people, which were also attacked and forbidden by the Hellenists.



Circumcision was looked upon as the very **sacrament of salvation** much like water baptism for infants and the mass became for Catholics.

We need to agree with them that we need not be physically circumcised on the outside in order to be saved. **Salvation is by the blood of Messiah and His atonement alone.** Interesting enough, the very concept of circumcision in the Old Testament is the cutting away of the foreskin or flesh of our hearts. **So if we are born again, we are internally heart circumcised.**

We find this written in Deuteronomy 10:16: “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff necked!”

This is repeated again in Jeremiah 4:4: “Circumcise yourselves to YHVH, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings.”

By the first century circumcision took on a national identity mark to Judaism and the believing Jews did not want to lose that identity. The Rabbis made it into a gate or door to belong to YHVH's true people.

This was not the original intent of circumcision in the time of Abraham or Moses. It was a sign of the righteousness that was already accounted to Abraham.

This is Paul's argument in Romans 4:11 saying: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he may be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."

The Bible says in Leviticus 12:2 (NLT) "On the eighth day the boy's foreskin must be circumcised."

But this command is no different than any other YHVH would ask us to do. We don't eat pork, keep Sabbath or keep the Feasts to be saved. **We keep them after we already have been saved and want to obey His Word and stop sinning or breaking His commandments.**



When we read verse 21 of Acts 15 we are told that after the Holy Spirit gave the directives on the question that Moses is read every Sabbath in the Synagogue.

The new believers coming in from outside the Torah would hear the rest of how they are to live. There were four stipulations, which are merely the bare minimum they need start doing not so they can be saved, but so they can have fellowship with their brother Judah.

According to verse 2 of Acts 15 it was Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them that went to Jerusalem unto the apostle and elders to get an answer to that question.

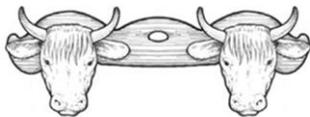
Reading Acts 15, the Apostles were gathered in Jerusalem for the express purpose of deciding, which laws the Gentile converts were

required to observe once they had been baptized into the body of Messiah!



We read in the verses 7-8: “And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago Elohim made a choice among us, that the Gentiles by mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. 8. And Elohim, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us.”

Then verse 9: “And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Yahuwah Elohim has spoken, let’s accept it!



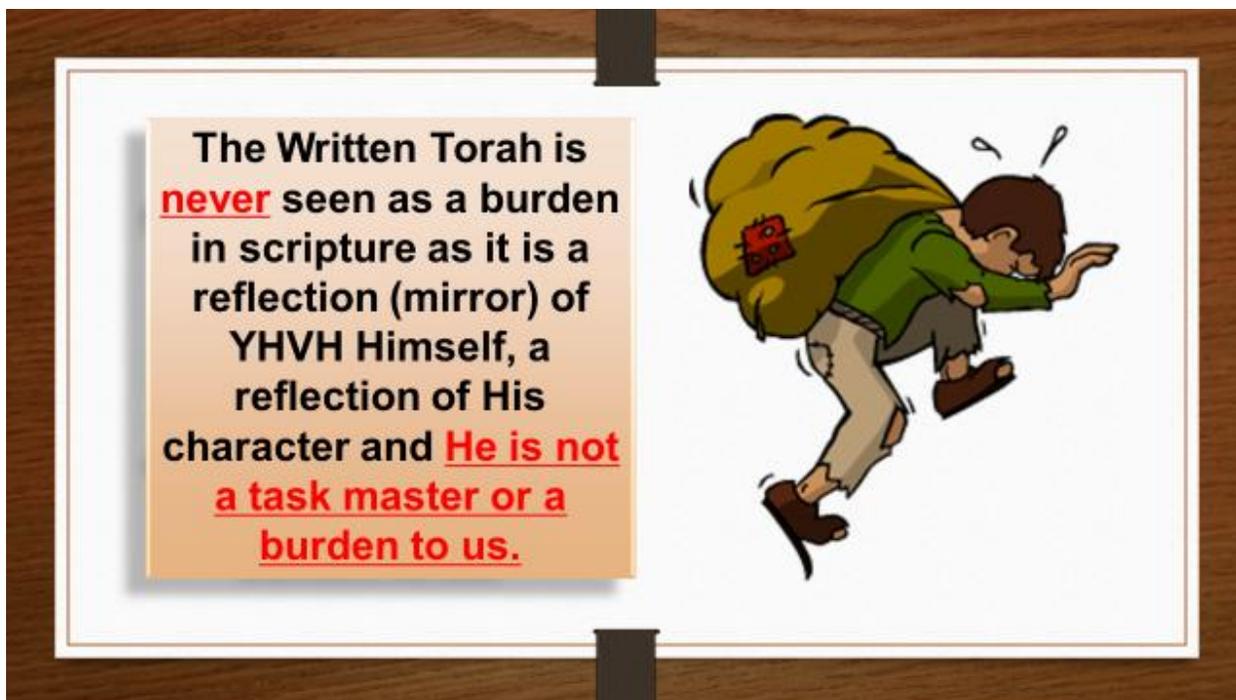
Before we go to verse 11, let’s first look at verse 10, at the idea of putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear? What are they talking about?

10. Now therefore why tempt ye Elohim, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

The same thought is brought out in verse 28 of chapter 15 when it states:

28. “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.”

In verse 10 it talks about a yoke and in verse 28 it talks about a burden, which neither their fathers nor they themselves could bear. What is it talking about? Is it talking about the 10 Commandments, the statutes, the judgments, the written Torah? The Written Torah given to Moses was never seen as a burden in Scripture. However, Christian theologians have always taken a dim view of Torah and are glad to dismiss “Old Testament law” as an unbearable yoke.



Paul states in Romans 7:12 “The Torah (law) is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good!”

Let’s look at some additional Bible verses and see what we can find?

Matthew 11:29-30 “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

My burden is what? It is easy!

Or go to 1. John 5:3 (NLT) “Loving Elohim means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.”

NOT BURDENSOME~

Psalm 119:45 (NLT) “I will walk in freedom, for I have devoted myself to your commandments.”



“Great peace have they which love thy law (*Torah*): and nothing shall offend them.” Psalm 119:165 KJV

I am still looking for **the burden part or the yoke of bondage!** Given this positive view of the Torah and the fact that 1. John 5:3 explicitly says that Elohim's commandments are not burdensome, could Peter have referred to the Torah as a yoke "that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"
So what is it talking about in Acts chapter 15, verses 10 and 28?

Could it be the Oral Torah? The Oral Torah were manmade laws that the Jews invented that became a system of sacramental deeds and works you had to jump through to get into the Kingdom.

The Sabbath alone had over 1,000 commandments added to it. Circumcision in the Talmud and Midrash is another work or sacrament with multitudinous laws added. It is only commanded once in scripture and yet the Rabbis made it into all kinds of laws that people came to believe were given to Moses. Unfortunately most people did not have a copy of a Torah scroll and therefore had no idea where Elohim's laws started and then morphed into man's laws. It had to be the oral traditions, this is why Peter uses the terms "**tempt Elohim**" and "**yoke of bondage**".

Here are the words of Yahusha in Matthew 23:13: "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people's faces. You won't go in yourselves, and you don't let others enter either."

"They crush people with impossible religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden." Matthew 23:4 NLT

"For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." KJV



Therefore we read in Mark 7:7

"Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men...."

That was the problem that existed then, and it exists today. Today's Christianity is a mixture of the Torah with customs from Paganism and manmade doctrines and teachings.

At this point let's go to verse 11 of Acts chapter 15 (*Restoration Study Bible*):

11. "But we believe that through the grace of the Sovereign Yahusha Messiah we shall be saved, even as they."

The Apostles were making an attempt at being uniform in their teaching and in sharing the love and law of the Messiah with the Gentile converts. Confusion and inconsistency was the last thing the Apostles wanted or needed to bring to the delicate faith of the Gentile converts and uniformity of purpose and doctrinal agreement was the primary purpose for this convention.

Before I continue, I cannot overemphasize the following facts: That the observance of the New Moons, The observance of the 7th day Sabbath and even the observance of the yearly appointed Feast Days **were not even up for discussion** before, during or after the Jerusalem counsel as it was already a given that Israelites (*native born and adopted/Gentile believers*) would always observe the Holy Days of Yahuwah.

I repeat: It was a given that all Israel, whether native born or adopted, would attend Yahuwah's appointed Holy Days!

If circumcision was necessary to be saved, was the primary law up for debate at that particular meeting, the annual feasts, the new moons and the weekly Sabbath were not in question as the Apostles all knew that the celebration of the festivals were exactly what Gentiles were "grafted" into according to Romans 11:17-24!

The celebration of Sabbath, New Moons and Feast days gave the Gentiles opportunity to associate and learn from the leaders and founders of the apostolic church who happened to be Jews (Hebrews)!

If the newly converted Gentiles did not attend and observe the Sabbath, the New Moons and the annual Feast Days, then they would have little to no opportunity to associate with the very men that brought them the good news of the Messiah in the first Place.



Let's not forget that some of the natural branches were broken off and the Gentiles being a wild Olive Tree were grafted in among them and with them are partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree!

Yahusha said in John 4:22: "Salvation is of the Jews."

Or Romans 3:2: "Unto them were given the oracles of Elohim."

Then we have Romans 11:25 saying: "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."

Romans 11:28 "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes." (KJV)

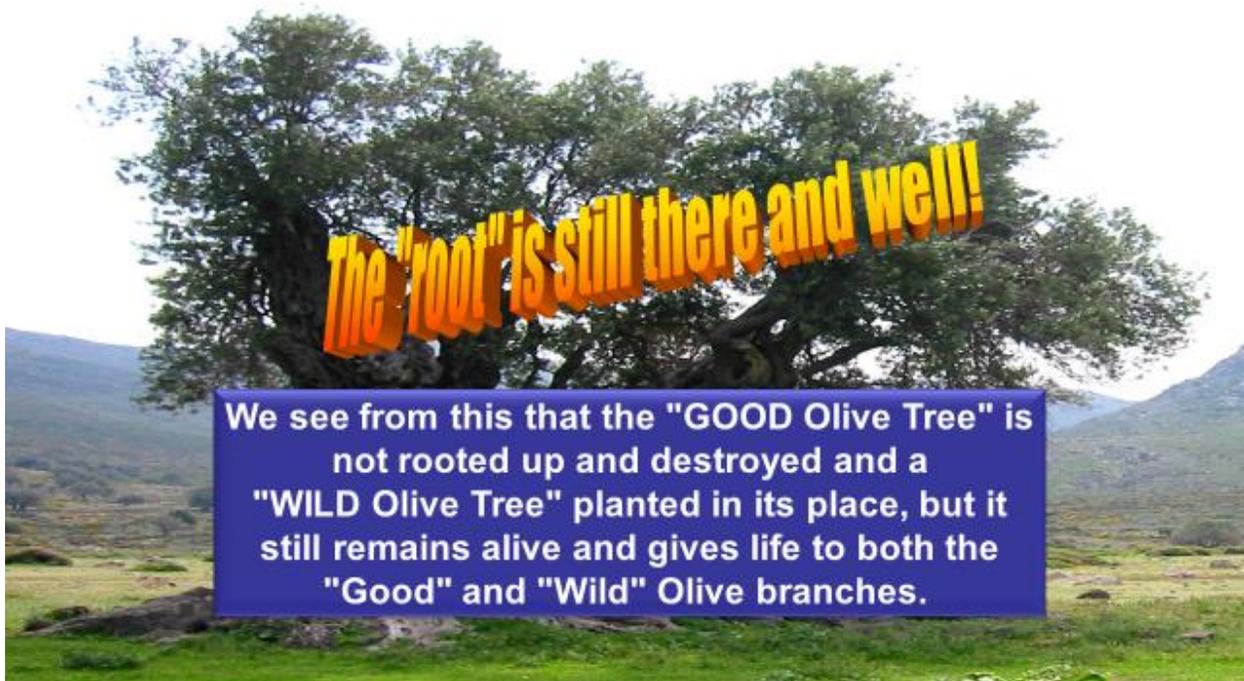
In Jer. 11:16-17, Israel is called a "**GREEN OLIVE TREE**," fair, and of goodly fruit, but is warned that for its idolatry its branches shall be broken off.

In Rom. 11:17-27 we have the Parable of the "**TWO OLIVE TREES**."

One is called a **GOOD** Olive Tree, the other a **WILD** Olive Tree. The **GOOD** Olive Tree represents Israel, the **WILD** Olive Tree the Gentiles. The **root** of the Good Olive Tree consists of the main root Abraham, the other two are Isaac and Jacob.

Israel was not broken off that the Gentiles might be grafted in, but they were broken off because of "**UNBELIEF**," and the Gentiles were not grafted in that they might supplant, or take the place of the branches that had been broken off, but that they, as branches of a "**WILD Olive Tree**," might be **PARTAKER** of the "**root**" and "**fatness**" of the **GOOD** Olive Tree.

The "Threefold root" of the Good Olive Tree was **HOLY**, separated, and as the "**root**" was holy so were the "**branches**." We next read that only "**some**," not all, of the branches were broken off.



We see that those who claim that the "Wild Olive Branches" that are grafted in represent the Christian Church, and that the Church has taken the place of Israel, must be in error, for the "Wild Olive Branches" do not remain on the "Good Olive Tree if they are unfaithful," but will be broken off also that the original branches may be grafted back again.

Jewish and Gentile believers in Messiah are alike Abraham's spiritual children, and are joint partakers of the "root" and "fatness" of the "Good Olive Tree," for Messiah was of the seed of Abraham.

Those Jews who rejected the Messiah and thus broke away from the religion of Abraham, are the branches, who, through **unbelief**, are broken off.

In grafting, the practice is to graft the "**Good**" Olive Branch on the "**Wild**" Olive tree so as to improve the fruit of the "Wild" Olive. If the "Wild" Olive is grafted on the "Good" Olive the effect is the reverse, and the "Good" Olive will run to **wildness**.

So Paul knew what he was talking about when he said that the grafting of the "Wild" Olive branch on the "Good" Olive Tree was "**CONTRARY TO NATURE.**" **In nature one puts a good branch on the bad tree and not a bad one on a good tree!**

From this we see that the injection of Paganism into Judaism is not beneficial to Judaism. Paganism (the wild Olive branches) must be removed or cut off from the "Good" Olive Tree, and be replaced by the grafting back again of the **"Natural Branches."**

Romans 11:21.

By Paganism we mean that part of the Gentile world known as Christianity, or the professing Church, as described in the parables of Matt. 13. It is the Laodicean part that YHVH says He will **"SPUE OUT OF HIS MOUTH"** (Rev. 3:16). These are the "Wild" Olive branches Yahuwah will remove from the "Good" Olive Tree, for all true believers who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which make up the true Church, the "Body of Messiah," that belong to the "Spiritual Israel" of Yahuwah, cannot be displaced.

Today we are witnessing the Apostasy of the "Wild Olive Branches," the professing Christian Church. Soon they will be "cut off," and then the BLINDNESS shall be removed from Israel, and the "Natural Branches" will be grafted back again.

This Parable teaches us that we are not to look upon the unbelieving Jew as a cast-off and withered branch only fit for fire-wood, but we are to consider that his "casting away" as well as his "blindness" is only temporary, and that he will again take up his position among the nations of the earth.



Scripture does acknowledge as the "way" the "Living Word of YHVH, HIS Torah!" That should be our way; and it is certainly what Yahusha taught while on earth – He did not teach Christianity as we know it today!

Yahusha never taught us anything about Sunday, Easter, Christmas, St Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, popes, nuns, holy water, sacraments, or any separation of His Church into a "priesthood" and "laity"! **We are all priests on level ground with one another, and HE is our High Priest!**

If you are studying something, and embrace it as a way of living, shouldn't you search it out completely and find where its roots lead? If the root is good, the fruit is good!

Christianity is a religion without Hebrew roots, mainly Greco – Latin. We can call Christianity a usurper. You remember Esau and his Edomite descendants, they were usurpers. They sought to steal the birthright and promises that were only given to Israel, the over comers. This is what is at the heart of Replacement Theology. Today's Christianity, therefore is like Esau and the Edomites. They modify the Covenant and claim the promises made to Israel the Overcomers. Some call Christianity the Synagogue of Satan! These are strong words, but they do have truth in it.



The new Jerusalem will have 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel engraved!

Why wasn't there at least one gate called "Christians?" Or specifically Catholics, Protestants, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, Baptists etc.?

HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

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Something to think about! **We must become spiritual Israelites in order to be allowed to go through one of these gates! Only those whose names are written in the lambs' book of life, only those who are sealed will enter those gates!**

Let's go back to Acts Chapter 15!

What was the decision of the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem, called the Jerusalem Council?

Acts 15:19 – 21 states: "Wherefore my sentence is that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to Elohim 20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. 21. For Moses

of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day.” KJV

These four things are being repeated again in Verse 29:

“That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Are ye well.” KJV

“That you abstain from what is offered to idols, and blood, and what is strangled, and whoring.¹ If you keep yourselves from these, you shall do well. Be strong!” The Scriptures

We should point out that the word “meats” is not in the original sentence at all, but “apechomai” meaning “abstain” and “eidolothuton” meaning “idol/sacrifice/service/offering”

This would include a great deal, such as participating in ANY pattern of Pagan idol servitude, such as going to a party and lifting a cup to toast “the Elohim”, or celebrating on a day that is only derived from a Pagan background (such as Saturnalia = Christmas), even if it had been “cleansed” and turned into another meaning. That would also include the offering of “meat” to an idol.

Just a note, the laws that the Apostolic counsel under the influence of the Holy Ghost decided to strictly enforce upon the gentile believers are nowhere to be found in the Ten Commandments but rather, are found in the statutes, which of course explain the Ten Commandments. (see Leviticus 3:17; Leviticus 19:26 and Leviticus chapter 18)

To take these verses as is, without understanding the context and what the Gentiles were used to be doing, and claim that people born out of the Covenant may do whatever they wish except for these four things, is misinterpreting scripture!

If this were the case, it would mean that former Gentiles (*who have become fellow citizens of Israel through the covenants*) could covet, lie, misuse YHVH’s Name, ignore the Sabbath, the New moons, the Feast days and misuse their parents, would still be fine with Yahuwah and be in a saving relationship with HIM.



The question is: WHY these four (4) prohibitions?

Someone said: “The requirements ... were primarily practical social requirements for fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers. A Gentile who did not immediately observe all four prohibitions would so offend his Jewish brothers in the faith that a spirit of community would never be able to develop. These changes in the Gentiles’ behavior were necessary in order to gain acceptance into the Jewish congregations so that they could, eventually, learn the Torah and live it out.”

The four prohibitions were not to become the only Torah standards by which all Christians everywhere would be bound for all time. This is evident in the conjunction “**For Moses**” of verse 21 as we have seen in previous slides. Since the context of this verse pertains to the public readings of the Torah in the synagogues on every Sabbath, the Jerusalem Council thought it good to immediately bind the Gentiles “turning” to Yahuwah with the understanding that they would be attending synagogues with the Jews on the weekly Sabbath.

Why would the Council want this? The answer is obvious – so that the Elohim-fearing Gentiles, now grafted into Israel, could learn the Torah, do the Torah, and live righteously as empowered by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

This is apparent in Paul's writings. 2. Timothy 3:16-17: **"All scripture (is) given by inspiration of Elohim, and (is) profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of Elohim may be perfect, thoroughly equipped for every good work."**

There are **not** two Torahs – one for the Jew and one for the Gentile. There are **not** two laws! There are **not** two ways of salvation. **Only under one name is a person saved – Yahusha our Messiah.** Since He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, neither his ways nor His Instructions change. The beloved apostle says in 1 John 2:5: **"Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."**

Then He states in 1. John 2, verse 6: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked!"

The Word of YHVH became flesh and walked among us as a Rabbi and a Torah-keeping Jew. He ascended into heaven as a Torah-keeping Jew and He will return to earth as a Torah-keeping Jew.

During the last 2,000 years, Christianity has looked at scripture with ignorance and often times through anti-Semitic lenses. Christians have missed the point of Acts 15:19-21. These verses come to teach all who want to draw close to the Elohim of Abraham Isaac and Jacob that salvation is wrought through faith in Yahusha alone and further instruction comes by associating with believing Jews who can continue to instruct them, as Paul, James, Peter, John and others did, in the ways of righteousness – the royal Torah of Elohim. To them have been committed the oracles of Elohim, the Torah according to Romans 3:2! These would be read and taught every Sabbath!

After stopping their idolatrous style of living, the next step for these who were "turning" to YHVH was to hear the instructions that are being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. We read that in Acts 15:21

Acts 15:21 **"For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."**

It is amazing that the whole Christianity misses this blatant reference to the weekly Sabbath, the New Moons and the yearly Feast days?

The gentile converts were not required to get circumcised in order to be saved **but they were expected to learn and to study the law of Moses every Sabbath day!**

Circumcision was/is an option but not a requirement for salvation!

When the apostles convened in Jerusalem they never in their wildest imagination dreamed that Christians some 2,000 years later would attempt to use their meeting as an excuse or justification for NOT observing the Sabbath, the New Moons and the Annual Feast Days.

The apostles would cringe, if they knew how the church of the 21st century abuses and twists this passage of scripture to excuse their ignorance of and disdain for the observance of the Sabbath, New Moons and Feast days.

The privilege and duty of observing the festivals of Leviticus 23 gives Gentile believers as well as free born Jews the opportunity to associate, learn from and encourage one another. Not observing the feast days is the same as not observing the 7th Day Sabbath, because the weekly Sabbath is the first feast day mentioned in Leviticus 23. This would be defined by the Scripture as sin. All of Yahuwah's holy days (*annual, monthly and weekly*) are important to HIM. **The truly converted individual should never forget this fact.**

Read Leviticus 23 and you will see that these holy convocations are all about worshipping our Creator!

These are **His** invitations! Not only that but they are all important to YHVH and His true Disciples. His followers will live in a way that shows enthusiasm and excitement for the opportunity to gather together during these holy, festive occasions to meet with their Creator and Savior.



Modern Christians ought to delicately but purposefully clear away the rubble and debris of anti-Semitism and Replacement Theology from artifacts like Acts 15 and other passages like them, who seem to abrogate or destroy the Torah including the weekly Sabbath, the New Moons and the feast days and seek to understand and interpret these scriptural finds within their proper setting, which is Judaism.

Believers should consider our Master's warning in Matthew 5:17-18

” Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Torah until all is accomplished.”



With these words in mind how could Christians ever accuse Paul, Peter, or the Jerusalem Council of doing away with the Torah, with the weekly Sabbath, the New Moons and the yearly appointed Times? It is time the Christian Church mature past the days of Acts 15 and seek to study the Torah and petition Elohim (YHVH) as did king David in Psalm 119:18 **“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from your Torah!”**

May this be our longing and desire!

יהוה bless you and guard you;
יהוה make His face shine upon you,
and show favor to you;
יהוה lift up His face upon you, and give
you peace (Shalom). *Numbers 6:24-26*

THE END

