

S T U D Y   G U I D E

# Restoration

Returning the Torah of Moses to the Disciples of Jesus

This study guide was written by Reverend Dr. Jennifer A. Wilson to accompany the book Restoration: Returning the Torah of Moses to the Disciples of Jesus by D. Thomas Lancaster.

Willerup Church  
414 W. Water St.  
Cambridge, WI 53523  
(608) 423-3777  
[churchoffice@willerupumc.org](mailto:churchoffice@willerupumc.org)  
[willerupchurch.org](http://willerupchurch.org)

This material is copyright protected by Jennifer Wilson 2022



## Contents

Preface.....	6
Introduction.....	8
Chapter One: My Journey to Torah.....	9
Chapter Two: The Journey away from Torah.....	10
Chapter Three: What is the Torah?.....	12
For your consideration: <i>Divine Guidance for Good Living</i> (jewfaq.org).....	13
Chapter Four: Summing up the Torah.....	17
Chapter Five: Torah and the New Testament.....	18
Chapter Six: The Giving of the Torah.....	20
Chapter Seven: The Inner Torah.....	22
Chapter Eight: Torah for the Sons of Noah.....	24
Chapter Nine: An Argument about the Torah.....	25
For your consideration: <i>The Righteousness of Christ</i> : Dietrich Bonhoeffer.....	26
Chapter Ten: Torah Lost and Found.....	28
Chapter Eleven: The Sabbath of the Torah.....	30
For your consideration: Wasn't the Sabbath Cancelled?.....	31
Chapter Twelve: The Festivals of Torah.....	35
Chapter Thirteen: The Life of Torah.....	37
Chapter Fourteen: The Jots and Tittles of Torah.....	39
Chapter Fifteen: The Difficult Laws of the Torah.....	41
Chapter Sixteen: The Oral Torah.....	43
Chapter Seventeen: Paul and the Torah.....	45
Chapter Eighteen: Res-Torah-ation.....	47
The Apostolic Decree.....	49
Bibliography.....	53



# Preface

Dear Fellow Adventurer,

I hope you are a little like me...I love a good adventure story. I am even more inspired when I listen to the details of how our ancestors, men and women, made their way into uncharted territory or sacrificed so much to get their own piece of land to cultivate and to establish their future generations. Sometimes these narratives are known as ‘origin narratives.’ Each narrative adds a new dimension to the greater human story.

Our personal origin narrative or ancestry can answer a lot of questions or bring up new ones. History matters. Our identity depends upon it. Just like our personal ancestry, Christianity has a heritage. Christians can be tempted to take for granted there is a singular Christian approach to interpret scripture and theology. Christians often omit our ancestry and claim the Church is “the true Israel” or “the new Israel” or simply “Israel,” at the expense of the Jewish people. Jews have been targeted by numerous anti-Jewish ideologies throughout the ages, but only Christendom has claimed that it has *replaced* Israel, that Hebrew Bible texts actually are about Christians, and that they can only be read and understood through the Christian lens.

Perhaps you’ve never heard the phrase, “We are Israel,” with regards to the Church. Judaism is often understood not as a distinct religion from Christianity but rather as its prologue. In history, it is argued, Judaism *preceded* Christianity. As we move forward, Christianity should *proceed* alone. Judaism paved the way, but now it is no longer relevant. Judaism should get out of the way. This way of thinking has been extraordinarily influential in Christian theology for generations.

There are people who seek other ways to describe the relationship between Judaism and Christianity—and the Bible provides us with an older, less-traveled approach. Let’s call it a ‘more adventurist’ approach. By asking old questions and articulating some new answers, we can read our most sacred texts in such a way that the early Christian movement’s inherent Jewishness is given much stronger consideration than it typically received only a couple of decades ago. Godly wisdom flourishes as we learn from the past, apply the hard-earned Biblical lessons to our lives and lead or teach the next generations to embrace all God has for us.

Both the historical Jesus and the historical Paul are firmly situated within the belief system of late Second Temple Judaism. It is widely understood that some of the writers of the New Testament form their theology and write their texts in the wake of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. All branches of Judaism had to cope with the fact that their holy sanctuary was destroyed for a *second* time. A growing number of present-day scholars

now understand Judaism not as the gloomy background from which Christianity had to be removed to grow and prosper, but rather as the matrix we must restore in order to appreciate the New Testament texts more fully and to consider our future role in the coming Kingdom of God.

It is this Judeo-Christian *adventurist approach* to scripture and theology that present day scholars, preachers, and people in the pew all seem to want to know more about. So, as we set out on the great adventure, here are four recommendations for you to consider:

1. **Be familiar with your origin narrative.** Review your genealogy, talk with living relatives about where your family of origin lived and investigate the culture of your family of origin. Discover new things about yourself.
2. **Rediscover the pilgrimage or discovery approach in the Bible.** Christians who consider themselves as pilgrims or those on a journey of discovery are reminded that they have not yet reached their destination, that they are still on their way and that they are open to discovering something new.
3. **Read your Bible holistically.** We often read the Gospels or the concluding chapters of Revelation eschatologically, forward oriented. Consider the entire Bible as revelation for our lives and the LORD God's idea of a holy community.
4. **Take note of what is being revealed throughout the Bible.** There are many biblical themes that bring us to the goal of Jesus our Messiah as Christ our King. The Great Commission in Matthew's gospel takes on greater significance as we embrace the weight of responsibility of being commissioned to the LORD's service. Jesus commanded His disciples to specifically carry out His ministry: to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

I look forward to what we will learn as we travel together,  
Pastor Jen

## Introduction: Restoration Prophecy from Deuteronomy 30:3-6

“The Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors. The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.” (Deuteronomy 30:3-6)

**The Jewish homeland of Israel was established in 1948.** The return is more than to the land. The return was to the Word of God. Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and all the other prophets made the same prophecy concerning *the return*.

Consider what Jesus says about His return: Matthew 24:26-27; Luke 21:25-28; Matthew 24:36; Matthew 25: 1-13; John 14:1-3?

What do you believe about Jesus’ return?

Modern Judaism calls this phenomenon the *Teshuva* movement. (Page 5) What comes to mind when you think of ‘the return?’

1. What questions do you have about the Torah?
2. Do the promises God made to the Jewish people apply to Gentiles?
3. Read through the questions on page 7.
  - a. Which ones stand out to you?
  - b. Which questions would you like to ignore?
  - c. Are there questions the LORD is asking you?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter One

# My Journey to Torah

1. What comes to mind when you read about the author Daniel's journey?
2. Define the terms:
  1. Conventional definition of a Judaizer:
  2. Biblical definition of a Judaizer:
  3. Conventional definition of a legalist:
  4. Theological definition of a legalist:
3. What interactions have you had with Messianic Jewish people and Messianic Gentiles?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Two

### The Journey away from Torah

1. Describe what 'the gospel in exile' means:
  
2. "He did not institute a new religion, nor did He cancel the Torah." (Page 20) Describe what you know or believe about Jesus' role as a teacher or rabbi
  
3. Paul argued fiercely for the 'engrafting' of the Gentiles. What does Paul mean in Romans 11?
  
4. Read through the historical detachment of Jewish people and Christians: Describe the historical occurrences in your own words:
  - a. Guilt by association (Page 22)
  
  - b. Expulsion from the Synagogue (Page 23)
  
  - c. The Domitian Persecution 89-96 AD (Page 23)
  
  - d. The Second Century: (Page 24)
  
  - e. The Bar Kochba Revolt 132-136 AD (Page 24-25)
  
  - f. The Church Fathers (Page 25-26)

- g. Resurrection Sunday (Page 27)
  
- h. Constantine and Nicaea 325 AD (Page 28)
  
- i. John Chrysostom 347-407 AD (Page 28-29)
  
- j. 900 years of The Dark Ages 5th-14th centuries (Page 29-30)
  
- k. The Reformation 1517 (Page 30-32)
  
- l. The Radical Reformation (Page 32-33)
  
- m. Post-Holocaust Scholarship 1938-1945 (Page 33-34)
  
- n. Dead Sea Scrolls 1946-1947 (Page 34-35)
  
- o. Modern Messianic Movement 1960 to Present (Page 35-36)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Three

### What is the Torah?

1. Define the Hebrew terms *torah*, *yarah*, *chata*, *ketubah*:
2. Messiah is the *goal* not the cancellation of Torah. Describe this in your own terms:
3. Describe torah for Gentile believers. (Page 39)
4. Describe how you interpret the Torah is covenantal. (Page 40)
5. Define terms: legalism and obedience. (Page 42)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## **For your consideration: *Divine Guidance for Good Living* ([jewfaq.org](http://jewfaq.org))**

There are 613 mitzvot, often translated as laws, which are God's guidance for holy living. The laws include positive commands (to perform and to act) and negative commands (to abstain from acts). Some include relationship expectations for individuals, marriage, family, the community and how the nation needs to act within its boundaries and with other nations.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NIV)

God defines His law. God's laws have generational impact and influence. It is important for each generation to teach them to the next generation. If parents do not teach and expect their children to learn and live how God expects, it is far less likely they will ever be interested in God as they mature into adulthood.

God's laws are organized in this way of Divine Guidance:

1. Positive Elements
2. Living God's Way
3. Avoidance of Idols
4. Love Your Neighbor as Yourself
5. The Weak
6. The Strong
7. Encounters in Commercial Settings
8. Divine Expectations of Judges and Judging others
9. Witnesses and the Natural Law
10. Regarding Criminal Actions Harmful to Others
11. Rights and Interests of Harmed Parties
12. Leaders and the Conduct of War
13. The Nature and Purpose of Sacred Space
14. The Roles of Priests and the People
15. The Requirements of Priests and the Role of Levites
16. The Importance of Purity and Holiness
17. The Condition of Tzara'at (leprosy, physical impurities)
18. What We Do To Eat
19. Forbidden Mixtures and Intro to Sacrifice
20. The Role of Sacrifices in Faith
21. Life Activities that Call for Offering
22. Tithes, Vows, and the Manner of Making Offerings
23. The Nature and Purpose of Sacred Time
24. The Meaning and Experience of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption

Notice that for each precept there is a citation to the biblical passage or passages from which it is derived. There are commandments that cannot be observed today primarily because they relate to the Temple, its sacrifices and services (because the Temple does not exist) and criminal procedures (because the theocratic state of Israel does not exist). Included below are the first Fifty-eight laws with Biblical references: ([jewfaq.org](http://jewfaq.org))

## God

1. To know that God exists. (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6)
2. Not to entertain the idea that there is any god but the Eternal. (Ex. 20:3)
3. Not to blaspheme. (Ex. 22:27 or Ex. 22:28), the penalty for which is death. (Lev. 24:16)
4. To hallow God's name. (Lev. 22:32)
5. Not to profane God's name. (Lev. 22:32)
6. To know that God is One, a complete Unity. (Deut. 6:4)
7. To love God. (Deut. 6:5)
8. To fear Him reverently. (Deut. 6:13; 10:20)
9. Not to put the word of God to the test. (Deut. 6:16)
10. To imitate His good and upright ways. (Deut. 28:9)

## Torah

11. To honor the old and the wise. (Lev. 19:32)
12. To learn Torah and to teach it. (Deut. 6:7)
13. To cleave to those who know Him. (Deut. 10:20)
14. Not to add to the commandments of the Torah, whether in the Written Law or in its interpretation received by tradition. (Deut. 13:1)
15. Not to take away from the commandments of the Torah. (Deut. 13:1)
16. That every person shall write a scroll of the Torah for himself or herself. (Deut. 31:19)

## Signs and Symbols

17. To circumcise the male offspring. (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3)
18. To put tassels (tzitzit) on the corners of clothing. (Num. 15:38)
19. To bind God's Word (tefillin) on the head. (Deut. 6:8)
20. To bind God's Word (tefillin) on the arm. (Deut. 6:8)
21. To affix the mezuzah to the doorposts and gates of your house. (Deut. 6:9)

## Prayer and Blessings

22. To pray to God. (Ex. 23:25; Deut. 6:13)
23. To read the Shema in the morning and at night. (Deut. 6:7)
24. To recite grace after meals. (Deut. 8:10)
25. Not to lay down a stone for worship. (Lev. 26:1)

## Love and Brotherhood

26. To love all human beings who are of the covenant. (Lev. 19:18)
27. Not to stand by idly when a human life is in danger. (Lev. 19:16)
28. Not to wrong any one in speech. (Lev. 25:17)
29. Not to carry tales. (Lev. 19:16)
30. Not to cherish hatred in one's heart. (Lev. 19:17)
31. Not to take revenge. (Lev. 19:18)
32. Not to bear a grudge. (Lev. 19:18)
33. Not to put any Jew to shame. (Lev. 19:17)
34. Not to curse any other Israelite. (Lev. 19:14) (by implication: if you may not curse those who cannot hear, you certainly may not curse those who can)
35. Not to give occasion to the simple-minded to stumble on the road. (Lev. 19:14) (this includes doing anything that will cause another to sin)
36. To rebuke the sinner. (Lev. 19:17)
37. To relieve a neighbor of his burden and help to unload his beast. (Ex. 23:5)
38. To assist in replacing the load upon a neighbor's beast. (Deut. 22:4)
39. Not to leave a beast, that has fallen down beneath its burden, unaided. (Deut. 22:4)

## The Poor and Unfortunate

40. Not to afflict an orphan or a widow. (Ex. 22:21)
41. Not to reap the entire field. (Lev. 19:9; Lev. 23:22)
42. To leave the unreaped corner of the field or orchard for the poor. (Lev. 19:9)
43. Not to gather gleanings. (the ears that have fallen to the ground while reaping) (Lev. 19:9)
44. To leave the gleanings for the poor. (Lev. 19:9)
45. Not to gather ol'loth (the imperfect clusters) of the vineyard. (Lev. 19:10)
46. To leave ol'loth (the imperfect clusters) of the vineyard for the poor. (Lev. 19:10; Deut. 24:21)
47. Not to gather the peret (grapes) that have fallen to the ground. (Lev. 19:10)
48. To leave peret (the single grapes) of the vineyard for the poor. (Lev. 19:10)
49. Not to return to take a forgotten sheaf. (Deut. 24:19) This applies to all fruit trees. (Deut. 24:20)
50. To leave the forgotten sheaves for the poor. (Deut. 24:19-20)
51. Not to refrain from maintaining a poor man and giving him what he needs. (Deut. 15:7)
52. To give charity according to one's means. (Deut. 15:11)

## Treatment of Gentiles

53. To love the stranger. (Deut. 10:19)
54. Not to wrong the stranger in speech. (Ex. 22:20)
55. Not to wrong the stranger in buying or selling. (Ex. 22:20)
56. Not to intermarry with gentiles. (Deut. 7:3)
57. To exact the debt of an alien. (Deut. 15:3)
58. To lend to an alien at interest. (Deut. 23:21) According to tradition, this is mandatory.

## Consider this:

There are 248 positive laws or things we should do. The number is thought to represent the number of bones and significant organs in the human body.

There are 365 negative things we should not do. The number corresponds to the number of days in a solar year.

Many of the laws cannot be observed following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. According to one school of thought, there are only 77 negative and 194 positive commandments that can be observed today. There are 26 commands that apply only within the Land of Israel.

It is interesting that the “10 Commandments” (Ex. 20 & Deut. 5) are just a small part of the laws that God commanded us to follow.

It is common to ask a rabbi or religious teacher which is the most important command. Many Jewish people don't know which one is the most important or the greatest. There is a common answer: the most important law is that all Jewish people need to be part of writing a new Torah.

Read Matthew 22:36-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 4-5; Galatians 3:24

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:34-35 NIV

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Four

### Summing up the Torah

1. Have you ever wanted the ‘short version’ of scripture? Why?
2. Do you agree with “God has given us all an innate sense of right and wrong. A conscience. But it is subjective.” (Page 46) What does it mean that our conscience is *subjective*?
3. How does God’s Word form our character within us? Are actions important, why or why not?
4. Describe the command “to love the LORD” and “Love your neighbor. Why is the placement significant? (Matthew 5:19, Matthew 7:12, Mark 12:30-31)
5. Love is not the replacement of the Torah; it is meant to be a summary. (Page 48) What does the author mean?
6. The opposite of love is not hatred; it is selfishness. Love of self. (Page 49) Describe this concept in your own words or use an example from your own experience.
7. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. Leviticus 19:18. Did you know this verse was in *Leviticus*?
8. God has standards to live by—discuss your insights from pages 52-53.

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Five

### Torah and the New Testament

1. Describe Galilean synagogue worship. Why did Jesus stand up and sit down? (Page 56)
2. What are the scriptures Jesus read?
3. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17) What comes to mind when you read this scripture?
4. What is the *Tanakh*? Jesus describes the three sections: He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. (Luke 24:44)
5. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: the correct priority of Scripture is sequential? (Page 60)
6. From where do you get your instruction? There is a Biblical expectation to get instruction to gain wisdom. Torah is sometimes defined as instruction: Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked, but those who heed it resist them. (Proverbs 29:4). If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction, even their prayers are detestable. (Proverbs 28:9); Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction. (Proverbs 29:18)

7. Paul continually spoke of the Torah, citing passages from the Torah and Hebrew Scriptures to make his case for the gospel. Paul found his source of authority from the Torah. What does it mean to keep the Torah and hold to the gospel?
  
8. What is a Messiah—who is the Messiah? (Page 62)
  
9. What is the definition of sin? (Page 63)
  
10. Imagine someone never hearing anything about the Bible. How would you describe the gospel?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Six

### The Giving of the Torah

1. At Mt. Sinai theology ceased to be speculation and became a study of revelation. At Mt Sinai God told us who He is. (Page 65) Describe this in your own words.
2. Read Exodus 19 and 20. The entire book of Genesis can be regarded as divine revelation because of what happened at Exodus 19 and 20. (Page 65) Many people heard the words. God gave the entire nation these words. What meaning does this have for us?
3. God's revelation at Mt. Sinai was deliberate. According to the author, Natural Law and the ethical society was deliberately revealed. Do you agree or disagree with the author's statement? (Page 67)
4. Short of direct divine revelation, how would we imagine God? If we had to base our assessment of God only on human behavior, God would come out looking human. (Page 68) Fortunately, God did not leave us to speculate. He gave us Torah. Consider what you believe about God's laws and revelation. How do you apply God's Torah and revelation to your life and relationships?
5. God's commandments are beyond Natural Law. What does this mean? (Page 69)
6. Read Exodus 23. We learn a little bit about God's character. How would you teach this to someone else who does not have any Biblical resource?

7. "When one realizes that God discloses Himself to the world in the Torah, one must also recognize the enormous gravity of declaring parts of that same Torah null or void. Even the smallest commandment of the Torah comes to us suffused with godliness. To declare any commandment as irrelevant or obsolete denies the eternal and unchanging nature of God." (Page 70) What are your thoughts about this statement?
  
8. Who is the beneficiary of the people who follow God's ways? "See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?" (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)
  
9. What does it mean to have Torah written on our hearts? (Page 71)
  
10. Jesus is our standard. How do we measure up? Do we measure up? Are we supposed to measure up to God's standards or has Jesus cancelled that need?
  
11. What is the role of a disciple and discipleship?
  
12. What is the Holy Spirit's role: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:26-28)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Seven

### The Inner Torah

1. James states that the scriptures are a soul mirror: “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it— not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.” James 1:22-25
2. What does James mean by doing what the Word says?
3. “When we investigate the Torah, we investigate the righteousness of God. It shows us things with which we must deal, commandments to keep, dangers to avoid, and areas in our lives that need to be set right. What we do with that information is up to us. (Page 76-77) How would you put these statements into your own words?
4. All believers run a risk of returning to their life without applying scripture. Here is one example: Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset because they are poor and are counting on it. Otherwise, they may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin. (Deuteronomy 24:14-15)
5. To live in the full expression of our new life in Christ, we must do and apply the Word of God. How do you see this happening in your own life? (Page 78)

6. It is not our love—but the love of Jesus made manifest through us—what does this mean and how would you apply it? (Page 79) Read Romans 6:3-4, Ephesians 3:17 and 2 Corinthians 13:5.
  
7. When we become disciples of Jesus, the Living Word (Living Torah) moves into our daily lives, our heart, into our conversations, into our minds, into our marriages, into our family and extended family, and through our efforts into the lost, broken, lonely world. (Page 81) How do you experience this in your personal life? Read John 1:17

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Eight

### Torah for the Sons of Noah

1. The Torah has laws for all human beings, and it tells the story of a covenant that God made with all of humanity. (Page 83) What does the Torah have to do with Gentiles? “Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you.” (Genesis 9:8-9)
2. What are the terms and conditions of the Covenant with Noah? (Pages 84-90)
3. Consider that these are the minimum standards for all people. How do you interrupt this and how would you tell someone?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Nine

### An Argument about the Torah

1. The Gentile followers of Jesus and the Jewish followers of Jesus were held to standards. Why are standards necessary?
2. What was the original issue discussed in Acts 15? (Page 93)
3. Consider how the Holy Spirit was at work in the Gentiles. How do you explain this: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues<sup>[b]</sup> and praising God.” (Acts 10:44-46)
4. What does it mean that James, the brother of Jesus, used prophecy as evidence for the decision for the Gentiles? “In that day, “I will restore David’s fallen shelter (tabernacle)—I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins—and will rebuild it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations that bear my name,” declares the Lord, who will do these things. (Amos 9:11-12)
5. Do Gentiles also belong to God? (Page 95)
6. What would happen if a Gentile group decided to follow the God of the Bible? “And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, ‘As surely as the Lord lives’—even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal—then they will be established among my people.” (Jeremiah 12:16)
7. Disciples of Jesus who were Gentiles were given expectations. What are they? (Pages 96-100)
8. Consider what you believe about the Laws of Love in the Bible. How would you interpret them and apply them in your life? (Page 101)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## **For your consideration: thoughts and excerpts From Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *The Cost of Discipleship***

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:17-20 NIV)

It is not at all surprising that some Christians imagined that the law had been abolished with the arrival of the Messiah. However, Jesus spoke to His followers, to men and women, who owed their exclusive allegiance to Him with clarity. Discipleship means adherence to Jesus alone and immediately. Then comes a surprise—the significance of the law in the disciples' lives.

It meant faithfulness to the law was something quite different than most present-day Christians understand it to be. We are to be faithful to what Jesus was faithful. The law Jesus refers to is the law of the old covenant, not a new law, but the same one He quoted to the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-27) and the lawyer who wanted to know the revealed will of God. (Luke 10:25-37) It becomes new law only as it is Jesus who binds it to his followers. “For Christians, therefore, the law is not a ‘better law’ than that of the Pharisees, but one and the same; every letter of it, every jot and tittle, must remain in force and be observed until the end of the world.” (Bonhoeffer, Page 122)

Consider the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5-7) Jesus spoke of a better righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees. (Matthew 5:20). Jesus manifests his perfect union with the will of God as revealed in the Old Testament. He has in fact added nothing to the commandments of God, except this—that He keeps them. Jesus fulfills the law down to the last iota which meant He must die. Jesus alone understood the true nature of the law. The law itself is not God. Nor is God the law. Israel's error was to make the law the ultimate authority. The disciples' error was to deny the divinity of the law separating it from God.

Jesus validates the divine authority of the law. God is the giver of His holy Word and its Lord. Only in close, personal communion is the law fulfilled. Jesus, as the only one *who could fulfill* the law, is the only one *who can teach* the law so that his disciples could grasp it and love it the way He did. (Psalm 119:97)

How does Jesus fulfill the law? Jesus lives in perfect communion with God. Jesus forges yet another bond with His disciples by showing them how to forge their own bond

with God. Jesus does not become a barrier between the disciples and the law—He is the conduit between them. Jesus validates the law, and his disciples are bound to Him.

God's law is beautifully illustrated by Jesus. For the first time, Jesus fulfills it properly and validates it perfectly. That is why those who obey and teach His commands are truly His disciples. (Matthew 28:20)

It is not the law that distinguished Jesus' disciples from the Jewish people. It was the way they lived in communion with Jesus which Jesus claimed was the 'better righteousness.' Jesus spoke of the excess and ambition the Pharisees laid on new converts. (Matthew 23:4) Their obedience to the law was always going to be imperfect because the measurement was on behavior not the heart.

The righteousness of Jesus submits to the Cross because that is what the law demands. This righteousness is not a duty or an obligation. Jesus is not only endowed with righteousness, Jesus *is* the righteousness. By calling the disciples, Jesus admitted them to partnership with Him. Jesus made the disciples *partners* and *partakers of his faithfulness*.

Remember, the righteousness of the disciples can never be personal achievement. It is always a gift which they received, and we receive once we agree to follow Him. The law itself or even Sabbath is a good, perfect gift coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like the shifting shadows. (James 1:17)

Jesus secured the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) an additional law based in Him.

Jesus outlined it perfectly in the Sermon on the Mount. His righteousness is under the Cross. It belongs to the poor, the tempted, the hungry, the meek, the peacemakers and the persecuted—who all endure much for the sake of Jesus Christ. It is visible righteousness of being light and a city set on a hill. (Matthew 5:14) It is grounded in the call to fellowship with Him who alone fulfills the law and fulfills the will of the Father. Likewise, disciples fulfill the law and must do the will of God, too.

It is not enough to teach the law—we must be doers of it. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Romans 2:13) To be a follower of Jesus means actively following Him. It is real and active faith in the righteousness of Christ. It is doing what Jesus did. (Page 125)

Reflections:

---

---

---



4. Most Christians are Torah-observant without knowing it. How? (Page 111)

5. Worship in the Jewish synagogue, festivals and holidays were observed by the early community. They also revered the Temple. Does this information change the way you view the early faith communities? Why or why not?

6. The Jesus predicted the persecution that would eventually come. Do you notice a pattern that developed throughout history? “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24:9-12)

7. Does it seem to you that Christians have lost their heritage and forgotten their spiritual ancestry? (Page 113)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Eleven

### The Sabbath of the Torah

1. What is a Sabbatarian? (Page 115)
2. Consider the varied Biblical accounts of Shabbat: Genesis 2, Exodus 31, Deuteronomy 5, Isaiah 66:23, Matthew 11, John 14, Hebrews 3-4, 2 Peter 3:8. What do you notice?
3. Sabbath is set apart for freedom. What does this mean? (Page 119)
4. Was Jesus a Sabbath breaker? (Pages 120-121)
5. What did Jesus mean when He said, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)
6. How did Jesus fulfill his weekly Sabbath? (Page 122)
7. Consider the burial of Jesus. What day of the week was it and why was it important?
8. Gentile believers are not obligated in the same way that Jewish believers are. Isaiah tells us that in the End Times, non-Jews who keep the Sabbath Day will be given a place in God’s Holy Temple: “And foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah 56:6-7)
9. Evaluate your own thoughts about Sabbath.

Reflections:

---

---

## **For your consideration: Wasn't the Sabbath Cancelled?**

Wasn't the Sabbath cancelled or didn't the Sabbath get changed to Sunday to celebrate the resurrection? Didn't Jesus break the Sabbath and free His people from the Law? Aren't we supposed to keep the Lord's Day and not the Sabbath? Isn't a Sabbath Day something I can decide to do whenever I have the time?

During the early days of the apostles' leadership, all believers honored the Sabbath because the Sabbath was the weekly day of worship. Less than a century later, as Gentile Christianity left Judaism, it left the Sabbath behind.

Here are some Biblical references to consider. Once, when Jesus and His disciples were walking through Jerusalem on a Sabbath, they encountered a man born blind. (John 9) Jesus spat on the ground, made clay with the spittle, and applied it to the man's eyes. Jesus then told the man to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. He did so and could miraculously see! The Pharisees criticized Jesus as a Sabbath breaker. This was a serious sin—how could Jesus be sinless and a Sabbath breaker?

Consider other well-known accounts: Jesus' own disciples plucked the grain on the Sabbath. (Matthew 12, Mark 2) On a Sabbath day, friends lowered a paralytic into the house where Jesus preached, and the paralytic was healed. (Mark 2) While in Jerusalem, Jesus healed a man who had been an invalid by the Pool of Bethesda for 38 years on the Sabbath. That same man picked up his mat and left. (John 5) Jesus healed a man in a synagogue with a withered hand on a Sabbath. (Matthew 12, Mark 3, Luke 6) While Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, a woman with scoliosis was healed on the Sabbath. (Luke 13)

Consider that Jesus kept the Sabbath holy. Carefully meditate on what it means if the Messiah breaks something that is sacred or holy and then advocates breaking the Sabbath to His followers. What does this reveal about the character of Jesus?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Consider that each of the Sabbath scripture references reveals a nuance as to why God created the Sabbath and then set it apart as holy.

Jesus challenged the Pharisees with their interpretations of Sabbath keeping. For example, Jesus cited the illustration of David and his followers being justified because they displayed *need* and *hunger* on a Sabbath. (1 Sam 21) Jesus claimed there was something greater present. (Matthew 12:3)

Sometimes Christians interpret this passage as Jesus Himself being the ‘something greater.’ Consider whether the Pharisees would accept this defense. Someone may use the ‘saving a life or preserving a life on the Sabbath’ defense as it overrides the Sabbath rest obligation. Pharisaic Law provided justification in circumstances when there is a threat to human life. However, like David’s men, Jesus’ disciples were hungry but not starving unto death. Nevertheless, Jesus declared that his disciples were guiltless. Their hunger alone justified their transgression. Why?

In Matthew 9:12-13, Jesus used a famous scripture passage from Hosea 6:6, “For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Consider that compassion for people, specifically the alleviation of human suffering, comes before ceremonial and ritual concerns. In fact, Jesus alluded to the alleviation of human suffering as something greater than the Temple.

Jesus quotes that same Hosea passage in Mark 12:33. We are to love God with all of our heart and with all of our understanding and with all of our strength—and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This action is greater than all the Temple activity connected with burnt offerings and sacrifices. Was King David greater than the Temple? No. But, human need and desperate circumstances were greater than Temple service. Jesus applied this ethic to the situation with His disciples.

The urgent need of human beings is of greater importance than the ceremonial concerns, which is why the Jewish people and Christians alike can exist without the operational Temple or Church as the centerpiece of their lives. God desires mercy more than sacrifice. In Mark’s version of the narrative, Jesus punctuated the argument by explaining, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27) In the most loving and convicting of ways, Jesus makes the Truth known: compassion for humanity takes priority. Jesus validates that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath and secures the Sabbath’s rightful place as a sacred weekly practice. (Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:28; and Luke 6:5) Why?

When Jesus said, “The Sabbath was made for man,” His statement included all human beings, not only the Jewish people. Sabbath is God’s good gift to us all. (Genesis 2:2-3) God did not institute Sabbath on Mt Sinai. He instituted Sabbath after He created human beings and gave them work to do. We all have the privilege of observing the Sabbath to whatever extent we are able. According to God, Sabbath was made for everyone.

The incident in the grain fields provided an ethical and legal framework. All the other conflicts center on one point: Jesus believed compassion for humanity and the alleviation of human suffering takes priority over ceremonial concerns. Jesus was concerned with restoring balance to world gone mad enslaving human beings to their work endlessly without rest in Him. Sabbath is about priorities. One day in seven, we are to participate in Sabbath as a sanctuary in time. (Heschel, page 10) Implementing even the smallest attempt to Sabbath keeping transforms our life.

## For your consideration:

Reprinted with permission from *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, published by Noonday Press. *Shabbat as a Sanctuary in Time*. Farrar Straus Giroux Publishers. 2005. Abraham Joshua Heschel. ([myjewishlearning.com](http://myjewishlearning.com))

Judaism is a religion of time aiming at the sanctification of time. Unlike the space-minded man to whom time is unvaried, iterative, homogeneous, to whom all hours are alike, quality-less, empty shells, the Bible senses the diversified character of time. There are no two hours alike. Every hour is unique and the only one given at the moment, exclusive and endlessly precious.

Judaism teaches us to be attached to holiness in time, to be attached to sacred events, to learn how to consecrate sanctuaries that emerge from the magnificent stream of a year.

The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals; and our Holy of Holies is a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Germans were able to burn; a shrine that even apostasy cannot easily obliterate: the Day of Atonement. According to the ancient rabbis, it is not the observance of the Day of Atonement, but the Day itself, the “essence of the Day,” which, with man’s repentance, atones for the sins of man.

Jewish ritual may be characterized as the art of significant forms in time, as architecture of time. Most of its observances—the Sabbath, the New Moon, the festivals, the Sabbatical and the Jubilee year—depend on a certain hour of the day or season of the year. It is, for example, the evening, morning, or afternoon that brings with it the call to prayer. The main themes of faith lie in the realm of time. We remember the day of the exodus from Egypt, the day when Israel stood at Sinai; and our Messianic hope is the expectation of a day, of the end of days.

In a well-composed work of art an idea of outstanding importance is not introduced haphazardly, but, like a king at an official ceremony, it is presented at a moment and in

a way that will bring to light its authority and leadership. In the Bible, words are employed with exquisite care, particularly those which, like pillars of fire, lead the way in the far-flung system of the biblical world of meaning.

One of the most distinguished words in the Bible is the word *kadosh*, holy; a word which more than any other is representative of the mystery and majesty of the divine. Now what was the first holy object in the history of the world? Was it a mountain? Was it an altar?

It is, indeed, a unique occasion at which the distinguished word *kadosh* is used for the first time: in the Book of Genesis at the end of the story of creation. How extremely significant is the fact that it is applied to time: "And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy." There is no reference in the record of creation to any object in space that would be endowed with the quality of holiness.

This is a radical departure from accustomed religious thinking. The mythical mind would expect that, after heaven and earth have been established, God would create a holy place—a holy mountain or a holy spring—whereupon a sanctuary is to be established. Yet it seems as if to the Bible it is holiness in time, the Sabbath, which comes first.

When history began, there was only one holiness in the world, holiness in time. When at Sinai the word of God was about to be voiced, a call for holiness in man was proclaimed: "Thou shalt be unto me a holy people." It was only after the people had succumbed to the temptation of worshipping a thing, a golden calf, that the erection of a Tabernacle, of holiness in space, was commanded. The sanctity of time came first, the sanctity of man came second, and the sanctity of space last. Time was hallowed by God; space, the Tabernacle, was consecrated by Moses.

While the festivals celebrate events that happened in time, the date of the month assigned for each festival in the calendar is determined by the life in nature. Passover and the Feast of Booths [Sukkot], for example, coincide with the full moon, and the date of all festivals is a day in the month, and the month reflects what goes on periodically in the realm of nature, since the Jewish month begins with the new moon, with the reappearance of the lunar crescent in the evening sky. In contrast, the Sabbath is entirely independent of the month and unrelated to the moon. Its date is not determined by any event in nature, such as the new moon, but by the act of creation. Thus, the essence of the Sabbath is completely detached from the world of space.

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation, from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

## Chapter Twelve

### The Festivals of Torah

1. The Torah is the inheritance of the Jewish believer and the biblical heritage of all the disciples of Yeshua. (Page 127) How do you define your spiritual heritage?
2. Gentiles have a different type of relationship with the festivals. God gives Leviticus 23 as His holy appointments. Why would these be important or not important?
3. Describe Jesus' Passover. (Page 129)
4. What did Jesus ask of the disciples? When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:14-19)
5. What is the Festival of First Fruits? (Page 130) What does Paul mean by saying "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:20)
6. How do you define 'Fire on the Mountain and giving the Word of God.' (Page 131) What does this mean that God provided a written language for His people? (Exodus 19-20)

7. Repentance, Trumpet Blows, and the Day of Atonement! All of this is work of the Messiah and what does this mean for His disciples? (Page 133)
  
8. Who would be invited to sit at your table for a sacred meal? The point of the ritual of Sukkot anticipates the Messianic Age when the dead will be raised to life again and we will all sit at table. (Page 135)
  
9. We all must accept the temporariness of this life. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness, the Temple in Jerusalem, the Incarnation, our human body—all temporary but essential to God. Everything we do in this life has merit. Read pages 135-137.
  
10. What God asks us to do is not something we can totally grasp. And yet, He asks us to believe without understanding everything. Consider that Paul spoke plainly to the Jewish believers: “Let no one, then, judge you in eating or in drinking, or in respect of a feast, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of the coming things, and the body [is] of the Christ;” (Colossians 2:16-17 Young’s Literal Translation)
  
11. What is your understanding of a shadow?
  
12. Why is this relevant to Christians or belief? (Page 137)
  
13. What pattern would God want us to live by?
  
14. What would it mean to rediscover part of your spiritual heritage or reclaim a celebration that belonged to your ancestors?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Thirteen

### The Life of Torah

1. Have you ever lost something of incredible value? What was that experience like?
2. Organized prayer has its own reward. (Page 139-140) Why would this be a good idea and a practice to include in your family life?
3. What is the Jewish understanding of the moon, the phases and being 'born again?' (Page 140)
4. There is an obvious connection with the moon and women's bodies. What is it?
5. Define the terms ritually fit and unfit/clean or unclean. (Page 141)
6. What comes to mind as you read the purity regulations, the application to a woman's body and the constant cycle of life and death? (Page 142)
7. Mikvah immersion and baptism are inextricably linked. How? (Page 142)
8. Baptism is a touchy subject and divides most denominations from one another. Torah is something we all have in common. What difference might this make? (Page 143)

9. What is a mikvah? Why is it important? Why are there so many of them around the Temple in Jerusalem?
10. The life of Torah is filled with reminders. Consider what you need reminders for and why reminders about your heritage and ancestry matter. (Page 144-145)
11. Dietary Laws? What does this mean and why was it important for the Jewish people to eat according to the laws of the Bible? Is there something necessary for us as Gentiles to learn or to apply? Maybe...maybe not? (Page 147)
12. "The biblical dietary laws bring us back to the Garden. They remind us that we are not the authors of morality. God makes distinctions." (Page 149) What comes to mind as you process these statements?
13. Keeping God's laws forces us to analyze everything. Basic discipline teaches us to be careful about what we eat, how we dress, what we watch or listen to and so many other things. Consider how intentional you are about analyzing what you do with your time and resources.
14. Do you agree or disagree: The life of Torah is walked out in quiet beauty and subtle majesty. Until it is experienced, it cannot be understood. (Page 150)
15. Consider the Torah mode of life. What is the advantage of knowing about this?
16. How did we lose all the connections, reminders, and heritage of the Bible as Christians? Did we lose anything...or not?
17. Consider the cost of the loss. Or was there any loss at all? (Page 152)
18. As an archaeologist, digging through the layers is an act of discovery. What happens when we look deeper, dig deeper, and discover something valuable?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Fourteen

### The Jots and Tittles of Torah

1. God commands the king to write a copy of the Torah. Why is this significant? Do you think this is a good idea for leaders? (Page 153)
2. The king is not above the law. What do you think about this statement?
3. In the constitutional model, the ultimate sovereignty is not vested within the government; it lies in the constitution that formed the government. (Page 154) What are your thoughts and ideas about this statement?
4. In God's economy, the Torah is the constitution that mitigates Israel's government. (Page 154) Consider what this means for governments.
5. What did Solomon change? (Page 155)
6. Why do you think Solomon felt he could edit God's Word? (Page 156)
7. Rationale is what comes from reasoning as to why we do not want to keep the commandments or God's Law. What is our present-day rationale for doing our own thing or editing the Torah? (Page 158)

8. Do you understand the reason God wrote His law the way He did? What comes to mind as you read pages 158-159?
  
9. Are believers in Jesus exempt from the Law? (Page 159)
  
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer refused to trivialize and explain away the words of the Master. He took Yeshua literally. He did not try to be better than the gospel. (Page 160) What insights do you have regarding the Rule of Law and the theology of ‘cheap grace?’
  
11. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. (Matthew 10:24) What is Jesus trying to tell us?
  
12. Summarize the ideas included on page 161 in your own words.

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Fifteen

### The Difficult Laws of the Torah

1. What are your thoughts about the statements made on page 166: How can we derive unchanging ethical and moral absolutes from a document we routinely disregard and declare irrelevant to life in the modern world? How can we cling that God's Word is eternal and unchanging while at the same time teach that it has changed?
2. What disgusts God?
3. How do we resolve the 'three Torah's' approach with the one Torah? It's okay to admit we wrestle with these statements. (Pages 167-168)
4. How can we apply the attributes of Scripture as the unchanging and immutable to our present-day situation?
5. Describe your understanding of the Temple in Jerusalem and the significance of either its presence or current state.
6. Is there a positive interpretation to purity laws or is it all for nothing? (Page 170)
7. What is the point of priests and pastors?

8. Slavery is an emotional topic and politically used to instigate heated debates. What is your understanding of slavery that is included in the Bible? How does it compare to present-day slavery or the definition?
  
9. Sabbath is controversial for many reasons. Name some. What are your thoughts as to why Sabbath is questionable? (Page 172)
  
10. The author challenges us to consider the dietary laws. What are your thoughts?
  
11. Write down some ideas about why we need to read the difficult laws. (Page 174)

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Sixteen

### The Oral Torah

1. Describe your understanding of Written and Oral Torah.
2. Mishnah is an elaborate development of how to apply and live according to God's Word. How are Jews and Christians expected to treat the Oral Torah? (Page 177)
3. What is the Gemara? (Page 178)
4. What is the Talmud—is there a difference between the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmud? (Page 179)
5. Did Jesus live up to the expectations of both Written and Oral Law? (Page 180)
6. "Almost all of Yeshua's arguments with the religious authorities involve a question of misplaced priorities." (Page 181) How do you interpret this statement?
7. Define *Halachah*. (Page 183) What is the ruling about hand washing?

8. What are Gentile expectations for Torah, observing the Law and how to live a life according to Godly standards? (Page 185)
  
9. How could a Gentile believer misapply or misinterpret the Bible? Consider what the author suggests. How would you put what you read into practice?
  
10. Applying what we learn from God's written Word is important but not at the expense of our understanding of the authority of Jesus. What are your thoughts regarding the paragraphs on page 186?

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Seventeen

### Paul and the Torah

1. What was your understanding of the Apostles and their relationship to Jesus and the Law? (Page 188) Has your opinion changed or is it the same?
2. Describe the controversy that involved James and Paul. (Page 188)
3. What are God's basic ethics for all people, also known as the laws of Noah? (Page 189)
4. What does it mean that Paul took a Nazarite vow? (Page 190)
5. What comes to mind as you read about Paul's development in the Book of Acts?
6. Read through the scripture references on page 192. Make notes if necessary.
7. Paul argued against requiring non-Jewish believers to adopt the particulars of Torah that defined Jewish identity. (Page 194) What defines Christian identity?

8. How do you define, apply and teach Matthew 28:19-20? What do you think Jesus meant when He told his disciples to do as He commanded them?
  
9. Paul taught that disciples are to live a life of *imitation of Jesus*. Define what you believe he meant using your own words.
  
10. The Antichrist is defined as a ‘man of lawlessness.’ (Page 195) What is your understanding of the term? Has your interpretation changed, why or why not? Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10.
  
11. What do you think contributed to misunderstanding Paul or his teaching? Consider what you were taught about Paul, Torah, Jesus, the Law and being included into the People of God. Describe a biblical interpretation of how God brought the Gentiles into right relationship with Him.

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Chapter Eighteen

### Res-Torah-ation

1. What is our prophetic destiny as you define it? (Page 197)
2. What does it mean to follow the LORD in Deuteronomy 13:4?
3. False prophets are clearly defined and identified. Could you pick one out? Why or why not? How many false prophets can you name? (Page 198)
4. “Become a Christian and you no longer be under the Law.” (Page 199) Is that what the Bible says? Describe a Torahless Messiah.
5. Do you agree or disagree with the author’s statements on page 200?
6. “If turning away from the Torah inflicted the wound, then returning to Torah is the balm. In a sense, the gospel has been in exile since the days of the apostles.” What are your thoughts about these statements? (Page 201)
7. What are the four things that need restoration according to the author? Do you agree or disagree or have your own ideas? Share them.

8. It is okay to disagree, why? Or do you think we need to agree? On what things do we need agreement and why?
  
9. We are in the Last Days. What does the statement mean in your own words? (Page 203)
  
10. Write down your thoughts about how you interpret scripture and theology after you read the book and discussed the topics with others.

Reflections:

---

---

---

---

---

---

# The Apostolic Decree

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So, we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

Acts 15: 23-29 NIV

What to do with Gentile converts was one of the first challenges that needed to be addressed in the early stages of the new post-resurrection worshipping community. Synagogue worship was structured and ordered. Purification ordinances separated the Jewish people from Gentiles. Men and women studied apart and were part of an elaborate educational system. So, you can imagine the uproar and discontinuity that was brought into the 'house of worship' of the first century when Messianic Gentiles arrived in synagogues.

It was wise for the leaders to appeal to a previous precedent: the universal laws of Noah. (Genesis 9:1-7) The Apostolic Decree held Gentile believers to an even higher standard. As strangers living within Israel, God-fearing Gentile believers also had to avoid things contaminated by idols. (Acts 15:29) What did this mean? The Gentile believers had to completely renounce idolatry and things associated with foreign worship. (Avodah zarah)

Is there a Biblical reference for this? Yes.

They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come. Say to them: 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who offers a

burnt offering or sacrifice and does not bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to the Lord must be cut off from the people of Israel. (Leviticus 17:7-9)

You may wonder, what is the big deal? From the twenty-first century point of view, we don't have a grasp on what it meant that Gentile believers needed to renounce their religion and things associated with it. Gentile believers were required to leave behind their ancestral belief, worship, idols, practices, culture, food, and customs.

Consider how a belief in Jesus as Messiah separated Gentile families from each other.

The Acts 15 Apostolic Decree obligated Gentile believers to keep those commandments whenever applicable. It was important for Gentile believers to make a clean break from their idolatrous past and cling to the God of Israel. Think about how the Torah's commands regarding idol worship are binding for Gentile believers. The prohibition on things polluted by idols included most of the Torah's commandments pertaining to idolatry, paganism, and the occult.

Here is the section of the law: Idolatry, Idolaters, and Idolatrous Practices ([jewfaq.org](http://jewfaq.org))

- 312. Not to make a graven image; neither to make it oneself nor to have it made by others. (Ex. 20:4)
- 313. Not to make any figures for ornament, even if they are not worshipped. (Ex. 20:20)
- 314. Not to make idols even for others. (Ex. 34:17; Lev. 19:4)
- 315. Not to use the ornament of any object of idolatrous worship. (Deut. 7:25)
- 316. Not to make use of an idol or its accessory objects, offerings, or libations. (Deut. 7:26)
- 317. Not to drink wine of idolaters. (Deut. 32:38)
- 318. Not to worship an idol in the way in which it is usually worshipped. (Ex. 20:5)
- 319. Not to bow down to an idol, even if that is not its mode of worship. (Ex. 20:5)
- 320. Not to prophesy in the name of an idol. (Ex. 23:13; Deut. 18:20)
- 321. Not to hearken to one who prophesies in the name of an idol. (Deut. 13:4)
- 322. Not to lead the children of Israel astray to idolatry. (Ex. 23:13)
- 323. Not to entice an Israelite to idolatry. (Deut. 13:12)
- 324. To destroy idolatry and its appurtenances. (Deut. 12:2-3)
- 325. Not to love the enticer to idolatry. (Deut. 13:9)
- 326. Not to give up hating the enticer to idolatry. (Deut. 13:9)
- 327. Not to save the enticer from capital punishment, but to stand by at his execution. (Deut. 13:9)
- 328. A person whom he attempted to entice to idolatry shall not urge pleas for the acquittal of the enticer. (Deut. 13:9)
- 329. A person whom he attempted to entice shall not refrain from giving evidence of the enticer's guilt, if he has such evidence. (Deut. 13:9)
- 330. Not to swear by an idol to its worshipers, nor cause them to swear by it. (Ex. 23:13)

- 331. Not to turn one's attention to idolatry. (Lev. 19:4)
- 332. Not to adopt the institutions of idolaters nor their customs. (Lev. 18:3; Lev. 20:23)
- 333. Not to pass a child through the fire to Molech. (Lev. 18:21)
- 334. Not to suffer anyone practicing witchcraft to live. (Ex. 22:17)
- 335. Not to practice *onein*. (observing times or seasons as favorable or unfavorable, using astrology) (Lev. 19:26)
- 336. Not to practice *nachesh*. (doing things based on signs and portents; using charms and incantations) (Lev. 19:26)
- 337. Not to consult *ovoth* (ghosts) (Lev. 19:31)
- 338. Not to consult *yid'onim* (wizards) (Lev. 19:31)
- 339. Not to practice *kisuf* (magic using herbs, stones and objects that people use) (Deut. 18:10)
- 340. Not to practice *kessem* (a general term for magical practices) (Deut. 18:10)
- 341. Not to practice the art of a *chover chaver* (casting spells over snakes and scorpions) (Deut. 18:11)
- 342. Not to enquire of an *ob* (a ghost) (Deut. 18:11)
- 343. Not to seek the *maytim* (dead) (Deut. 18:11)
- 344. Not to enquire of a *yid'oni* (wizard) (Deut. 18:11)
- 345. Not to remove the entire beard, like the idolaters. (Lev. 19:27)
- 346. Not to round the corners of the head, as the idolatrous priests do. (Lev. 19:27)
- 347. Not to cut oneself or make incisions in one's flesh in grief, like the idolaters (Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1)
- 348. Not to tattoo the body like the idolaters. (Lev. 19:28)
- 349. Not to make a bald spot for the dead. (Deut. 14:1)
- 350. Not to plant a tree for worship. (Deut. 16:21)
- 351. Not to set up a pillar (for worship). (Deut. 16:22)
- 352. Not to show favor to idolaters. (Deut. 7:2)
- 353. Not to make a covenant with the seven (Canaanite, idolatrous) nations. (Ex. 23:32; Deut. 7:2)
- 354. Not to settle idolaters in our land. (Ex. 23:33)
- 355. To slay the inhabitants of a city that has become idolatrous and burn that city. (Deut. 13:16-17)
- 356. Not to rebuild a city that has been led astray to idolatry. (Deut. 13:17)
- 357. Not to make use of the property of city that has been so led astray. (Deut. 13:18)

What comes to mind as you consider the laws regarding idolatry and Gentiles?

### **Treatment of Animals for consumption:**

Most present-day Christians do not abide by the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15. Consider why God placed such laws within the expectations of His people. The way human beings treat animals reflects our character. God provided clear directives on how to treat animals set apart for slaughter and consumption, even describing with detail how to slaughter an animal in a God-honoring way. (Page 208-209)

## **Expectations for the Early Community:**

Have you ever wondered how the early believers developed their communities? Consider what the Didache offered as leadership and expectations for believers.

### **The Didache: (Page 210)**

The Didache is an early handbook of an anonymous Christian community, likely written before some of the New Testament books were written. It spells out a way of life for Jesus-followers that includes instruction on how to treat one another, how to practice the Eucharist, and how to take in wandering prophets.

The post-resurrection Apostolic era brought the 'engrafting' of the Gentiles to a whole new level of understanding. The rules for worship and discipleship expectations of early believers were shared across cultural lines and geographic boundaries. Gentiles were given a minimum requirement. They were also encouraged to even go further in their application of belief:

"If you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be complete; but if you cannot, then do what you can. Concerning food, bear what you can, but scrupulously guard yourself from what has been offered to idols, because it is the worship of dead gods."

Didache 6:2-3 (Page 210)

### **Sexual Immorality (Page 211)**

Maybe you have heard the phrase, "You're such a prude—a goody two-shoes!" Keeping oneself sacred or separate from the cultural sexual norms of the day has been a challenge since the beginning of time for the People of God. The seven laws of Noah forbade Gentile believers from sexual immorality. But the application of the prohibition went undefined for Gentiles. For the Jewish people, there is a detailed list included in the Bible. Scripture considers adultery, promiscuity, prostitution, and sexual relationships outside of marriage as forms of sexual immorality.

What comes to mind as you consider that God outlined expectations around sexuality.

What are the benefits of God's expectations? What is the downside?

What are the requirements of becoming a Christian?

What are the requirements of remaining a Christian?

## Bibliography

*From Sabbath to Sabbath: Returning the Holy Sabbath to the Disciples of Jesus.* D. Thomas Lancaster. First Fruits of Zion. 2016.

*Messianic Judaism: A Modern Movement with an Ancient Past.* David H. Stern. Messianic Jewish Publishers. 2007.

*Restoration: Returning the Torah of Moses to the Disciples of Jesus.* D. Thomas Lancaster. First Fruits of Zion. 2015.

*Shabbat as a Sanctuary in Time.* Farrar Straus Giroux Publishers. Abraham Joshua Heschel. 2005.

*The Cost of Discipleship.* Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Touchstone, Simon & Shuster. 1959.

*The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship.* Dallas Willard. Harper Collins Publishing. 2006.