

## Session 6

# Jesus, Paul, and the Modern Push for Torah-Obedience

*Series: Living The Torah | Dr. Randy White*

### Did Paul Say Something Different Than Jesus About the Law?

- Popular claim: Jesus upheld the permanence of the Mosaic Law (Matt. 5:17–19), while Paul later abolished it (Eph. 2:15).
- This assumes both men addressed the same action in the same covenantal setting.
- The supposed conflict dissolves when the Greek vocabulary and the timing are allowed to speak for themselves.

### Jesus Did Not “Destroy” the Law (Matt. 5:17)

- “Destroy” = *kataluō* (καταλύω): tear down, dismantle, overthrow.
- Jesus explicitly denied tearing down the Law or the Prophets.
- Modern translations using “abolish” (e.g., NIV) confuse categories.
- Jesus came to “fulfil” (*plēroō* πληρώω): to bring to fullness, to complete in practice.
- As one “made under the law” (Gal. 4:4), He lived Torah to its fullest expression.

### Paul Said Christ “Abolished” the Law (Eph. 2:15)

- “Abolish” = *katargeō* (καταργέω): render inoperative, deactivate, make without effect.
- Not the same as Jesus’ “destroy.”
- The text identifies what was abolished: “the enmity,” the law of commandments that maintained Israel–Gentile separation.
- Purpose: to create “one new man” — the Body of Christ.
- Christ set aside the Law’s dividing function; He did not destroy the covenant itself.

### This Change Took Place Through the Cross

- Paul connects the abolition to Christ’s death: “in his flesh.”

- The cross removed the jurisdictional force of the Law over Jew and Gentile in creating the one new man.
- The explanation of this change belonged to the mystery revealed to Paul, not to Jesus' earthly ministry.

## **The Relationship Between Fulfilment and Abolishing**

- Fulfilment and abolishing are not contradictory because they refer to different actions and different covenantal functions.
- Jesus fulfilled the Law – upheld it fully during His earthly ministry.
- Christ later abolished its jurisdictional authority over the Body of Christ.

## **Fulfilment Does Not Cancel Covenant Promises**

- Jesus' fulfilment upheld the Law's integrity.
- The Mosaic covenant and its promises remain intact and await future fulfillment.

## **Abolishing Removes Operational Power**

- Christ deactivated the dividing legislation, not the covenant itself.
- This was necessary for forming the one new man, where Jew and Gentile stand on equal footing.

## **The Covenant in Abeyance**

- Israel's national program is temporarily paused (Rom. 11).
- The Law's authority is suspended for the Body of Christ.
- The one new man becomes a past-tense reality at the rapture.

## **Conclusion of the First Half**

- Jesus denied tearing down the Law; He fulfilled it.
- Paul taught that Christ rendered inoperative its separating function.
- No contradiction exists when each statement is kept in its proper place.

# Who Is Putting Christians Under the Law Today?

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## Groups and Movements Promoting Torah-Obedience

- A number of modern movements insist that Christians — Jew and Gentile — are obligated to obey the Law of Moses.
- Their influence spreads through conferences, online ministries, and social media.

## Hebrew Roots and Torah-Observant Movements

- Teach Torah as binding on all believers.
- Argue Jesus and the apostles kept Torah; therefore Christians must.
- Typical representatives: 119 Ministries, AmericanTorah, EliYah.com, Torah Family Living.
- Sacred Name movement overlaps heavily.

## Torah-Observant Wing of Messianic Judaism

- Holds that Jews in Messiah remain obligated to Torah.
- Many congregations encourage or require Gentile Torah observance.
- Distinction often blurred in practice.

## Sabbatarian and Law-Positive Protestant Groups

- Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh Day Baptists, Churches of God.
- Hold that the Ten Commandments, especially the Sabbath, remain binding.
- Reinforce Torah-positive thinking.

## The Foundational Strategies These Movements Use

### Torah Is Eternal and Never Abolished

- Argue the Law must be permanent because God does not change.

- “Fulfil” in Matthew 5:17 is reinterpreted as “expand.”

## **Jesus as the Model Torah-Keeper**

- “Jesus kept the Law — so should we.”
- Ignores His identity as an Israelite under the Mosaic covenant.

## **Greek/Roman Corruption Narrative**

- Claims the early church corrupted itself by adopting Greek and Roman practices.
- Frames Torah-observance as a return to “original Christianity.”

## **Reinterpreting the New Covenant**

- Claims the New Covenant writes the same Torah on the heart.
- Used as a pro-Torah argument rather than a dispensational shift.

## **Rereading Acts 15**

- Claims Acts 15 rejected only circumcision-for-salvation.
- Verse 21 becomes a mandate for Gentiles to learn full Torah over time.

## **Redefining Paul**

- Restricts “works of the law” to identity markers.
- Claims Paul opposed misuse of Torah, not the Law itself.

## **The “Scripturalist” Claim**

- “We believe the whole Bible.”
- Frames non-Torah-observers as picking and choosing.

## **Conclusion: Why We Are Free From the Law**

- Torah observance cannot be done as written: no temple, priesthood, or covenant land.
- The Law has been abolished in its jurisdictional role for the one new man.
- The believer is free from Torah observance by God’s own design for this dispensation.