

ONE JOT or ONE TITTLE

“a change of the law”

Compiled by Rachel Cory-Kuehl, March 10, 2014
Scripture is from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

A NEW COVENANT

In the study [“Two Covenants”](#) we looked at the legal basis for a NEW Marriage Covenant with Israel redeemed. We concluded that the “first” Covenant was rendered obsolete by the death of Yeshua - the betrothed “husband”. He is now free to enter into a NEW Marriage Covenant with His bride - Israel redeemed. Because it is a NEW Covenant, He can legally make a few changes.

The study [“Israel - The People of God”](#) will hopefully convince you that Israel is the name of the redeemed people of God. The sinners in Zion will be “cut off” from Israel, and Gentiles who come to faith in Messiah are “grafted in”.

Many teach that any change of the Law is absolutely impossible. We need to look at those passages which are used in support of that position.

Matthew 5:17-18 [Yeshua speaking] “Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, **Till** heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, **till** all things be accomplished.” (ASV)

He came “to fulfill” the Law. Did He fulfill the Law? - Yes! The law of sacrifices - as a prophecy of Messiah’s death - was fulfilled. He died as “the lamb of God”. Yes! That part of “the law” - the “law of sacrifices” - WAS fulfilled!

To fulfill the Law also means to keep it. Did Jesus “fulfill” the Law? Yes! Perfectly. “He was obedient unto death” (Phil. 2:8). He fulfilled every duty to the Law. He can legitimately receive the promises of that Sinai Covenant. We who have not perfectly obeyed, can still receive the promise - if we are part of His bride.

The Law was not “destroyed” - it was “fulfilled.” The Law was a prophecy of Messiah - of what He would do for us, and in us. He would be the sacrifice, and He would become the High Priest. He would come to tabernacle with us in the land promised to Abraham. And He will write His Law on our hearts.

Acts 13:29 “Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb.”

Luke 24:44 [Speaking post resurrection] “Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me.”

Acts 3:18 “But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.”

John 19:28-30 “After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”

TIL HEAVEN AND EARTH PASS AWAY

Matthew 5:18 “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.” (ASV)

Was Yeshua saying that “all” would be fulfilled, only when heaven and earth pass away? We know that heaven and earth will pass away at the Second Coming. Does that mean we must continue to live under “the Law” until Christ returns? I do not believe so.

There are prophecies in the writings known as the Old Testament, which tell of things that Yeshua will do AFTER the Second Coming. Those prophecies will not be “fulfilled” until Gog-Magog is destroyed, the earth is cleansed of sin, and the New Jerusalem finally descends.

Mark 13:31 “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

In context He was speaking of His own glorious return.

2 Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

Perhaps we could at least agree that AFTER the return of Christ in glory, the Law may be changed, allowing for “spiritual sacrifices” only in the coming kingdom of Messiah.

A DUAL PROPHECY?

It is possible that the words of Christ recorded by Matthew have more than one fulfillment. All was “accomplished” concerning Him, when He died as our perfect Sacrifice. And all will be “fulfilled” at the Second Coming when the “heavens and the earth” (as we know them) pass away. The prophetic “appointed times” will meet their perfect fulfillment.

A SIMILAR PASSAGE

Luke 16:17 “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.”

This passage in Luke, also quoting Yeshua, may help to explain what He meant in the passage recording Matthew’s recollection.

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY -

When Yeshua died **the great high entrance veil of the Temple was torn in two**, from top to bottom. This veil was 80 feet high. On this veil was a glorious depiction of “the universe” - for the LORD “stretches out the heavens like a curtain” (*Isa. 40:22*). God the Father “rent His robe” at the death of His Son. At the same time a great earthquake rent “the earth” beneath Jerusalem. Upon seeing these things, the centurion and those with him at the crucifixion “feared greatly, saying, “Truly this *was* the Son of God!” (*Matt. 27:54*).

Josephus mentions but a single veil (katapevtasma; J.W. 5.5.5 §219) before a set of doors which serve as the “gate opening into the building”. It had golden doors **fifty-five cubits** high and sixteen broad. Before these hung **a veil** (katapevtasma) of equal length, of Babylonian tapestry, with embroidery of blue and fine linen, of scarlet also and purple, wrought with marvelous skill. Nor was this mixture of materials without its mystic meaning. It typified the universe. For the scarlet seemed emblematical of fire, the fine linen of the earth, the blue of the air, and the purple of the sea; the comparison in two cases being suggested by their colour, and in that of the fine linen and purple by their origin, as the one is produced by the earth and the other by the sea. On this tapestry was portrayed a panorama of the heavens, the signs of the Zodiac excepted . . .) J.W. (5.5.4 §211-5.5 §219 LCL)

Yeshua was master of the dual prophecy. While “heaven and earth will pass away” at the glorious return of Jesus (*2Peter 3:7, 10-13*), on the day and at the hour Jesus died, “heaven and earth” did indeed “pass away” when the veil of the Temple was torn by God Himself.

NO ADDITIONS - NO SUBTRACTIONS

Psalms 89:34 "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips."

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Deuteronomy 12:32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."

Deuteronomy 11:26 "Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today . . . "

I CHANGE NOT

Malachi 3:6 "For I am the LORD, I change not;"

This statement, made by the LORD has been quoted to support the teaching that God will never change His Sinai Covenant. But you see, **He did not change that Covenant.** THAT Covenant was rendered "obsolete" when the betrothed husband died, necessitating a "New" marriage Covenant.

Please see the study "[Two Covenants](#)".

And there is another way of looking at this. The LORD's intention - from the moment of Adam's sin, was that His Son would be the "sacrifice for sin" and would become the High Priest over Israel redeemed. **That plan did NOT "change"**. It remains the same.

A CHANGE OF THE LAW

Hebrews 7:12 "**For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.**"

Some do not believe that the Letter to the Hebrews belongs in the Holy Canon. I do NOT share their view. Because the "first" Covenant was a covenant of marriage, it has been rendered obsolete by the death of the "husband" (*Jer. 2:1-3, Jer. 3:14, Jer. 31:32, Ezek. 16:32, Rom. 7:1-4*). I believe that we are betrothed to Yeshua Messiah by a New Marriage Covenant. No mortal man has "changed" that "first" Covenant. The LORD Himself has "changed" the priesthood, within His New Covenant, and with it the blood sacrifices - including physical circumcision.

I see the work of a new generation of Pharisees, teaching a return to every aspect of the “first” covenant, including the sacrifice of animals thru a restored Aaronic/Levite priesthood at a rebuilt Temple on the Mount. They deny the existence of a “New” Covenant, and insist rather that we are under a “renewed” Covenant.

This is very serious! The LORD pronounced a curse upon “the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them” (*Deut. 27:26*). No wonder there was such a conflict! No wonder Paul and all of the first believers were persecuted.

The Pharisees of Christ’s day believed that failure to keep every word of the Torah, would bring upon them the curse of God. They kept the letter - but not the spirit, of the law. The Pharisees maintained their authority over the people - teaching the Law. If Paul had advocated no change to the old system - he would not have been persecuted!

Of course, there was the added element of money. The Sadducees controlled the priesthood. They made their money exchanging Roman currency for the acceptable Temple shekel (for a fee of course), and by selling animals for sacrifice. They were not satisfied with the 10% tithes. Fees at the Temple exchange tables ran as high as 20% during the Feasts. If the system of animal sacrifices went away - so would their stream of income.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul clearly stated that physical circumcision for Gentile converts was no longer necessary. He went much further saying that those who became circumcised in order to become “partakers of the covenant,” were “fallen from grace” and “estranged from Christ” (*Gal. 5:5-6*). Certainly THIS was a “change of the law.” Circumcision was law under the “first” Covenant (*Gen. 17:10, Exo. 12:44-48, Lev. 12:3, Jos. 5:3-5*).

There were those in Paul’s day - converted Pharisees - who vehemently taught that all new converts must be physically circumcised, and must agree to keep all the Law of Moses (including thrice yearly pilgrimage to the Temple at Jerusalem and the offering of animal sacrifices). These Pharisees did not believe that any part of the Torah could be changed. Please read the study titled “[Circumcision - Under the New Covenant](#)”.

Hebrews and Galatians spell out clearly **what has changed** under the New Covenant:

1. *the Aaronic priesthood (a temporary substitute) for the original Melchizedek order*
2. *the system of animal sacrifice (which could only be performed by an Aaronic priest)*
3. *the circumcision of the flesh (which was a type of blood sacrifice)*

Either we reject the Letter to the Hebrews and much in the letters of Paul, or we accept that all things” written in the Law and the Prophets concerning the earthly life and sacrificial death of our Messiah *were* “accomplished”.

WHY DID PAUL OFFER SACRIFICES AFTER THE DAMASCUS ROAD VISION ?

We cannot deny it happened. The story was faithfully preserved in Acts Chapter 21, because it ended with Paul's arrest. At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul returned to Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. He had apparently taken a Nazarite vow, for which he had his hair cut off some weeks before reaching the City (*Acts 18:18*). (*See Numbers 6:2,5,9,18.*)

The LORD had given him several warnings along the route. (*See Acts 20:22-23, Acts 21:4, Acts 21:11.*) But Paul was determined. Upon reaching Jerusalem he met with "James and all the elders" who joyfully told him of all the converts from the Jews who had come to belief in Yeshua as Messiah. These Jewish converts were "all zealous for the Law" (*Acts 21:20*).

Acts 21:21 [James speaking] "but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs."

Acts 21:22-24 [James continues] "What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law."

There were several sacrifices involved in this process of purification. Paul went to the Temple, and paid the money for the sacrifices, but before they could complete the process of purification some of the Jews from Asia recognized Paul - and a riot ensued, as they sought to kill him. From that day on Paul remained a prisoner.

Why did Paul do as the Elders directed? Did he believe that the blood of animals really effected anything at all? Did he ignore the warnings sent by the LORD? Did he cross the line? Did he strike the rock twice?

1 Corinthians 9:20 "and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;"

Paul makes it very clear that he did not consider himself "under the law" (Rom. 6:15).

I think we must consider the possibility that Paul was going thru the motions, in order to dispel prejudice against the Gospel, from the Jewish community. After all, in this same passage James repeats the consensus of the Jerusalem Council.

Acts 21:25 "But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, [sacrifices at the Temple] except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality."

Are you starting to see why some in the Messianic Community are teaching that Jews are still obligated to keep the sacrificial law, and Gentiles are not. Personally - I cannot accept a two tiered system, one for Jews and the other for Gentiles. All human beings are "saved" in the same way - "by grace" "through faith".

The problem today is that a third Temple will be restored on the Mount - before the return of Christ in glory. Many will go there to offer sacrifice, but the LORD will not be there. An imposter will "sit in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2Thess. 2:3-4). Please see the study: "[Another Temple](#)".

HIS ORIGINAL PLAN

Exodus 19:5-6 [Spoken to Israel] ". . . if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Here we have the LORD's original intent and purpose for Israel.

Remember - His word will be accomplished (Isaiah 55:11).

And remember - You are an Israelite - "grafted in" by faith.

Please do read the studies: "[Israel - The People of God](#)" and "[A Kingdom of Priests](#)".

*We pray this study will be a blessing.
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