

# **What is "Under the Law?"**

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# English - Hebrew Names of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT - TANAKH	NEW TESTAMENT
GENESIS - B'RESHIYTH	MATTHEW - MATTITYAHU
EXODUS - SH'MOT	MARK
LEVITICUS - VAYIKRA	LUKE
NUMBERS - B'MIDBAR	JOHN - YOCHANAN
DEUTERONOMY - D'VARIM	ACTS
JOSHUA - Y'HOSHUA	ROMANS
JUDGES - SHOF'TIM	1 CORINTHIANS
RUTH - RUT	2 CORINTHIANS
1 SAMUEL - SH'MU'EL ALEF	GALATIANS
2 SAMUEL - SH'MU'EL BET	EPHESIANS
1 KINGS - M'LAKHIM ALEF	PHILIPPIANS
2 KINGS - M'LAKHIM BET	COLOSSIANS
1 CHRONICLES - DIVRE-HAYAMIM ALEF	1 THESSALONIANS
2 CHRONICLES - DIVRE-HAYAMIM BET	2 THESSALONIANS
EZRA - 'EZRA	1 TIMOTHY
NEHEMIAH - NECHEMYAH	2 TIMOTHY
ESTHER - ESTER	TITUS
JOB - IYOV	PHILEMON
PSALMS - TEHILLIM	HEBREWS - IVRIM
MIZMOR for individual chapters	
PROVERBS - MISHLEI	JAMES - YA'AKOV
ECCLESIASTES - KOHELET	1 PETER - 1 KEFA
SONG OF SONGS - SHIR-HASHIRIM	2 PETER - 2 KEFA
ISAIAH - YESHA'YAHU	1 JOHN - 1 YOCHANAN
JEREMIAH - YIRMEYAHU	2 JOHN - 2 YOCHANAN
LAMENTATIONS - EIKHAH	3 JOHN - 3 YOCHANAN
EZEKIEL - YECHZK'EL	JUDE - Y'HUDAH
DANIEL - DAN'EL	REVELATION - HITGALUT
HOSEA - HOSHEA	
JOEL - YO'EL	
AMOS - 'AMOS	
OBADIAH - 'OVADYAH	
JONAH - YONAH	
MICAH - MIKHAH	
NAHUM - NACHUM	
HABAKKUK - HAVAKUK	
ZEPHANIAH - TZ'FANYAH	
HAGGAI - HAGAI	
ZECHARIAH - Z'KHARYAH	
MALACHI - MAL'AKHI	

# What is "Under the Law?"

## Introduction

There is a universal battle cry for those who embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and yet at the same time deny His words. "We are no longer under the law, but under grace." I meant what I just said. This has been the banner under which millions of Christians for hundreds of years have flown. Humankind since the days of Adam have turned away from the word of YHVH. It is a central part of our fallen nature. There are really three kinds of people in the world. Those who disobey the commands of YHVH because they do not acknowledge His existence, those who disobey Him and do it in His name, and those who claim His name and obey Him. Which one are you? When reading the scriptures, it becomes quite evident that no matter what "dispensation" you are cruising through, disobedience is rampant, and so is chaos and moral decay. This is not only true today, but it seems to have reached it's pinnacle. At least in the times of the Judges or the times of David, YHVH's people realized that they had turned from His ways and repented now and then. Today however, the modern church stills teaches that Yahshua's death put an end to law. So we all stand by and watch as our society crumbles, having the peace of mind that it is not our fault. It is Satanism, the New World Order, the New Age Movement, the Catholics, the Democrats, liberalism, Bill and Hillary, Hollywood, Nintendo, Neo-Nazi's, and Oprah Winfrey.

I hope and pray that this study will begin to open your eyes to the commonly accepted interpretation of being "under the law". Like many of the Hebrew words we have defined, this phrase has a background and an Old Testament meaning that is imperative in understanding it's New Testament use. This will take a few lessons to get through, but I believe it is very important. Yahshua, Sha'ul, and all the writers of the Brit Chadashah (New Testament) would have used the concept of "law" in the framework of it's previously established use. This word, or for that matter the idea of being under the law, was not created in a vacuum. However, the use or misuse of this idea was so misunderstood by "Jew and Gentile" alike, that Sha'ul spends an incredible amount of time to make it clearly understood. Why so much attention to this word? Well, it is because one cannot draw the two usual conclusions to this matter. There seems to be a very fine line between obedience and what we call legalism. I hope to show that Sha'ul's desire for "Jew and Gentile" was that they lived in YHVH's glorious grace. He also stressed that YHVH's people walked in obedience in their newly found life in Yahshua, and that these two ideas were not in conflict. Considering the two opposing cultures, this was not an easy task. Drawing two such contrary views of life into one would take up a lot of writing space. I believe that the Messiah Yahshua was the answer to that enmity created by the law between "Jew and Gentile". The phrase "under the law" is found ten times in the Brit Chadashah. If you are familiar with scriptural numerics, then you will quickly notice that the number ten usually speaks of law or judgment for disobeying (10 commandments, 10 plagues, the tithe, etc.). I intend to discuss these ten occurrences. First, however, we must take the time to define what we mean by the "law". As I have said many times before, the New Testament writers would have used this word as it has always been understood and defined. Simply put, if law was evil or bad in the Tanach then it would continue to be understood as evil or bad in the Brit Chadashah. If YHVH's laws were understood as righteous and holy in the Tanach, then they would continue to be defined as righteous and holy in the Brit Chadashah. I would pray that this would not only be in harmony with the very nature of YHVH, but is simple common

sense. If YHVH is constantly changing the meaning of these words, then there is no solid rock on which we are to stand. Our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Ivrim 13:8). Do you believe that only Yahshua was the same? YHVH does not change (Mal'akhi 3:6). There is no explanation of the phrase "under the law" because it was already understood!

Many times I find modern Christian teachers teaching backwards! The modern church approaches the scriptures by beginning in the New Testament, forming an understanding of its teachings, and then going back to the Old Testament to understand it's meaning. This denies the plain cultural meaning of the text and conforms the Scriptures to the ever changing ideology of the church rather than forming the church around the solid consistent rock of scripture. When you read the book of Acts, you see that, historically, the followers of Yahshua did not simply accept whatever new teaching they heard. They could not have tested established revelation (Tanach), which they knew to be true, by a new revelation which they did not know to be true. The three sections of the Tanach were already accepted and established as YHVH's holy everlasting word. YHVH had already commanded, and Yahshua confirmed, that a new teaching or claim of Messiahship was to be tested against what YHVH had already revealed, not the other way around. Interpreting the Scriptures backwards produces a message that is backwards. They could not have justified New Testament teaching by quoting the New Testament!

The English word 'law' is translated from the Greek word nomos. It is very important to see how this word evolved, because the defining of words change our image and perception of the full meaning of a sentence when it is formed. The translation process from Greek to English has already changed the meaning of law. In Greek society, the concept of law still held a positive, honorable, and instructive substance. When we peruse the Tanach, we see that the law was reverently esteemed, and was given many other titles to describe it's place in the lives of YHVH's people. We will discuss those titles later. As this word traveled the translation process, it took on a much heavier negative connotation. As early as the 3rd century A.D. the so-called early church fathers had already begun to denigrate this word. Law was already being taught as a product of 'the Jews'. An heretical character named Marcion taught that the entire Tanach should be removed from our pulpits as well as many sections of the New Testament which put 'the law' and 'the Jews' into a more positive light, such as the book of Luke and the book of Acts.

As the western culture progressed, the concept of law grew more and more negative. The whole scriptural concept of law and bondage was reversed. Law was taught as bondage, not sin. Certain cliches and phrases were adapted to express this bondage. What began in YHVH's word as light, life, righteousness, the Way, the walk, truth, goodness, and holiness, soon became disdained, loathed, and despised. **IT'S THE LAW! LAW AND ORDER! THAT'S AGAINST THE LAW! HE BROKE THE LAW! I FOUGHT THE LAW AND THE LAW WON!** The law has become the enemy. Today, in many movies the handsome bank robber or jewel thief is actually applauded over the bumbling representatives of the law, the police. Iniquity is actually portrayed as good and the law as bad! Law is no longer seen as good and righteous but is seen as nothing but fear and punishment. This is because the scriptural concept of law has been so twisted and redefined that it is virtually unrecognizable. I have come to at least one undeniable conclusion for a long time now. A nation's behavior is guided by it's philosophy, and a nation's philosophy is formed by it's religious values. All cultures and peoples form their society, no matter how large or small, from their view of whatever they deem to be the ultimate Superior. In this great nation it is supposed to be the 'God of the Bible'. But is it really?

# What is "Under the Law?"

## Part 2

According to Colossians chapter 1, all things were created by the Word of Elohiym. The Scriptures are full of expressions to verify this. The Word is Elohiym in Yochanan 1:1. The Word is life in D'varim 32 and 1 Yochanan 1:1. The Word is light in Mizmor 119:105. The Word is the way in Mizmor 119:9. The Word is righteousness in D'varim 6 and Romans 6. The Word is wisdom in Mishlei 4:5. The Word is truth in Mizmor 119:142. All things were created by this Word, says the writer of Ivrim. The Word is a general term to describe what is spoken and written down. An essential part of the Word is commands, ordinances, statutes, and laws. These are generally placed under the term 'laws'. In the English, the word law is translated from the Greek word nomos, which comes from the predecessor Torah. Torah however does not mean law as we know it. It means teaching or instruction. Torah is another general term that refers to all teaching. Contained within Torah are commands or mitzvot. These are commands from Elohiym to His creation. Teaching, instructions, and commands are given by YHVH to creation for its welfare and good. The very laws that brought all creation into existence are also to sustain it, whether it be man or beast, so to speak.

The scriptures begin with laws or commands. ". . . let there be light . . . let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters . . . let the earth bring forth vegetation . . . let there be lights . . . let us make man . . ." These commands brought forth all of His creation. This is the beginning of Elohiym's Torah or instructions to creation. He placed within living things the ability to reproduce or multiply after itself, including humankind. He continues to give instructions to His creation after they are created to sustain His original commands. Adam, the first man, is created by laws or commands and is then given instructions. "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it . . . of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat . . ." Why did Elohiym tell Adam not to eat of this tree? Because you are what you eat? In other words, disobedience will result in a separation from Elohiym, and man will be accountable to choose between good and evil, and because of his now fallen nature, he will generally choose evil over good. This will perpetuate entropy and the eventual extinction of man. So what does YHVH do? He loves man. So, to sustain man, He gives him instructions or laws. Not only for man but for all of His creation. All of creation is created by Torah and sustained by Torah.

All mankind will come from Adam, a fallen creature, sustained only by laws. But how is man reconciled back to YHVH if we all break those laws? How could man ever be redeemed? Well, not by the law. Why? Because law, instructions contained within the Word, was not designed to redeem man, but rather to create, sustain, and prosper man. When Elohiym's instructions are obeyed, they separate and distinguish the obedient from the disobedient. The instructions in Sh'mot 19 separate YHVH's people as a peculiar treasure above all other people. In D'varim 30, it prospers and causes long life to those who obey. In D'varim 11, it blesses the obedient and curses the disobedient. All mankind was created by law, and blessed or cursed by it. Since commandments do not redeem man, YHVH had to redeem him another way. BY GRACE! If man rejects grace, then he is by nature "under the law". All mankind is under law until placed under grace by faith. YHVH's teaching and instruction (Torah)

produced creation and sustains creation. The grace of YHVH through faith redeems man back to Him. His grace redeems man to Him, but will not sustain him unless faith is acted upon through Torah. Torah will sustain man but will not redeem him back to YHVH. Two systems with two different functions. With this in mind, we will now cover all ten verses in which the term "under the law" is applied.

*Romans 3:9 – 19 "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way: for we have before proved both Jews and Greeks, that they are ALL under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are ALL gone out of the way, they are TOGETHER become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that whatever things the law saith, it saith to them who are UNDER THE LAW, that EVERY mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."*

Many times I have heard these verses used to show the condition of Israel, as they are under the law and we (the church) are under grace. But this series of verses begins by stating that ALL are under sin, Jew and Gentile. All of these verses point to the condition of ALL of mankind, and that when the law speaks it speaks to EVERY mouth, and that ALL the world is guilty before YHVH. The law tells us that we are all guilty before YHVH. The law in verse 20 teaches us what is right and wrong. We all are guilty of breaking the law, so we are ALL doomed unless YHVH provides another way to be redeemed. When we are placed under grace by faith, the law still teaches us what is right and wrong. That is its designed function and its lawful use (1 Timothy 1:8). To be under the law is to be without grace and therefore subject to the law, and therefore guilty. There is no teaching here that law was for Old Testament Jews or that they were redeemed by it. Remember that when Sha'ul (Paul) taught, the Bereans checked out everything he spoke by searching the Old Testament that these things were so. There was no New Testament to verify his words.

*Romans:6:14-16 "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not UNDER THE LAW, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness."*

Verse 14 is probably quoted more often than not to explain the doctrine that Yahshua died to free the church from the Old Testament laws. This is absurd and what I call cradle hermeneutics. This discussion is one of hundreds of places where a working knowledge of Hebrew idiom and expressions are imperative to understanding the text. But even without that knowledge, you will begin to see that the focus of the next two chapters is the "old man" of Romans 6:6. Sha'ul begins chapter 6 by telling his listeners, both Jew and Gentile, that they are now "dead to sin" in verse 2. This was accomplished by identification with the baptism of Yahshua, which was the death of the sinful nature, the body of sin, also called the old man. Here, the body of sin was crucified, not the law. If you are not under grace, then you only have law which produces sin when disobeyed. You then become a servant to sin and under it's dominion. Not because you obey it, but because you do not obey it. It becomes your only master. This old man is the old nature, the Adamic nature. In Hebrew thinking, it is called the yetzer hara, or the evil inclination. This old man must serve the law because he has no other master, and therefore he is under the dominion of sin because he breaks the law. In other words, he is using the law

for what it was not intended to be used. It is said that the English phrase "my old man", referring to a woman's husband, comes from this term. In other words, she is referring to a husband that she can never please. So the context here is the crucifying of the old man or the body of sin, and therefore being "dead to sin". In verses 11 through 13 Paul teaches us not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies anymore. Remember sin, in 1 Yochanan 3:4, is transgression of Torah. He also tells us that we are to yield our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto YHVH. When we get to verse 14 we see that being under the law is synonymous with being under the dominion of sin, not Torah. Again, Torah teaches us what sin is, i.e. Torah is NOT sin. To be under grace is to be a servant of that which is righteous and that you are now freed from SIN (Romans 6:18). We have the power to serve YHVH now rather than sin. In chapter 7, Sha'ul begins by telling us that he is now addressing those who know Torah. To these brethren, it would consist of written and oral Torah, which is a subject for another time. He says, "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?" He is going to relate this teaching now to those who understand the culture. He then begins by using a story common in Jewish parables. "For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." Torah teaches that a marriage contract is forever or until her husband dies. The law states that when she chooses to marry a man that she must stay married to whom she chose. The law also states that when he dies she is freed from him. Now who is the man? The law? NO! Paul just explained to us in chapter 6 that the man is the body of sin. So, let's interpret the parable as understood by the ones who knew the law. The husband is the body of sin, under the law, which can never be pleased. According to the law, she must stay married to him. If she tries to marry another, i.e. grace, while still married to her first husband, the body of sin, she is an adulteress, for she cannot serve two masters. If she, according to the law, dies to sin, i.e. the old man dies, then she is free to marry another.

The law, when disobeyed, is a curse and produces the body of sin, an old man which can never be pleased. To be under the law is to be without grace and under the constant dominion of sin, the old man. In the entire context of Romans 6 we see that there is no teaching here that the Jews were under law and now the church is under grace. Clearly we are all under the dominion of sin until we accept His wonderful grace. I see only two ways to go. If one rejects grace then he is under the law and bound by it. If, however, law was designed to save anyone, then there would be no need for grace.

## **What is "Under the Law?"**

### **Part 3**

Now, where were we? Oh yes, we were continuing our study of being "under the law". This is an important subject to me. I believe that it is a foundational phrase used by modern Christian teaching that has ultimately led to the current moral collapse of our culture. As I have stated, there are ten occurrences of this phrase in the Brit Chadashah. We have covered three, (Romans 3:19, 6:14-15) and now we will go to a slightly different context in 1 Corinthians 9:20. First, keep in mind that Romans 3 and 6 showed us two clear insights. We are ALL under the law until we are under grace, and to be

under the law is to be under the dominion of sin.

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-22, we have the popular Sha'uline (or Pauline ha ha) discourse concerning his desire to be all things to all men that he might by all means save some. This alone has been used erroneously to justify immoral behavior by some, but that is not really our purpose here. We need to go back to verses 19-21 for our study. Here is how the narration goes:

*Verse 19 "For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.*

*Verse 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;*

*Verse 21 To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law."*

Sha'ul begins by stating that he is not controlled or led by any man, but rather he is a servant to all men that he might gain them. His purpose is to win their trust. He will do this by empathizing with them. He will approach them from their perspective and from their point of view and needs. This in no way teaches that he will take on their behavior or even mystically become them. This is verified by his first statement: "to the Jews he became as a Jew". Sha'ul states emphatically many times that he IS a Jew, or that he has remained a Jew. So he certainly did not become a Jew to win the Jews. He also does not equate the Jew as being the one under the law. This statement is listed separately. These statements cover various situations that Sha'ul, in his ministry, confronts. Sha'ul obviously does not run away or shy away from anybody. He strives to understand a persons circumstances. He is not teaching that he becomes a drunk with the drunks in order to save the drunks, but rather he will not turn away from the drunk because he is a drunk. So Sha'ul will minister to the drunk from the drunk's world. He will minister to the Jew from his world. He will confront those under the law from their mind set, considering their way of thinking and their kinds of problems. Remember that those who are under the law can be Jew or Gentile and have chosen to reject God's gift of grace, and chose rather to remain under the dominion of sin because they cannot keep the law. Sha'ul is not under the law because he has confronted the Messiah and has seen his condition and has received His grace. He is unabashed in his zeal to win those who are without the law, who do not know the law for whatever reason. Then he says, "being not without law to God, but under the law to Messiah." This is somewhat difficult to understand for Sha'ul has used a double negative here. Sha'ul is simply stating that he is not outside the true Torah of God, which is under the law of the Messiah. Perhaps better stated is that he is not subject to the letter of the law but the spirit of the law. The letter and spirit of the law is a very Hebrew concept that I will explain later. Sha'ul then becomes as weak to those who are weak. This, I believe, is a reference to those addressed in Romans chapter 14:1-12. All Sha'ul is saying here is that he is a witness of the Messiah to all, no matter what there condition. These passages do not teach that Jews are the ones under the law, or that being under the law means obeying Torah.

It is now time to address a few of the tough ones. The majority of the occurrences of this phrase are in the book of Galatians. I want to set a basic foundation for the phrase before we get to these very misunderstood verses. First we must keep in mind to whom Sha'ul is addressing his concerns. He is writing to Gentile believers who have been deceived by SOME Jewish believers into believing that works of Torah are required to enter the kingdom of God or to stay in the kingdom of God. Sha'ul

reminds them in the beginning of Galatians chapter three that they did not receive the Spirit of God by works of Torah and they will not keep the Spirit by works of Torah. Torah is not and has never been designed to justify man before God, but rather, faith justifies man before God. Sha'ul goes on to say that if man were justified by Torah then he would have to continue in ALL things which are written in Torah which man cannot do (Galatians 3:10-12). Remember that if you reject God's grace then you are under the law and subject to the law. Sha'ul explains that the law then becomes a curse rather than it's intended blessing. D'varim (Deuteronomy) chapter 11 tells us that if you obey the law then you are blessed and if you disobey you are cursed. So the law is a curse ONLY when it is disobeyed. If entrance into the kingdom of God is dependent upon our obedience to the law, which none of us keep, then we are all cursed and doomed. This we have seen in Romans chapter 3 and will see again in the latter part of this discourse. Sha'ul is re-teaching, if you will, these Galatian believers what God has done for them, and not only them but Sha'ul himself. In verse 13 Sha'ul tells us that we are ALL redeemed from the curse of the law, remembering that the results of our inability to keep the law IS the curse of the law. In verse 14 he tells us that what happened to Abraham has now come upon the Gentiles, that the promise of the Spirit is by faith. He then reminds us that this promise was made to Abraham and his seed, and that there is only ONE seed. Sha'ul then expounds on the fact that the inheritance of this seed comes, not by the law, but by faith, and that the law was given because we sin. The seed is received by faith. For Abraham it was through the promise of the Messiah. For ALL Old Testament believers it was through the promise of the Messiah. For Sha'ul and us it is through the same seed fully manifested, i.e. Yahshua the Messiah. To only those of the SEED were the promises made, and there is only ONE seed. There cannot be one way of salvation for the Jew and another way for the Gentile, for there is only one seed and one way, by faith in the Messiah. For the Old Testament saint it is through the promise and for us it is the fulfillment of that promise. We are ALL kept under the law until faith comes. Verse 22 concludes that ALL are under sin and that the promise by faith of Yahshua the Messiah would be given to those who trust. Sha'ul then states that before faith came, we were kept under the law, until faith is revealed. Sha'ul is not teaching that all Jews were kept under the law until Jesus came, but rather we are all under the law until faith comes, and that the law is our schoolmaster that points us all to that faith or the promise of that faith. Torah teaches us all what is right and what is wrong. It shows us our sinful nature and our need for the deliverer. Sha'ul is saying here precisely what he was teaching in Romans chapter 6. If you have not received God's grace then you are under the law. If you are striving to keep the law then the law will teach you that you need the Messiah. It will point you to Him and show you your desperate need for Him and your complete inability to do it yourself. Nowhere in these passages does Sha'ul teach that Torah has been canceled or even temporarily suspended. He teaches its purpose only. If I am relying on obedience to Torah to receive the inheritance then faith has not come to me.

This is not hard to understand if we keep in mind that being "under the law" is being under the dominion of sin, and being without His grace. Sha'ul takes up a lot of scripture time discussing this subject, yet it is the most taken for granted doctrine in all of the New Testament. There is a very fine line between being "under the law" and obeying the law. Sometimes it seems like an oxymoron. In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Sha'ul makes a casual statement relating to this very thing. He says, "For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all...." He is free from them yet he is a servant to them as well. Remember that Sha'ul taught us in Romans 6 that we have been set free from the body of sin so that we can be servants of righteousness. Only Torah determines what is righteous. Next time we will spend a considerable amount of space discussing Galatians 4:1-7. These verses will make a lot more sense when seen from Sha'ul's culture and not a Greek one.

# What is "Under the Law?"

## Part 4

I have given a lot of thought to the last section of this subject. Now that we have a basic understanding of what it means to be "under the law" I think we can wrap up this last session very quickly so we can get on to some more provocative subjects. Galatians chapter 4 begins with a very misunderstood thought process, the concept of adoption. This is intimately related to our current subject so I do not want to gloss over it. I have decided to talk about this next time. Our concern for now however is to remain focused on whether the believer is "under the law".

In Galatians chapter 4:5 it states, *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

This verse says no more or no less about what it means to be under the law than what we have seen all along. Anyone who strives to please God or be reconciled to God by obedience to commandments is under the law and needs to be redeemed. Old Covenant and New Covenant believers must be redeemed the same way. BY THE BLOOD! As long as anyone desires to remain under any legal system of any kind, whether God's law or Roman law or natural law, they are under a curse because of their inability to keep it and the blood of the sacrifice is of no use to them. As I have shown so many places, Sha'ul has taught us that we are all under a curse, we are all under the law, and we all need to be redeemed. Only then can we call God, Father. So, once again, there is absolutely no teaching here that Yahshua died to end God's instructions for mankind, only that those instructions were not designed to redeem man, but to guide man, to teach him what is right and good and what is not. The new man or the inner man that Sha'ul refers to is guided by trusting faith in the Messiah to listen to Him, follow Him and obey Him that the outer man may live long and prosper. Without that inner trust in God, man aimlessly obeys rules that eventually lead to rationalizing away the very words that are designed to guide him. This is a very real part of the history of Judaism. Their lack of trusting faith in God eventually led to manipulation of His word and the casting away of HaShem's real intent or spirit as well. Without the power of God (Ruach HaKodesh - Holy Spirit) man has no ability to sustain his relationship with Him. The "rules" (Torah) soon become a burden rather than a joy and man drifts away, soon followed by generations of faithless children.

Galatians 4:21-31 teaches us this very same principle. Struggling to obey God without the benefit of His presence produces that body of sin that Sha'ul talked about in Romans 6. This places a person in constant bondage, never coming to trust in God and to rely on His power and righteousness. Sha'ul begins this short lesson by assuming that the reader is not only familiar with the story of Hagar and Ishmael, but has knowledge of biblical interpretative methods. In this case he uses a midrash, which is translated as allegory in the English. Midrash draws a personal, moral or ethical meaning from the text. Sha'ul is going to teach us from Genesis chapter 21 how to understand his constant attempt to explain "under the law". In verse 24 he states that there are two covenants, one from the Mount Sinai, bearing

children of bondage, who is Hagar. *"For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all".* "Jerusalem from above" is the other covenant. As a sidebar, notice where Mount Sinai is. It is not in what we call the Sinai peninsula, but in Arabia. We will save that for another time. Now for a brief review of the Hagar story. Abraham and Sarah are given instructions by God that Sarah will bear the child of promise to Abraham. All they had to do was trust in God and take Him at His word. But nooooo, they had to take it in their own hands (or works) and go to Hagar for the promised child instead of trusting God. Now Hagar was a servant given to Abraham to serve him. She was not the means by which the promise was to be fulfilled. Hagar's purpose was to serve Abraham and Sarah. So Abraham goes TO Hagar to fulfill the promise and ends up producing a child that will forever stalk his people and keep them in bondage. Why is Hagar like Mount Sinai? Because the place where the law was given was precisely that! The law was GIVEN to Israel at this place. It's purpose was to serve, not to be served. It is a separate covenant. Notice in Exodus 19:12, that no one was allowed to go up to the Mount or even TOUCH it! Israel was not to be redeemed by going to the Mount, but rather through faith. The design has always been that way. Contained in the law was the instructions for being redeemed, by sacrifice of the innocent, through the BLOOD. God gave Israel the law AFTER He placed them under His wings and brought them unto Himself in Exodus 19:3-4. No one can come to God by going to Mount Sinai, anymore than the promise to Abraham could be found by going to Hagar. If your redemption is reliant upon your own works then you will forever be in bondage to those works because you will constantly fail. If you trust wholly in God to give you His promise by trusting that He can, then he will give you His promise. He will also provide you with His covenant at Mount Sinai, which when obeyed will cause you to be a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people. However if you desire to come to Him by way of Mount Sinai, a mount He does not even want you to touch, then you will become a servant of Mount Sinai and forever in bondage.

The rest of this midrash is also very thought provoking, but my purpose is to teach what "under the law" means. One more thought about Hagar. If Abraham and Sarah would have trusted God and waited, then Hagar would have continued to be Isaac's servant rather than the other way around. Please take the time to ponder all this. Sha'ul is continuing to teach that if the law is used lawfully then it blesses, if it is used unlawfully then it curses. (1 Timothy 1:8-9)

Our last use of this phrase is in Galatians 5 verse 18.

*"But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law."*

The works of the flesh are analogous to being under the law. Remember that the works of the flesh is the "old man" of Romans chapter 6 that we discussed earlier. The old man is without the presence of God and only produces the body of sin. It is not guided, directed, sustained or led by the Spirit of God. It is on its own and can never please. According to Romans 6:14 it is under the dominion of sin because of disobedience. When you are led by the Spirit of God, then He guides you, through His instructions (Torah), to do what is holy and righteous and you do not serve the works of the flesh, which Sha'ul lists in verses 19 through 21.

I would like to close this section on this phrase by making a few comments about the difference between the "letter" of the law and the "spirit" of the law. These two expressions are very well known in Rabbinical circles. According to sages who lived before Yahshua, when the Messiah comes, He will interpret the Scriptures for us, and He will even interpret the spaces between the letters! What does that mean? The ancient Jewish teachers revered the words of God much more than we in this culture can conceive. The universe and all that is in it was created by the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the

Aleph-Tav. These letters, through the very breath of God, created all that is. This is also verified in Hebrews 11:3 and many others places in Scripture. These letters that created were held together by God Himself. He was the space between the letters. His Spirit holds all things together. After God rested, creation was considered to be held together by the perpetual reading and "doing" of Torah. It was taught that if there ever came a time when Torah was not taught or performed that the universe would cease to exist (melt away with a fervent heat?!). We know by New Covenant revelation that it is Yahshua Himself that holds all things together, for He is the very Spirit of Torah (Colossians 1:16-19). In Hebrew thought, the letter of the law is simply letters on parchment. The letter of the law is Torah without the Spirit. The Spirit of the law is Torah engulfed by the Spirit. This is why in 2 Corinthians 3:17, Sha'ul concludes by stating, *"Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."* According to verse 6 of that same chapter it is the Spirit that gives life to Torah, otherwise it is only letters on paper and can never give or sustain life. Can you see this? Can you seriously study all these passages and still conclude that Yahshua's death ended God's instructions? Do any of these lessons of Sha'ul teach that the commandments of God ceased to exist today?

I hope and pray that these past few lessons have given some insight into this commonly abused expression. The law of the Lord is good, holy, righteous and true, and is a blessing if it is obeyed and a curse if it is not. The law is similar to a sharp knife. If it is used for what it was designed for, it will serve you. If it is used to murder, then it will be the most damning piece of evidence to stand against you. As believers we should be saying, "Lord help me to understand through your word how to obey you instructions and prosper." Instead we are teaching that these instructions are simply not for us. In the past few years a popular acronym has become part of speech. It is WWJD! I would pray that we would all keep in mind that this does NOT mean What Would Jesus Say, but What Would Jesus DO!

Remember, cling to your roots that your days may be prolonged in the land that the LORD has given you.