

You've probably heard...

This is a perpetual statute throughout your generations or some variation thereof. Some examples include:

2 Kings 17:37 The statutes and the ordinances and the law and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall observe to do forever; and you shall not fear other gods.

Passover

Exodus 12:14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.

Shavuot

Leviticus 23:21 On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations.

Yom Kippur

Leviticus 23:31 You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places.

Sukkot

Leviticus 23:41 You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

Exodus 31:12-13 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign

between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

Leviticus 3:17 It is a perpetual (olam) statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.”

There are several more of these verses that contain that phrase.

### **How long does forever last?**

This is a statute forever throughout your generations.

Through this struggle another question arose...

### **Can sin ever stop being sin?**

The obvious answer is no, however that is not what we are often taught.

Can God's standard of holiness change?

Why would God's standard of holiness change?

Did it need to change?

First there has to be a solid definition of sin.

Right now think of how you might answer that question. I used to think of it as something God would not do.

I would simply define sin as a violation of God's commandments.

He told you to do something and you did not do it.

He told you not to do something and you did it.

Sin is lawlessness as it states in

1 John 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

For me when I see that verse I think of Torah. Sin is Torahlessness...

Well but...

John even gives us a call to keep His commandments

1 John 2:3-7 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to **walk in the same manner as He walked.**

Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; **the old commandment is the word which you have heard.**

### **Can God change?**

WE know what the text says in Malachi

Malachi 3:6

For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

The message of the prophets is always repent, turn back to the Lord and keep his commandments.

Even here in Malachi in chapter 4 it goes on to talk about the Day of the Lord, which is a day of great judgement; burning like a furnace it says.

What does it say right after that?

Malachi 4:4 Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.

Remembering is really a call to keep the commandments as it states in

Numbers 15:37-40 The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the **corners (kanaf)** of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each **corner (kanaf)** a cord of blue. It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, **so as to do them** and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God.

Wouldn't it be interesting if there was a hint at the tzit-tzit in Malachi chapter 4?

Look at...

Malachi 4:2 But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its **wings (kanaf)**; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

There was healing in the corners of Jesus' garment (the tassels) when the lady grabbed the corner of His cloak.

Matthew 9:20-22 And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak; for she was saying to herself, “If I only touch His garment, I will get well.” But Jesus turning and seeing her said, “Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.” At once the woman was made well.

**Jesus came as a prophet as well.** His message was the same as those that went before Him. He called the people to repent. He called the people to keep the commandments as it states in

John 14:15 If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

In fact, all the books of Moses, are all about how to love God and your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 11:1 You shall therefore **love the Lord your God**, and **always** keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.

Deuteronomy 11:13-14 It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, **to love the Lord your God** and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.

Deuteronomy 11:22-23 For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, **to love the Lord your God**, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you.

**Those passages seem to repeat the same idea of, if you love Me, you will keep my commandments.**

Jesus even stated in...

Matthew 5:17-19 “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth

pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The first verse receives quite a bit of confusion. Jesus said that He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets.

That much is pretty easy to understand. It's the second part that people get tripped up on.

Here is what John McArthur says in his study Bible:

Matthew 5:17 Jesus was neither giving a new law nor modifying the old, but rather explaining the true significance of the moral content of Moses' law and the rest of the OT. "The Law and the Prophets" speaks of the entirety of the OT Scriptures, not the rabbinical interpretations of them. fulfill. This speaks of fulfillment in the same sense that prophecy is fulfilled. Christ was indicating that He is the fulfillment of the law in all its aspects. He fulfilled the moral law by keeping it perfectly. He fulfilled the ceremonial law by being the embodiment of everything the law's types and symbols pointed to. And He fulfilled the judicial law by personifying God's perfect justice (cf. 12:18, 20).

The problem with this though, is that Jesus was not saying this or implying this. In verse 19 mentions the Kingdom of God and those who keep the commandments are called great in the Kingdom of God. It appears that He was simply stating that He did not come to abolish the Torah, but to keep Torah. So, to say that Jesus was stating that He was there to fulfill prophecy and to fulfill some types and shadows goes beyond the point of what Jesus is saying.

Jesus of course does fulfill prophecy and he does fulfill types and shadows, but that's not what He is conveying in these verses.

It's not until you do a deep dive into the Greek word that is translated as fulfill that you start to get a better idea of what Jesus is saying.

**The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** defines the Greek word translated as fulfill as follows:

The goal of the mission of Jesus is fulfilment (Mt. 5:17b) ; according to Mt. 5:17a this is primarily fulfilment of the Law and the prophets, i.e., of the whole of the OT as a declaration of the will of God. Jesus does not merely affirm that He will maintain them. As He sees it, His task is to actualize the will of God made known in the OT. He has come in order that God's Word may be completely fulfilled, in order that the full measure appointed by God Himself may be reached in Him. His work is an act of obedience also and specifically in the fact that He fulfils God's promise, cf. Mt. 3:15. He actualizes the divine will stated in the OT from the standpoint of both promise and demand.

### **Thayer's Greek Lexicon**

universally and absolutely, to fulfil, i.e. to cause God's will (as made known in the law) to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises (given through the prophets) to receive fulfilment.

Something else to consider, is that in Judaism this word pairing of abolish and fulfill is very common and it still exists today. In fact this particular Mishnah I am about to read probably existed in Jesus' day.

Mishnah means repetition. These were the oral traditions that were eventually written down between the second and third century.

This is from  
Mishnah Avot 4:9

Whoever fulfills the Torah in poverty, will fulfill it later on in wealth; and whoever abolishes the Torah in wealth, will abolish it later in poverty.

So fulfilling the Torah in a rabbinic context refers to "obeying the Torah" or demonstrating how the Torah is to be properly obeyed.

The Jewish sages often argued about how to properly interpret the commandments. A rabbi who properly interpreted the Torah was said to be fulfilling the Torah and a rabbi who misinterpreted the Torah was said to be abolishing the Torah.

If we follow that example then Jesus was stating that He interprets and obeys the Torah correctly.

Jesus was stating his expressed endorsement of the Torah and the whole Old Testament in the strongest sense.

Verse 18 states:

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Has all been accomplished?

Heaven and earth are still standing as witnesses

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

Luke 16:17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

Why did the law need to be done away with as so many say, or done away with in part, or rendered inoperative?



That's a powerful question.

I say done away with in part because that is what a lot of folks think, one major one is John McArthur. He states that it was the ceremonial and the judicial laws that were done away with. The "moral" laws still remain.

The problem with that thought is there has to be some sort of proof text showing that there is cause to divide the Law of God that way. There isn't. In fact it's called the Torah, singular. It's one unit comprising of those types of laws.

There are no New Testament scriptures that even hint at the idea of part of the Law of Moses being done away with.

The hermeneutics class I took taught that the Law of Moses has been rendered inoperative in its entirety and that we are to only follow Jesus' commandments.

The last part of this section of Matthew I think gets overlooked quite a bit.

Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The Greek word for annul has to do with relaxing or loosening. So whoever loosens the stringency of even the least commandment and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the Kingdom of God. We are not talking about abolishing, we are talking about loosening.

To me this really seals the deal. He's not talking about fulfilling in the sense of prophecy, He is speaking of not just keeping Torah, but keeping it scrupulously and teaching others to do the same.

**BUT WHAT ABOUT PAUL!!**

As I was on this journey of setting my dogma, my doctrine, and my theology all down, my biggest struggle was with Paul.

Other people of the day had trouble with Paul as well.

2 Peter 3:14-16 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

Acts 21:17-26 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, **“You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What, then, is to be done?** They will certainly hear that you have come. Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take them and purify yourself along with them, and **pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.** But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.” Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

Acts 15:19-21 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. **For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.**

It really came down to one verse. I had found some really good explanations for other issues that I was having with Paul, but there was one verse that really stuck out to me. That one verse was Ephesians 2:15.

Ephesians 2:14-16 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, **by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances**, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

This was it. The one verse that stumped me.

By abolishing in His flesh the enmity (hostility), which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances.

Almost universally scholars are saying that Moses has been done away with.

Here are some examples from different study Bibles and commentaries I have.

### **MacArthur Study Bible**

Ephesians 2:15 Through His death, Christ abolished OT ceremonial laws, feasts, and sacrifices which uniquely separated Jews from Gentiles. God's moral law (as summarized in the Ten Commandments and written on the hearts of all men, Rom. 2:15) was not abolished but subsumed in the New Covenant, however, because it reflects His own holy nature (Matt. 5:17–19). See notes on Matt. 22:37–40; Rom. 13:8–10.

### **ESV Study Bible**

Ephesians 2:15 The additional mention of commandments and ordinances identifies this as the Mosaic law, which included many commandments that served to separate Israel from the other nations. Thus the law was a “dividing wall” (v. 14) which Christ has abolished or rendered powerless both by fulfilling it and by removing believers from the law's condemnation.

### **NIV Zondervan Study Bible - The editor was D.A. Carson**

Ephesians 2:15 Christ sets aside the old covenant with its Mosaic law and replaces it with a new covenant for all believers. Consequently, the Mosaic law cannot serve as a barrier between Jewish and Gentile believers. Although new covenant believers are not under the Mosaic law, they are under “Christ’s law”

### **The King James Study Bible**

Jesus has formed the two antagonistic groups of Jew and Gentile into a single new party, the Christian Church. He did this by removing the middle wall of partition that is the Mosaic law. The law was meant to protect Jews from pagan corruptions, but by misconstruing the purpose of the law, the Jews felt superior to Gentiles, who were incensed at this arrogance. So Jesus abolished this enmity, caused by an abuse of the law, by making the law invalid for his church.

### **The Word Biblical Commentary**

Ephesians 2:15 Christ removed or abolished this hostility. ἔχθρα, "hostility," which in the traditional material would have referred originally to the enmity caused by the hostile powers in the cosmos, now refers to the hostility between Jews and Gentiles that is bound up with the law, as τὸν νόμον, "the law," which stands in apposition to (together with) hostility, makes clear. The objective situation of hostility because of the law's exclusiveness engendered personal and social antagonisms.

### **The Holman New Testament Commentary**

Ephesians 2:15 The Jews kept the law, with its commandments and regulations. Gentiles did not. This created a barrier between them. Jesus' death satisfied the law and therefore eliminated it as a barrier. Since neither Jew nor Gentile had to

obey the law to find salvation, the means of distinguishing between the two kinds of people vanished. Again, this created peace between hostile parties.

You can see the replacement theology thread in all of those, but also you can see that universally scholars take that verse to mean that the law has been abolished and that it was considered hostile.

But I think they are overlooking one very important word thrown in here...

Ephesians 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments **contained in ordinances**,

Why not just say the law of commandments?

NASB contained in ordinances

ESV - expressed in ordinances

NLT - Ephesians 2:15 He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations.

I prayed. He answered.

I was taken to [scripture4all.org](http://scripture4all.org)

The word for ordinances is...

Dogma - and the very first definition of the word dogma is man's opinions

Does G-d have an opinion?

God is all knowing, so He does not have an opinion.

What was abolished is the law contained in man's opinions. Man's religious laws. What might that entail? What about circumcision for salvation? God's actual laws were never a source of hostility. His laws are always about holiness.

This man-made law set forth in religious decrees causes enmity because it deliberately skews the work of God as originally laid forth in the Torah mandate for Israel to be a blessing to all!

There are, in fact, several kinds of Rabbinical injunctions making up Jewish religious law that would have placed a kind of dividing wall between the Jewish people and the nations, which would have undoubtedly caused problems for the mission upon which Paul had embarked among the nations.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR [Leviticus 19:18] and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Hating your enemy is nowhere prescribed by the Torah.

The kind of dogma which would demand that one hate others outside of the accepted community of Israel was one which undeniably had to be abolished via the work of Jesus, as our Lord emphasized love for all people as the first of the commandments

If we understand the fact that the Temple was to be a testimony to the God of Israel among the nations (1 Kings 8:41-43)—and indeed a house of prayer for all nations (Isaiah 56:6-7)—then the placement of a physical barrier prohibiting the nations from entering into the inner sanctuary was obviously something that He had never intended! Such a barrier, at least in the hearts and minds of the First Century Jewish Believers, had to have been removed by the work of Jesus within them. This was something that was justified by much of “the religious Law of commandments in dogmas” within Second Temple Judaism, but was something that ran quite contrary to the missional intention of Moses’ Teaching—with Israel being a blessing to all nations!

To a strong degree, the barrier wall in the Second Temple was a manifestation of Jewish hatred for the nations—not at all a manifestation of love and of spiritual concern. By His sacrifice, Jesus tore down this wall and with it whatever human regulations and unnecessary barriers between people and the Father. In so doing, Jesus would be able to bring Jewish people and those from the nations together as *kainon anthrōpon* (*kaino.n a;nqrwpon*) or “**one new humanity**” (Ephesians 2:15c, NRSV/CJB/TNIV) in Him.

Jesus the Messiah never came and eliminated the Torah, as per His crucial admonition in Matthew 5:17-19. Rather, the wall that He broke down was that of Rabbinical addition and/or manipulation to the commandments that had separated the non-Jews coming to faith from inclusion in Israel. It was never the Torah or Pentateuch itself that caused a wall of division to be erected not permitting the outsider from becoming a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Certain Rabbinical ordinances or dogmas not found in the Torah ultimately led to a barrier wall being constructed on the Temple Mount, and caused this separation to take place.

### **Where are the prophecies that foretell the abolition of the Torah?**

Where are the many prophecies predicting the abolition of Torah? I have not seen any or heard of any. It does not seem that there is a single mention in the Bible of the Law of God becoming inoperative or abolished for a believer; or what had always been considered sinful suddenly becoming not sinful.

The Bible does say that God does not do anything without letting the Prophets know ahead of time.

Amos 3:7 "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets."

Where is the mention of the standard of sin changing? It does not exist.

The Torah is said to be "perfect" in Psalm 19:7. Why would something that is perfect ever need to change?

Psalm 1:1-2 "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! **But his delight is in the law of the Lord**, and in His law he meditates day and night."

Psalm 119:44-45 "So I will keep Your law continually, forever and ever. And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts."

I have often heard that, "we have been freed from the Law." How can you be freed from liberty? How can we be freed from something we never obeyed before we came to Jesus?

I think that there is more to that than what is commonly taught.

What if we have been freed from the curse of the Law, but the Law of God is just as in affect as before? Galatians 3:13 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"

"He fulfilled it so I don't have to" is another thing I've heard as well. So, Jesus took the curse of the Law, so that means that you do not have to keep the Law? Paul said that he had not known sin but by the Law. John said that everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness. The opposite of lawlessness would be lawfulness, and lawfulness is abiding in the commandments of God. So if the standard of sin is no longer applicable because the Law has been rendered obsolete, does that mean that sin does not exist???

But we now follow the Law of Christ.

What Law did He follow? He said, "I and the Father are One," so wouldn't it be logical to say that the Law of God and the Law of Christ are all the same thing? If



we are supposed to be imitators of Christ and do what He did, doesn't that mean that we are supposed to keep the Law? But isn't that legalism?

Following God's Law has never been referred to as legalism in the Bible, it's called obedience.

Salvation has never been through the works of the Law. It has always been grace through faith, so following the Law has nothing to do with salvation and everything to do with obedience. Obedience because you love God. James even refers to God's Law as "liberty" just as Psalm 119 does.

James 1:25 "But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."

He's talking about the Torah.