

Chapter IV

The Torah

The festivals and sacred days of Yahweh are counted among Yahweh's statutes and are found listed as such in the Torah.¹ Can we prove that these *חֻקֵי* (*khoquth*; statutes) are part of the conditions of the Covenants of Promise made with Abraham? And further, are they still required today in order to receive the inheritance under grace? Proof that the statutes observed by Abraham included the festivals and sacred days of Yahweh, and that they are required to be observed by those following Yahweh until the end of our present world-age, begins to be unveiled in the issues connecting the Torah (Law) of Moses with the Covenants of Promise.

In this chapter we shall demonstrate that the Torah (Old Covenant) given at Mount Sinai was a marriage covenant between Yahweh and the nation of Israel. It was brought about due to Israelite transgressions against the Covenants of Promise. The Torah of Moses, therefore, was used to teach the Israelites what sin (transgression) was, thereby revealing in written form the conditions of the earlier verbal Covenants of Promise. It merely put into writing those original conditions and augmented them with judgments. Nevertheless, the Israelites continued to break their marriage vows. As a result, under the condition to obey Yahweh's voice,² the Old Covenant was further augmented with what became known as the "works of the Law."

An Augmentation

The Torah (Law), or Old Covenant,³ came into existence several centuries after the Covenants of Promise were given to Abraham. This Torah covenant was in fact an augmentation of these Covenants of Promise.⁴ William Smith reminds us that it is "all-important, for the proper understanding of the law, to remember its entire dependence on the Abrahamic covenant."⁵ In form, the Old Covenant was a marriage covenant between Yahweh and the nation of Israel.⁶ It was intended to bind the Israelites to the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenants (also referred to in the singular as the Abrahamic Covenant)⁷ by a

¹ See above Intro. to Part I, pp. 26f.

² That obeying the voice of Yahweh *eloahi* was a condition of the Abrahamic Covenants see Gen., 26:5. This condition is also reflected in the Mount Sinai covenant at Exod., 23:20–22.

³ In Heb., 8:8–13, and Jer., 31:31–34, it is called the Old Covenant, while in Gal., 3:15–20, it is called the Torah (Law). As we shall prove, the Old Covenant given at Mount Sinai is merely the first of various stages of the augmentations of the entire Torah.

⁴ For the covenant given at Mount Sinai see Exod., 20:1–23:32.

⁵ DB, p. 344, in which Smith cites Gal., 3:17–24. Also see below n. 7.

⁶ Jer., 31:31f; Isa., 54:5.

⁷ The various covenants between Yahweh and Abraham are often spoken of in the singular, i.e., as the Abrahamic Covenant, because they stand as one covenant. The classing together of several covenants into a single covenant was common practice and finds counterparts elsewhere in

written contract: If you do this, then I will do this. The Torah is called the “Old Covenant” to distinguish it from the “New Covenant” of marriage that Yahweh is yet to make with the elect of Israel.⁸ Accordingly, the expression “Old Covenant” must not be confused with earlier covenants, such as the Covenants of Promise made with Abraham.

The Torah was established in 1439 B.C.E. at Mount Sinai,⁹ only a few weeks after the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt, in the third month of that year.¹⁰ The precepts of this marriage agreement declared in writing that if the Israelites obeyed Yahweh’s voice and kept his commandments, statutes, and judgments Yahweh would give them the ארץ (*erets*; land)—from the Suph Sea (Gulf of Aqaba) unto the Palestim Sea (Mediterranean), and from the wilderness (of Sinai) unto the River (Euphrates), i.e., the Promised Land.¹¹ All the people of Israel agreed, and the marriage covenant was ratified.¹²

According to Scriptures, although the Torah gives the inheritance as a reward for keeping the marriage covenant, it does not annul the promises of inheritance given to Abraham in the Covenants of Promise. Saul reports, “For if those of the Torah are the heirs, trust has been made empty, and the promise is of no effect.”¹³ Put another way, if the inheritance only went to those who came under the Torah covenant and its works, then what worth are the Covenants of Promise given much earlier to Abraham and his seed (the messiah)? Was not the inheritance of this will guaranteed to Abraham because he trusted Yahweh, obeyed Yahweh’s voice, and kept Yahweh’s charge, commandments, *khoquth*, and *torath*? Did not Yahweh give an oath to fulfill his covenant with Abraham swearing to do so by his sacred name?

In his epistle to the Galatians, Saul begins to clarify this issue when he writes:

This now I say, a covenant confirmed beforehand by *eloahi* unto the messiah, the Torah having taken place 430 years after, does not annul so as to make of no effect the promise; because if the inheritance is out of

Scriptures. For example, the Old Covenant consists not only of the original covenant made by Yahweh with the Israelites at Mount Sinai but includes the additional covenants produced during the next 40 years, down to the covenant discussed in Deut., 29:1. Similarly, the Torah (Law) of Moses includes a large number of *torath* (laws) which help make up the the book of the Old Covenant.

⁸ The book of Hebrews states that the messiah is the “mediator” or “go-between” of the New Covenant, and that by his death took place the redemption for those transgressions under the first covenant (the Old Covenant), so that “they which are called might receive the eternal inheritance” (Heb., 9:15). Nowhere in Scriptures does it say that we are presently under the New Covenant. It does say that the Old Covenant “grows old and aged” and is “near disappearing” (Heb., 8:13). The apostles are also called “servants of a new covenant” (2 Cor., 3:6). Yet the New Covenant itself cannot be made as a marriage agreement until the messiah returns, resurrects the elect, places the laws within their innermost selves, and regathers the house of Israel and the house of Judah into one nation. It is at that time that Yahweh will make a New Covenant of marriage with the elect of Israel (Heb., 8:3–13; cf., Jer., 31:31–34). The rest of mankind remaining to be saved shall enter into this eternal New Covenant marriage at the end of the Judgment Day (e.g., Rev., 21:1–3, 9–27, 22:17).

⁹ For the year of the Exodus see IC.

¹⁰ Exod., 19:1f. The Exodus took place in the first month (Exod., 12:1–20, 13:4, 23:14f, 34:18; Deut., 16:1).

¹¹ Exod., 23:20–23, 30f; cf., Gen., 15:18–21; Deut., 1:7f, 11:24; Josh., 1:4. Cf., NJB, p. 111, n. 23 m.

¹² Exod., 24:1–8.

¹³ Rom., 4:14.

the Torah, it is no longer out of promise. But to Abraham, through promise, *eloahi* granted it.¹⁴

This statement confirms that the inheritance is not accomplished solely from the Torah given at Mount Sinai, even though the Torah allows for the inheritance if all of its precepts are kept. Rather, the Covenants of Promise were granted to Abraham and, as with any man's covenant agreement, it cannot be changed.¹⁵ Neither can any scripture be broken,¹⁶ nor would Yahweh change it, for Yahweh does not change.¹⁷ These promises were later confirmed with Jacob a full 430 years before the marriage covenant of the Torah was made at Mount Sinai.¹⁸

Further, since the eternal inheritance was promised in the covenants given to Abraham and did not originate in the Torah (Old Covenant), the inheritance found in the Torah must itself somehow be derived from the Covenants of Promise. The next question naturally arises, "If the eternal inheritance was already promised in the Covenants of Promise, why bring about another covenant granting the same inheritance?" Saul explains:

Why then the Torah? It was προσετέθη (*prosetethe*; an augmentation)¹⁹ for the sake of transgressions until the σπέρμα (*sperma*; collective seed)²⁰ should have come to whom the promise has been made, having been ordained by means of angels in the hand of a mediator. But the mediator is not one (of the two parties being reconciled), yet the deity (father Yahweh) is one (of the two parties). Is the Torah then against the promises of *eloahi*? May it not be. For if a Torah was given which was able to quicken, indeed by a Torah would have been justification; but the Scriptures shut all things under sin, that the promise out of trust might be given to those that trust Yahushua the messiah."²¹

There is a basic difference between an ἐπιδιατάσσεται (*epidiatassetai*; supplement),²² which is forbidden in this covenant contract,²³ and a προσετέθη

¹⁴ Gal., 3:17f.

¹⁵ Cf., Gal., 3:15f.

¹⁶ Cf., John, 10:35.

¹⁷ Mal., 3:6; Heb., 13:8.

¹⁸ The Covenants of Promise were not confirmed with Abraham, as many have so often incorrectly assumed. Scriptures specifically report that they were confirmed years later with Jacob (Ps., 105:8–10; 1 Chron., 16:14–18).

¹⁹ Προσετέθη (*prosetethe*) means, "to place additionally, i.e. lay beside, annex, repeat" (SEC, Gk. #4369); "to add . . . i.e. to make oath and then add the statement . . . to make additions, to augment . . . esp. of adding articles to documents" (GEL, p. 698).

²⁰ The σπέρμα (*sperma*; collective seed) is identified in Gen., 17:9f, 24:60 (cf., the LXX for the Greek term). This is the collective plural seed, united as one group, which form the elect (cf., Gal., 3:29; Rom., 4:16–18, 9:7–8). Also see above Chap. II, p. 38, n. 31.

²¹ Gal., 3:19–22.

²² See above Chap. II, p. 38, n. 29.

²³ Gal., 3:15f.

(*prosetethe*; augmentation), which has been provided by the Torah. A supplement can contain additions which contradict the original agreement, while an augmentation merely expands or restricts the requirements already allowed for by the original covenant agreement.

For example, if a condition of the Abrahamic Covenants is that one must obey Yahweh, Yahweh can later augment that covenant by having his heirs build a Tabernacle and associate with that artifact a priesthood and certain religious services of cleanliness, as long as these works do not contradict the conditions of the original covenant. On the other hand, if a condition of the covenant is that you shall not steal, Yahweh cannot later command that you should steal. Augmentations allow for the establishment of specified customs in dress, foods, and cleansing rites—all found as fleshly works of the Torah—which were meant to keep one ritualistically clean.

The Judahite expression “מַשֵּׁי הַתּוֹרָה” (*mashi ha-Torah*; works of the Torah) was used by the apostle Saul in the first century C.E. to define these augmentations.²⁴ They refer specifically to the purity laws found in the written Torah of Moses. This detail is confirmed by the fact that this label was given to the contents of a Hebrew manuscript (MMT) written by a contemporary Jewish community located at Qumran.²⁵ Among the subjects listed under this heading were rulings concerning the cleansing of lepers, the barring of the blind and deaf from the Temple, the restriction of intermarriage with the Ammonites and Moabites, the prohibition of intermarriage between the priests and commoners, the prohibition against plowing with unlike animals, the use of hides and bones of unclean animals, as well as the rules for purification, offerings, sacrifices, and other such things.²⁶ As Martin Abegg comments, the aim of this work “was clearly to call attention to matters that trespass the boundaries between the pure and impure.”²⁷ We will confirm this definition as we proceed.

Therefore, the Old Covenant came about because the Israelites had transgressed the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenants, to which they were subject. The Torah, as a result, under a marriage agreement, augmented the requirements of those earlier covenants. What then were these augmentations and how are they different from the original conditions? And did these augmentations bring into existence the festival celebrations and sacred days or merely dress them with customs? To answer these questions we must examine more precisely what makes up the Torah and why it was considered the proper response to Israelite transgression.

²⁴ The Hebrew expression “מַשֵּׁי הַתּוֹרָה” (*mashi ha-Torah*; works of the Torah) is equivalent to the Greek expression ἔργον νόμου (*ergon nomou*; works of the Law) as used to describe the augmentations by Saul (e.g., at Rom., 3:20, 28; Gal., 2:16, 3:2, 5, 10), see CS, 1, pp. 541–544, s.v. ἔργον. Also see BAR, 20.6, pp. 52–55.

²⁵ BAR, 20.6, p. 61, MMT, *l.* 27.

²⁶ BAR, 20.6, pp. 56–61.

²⁷ BAR, 20.6, p. 53. Nevertheless, Martin Abegg’s conclusion that Saul was only addressing the members of the early Christian Assembly who had belonged to the Essene sect is clearly inaccurate. Saul’s reference was to the entire body of purity laws found in the Torah of Moses and as practiced by mainstream Judaism, which included the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and others. The fact that the Essenes provide us the only remaining record of the phrase “works of the law” does not mean that first century C.E. Judaism as a whole did not know or understand the meaning of this phrase.

The Torah: A Series of Covenants

The covenant of the Torah was much more than the agreement made at Mount Sinai. Rather, it became a series of handwritten augmentations created because the Israelites were unable to keep their covenant with Yahweh. These augmentations encompassed everything from building a Tabernacle and restricting the priesthood to the family of Levi to establishing further covenants, *khoquth*, and *torath*, including regulations for cleanliness, food offerings, required sacrifices, and burnt offerings.

These augmentations developed as follows: To begin with, the Covenants of Promise granted to Abraham, supported by an oath to Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob as a statute, were in the form of a verbal contract. Nothing was placed in writing. It was backed only by the word of Yahweh. Centuries later, Yahweh reports that he revealed himself to the Israelites while they were in Egypt, requesting them not to defile themselves with the idols of Egypt, i.e., they should obey Yahweh and not commit idolatry (follow other *eloahim*). In turn, he would bring them into the Promised Land.²⁸ It is manifest that obedience to Yahweh includes obeying his commandments, statutes, and laws which he had earlier attached as conditions to the Covenants of Promise and to which Abraham was subject.

Contrary to the conditions of the Covenants of Promise, the Israelites rebelled by disobeying. Yet Yahweh did not destroy them while they were in Egypt. He was unwilling to destroy them for the reason of his name's sake, so that his שֵׁם (*shem*; name, honor)²⁹ would not be profaned among the nations.³⁰ Put another way, he continued with them because his sacred name was attached to the Covenants of Promise, sworn to by an oath.³¹ If he failed to accomplish these covenants by giving the Israelites the land as an inheritance then the other nations would speak ill of the worth of Yahweh's word as sworn to Abraham.³² Yahweh's *shem* (name, honor) was at stake.

When Yahweh brought the Israelites out of Egypt and into the wilderness, he gave them knowledge of his statutes and judgments, "which if the *adam* (mankind) does them he will live in them; and also my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh, who sets them apart."³³ Such statements are important, for we know that Yahweh's statutes, laws, and commandments were revealed even before the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai.³⁴ Further, the statement that the Israelites were given knowledge of Yahweh's "שַׁבְּתוֹתָי" (*sabbathuth*; Sabbaths)," in the plural, demonstrates that the high Sabbaths as well as the weekly Sabbaths were meant.³⁵

²⁸ Ezek., 20:5–7.

²⁹ YDNB, p. 2; SNY, chap. iii; SEC, Heb. #8034; YAC, pp. 683, 685; HEL, p. 270.

³⁰ Ezek., 20:8f.

³¹ Gen., 22:15–18, 26:3; Exod., 6:8; Heb., 6:11–19; cf., SNY, chap. iii.

³² Ezek., 36:16–23; Deut., 9:25–29.

³³ Ezek., 20:10–12.

³⁴ Exod., 13:4–10, 15:26, 16:28, 18:20.

³⁵ When Yahweh referred only to the weekly Sabbath, it was normally spoken of in the singular (e.g., Exod., 20:8–14, 31:14–16; Lev., 23:3; Deut., 5:12–15; etc.). Yet when all the various Sabbath days (weekly or other *sabbathon*) are being included, they are referred to in the plural (e.g., Lev., 23:37–39, 26:2; Isa., 1:13, 56:4; Lam., 1:7, 2:6; Ezek., 20:12–24, 22:8, 26, 23:38, 44:24, 45:17, 46:3; Hos., 2:11; etc.). Also, when a number of weekly or seventh-year Sabbaths were counted as a group to give a total figure, they were spoken of in the plural (e.g., Lev., 23:15, 25:8).

Of interest for our study is the fact that, among these statutes, laws, and commandments known prior to the Israelites arriving at Mount Sinai, there were those dealing with the Sabbath day and the Festival of Unleavened Bread and Phasekh of which specific mention is made.³⁶

After the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai, the marriage contract of the Old Covenant was made due to continued Israelite transgression. Two important things occurred. First, the covenant was placed into writing, clearly spelling out what was required. Second, appended to the conditions of the Ten Commandments were the statutes augmented with the *משפטים* (*mashaphatim*; judgments)³⁷—judgments being statutes that render criminal decisions if a required commandment or statute is broken.³⁸ Previously, only the requirements of the Covenants of Promise were expressed (though punishment, such as death, is clearly allowed for).³⁹ With the advent of the Mount Sinai covenant, specific types of punishment for breaking these requirements were declared in written form.

The Torah's authority to continue with further augmentations is also found among the Old Covenant statutes. The Sinai covenant commanded that the Israelites must "guard from the face" of the angel who carries the name of Yahweh,⁴⁰ i.e., the angel of the covenant who swore an oath by his sacred name to give Abraham the promises.⁴¹ It commanded the Israelites to "listen to his voice; do not be rebellious against him, for he will not forgive your transgression, for my name is on him."⁴²

Of course, being careful does not mean that one is to listen to the voice of the angel Yahweh if he adds to the conditions of the covenant instructions outside what is allowed for in the original Covenants of Promise. Such supplements, as we have already proven, are forbidden.⁴³ Yet if the Israelites transgressed its conditions, the angel Yahweh was allowed to augment the marriage covenant. These augmentations were subjoined as part of the Sinai covenant, and are in part known as the "works of the Torah (Law)."⁴⁴ For instance, the original statutes found in the covenant at Mount Sinai command that the Israelites were to keep the Festival of Tabernacles.⁴⁵ The works of the Torah later augmented this statute with the custom that the Israelites should also sleep in tabernacles (tents, booths) during the Festival of Tabernacles.⁴⁶

After the incident of the Israelites building the golden calf—thereby committing idolatry and breaking their marriage agreement with Yahweh⁴⁷—the

³⁶ Exod., 12:1–51, 13:4–10, 16:4, 22–30.

³⁷ Exod., 20:1–24:8; cf., Deut., 4:12–14; Mal., 4:4.

³⁸ A *משפט* (*mashaphat*), plural *משפטים* (*mashaphatim*), is "prop. a *verdict* (favorable or unfavorable) pronounced judicially, espec. a *sentence* or formal decree" (SEC, Heb. #4941).

³⁹ For example, if one breaks the conditions of the Abrahamic Covenants, he does not receive the eternal inheritance. Without the eternal inheritance giving life, one is left with eternal death.

⁴⁰ Exod., 23:20f.

⁴¹ Mal., 3:1; cf., Gen., 22:15–18.

⁴² Exod., 23:21.

⁴³ Gal., 3:15.

⁴⁴ E.g., see additions in Exod., 34:23–26; Lev., 23:1–44; Num., 28:1–29:40; Deut., 16:1–17. That these regulations are among the statutes and judgments see Deut., 7:11, 26:16–17.

⁴⁵ Exod., 23:16.

⁴⁶ Lev., 23:39–43.

⁴⁷ Exod., 32:1–30; cf., Ezek., 23:37.

angel Yahweh kept augmenting the conditions of the covenant with commandments, statutes, and laws specifying in greater detail what was required. From this process, the works of the Torah (e.g., sacrifices, cleansing rites, washings, etc.) also came into existence. For example, after the sin of the golden calf, Yahweh made another covenant with the Israelites,⁴⁸ and then later added the Levitical regulations.⁴⁹

The key point is that the majority of these statutes and laws forming the works of the Torah had no severe adverse penalty. To demonstrate, if unclean meat was eaten, the most that would happen is that the guilty person would be declared unclean and unable to attend sacred ceremonies, enter the tabernacle, or remain in the Israelite camp. Breaking one of the commandments, statutes, or laws that were also attached to the Abrahamic Covenants, on the other hand, met with serious consequences.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the Israelites continued to rebel, once more breaking the statutes and laws and profaning the Sabbaths.⁵¹ Indeed, Yahweh counted “ten” rebellions from the time he began to bring them out of Egypt until they arrived for the first time at Qadesh Barnea, including their rebellion at Mount Sinai.⁵² For his name sake, Yahweh did not destroy Israel, but neither did he bring that generation (those who had left Egypt at the age of 20 years and upward) into the Promised Land.⁵³

After the death of almost all of that generation who had left Egypt, Yahweh told the children of the next generation to walk in his statutes and judgments and keep his Sabbaths.⁵⁴ Once more they rebelled, this time in the incident at Shittim with Baal-peor.⁵⁵ As a result, at the end of a 40-year sojourn in the wilderness, Yahweh “gave them statutes not good and judgments by which they could not live,”⁵⁶ i.e., he made the Deuteronomic Covenant, an augmentation of the Torah which is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy.⁵⁷ The Deuteronomic Covenant put in place curses that would come upon the Israelites if they once more failed to listen to the voice of Yahweh and observe his commanded statutes and judgments⁵⁸—the ultimate curse being death.⁵⁹

⁴⁸ Exod., 34:1–28.

⁴⁹ These regulations are found in the book of Leviticus. This book belongs to the period just before the first month of the second year of the Exodus era (Exod., 40:1; cf., Num., 1:1).

⁵⁰ Breaking any one of the original commandments or statutes could result in execution, justifiable death, or severe curses. Cf., Exod., 20:1–17, and Deut., 5:1–21, which list the Ten Commandments, with the judgments rendered in Scriptures for breaking them: (1) Exod., 22:18, 20. (2) Lev., 26:30; Rev., 21:8, 22:15; 1 Cor., 10:14–22. (3) Lev., 24:15f. (4) Exod., 35:2; Num., 15:32–36. (5) Exod., 21:15., 17. (6) Exod., 21:12–14; Lev., 24:17. (7) Lev., 20:10–16; Exod., 22:19. (8) Exod., 21:16, 22:2. (9) Deut., 19:16–21; Prov., 21:28; Mal., 3:5. (10) Col., 3:5; cf., Ezek., 23:37.

Also see the curses pronounced in Lev., 26:1f, 14–46 (esp. v. 46, which notes that the statutes referred to were only those made at Mount Sinai); Deut., 27:1–26, 28:15–68. Similarly, the non-observance of a sacred *khag* and its Sabbath resulted in exile from the nation or a severe curse (e.g., Exod., 12:11–20; Zech., 14:16–19; Ezek., 20:12–17).

⁵¹ Ezek., 20:13; cf., Exod., 16:26–29, 32:1–30.

⁵² Num., 14:19–25.

⁵³ Num., 14:20–24; Deut., 1:34–40, 2:13–17; Heb., 3:16–19.

⁵⁴ Ezek., 20:14–24; e.g., Num., 15:32–36.

⁵⁵ Num., 25:1–26:1.

⁵⁶ Ezek., 20:25.

⁵⁷ Cf., Deut., 4:1, 5:1, 12:1, 31:9–13.

⁵⁸ Deut., 11:26–32, 27:1–29:1; cf., Gal., 3:10–13.

⁵⁹ Deut., 30:19.

When Moses died, such augmentations ceased. The books of Moses were in turn followed by the books of the prophets (from Joshua to Malachi), providing the official history of Israel and prophecies of what will be. The Old Testament, as a result, is often referred to as “the Torah and the Prophets.”⁶⁰ Because Israel continued to sin, Yahu Yahweh did not enter into his great Sabbath rest in Zion, leaving that entry for a future time.⁶¹

Dogmasin

Our next effort is to define the Greek term δόγμα (*dogma*), plural δόγματασιν (*dogmasin*), and judge its use by Saul when he writes that all of our offenses having been forgiven us by the messiah, “having blotted out the handwriting in the δόγματασιν (*dogmasin*), which was adverse to us, also he has taken it out of the midst, having nailed it to the (torture-)stake.”⁶² Does this mean that all the commandments, *khoquth*, and *torath* named in the Torah are no longer applicable?

A δόγμα (*dogma*) is “a public decree” which is also an “ordinance.”⁶³ The *dogma* (decree) from Caesar for a census registration and his decree that there should be no other king save Caesar are two examples given in Scriptures.⁶⁴ By comparing the LXX with the MT, we also discover that the Hebrew/Aramaic word underlying the Greek term δόγμα (*dogma*) is דָּוָה (*duth*), “a royal edict or statute.”⁶⁵ These decrees establish national customs and rituals. To demonstrate, in Daniel we read the story of how some Babylonian officials created a *duth*. They spoke to King Nebuchadnezzar, saying:

All the presidents of the kingdom took counsel together, the nobles and the satraps, the royal officials and the governors, to establish a royal דָּוָה (*qeyam*; an edict [as arising in law])⁶⁶ and to make a strong ban that whoever shall ask a petition of any *eloah* or male for 30 days, except from you king, he shall be thrown into a pit of lions. Now king, establish the ban and sign the document that it may not be changed as a *duth* (LXX δόγμα; public decree) of the Medes and Persians, which does not pass away. So King Darius signed the document and the ban (LXX δόγμα). And Daniel, when he knew that the document was signed (LXX “was commanded the δόγμα”), he went to his house.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Matt., 5:17, 7:12, 11:13, 22:40; Luke, 16:16; John, 1:45; Acts, 13:15; Rom., 3:21; Acts, 28:23, “the Torah of Moses and the prophets.” Luke, 24:44, further divides it as, “the Torah of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms.” The Torah is often considered as beginning at Mount Sinai when the Old Covenant was made (Rom., 5:12–14, 19f; Gal., 3:17–21). That the Torah also includes the book of Genesis see Gal., 4:21–31, cf., Gen., 16:15, 21:2, 9; the book of Leviticus see Gal., 5:14, cf., Lev., 19:18; and the book of Deuteronomy see Gal., 3:10, cf., Deut., 27:26.

⁶¹ Heb., 3:7–11; Deut., 12:9–11; Pss., 95:9–11, 132:13f.

⁶² Col., 2:13f.

⁶³ GEL, p. 207; GEL, 1968, p. 441.

⁶⁴ Luke, 2:1; Acts, 17:7.

⁶⁵ SEC, Heb., #1881. HEL, p. 64, “edict, mandate, law.”

⁶⁶ SEC, Heb. #7010.

⁶⁷ Dan., 6:7–10.

These examples all reveal that a *duth* or *dogma* is the establishment of statute and custom by public decree, based upon present circumstances. They are often temporary, as reflected by the 30-day period in the above example.

Saul further narrows his definition when he states that these annulled *dogmasin* were handwritten.⁶⁸ The Covenants of Promise were a verbal agreement. There is no doubt that the *dogmasin* of which Saul speaks are only those decrees that were handwritten and placed in the book of Moses. Nevertheless, as we shall see, just because we are now under grace and not under the Mosaic Law does not mean that the commandments or the entirety of the laws, statutes (i.e., those kept by Abraham), and *dogmasin* statutes (i.e., those established under Moses) found in the Torah are annulled.

The *dogmasin* about which Saul and the other apostles speak are further clarified when they note that a *dogma*, such as the statute to circumcise all males in the flesh of their foreskin, are “after the ἔθει (ethei; custom) of Moses” and are found in the “Torah of Moses.”⁶⁹ The first century C.E. Jewish priest Philo speaks of the “νόμοισ καὶ ἔθεσιν (nomois kai ethesin; laws and customs) which he (Moses) had ordained.”⁷⁰ Customs are merely forms of actions practiced as a matter of course among the people. The customs established by the statutes and laws of Moses included such things as their type of dress, how to wear one’s beard, when things become clean or unclean, commanded sacrifices, and the like.

The *dogmasin* nailed to the stake and annulled, as mentioned by Saul in his epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians,⁷¹ include the idea of customs wherein “you may not handle, you may not taste, you may not touch, which things are all unto corruption in the using,”⁷² that is, they are works of the flesh. Also mentioned as one of the *dogmasin* was the custom of circumcising the flesh of the foreskin,⁷³ which is also a work of the flesh found in the handwritten Torah. Under grace, the law of commandments in *dogmasin*, which include fleshly circumcision, have been annulled.⁷⁴ Such things are classified as “works of the Torah (Law).”⁷⁵ A further example includes the ordinances of service in the Tabernacle. These offerings and works were an allegory, being only in meats and drinks and diverse washings, and ordinances of the flesh, and lasted only “until is imposed the time of setting things right.”⁷⁶

Josephus, a Jewish priest of the first century C.E., reports that, “there happened to come around the festival called Phasekh, at which it is our ἔθος

⁶⁸ Col., 2:14.

⁶⁹ Acts., 15:1–5; cf., vs 6–26.

⁷⁰ Philo, *Hypo.*, 6:9.

⁷¹ Eph., 2:11–17; Col., 2:13–15.

⁷² Col., 2:20–23. In Colossians these *dogmasin* are “according to the injunctions and teachings of men” (Col., 2:22) and not Yahweh. Nevertheless, they demonstrate what *dogmasin* are.

⁷³ Eph., 2:8–22. Also see App. D.

⁷⁴ Cf., Deut., 26:16f, “This day Yahweh your *eloahi* commands you to do these statutes and the judgments.” Nevertheless, these commanded statutes and judgments, or *dogmasin*, are not the royal commandments, such as the Ten Commandments.

⁷⁵ Rom., 3:20, 4:1–5, 11:1–6; Gal., 2:11–3:29.

⁷⁶ Heb., 9:1–28, esp. v. 10.

(*ethos*; custom)⁷⁷ to offer numerous sacrifices to the deity.”⁷⁸ Therefore, the authority for offering sacrifices, such as the Phasekh sacrifice, comes as a legal custom. Importantly, the original Phasekh sacrifice performed in Egypt was only a one-time event. After the Israelites left Egypt (the Exodus), Yahweh did not require any further sacrifices or burnt offerings from them.⁷⁹ This fact alone proves that the sacrifices and burnt offerings later added by means of the Torah were not a requirement under the Covenants of Promise given to Abraham, for which purpose the Israelites had been brought out of Egypt. Rather, it was due to the fact that the Israelites continued to sin that these sacrifices and burnt offerings were brought into force under the Torah of Moses.

These statements are all vital clues. They tell us that those things nailed to the stake at the messiah’s death were brought into existence by decrees which established certain ordinances or statutes, called laws and customs. These decrees were handwritten by Moses on a scroll, forming the Torah of Moses. Because they are public decrees, they do not act as eternal laws or commandments. Rather, they are temporary and conditional. Neither do they represent the entire Torah. This point is established by Saul’s statement that these particular annulled *dogmasin* were “against us” and “adverse to us.”⁸⁰ This statement is important because it carries with it the thought that there can also be *dogmasin* that are helpful to us.

Indeed, Saul and the other apostles make the point that not all of the handwritten *dogmasin* in the Torah of Moses—which form the augmenting statutes, laws, and customs—were annulled. To the contrary, among the decreed statutes given by Moses, there yet stand four types of *dogmasin* that apply even to this day. Proof of these four *dogmasin* comes with the doctrinal statement given by the apostles at the Jerusalem Council held in 49 C.E. At this council the apostles addressed the questions of whether or not it was necessary for those converted from the nations to practice circumcision in the flesh of the foreskin “after the custom of Moses,” and if it was necessary to charge them to keep the Torah of Moses in order to “be saved.” Keph scolds those who would put such a burden on these disciples, stating, “Now therefore why do you tempt *eloahi* to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”⁸¹ The conclusion of the apostles was declared by Jacob (James), the brother of the messiah and the bishop of the Christians at Jerusalem. Representing the leadership of the Assembly, he writes:

Wherefore I judge not to trouble those from the nations who turn to *eloahi*; but to write to them to abstain from the pollutions of the idols, and *porneia* (sexual misconduct), and what is strangled, and (eating) blood.⁸²

⁷⁷ The Greek term ἔθος (*ethos*) means, “*custom, habit*” (GEL, 1968, p. 480).

⁷⁸ Jos., *Antiq.*, 14:2:2.

⁷⁹ Jer., 7:21–23.

⁸⁰ Col., 2:14.

⁸¹ Acts, 15:1–10.

⁸² Acts, 15:19f.

All four categories are mentioned in the Torah of Moses.⁸³ A letter was then sent out from the leaders of the Assembly with the following conclusion:

For it seemed good to the sacred *ruach* and to us, no further burden to lay upon you than these necessary things: to abstain from the things sacrificed to idols, and from (eating) blood, and from (eating) what is strangled, and from *porneia*; from which keeping yourselves, you will do well.⁸⁴

Saul then passed through the cities of the nations instructing them “to keep the δόγματα (*dogmata*; decrees) as separated out by the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem.”⁸⁵ Collectively, therefore, these four customs are *dogmata* (decrees), a form of the word *dogmasin*, which are found in Scriptures. If you keep these particular *dogmasin* “you will do well,” for they are advantageous for us.

In a later event, Saul was charged with teaching the Jews apostasy by telling them not to circumcise nor to walk “in the ἔθεςιν (*ethesin*; customs)” taught by Moses.⁸⁶ Saul responded, “But concerning those who have trusted

⁸³ These four *dogmasin* are mentioned in the Torah as follows:

(1) The statute against drinking or eating blood existed even before the covenant made at Sinai (Gen., 9:4). This detail proves that the prohibition against eating blood was one of the original statutes observed by Abraham. The prohibition is also found attached to the covenant given at Mount Sinai as found in Lev., 3:17, 17:10–14, 19:26, and later in Deut., 12:23, 15:23. Blood is connected with life itself, see below Chap. VII, p. 109, n. 97.

(2) The πορνεία (*porneia*) statutes—i.e., the laws against illegal and immoral sexual behavior—are listed in Lev., 18:1–30, 20:10–24, and Deut., 27:20–23. In 1 Thess., 4:2f, Saul notes that the *dogma* (decree) to abstain from *porneia* was given to Christians by the “παραγγελίας (*paraggelias*) we gave you through the sovereign Yahushua.” *Paraggelias* means, “to transmit a message, i.e. (by impl.) to enjoin” (SEC, Gk., #3853), “to notify, to command, to charge” (ILT, *Lex.*, p. 74); “to give the word, give orders” (GEL, p. 594). REB renders the passage to mean the “charges we gave you through the Lord Jesus”; ILT has, the “injunctions we gave you through the Lord Jesus”; and NJB gives, “the instructions we gave you on the authority of Jesus Christ.” Therefore, we are charged by Yahushua the messiah to observe the *porneia* statutes. Many of these restrictions (e.g., brothers and sisters should not marry) only became applicable in the days of Moses due to the increasing development of genetic problems. We know, for example, that in the days of Adam and Eve, brothers and sisters did in fact marry (not only understood by the context of Gen., 1:26–28, 2:7, 21–25, 4:1f, 16f; but acknowledged by Jewish writers: Jub., 4:7–15; Chron. Jerah., 26:1f; Jos., *Antiq.*, 1:2:1–3; etc.). Abraham married his half-sister Sarah (Gen., 20:12); Nahor, the brother of Abraham, married his niece Milkah (Gen., 11:27–29). Neither are the rules applicable in our present day the end of the matter. During the age to come, after our resurrection into a higher form, marriages between men and women, though they have been permissible in our present fleshly state, shall be forbidden (Matt., 22:30). As our condition advances, so shall the relevant requirements. Other forms of sexual misconduct, on the other hand, have always been, and shall always be, counted as evil. These include acts of lewdness as well as effeminate and homosexual activities (1 Cor., 6:9f; Eph., 5:3–5; Gal., 5:19; Rom., 6:19). Those who break these *porneia* laws shall die in the lake of fire at the end of our present world-age (Rev., 21:8).

(3) There is a prohibition against eating things offered to idols (Exod., 34:15; Num., 25:2f; Deut., 32:16f; cf., 1 Cor., 8:10–13).

(4) There is also a prohibition against eating animals that have been strangled—an extension of the restriction against eating blood. In Scriptures any animal slaughtered for the purpose of eating must have its blood drained to avoid saturating the meat with blood (Deut., 12:23f, 15:23; cf., the idea behind Exod., 23:18, 29:11f, 15–21, 34:25; Lev., 1:3–6, 11–15; Num., 18:17; Deut., 12:27; and so forth). To sacrifice an animal, for example, one must cut its throat and drain its blood prior to cooking. This procedure is an extension of the prohibition against eating blood and sets the pattern for Christian homes. An example of food prohibited by this regulation is blood sausage.

⁸⁴ Acts, 15:28f.

⁸⁵ Acts, 16:3f.

⁸⁶ Acts, 21:18–24.

of the nations we wrote, judging them to observe no such thing, except to keep themselves from things offered to idols, and blood, and what is strangled, and *porneia*.⁸⁷

Important to our discussion is the fact that these four *dogmasin* do not include any of the royal commandments, which are also part of the Torah. The messiah straightforwardly states:

Think not that I came to abolish the Torah or the prophets: I came not to abolish, but to fulfill. For verily I say to you, Until the heavens and the earth shall pass away, in no wise shall one iota or one tittle pass away from the Torah until all comes to pass. Whoever then shall break the least one of the commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whoever shall practice and teach them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens. For I say to you, that unless shall abound your righteousness above the scribes and Pharisees, in no wise shall you enter into the kingdom of the heavens.⁸⁸

In another place the messiah advised those wishing to gain eternal life:

But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments. He said to him, Which? And Yahushua said, the commandments you know: You shall not commit adultery; You shall not commit murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ["You shall not defraud" (Mark)]; Honor your father and your mother; ["And you shall love you neighbor as yourself" (Matt.)].⁸⁹

Yahushua plainly states, "If you love me, keep my commandments."⁹⁰ These and numerous other statements from Scriptures prove that none of the royal commandments have been set aside even after the death of the messiah.⁹¹

Indeed, it does not make sense that Yahweh would still require the statute from the Torah of Moses ordering us not to eat blood yet would set aside the commandments that you shall not murder, steal, or commit adultery or negate the greater commands to love Yahweh and to love your neighbor as yourself.⁹² As a result, it is clear from this evidence that at least four groups of the *dogmasin*

⁸⁷ Acts, 21:25.

⁸⁸ Matt., 5:17–20 (cf., ST).

⁸⁹ Luke, 18:18–20; Mark, 10:17–19; Matt., 19:17–19 (cf., ST). This is a summary list which points to the Ten Commandments (Exod., 20:1–17), the commandments explaining other forms of the Ten Commandments (Lev., 19:13; cf., 1 Cor., 6:7f), and the two greater commandments (Lev., 19:18; Deut., 6:5), upon which all of the Torah hangs (Matt., 22:35–40).

⁹⁰ John, 14:15, 23.

⁹¹ See John, 15:10–14. That we are to continue to keep the commandments even after the death of the messiah see 1 Cor., 7:18f; 2 Cor., 3:1–18; 1 Tim., 6:11–16; 1 John, 2:3f, 4:20–5:6; 2 John, 4–6; Rev., 12:17, 14:12, 22:14f.

⁹² See Matt., 22:34–40; Mark, 12:28–34.

and none of the royal commandments found in the Torah of Moses have ever been annulled. In addition, we have not yet even touched upon the laws and statutes that were in existence prior to the Torah of Moses.

At the same time, Saul pronounces that Yahushua the messiah is the only true offering and is our Phasekh victim.⁹⁴ Where remission of sins exist, "there is no more an offering for sin."⁹⁵ Therefore, since the death of the messiah, there is no more need to sacrifice flock animals as a typology of the messiah's death. Our true Phasekh has already been sacrificed.

Conclusion

These details reveal that the popular notion about what the apostle Saul actually meant when he indicated that the *dogmasin* adverse to us have been annulled by the death of the messiah (i.e., the belief that all the commandments, laws, and statutes of the Torah have been nailed to the stake) is both misleading and incorrect. Rather, the evidence indicates that Christians must continue to observe the commandments and a number of the laws and statutes found in the Torah while under grace. At the same time, there are many other statutes and laws which are no longer applicable. The premise is thereby established that, just because one sets aside the authority of the handwritten Torah, it does not mean that the conditions found in the Abrahamic Covenants are also annulled (see Chart A).⁹⁶ One must still obey Yahweh, keep his charge, and be subject to the same commandments, statutes, and laws observed by Abraham.⁹⁷

The questions then stand: "How do we tell which conditions are still required and which have been nailed to the stake?" Secondly, "In which class do we place the festivals and sacred days of Yahweh?" Adding to the complexity of Saul's dialogue is the fact that, even though the Torah shall continue until heaven and earth pass away, we are not under the Torah but under grace.⁹⁸ Does grace eliminate all conditions? On the face of it, it would seem that we have an apparent contradiction. Therefore, we shall next address the issue of grace and whether or not, if we continue in grace, we are required to keep the conditions of the Covenants of Promise.

⁹⁴ Heb., 10:1-18; cf., 1 Cor., 5:7.

⁹⁵ Heb., 10:18.

⁹⁶ Cf. Chart M.

⁹⁷ Gen., 26:1-5.

⁹⁸ Gal., 5:18; Rom., 6:14f.