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All Who Rely on the Deeds of the Law are Under a Curse

Galatians 3:10 and Deuteronomy 27:26

All who rely on the deeds of the Law are under a curse **DIG: What is the difference between believing in legalism for salvation and believing in the Torah as a blueprint for living? What is the curse of Cain, and how did that relate to the curse of legalism? How did the Judaizers bring a curse upon themselves? How are believers supposed to view the Torah today?**

REFLECT: Why do you think legalism can be appealing to some people? Why do you think some people believe that they can work their way into heaven? What are some customs of your Messianic synagogue or church that should not be imposed on new believers? How would you explain the promised "curse" in verse 10 to a seeker?

Paul condemns the Judaizers for relying on the deeds of the Law for salvation, and writes to convince the Galatian God-fearers from making the same mistake.

Paul loved the Torah, in fact **he** said: **The Torah is holy (Romans 7:12)**. We need to understand that **the Torah** is righteous and an important part of **God's Word**. As such, it will last forever. As believers in the Dispensation of Grace, we should love **the Torah** also. At Shavu'ot, **about three thousand were saved** (see the commentary on **Acts, to see link click [An - Peter Speaks to the Shavu'ot Crowd](#)**). But about thirty years later, **tens of thousands** of believers were still **zealous for the Torah (Acts 21:20)**. Therefore, **the Torah** is not merely for **the righteous of the TaNaKh**, but for all believers today (see the commentary on **Exodus [Du](#) - Do Not Think That I Have Come to Abolish the Law or the Prophets**).

However, the Judaizers during **Paul's** ministry, spiritually blinded as they were, maintained that their knowledge of **the Scriptures** entitled them to the blessings which were obligated to the sons of Abraham. **Yeshua** said to the Pharisees and Sadducees of **His** day: **You search the Scriptures because you suppose that in them you have eternal life. It is these that testify about Me. Yet you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may**

have life (John 5:39-40)! This was the sin of Isra'el, ignoring the righteousness of YHVH and trying to establish her own right standing before **God (Romans 10:1-4)**. **For everyone who depends on a legalistic observance of Torah commandments lives under a curse, since it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not keep doing** (every moment of every day, all the time) **everything written in the scroll of the Torah" (3:10)**. Salvation, either in the TaNaKh, or in the B'rit Chadashah, has always been by faith. So, Paul quotes from **Deuteronomy 27:26**. Instead of being blessed by their act of placing themselves under the yoke of **the Torah** (voluntarily agreeing to obey all **613 commandments**), the Judaizers (see [Ag - Who Were the Judaizers?](#)) had, in reality, put themselves **under a curse**.

Paul argued that the Judaizers had brought **a curse** upon themselves because they were **relying on legalism** for salvation. For no one can keep all **613 commandments** perfectly. **James**, underscores this **curse** by saying: **For whoever keeps the whole Law, but stumbles in one point, has become guilty of all (James 4:4)**. Anyone trying to **keep the Law** is **under a curse**. Why? **Deuteronomy 27:26** clearly taught that unless you are able to perfectly uphold every aspect of **the Law**, all **613 commandments**, you were **under a curse**. Under the Dispensation of **the Torah**, the **613 commandments** were not a "religious cafeteria" where people could pick and choose which commandments they wanted to obey (**James 2:10-11**). You only have to be guilty of breaking one of the commandments to be found guilty of breaking them all. All you have to do is to start reading through **the 613 commandments** and you won't get very far before you notice that you've broken one. All of a sudden, you're **under the curse of the Law**. Because no one can uphold all the commandments perfectly, all humanity is under **the curse**, and the ultimate result of **the curse** is death. **For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)**.⁷⁴

As a result, **Paul** warned the **God-fearing** Gentiles in Galatia that becoming Jewish would bring serious consequences. They could not accept the blessings of taking on the yoke of **the Law** without also accepting **the curse** obeying all of **the 613 commandments of the Law** perfectly. If they chose to take on a Jewish identity, they needed to also take on the full weight of **the curse of the Law**, which is **the curse** of Cain. Cain thought he could have a right standing before **ADONAI** through his own effort of working in the field and raising his own crops as an offering; the Judaizers thought they could have a right standing before **ADONAI** through their own effort of following **the 613 commandments of the Torah**. Both Cain and the Judizers neglected **Ha'Shem's** commandment of a blood offering. **For without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22b)**.

Therefore, for believers, what is the purpose of **the Torah** today? First of all, it is not a set of rules. Rules cannot bring freedom, they can only accuse. What they do accomplish is to reveal the heart of **God**, and thus are an indispensable part of the life of a believer. **The 613 Commandments of the Torah have nothing to do with our justification, nothing to do with our salvation . . . but they have everything to do with our sanctification.**

Justification is a one-time action by **the LORD** whereby, negatively, **He** forgives the sins of believers and, positively, **He** declares them righteous by imputing the obedience and righteousness of **Christ** to them through faith (**Genesis 15:6; Psalm 32:2; Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 3:28 to 4:6; Gal 2:16, 3:8-9, 21, 24**). Sanctification, however, is to be set apart, specifically, to the holy use and purpose of **God**. It takes work, and is a continuous lifetime struggle to be **transformed into the likeness of Christ (Second Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1-2)**. It is a goal, and in reality, is never accomplished during our lifetime (see *Perfectionism* by B.B. Warfield). The result of being **transformed** is inward peace (**Isaiah 32:17**), observable spiritual fruit (**Second Corinthians 9:8; Second Peter 1:5-11**), and a deep desire to honor **ADONAI (Matthew 5:16; John 15:8)**.

The Ten Commandments, for example, reveal the heart of **God** in three ways. First, **the Torah** is still a moral guide by revealing sin (**Romans 7:7**). Secondly, we know that **all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (Second Timothy 3:16)**. Therefore, **the Torah** can be used as a **teaching** tool to show **ADONAI's** standard of **righteousness**, so that we can know **Him** better and love **Him** more. And thirdly, it can also be used to point others to **Yeshua (Galatians 3:24-25)**. **Nine of these Ten Commandments are also found in the B'rit Chadashah with conditions of the heart added that make us even more accountable not only for our actions, but for our thoughts as well.** You could say **the Torah** is **God's** blueprint for living. If we view **the Torah** in this way, we can love **the Torah** as we love **God's** Word, and not be **under a curse**.