

The Gentile Controversy and the Emergence of New Covenant Christianity

--:part two:--

Should Christian Jews Keep the Law?

1. Galatians 2.19–21; 3.10–4.7, 21–5.6, 13–25; 6.2, 7–8, 15–16
2. Ephesians 2.11–3.7
3. Colossians 2.9–17
4. Romans 2.25–29; 3.21–31; 4.13–16, 6.1–2, 14–15; 7.1–7; 8.1–4, 13.8–10
5. 1 Corinthians 9.20–21
6. Hebrews 7.11–12, 21–22; 8.4–13; 9.11–15; 10.9–22; 12.18–29

Flow of Thought

1. Initially all Christians were Jews who kept the Law of Moses
2. Gentiles start to become Christians
3. Question: Do Gentiles need to keep the Law in order to become Christians?
 - A. answer #1: yes, they must become circumcised and keep the law (i.e. convert to Judaism) and then they will be considered full members of the Christian church
 - B. answer #2: no, they need not keep the law and should be considered second class Christians (i.e. God fearers, etc.) because we (the Jewish Christians) cannot have table fellowship with them because of their dietary habits.
 - C. answer #3: no, they need not keep the law but they must keep a stripped down core of laws so that we can share table fellowship at the lord's supper (no strangled animals, no blood, no food sacrificed to idols, no fornication cf. 1 Cor 5.9–11)
4. So a double standard is constructed: the Jews keep the Law, the Gentiles don't (except for certain things)
5. The next question was bound to be asked sooner or later: Why should Christian Jews continue to keep the Law if the Gentiles don't?
 - A. answer: Christians Jews do not need to keep the law anymore
6. Question: Why not? For 1500 years we have kept the law, why suddenly stop keeping it?
 - A. answer: because when Christ died he absorbed the curse of the law becoming a curse *for us* so that we could die with him to the law and so be freed from that slavery into the freedom of Messiah
7. Question: So then, does that mean we are lawless?
 - A. answer: by no means! The Christian is implanted with the seed—the gospel of the kingdom—which by the energizing, mysterious power of the holy spirit grows and produces the fruit of the spirit. The Christian, whether Jew or Gentile, does not *need* a list of laws in order to live righteously. The Christian, by virtue of his or her faith in the kingdom gospel, the work of Christ on the cross, the vitalizing, sanctifying power of the spirit “naturally” does what is right. The flesh is dead. The power of sin is broken. Christ is raised. New life has come. Let us live new life blamelessly in

anticipation of the coming kingdom, which will arrive when our Lord appears (1 Cor 1.8; Eph 5.27; Php 1.10; Col 1.22; 2 Pet 3.14; Jud 24).

So, What is the Christian Worldview?

1. In Narrative Form

- A. God made the earth to be good
- B. Things got messed up through humanities decision to disobey God (inspired by the Serpent)
- C. God chose Abraham and his family line to serve him and he promised them the land
- D. Through Moses God delivered his people from Egypt in order to make them a nation for himself (he would be their God and they would be his people)
- E. God gave his chosen nation a Law for them to live by in the promised land
- F. After some time David became king and to him God promised a lasting royal dynasty and one descendant in particular who would rule forever
- G. Under Solomon the Temple was built and God dwelt among his people in his holy city—Jerusalem/Zion
- H. But as time progressed the people of God were not faithful, they did seek justice for the orphan and the widow, they did not trust God, so the prophets brought messages from God for the people to repent in light of coming judgment
- I. Along with these appeals for repentance, the prophets spoke of a day, the Day of Yahweh, in which the wicked would be completely destroyed from the land and the remnant, the righteous few, would be able to take charge of the land and live in harmony with their fellow countryman, with the other nations, and even with the animals.
- J. But God's people did not heed these appeals. Israel was taken first in 721 bc and never returned to the land. Judah was exiled a century later and did not return for 70 years.
- K. Even once the people returned to the land the intervening time before Jesus came was filled with political and religious turmoil. Then Rome came and annexed Judea.
- L. Finally, God through his spirit caused the conception of Jesus in the womb of his virgin mother.
- M. Jesus, in the vein of John the Baptizer, proclaimed the Day of Yahweh near, the kingdom of God was at hand, the people of God needed to repent...now!
- N. He backed up this fiery message with parables, both spoken and enacted (i.e. 12 disciples) along with dozens of healings and exorcisms.
- O. Furthermore, he understood himself not as apocalyptic prophet but also as Messiah, the Son of David promised who would one day rule over the kingdom of God. Because of this understanding he demanded complete loyalty from his followers.
- P. At some point in his ministry he began to reveal to his disciples that he would suffer and die and be raised on the third day.
- Q. Jesus entered Jerusalem in an intentionally provocative messianic enactment of Zechariah 9.9 by riding on a donkey and being hailed as the king of Israel. His last

week was filled with intense confrontation between himself and the Sadducees (temple demonstration) as well as the Pharisees (woes of Matthew 23).

- R. He instituted the last supper (communion) as an explanatory template and memorial for what his death would accomplish.
 - S. He was crucified due to a conspiracy between one of his own disciples, Judas, with the chief priests and Pharisees. Though he certainly could have evaded the trap he willingly submitted to the plan of God (suffering servant) to suffer and die on behalf of the people.
 - T. He was crucified for claiming to be “the King of the Jews” but he was really dying for our sins.
 - U. Then Sunday morning Jesus appeared to different people and groups of people demonstrating that he was physically alive and that God had overturned death through resurrection.
 - V. After forty days he commissioned the church to carry out “the mission” and he ascended to heaven where he was exalted to the right hand of God.
 - W. Upon the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus had been crucified, the spirit was poured out which proved that Jesus was indeed exalted to the right hand of God.
 - X. From this day forward the earliest followers of Jesus engaged in a vast missionary enterprise to their fellow Jews at home and abroad that the messiah has come, Jesus of Nazareth is he because God raised him from the dead, a fact to which they testified.
 - Y. Furthermore, this Jesus, will come again to bring about the restoration of all things and to judge the living and the dead.
 - Z. All must repent in order to share the bright future spoken of by the prophets from ancient times, called the kingdom of God, and by faith their sins can be forgiven because of Jesus’ accomplished work on the cross. This leads to a new life in which men, women, slaves, and citizens have been redeemed in advance in anticipation of the coming kingdom and have already been given the power, through the spirit, to live the life of the age to come now.
 - AA. Before long the message spread to God fearers and Gentiles who accepted it and consequently were accepted by God, for he poured out the spirit on them like he had upon the Jews at Pentecost.
 - BB. Over time it became clear that the law itself was fulfilled in the life and death of Christ so that just as he was resurrected we too could walk in the newness of life apart from the works of the law. In other words, neither Jews nor Gentiles needed to remain under the old covenant because the new covenant has made obsolete the Mosaic Law.
2. or to list the principles
- A. Genesis theology
 - i. Creation good
 - ii. Fall bad
 - B. The land promise (Abrahamic Covenant)
 - C. The king promise (Davidic Covenant)

- D. Torah
- E. Temple
- F. Prophetic message
 - i. Judgment & Restoration
- G. Return from exile
- H. Disaster of Hasmonean dynasty
- I. Roman occupation
- J. Apocalypticism
 - i. Kingdom will be physical, political reign of God
 - ii. Coming of Son of Man is cataclysmic and irreversible
 - iii. Kingdom is near
 - iv. Two groups of people
 - v. Reversals
 - vi. Grim outlook for disciples in this age
 - vii. Bright future for disciples in the age to come
 - viii. Wait for God to act
- K. Jesus is the authority figure
 - i. He knows what is going to happen in the future
 - ii. He has power/authority over sickness, disease, etc.
 - iii. He is the supreme interpreter of Torah
 - iv. He has exclusive access to the Father
 - v. He requires complete loyalty
- L. Jesus has made known how to relate to God
 - i. Love God with everything
 - ii. Trust in God over five senses
 - iii. Be genuine (not hypocritical)
 - iv. Pray
 - v. God as caring Father
 - vi. Emphasis on spiritual virtues not location
- M. Disciples are the true people of God
 - i. Holiness
 - ii. Wholeness among disciples (restoration community, physically/relationally)
 - iii. Love neighbor
 - iv. Love enemy
 - v. Remnant
 - vi. A new way to be Israel
- N. Jesus died for our sins so that we could be forgiven and die to sin
- O. Jesus was raised which proves he is messiah
- P. Spirit was poured out which proves he has been exalted
- Q. Jesus is coming back to set the world right and fulfill the messianic prophecies
- R. Even now, Jesus is present in spirit and dwells within his church
- S. The message needs to get out to the Jews
- T. And the Gentiles who have now been grafted in to the olive tree of faith
- U. Because the law was abolished in Christ's death