

Ancient Origins of the Hebrew Roots Movement

The Noahide and Mosaic Laws
as Seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls



Ken Johnson, Th.D.

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Introduction

The world has witnessed the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948, another biblical prophecy fulfilled. In 2005 the Sanhedrin was revived in Israel. They are not yet recognized by the official government of Israel, but their political power is steadily growing. Along with the Sanhedrin, the faithful Jews that wish to rebuild the temple have funded the Temple Mount Institute, and almost everything needed for the rebuilding of the temple has been created. A new Levitical priesthood has been created and daily rituals are being practiced. Everything is ready.

During the last two thousand years, Jews who wished to accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah had little choice but to leave their Jewish traditions and attend a Christian church. However, some Jews felt it was important to remain Jewish in structure to create a place where Jews can feel comfortable to come and learn about the Messiah. This caused the birth of the Messianic Movement. Messianic Jews recognized that Paul taught that the Law of Moses was created as a system of government for ancient Israel. It did not exist before the time of the Exodus (about 1450 BC) and it was only to last until the coming of the Messiah. They continue to observe the traditions because they are a part of Jewish culture. They admit the Mosaic law is not binding on any Jew today and also that Gentiles were never under that law.

In the early 1970's the Messianic Movement began to expand. In the last forty years it has become evident that it was a move of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of what Paul said in Romans 11; that eventually all of Israel would be saved. Although Israel will not accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah until the midst of the seven-year Tribulation; it is obvious that the Messianic Movement is the beginning of the fulfillment of that prophecy.

During the last forty years, many Gentile Christians have come to understand that many parts of the Law of Moses pointed to Jesus Christ and taught prophecy in ritual form. Jesus is our Passover Lamb, for instance.

Many wanted to learn Hebrew and start practicing some of the rituals to gain a deeper understanding of the prophecies. This was the beginning of the Hebrew Roots Movement.

There was nothing wrong with those who wanted to study more to have a deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. They were invited to come to the messianic synagogues and study with their believing Jewish brothers and sisters. They just had to follow kosher laws and not do anything to hinder the Jewish lifestyle for the Messianics *while* they were present at their synagogues.

In the last ten or twenty years something has changed. Some in the Hebrew Roots Movement began to teach that the laws of Moses were not given at Mount Sinai, but were originally given by God to Adam. They also taught that the Mosaic Law always had been, and always will be, binding on every human being. To not keep the Sabbath, not eat kosher food, or to willfully ignore any other Jewish law meant death and an eternal hell for the person that disobeyed. To them there was no difference in refusing to keep the Sabbath than it was to continue to murder people. Both are sins and both will be punished. To counter this misunderstanding, the Messianics brought Noahide Law to the debate. If the Law of Moses was given at creation to everyone then it was still binding on all and the Hebrew Roots faction would be right. However, if Gentile law was given to Adam for all nations and reinstated by Noah as the Noahide Laws, then Noahide Laws were binding on all nations and peoples, and the Law of Moses would be understood as Paul taught it. The Law of Moses was given as an addition to moral law (Noahide Law) and would exist only until the first coming of the Messiah.

This issue caused a split in the Messianic community. Today we have people who do not understand the difference. They may call themselves Messianic or Hebrew Roots and they may believe either doctrine.

So, it all boils down to whether Noahide Law ever really existed or not. If it did, the Hebrew Roots Movement has become a modern heresy. If it never

existed, then the messianic community is a modern Jewish/Christian denomination that has fallen for a medieval lie.

In this book I want to prove the existence of Noahide Law and that the Messianic Movement has the correct doctrine. If we can prove through many ancient manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Old Testament itself that Noahide Law did indeed exist then we will also prove that the Hebrew Roots Movement is wrong in its thinking because of their ignorance of ancient history.

Divisions of Moses' Law

First, we need to see the divisions in the Law of Moses. Only the descendants of Levi were chosen to be priests. Only they could do sacrifices and temple rituals. Only the descendants of Aaron could be high priests and do the rituals pertaining to the high priesthood.

“...Aaron and his sons... This is to be a perpetual ordinance for him and his descendants after him. This is what you are to do to them to consecrate them to serve Me as priests...” *Exodus 28:43-29:1 ISV*

The rituals had to be done *exactly* as God instructed. In the book of Leviticus, we are told that Nadab and Abihu (the sons of Aaron) were qualified to do rituals, but they did not do the ritual exactly the way God commanded, and God killed them for it.

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” *Leviticus 10:1-2 KJV*

When King Uzziah took the attitude that a king will do as he pleases; God struck him with leprosy. Even after repentance he still died a leper.

“But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed;

neither shall it be for thine honor from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.” *2 Chronicles 26:16-21 KJV*

The apostle Paul recorded that there were Christians who performed the communion ritual in an unworthy manner and died because of it. He calls this “sleep.”

“For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.”
1 Corinthians 11:29-30 NKJV

What should we learn from these events? God designed that temple rituals be done by whom He commanded and in the exact manner that He commanded. Neither could the king of Israel nor any other Israeli from any tribe outside of Levi perform temple rituals. Out of the six hundred thirteen Laws of Moses, over four hundred of them pertain to temple rituals. In other words, four hundred of the six hundred thirteen laws cannot be observed by any Jew or Gentile.

There are special laws that pertain only to the king of Israel. No Gentile can be a king of Israel.

“When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt

say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.”

Deuteronomy 17:14-15 KJV

When you consider that a true king of Israel had to be of the tribe of Judah and a direct descendant of King David, you realize very few Jews and no Gentile can observe those laws.

There are also special laws for the Sanhedrin. For example, a murderer was to be put to death; but according to the Law of Moses, a Jew could not just walk up and kill a suspected murderer. The accused must be captured and taken before the Sanhedrin for a trial. The Sanhedrin would then judge him. If he was guilty of murder, he would be sentenced to death. If he was guilty of manslaughter, he would be sent to a city of refuge. If he was found not guilty of murder or manslaughter, he would be freed to return home.

There are special laws for Israeli women. Only a woman would come before the priest and perform the ritual of the Water of Bitterness. Only a Woman would come to the temple and do the ritual of sacrifice for giving birth. No man gives birth. It would be a sin for a man to come to the temple and try to perform that ritual.

Conclusion

There are six hundred thirteen laws given to the nation of Israel to govern themselves and show the coming of the Messiah. When you remove the laws that are forbidden for the common Jew to perform, the number of laws a Jew can perform drops from six hundred thirteen to about seventy. These same seventy are listed in the New Testament as Christian laws.

The point of this chapter is that if there are laws that only male Jews, Kings, Priests, and the Sanhedrin can observe, it is reasonable to conclude that there are some Laws of Moses that Gentiles are forbidden to observe.

The Seven Noahide Laws

According to the *Law of Kings 9*, Adam gave six laws to his children.

1. Abstain from idolatry.
2. Do not commit blasphemy.
3. Do not commit murder.
4. Do not commit fornication.
5. Do not steal.
6. Establish laws and courts of justice.

The pre-flood world rejected Adam's laws and became so corrupt it was destroyed in a world-wide Flood. After the Flood, Noah added a seventh law to the six Adamic laws.

7. Do not eat blood.

This created the seven Noahide Laws. These seven laws were given by Noah to his sons for them to establish their own nations. They were to add to these laws as they saw fit, but not take away from them. We remember the seven laws by the seven colors of the rainbow. We see this in Genesis 9. Let's go through each of these briefly.

Abstain from Idolatry

Protestants still adhere to this today. There are to be no statues or pictures used in religious worship. You are never allowed to stand in front of a statue/picture and pray to it or to what it represents.

“A Gentile is held guilty of idolatry if he is intentionally worshipping false gods in an accepted manner. A Gentile would be executed in a Noahide court for every type of idolatry in which a Jewish court would execute him.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:2*

Do Not Commit Blasphemy

Blasphemy is defined as not believing what God has said. If one swears and curses in God's name it shows he does not believe the prophets, nor does he care about anything they said. So, in this case it is not believing what Noah and Shem said about the Flood, the coming fire judgment, and the coming of the Messiah. They were to follow the true prophets and hold their predictions in high esteem. As they awaited the Messiah, they were to follow the teachings of all the Old Testament prophets as written, and study the Old Testament. Once the Messiah came, they would have become Christians awaiting His Second Coming.

“A Gentile who curses God's Name, (including His actual name and/or His titles), in any language, is guilty.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:3*

Do Not Commit Murder

According to the Law of Kings, murder is defined as unlawfully taking a human life. It does not include war or self-defense, but it does include abortion and euthanasia.

“A Gentile who murders anyone, even an unborn child, should be executed as the penalty for their crime. Likewise, he is guilty if he murdered a person who was on their deathbed, placed a person before a lion, or starved a person to death. He should be executed because he murdered in one way or another.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:4*

Do Not Commit Fornication

The only legal sexual intercourse is with the one person you are married to. Fornication includes pre-marital sex. You are forbidden to marry a close relative, an animal, or someone of the same sex as you. Homosexuality and bestiality are forbidden and punishable by the death penalty.

“A Gentile is liable for relations with his mother, his father's wife, even after his father's death, a male, whether a minor or an adult, an animal, whether young or old. For bestiality: a Gentile is

executed, but not the animal. A Jew is executed along with the animal.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:6*

Do Not Steal

Thieves must pay back what they stole or be executed. Each nation was to decide on the death penalty, or paying back two-fold or four-fold, etc.

“A Gentile is liable for theft whether he stole from a Jew or a Gentile. This applies to forceful robbery, stealing when no one is looking, kidnapping a person [Taking a person’s daughter for marriage without parental permission is kidnapping or stealing a daughter. In the USA it is the crime of “statutory rape.”], withholding an employee’s wages, a worker who eats from his employer’s produce when he is not working.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:9*

Establish Laws and Courts of Justice

Each nation must have some sort of army, police force, court system, jails, and executioners.

“Gentiles are obligated to set up courts with police in every major city to ensure justice concerning these first six commands and to warn the people to observe them. A Gentile who breaks one of these seven commands shall be executed by decapitation. This is why all the Shechemites were executed. The people knew that Shechem kidnapped Dinah; but did not take him to court.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:14*

Do Not Eat Blood

All nations were allowed to kill and eat any animal they wished for food, but they were forbidden to eat a live animal or cut off part of the animal and allow it to live. The term “eating blood” is a Hebrew idiom meaning eating a living creature or meat cut from a living creature. Mountain oysters would be forbidden, as well as any form of cruelty to animals.

“A Gentile may not eat a limb or flesh from a living animal, regardless of the amount involved. The specification of minimum amounts only applies to Jews.” *Ancient Law of Kings 9:10*

The Ten commandments vs. the Seven Noahide Laws

Here are the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:1-17.

1. Have no other gods.
2. Make no graven images.
3. Do not commit blasphemy.
4. Remember the Sabbath day.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not kill.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not covet.

Now let's compare these to the seven Noahide Laws.

Idolatry

Commandments one and two comprise the first Noahide Law. You must worship the one true God and never use any representation of Him in worship or prayer.

Blasphemy

Commandment three is the second Noahide Law. You must believe and follow what the prophets teach, starting with Noah and Shem and going down through the Hebrew prophets.

The Sabbath

Commandment four is unique to the Mosaic Law.

Court Systems for Justice

Obeying parents as parents obey rulers and those in authority is the basis for a government structure and equates to the sixth Noahide Law.

Murder

Commandment six is the third Noahide Law. Murderers are to be put to death. This is to protect society as a whole.

Fornication

Commandment seven is the fourth Noahide Law. Adultery and other forms of fornication must be avoided to protect society from disease and to protect children from broken homes.

Stealing

Commandment eight is the fifth Noahide Law. People and their belongings need to be protected for society to thrive.

Lying

Commandment nine is part of the sixth Noahide Law. Lying cannot be tolerated in any court system because it would pervert justice.

Coveting

Commandment ten is part of the fifth Noahide Law. Coveting is basically greed and it leads to theft.

So, the only real difference between the Ten Commandments and Noahide Law is the addition of a weekly Sabbath ritual.

Noahide Law in the Old Testament

Noahide Law actually started in the Old Testament in Genesis. God created man and man sinned. His sin was so great, in fact, that God sent a flood to destroy mankind. God in His benevolence would not destroy mankind without first giving them an opportunity to repent. So, the fact that there was a flood proves there was moral law in the pre-flood world. This ancient moral law is referred to as “Adamic Law” in several ancient manuscripts. The Law of Moses would be given at Mount Sinai, seven hundred ninety-two years after the Flood.

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them.”

Genesis 6:5-7 KJV

Moses also recorded that after the Flood, God made a covenant with all Gentile nations (the Hebrew nation did not yet exist). This is referred to as Noahide Law, the Noahide Covenant, and the Rainbow Covenant. Most of us remember that the sign that God would not flood the earth again was that He set a rainbow in the sky. The seven colors of the rainbow symbolize the seven Noahide Laws. In Genesis 9 we have the account of God commanding Noah and his sons to set up laws for the respective nations that would come from them. Notice in the first three verses it speaks of food laws.

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth,

and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.” *Genesis 9:1-3 KJV*

God is saying here that Gentiles may eat, not only vegetation, but any animal that moves. This means pigs, catfish, shrimp, lobster, crab, etc. Verses four and five teach that animals must be killed and cooked (not eaten with the blood).

“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.” *Genesis 9:4-5 KJV*

The next verse teaches that each nation must set up courts of justice in order to try those accused of murder and put the guilty to death. This also requires some sort of police force and army.

“Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man.” *Genesis 9:6 KJV*

This Noahide Covenant is a perpetual covenant for all Gentile nations throughout time.

“And I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there anymore be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:” *Genesis 9:11-12 KJV*

Kosher Food Laws

Now let's take this a step further. Gentile nations can eat non-kosher meat. Then seven hundred ninety-two years later, Moses writes in Leviticus 11

that the Jews cannot eat unkosher food. But what about Gentiles who lived with the Jews in the land of Israel? Deuteronomy states they still can eat unkosher food.

“Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself: thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien: for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk.”
Deuteronomy 14:21 KJV

So, a Jew cannot eat something that died and became unkosher, but he can give it to a Gentile believer (Noahide) who lives in the same city as he does, and that Gentile can eat the unkosher food! Notice also that the food is given to the stranger (Ger Toshev) who sits in the gates. A person who “sits in the gates” of a city is a judge of that city. This shows that not only were there Noahide Gentiles that lived with the Israelis, but that they had their own court system. History records that there was a Jewish court and Noahide court in every city in Israel where both Jews and Gentiles lived.

Circumcision and the Passover

We are taught in Exodus that no uncircumcised person can eat the Passover. Here in America most of us are circumcised. However, the circumcision practiced here in America is not the same as the circumcision of Moses.

“And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the Passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof: But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and

unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.” *Exodus 12:43-49*
KJV

The apostle Paul said that Gentiles who believe in the Messiah should not allow themselves to become circumcised.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” *Galatians 5:1-6 KJV*

Now let’s pull this together. If I am an uncircumcised Gentile that believes that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and my Savior, I am to remain uncircumcised. If I remain uncircumcised, then I cannot partake in the Passover. In fact, I am forbidden to do many Jewish things, not just eat the Passover, but celebrate Tabernacles, wear the tallit, tefillin, kippah, or do a great many things, all because I am Gentile.

The Weekly Sabbath

The weekly Sabbath is a sign between God and the nation of Israel. It is not a sign between God and any Gentile nation.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever:** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.” *Exodus 31:16-17*
KJV

The Seven Festivals

The Seven Festivals are a sign between God and the nation of Israel. They are not a sign between God and any Gentile nation.

“Moreover, also I gave them My sabbaths, **to be a sign between Me and them**, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them.” *Ezekiel 20:12 KJV*

Noahide Covenant vs. the Mosaic Covenant

The Holy Spirit more fully explained in Deuteronomy that His covenant with Israel (the Mosaic Covenant) was different from the covenant He made with their fathers (the Noahide Covenant).

“And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. **The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers**, but with us, *even us*, who *are* all of us here alive this day.” *Deuteronomy 5:1-3 KJV*

Mosaic Covenant vs. the New Covenant

Jeremiah shows the exact same concept with the new covenant. It is not at all like the covenant God gave on Mount Sinai.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:” *Jeremiah 31:31-32 KJV*

Conclusion

So, either the Law of Moses has been done away with, as Paul says, and we are free to observe or not observe Jewish rituals, or the Mosaic Law has not been done away with, which means we are forbidden to do most of these things.

We will see greater proofs in the next chapters.

Noahide Law in History

We published a translation of the *Ancient Law of Kings* in 2018. This book is an English translation of Maimonides' text, the *Law of Kings* with a conservative Christian commentary. Maimonides put this together in the twelfth century AD. It is the standard text that describes the rights and duties of Israeli kings and the Jewish and Noahide Court systems in ancient Israel.

Hebrew Roots groups say this is the one and only source of Noahide Law. They say the whole idea was made up by rabbis in the middle ages. Therefore, it should be rejected as a forgery. You can read about the Noahide Laws in detail in the *Ancient Law of Kings*. For now, we want to address the Hebrew roots allegation that the Noahide laws are fictitious. If they truly are laws from Noah, there should be evidence dating much further back than the twelfth century AD. Here is a list of some ancient manuscripts that reference Noahide Law:

1. Law of Kings (12th century AD)
2. The Seder Olam (AD 169)
3. The Book of Gad the Seer (1000 BC)
4. The Book of Jubilees (Dead Sea Scrolls)
5. The ancient church fathers (1-3 centuries AD)

Seder Olam

The Seder Olam was written about AD 160 by an anonymous Jew who wanted to show respect to his elders, but wanted to show that the Messiah did indeed come as prophesied. Rabbi Yose tried to say that Daniel 9 pointed to the destruction of the temple. The writer of the Seder Olam cited many scriptures that had dates and tallied them up to show the time the Messiah would come, then respectfully pointed out the errors of Rabbi Yose. Chapter five of the Seder Olam gives a fairly detailed description of the Noahide laws and how they relate to the Mosaic Law.

“Israel received the Ten Commandments there; but seven of the Ten had already been given to all of Noah’s children. The Noahide Laws can be summed up in one verse...” *Seder Olam* 5 (AD 160)

Gad the Seer

The book of the prophet Gad is a book of prophecy written by the prophet Gad in the time of King David. It was not found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, but church father Hippolytus stated that Gad is listed as being one of the prophets that headed the “School of the Prophets.” His work was undoubtedly kept by the Essenes and another copy of his book may yet be found in Qumran.

“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.” *1 Chronicles 29:29-30*

The Moabite

In chapter 3 Gad tells the story of a Moabite who wished to convert to Judaism and be circumcised. King David said absolutely not! It is forbidden for any Ammonite or Moabite to ever convert and be circumcised. David cited Deuteronomy to prove his point.

“An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD **forever:**” *Deuteronomy 23:3 KJV*

“When the feast of Passover came, on the fifteenth of the first month, a Moabite shepherd came to David and talked with him saying: ‘My lord the king, you have known that I, your servant, have been loyal to Israel from my youth, and now take me away from dwelling among uncircumcised people and circumcise the

flesh of my foreskin to take away my reproach, so that I can sit among your people.’ And David said: ‘The LORD does not want your people, and He commanded, “An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the LORD forever.”’ (*Deuteronomy 23:3*)” *Ancient Book of Gad the Seer 3:1-2* (1000 BC)

Notice that it was fine for him to be a servant of King David, a God-fearer (Noahide), and work in the king’s stables. He was a true believer, a spiritual brother. He would spend eternity in heaven with king David, but he could not convert. It was forbidden.

King Hiram of Tyre

In chapter 9 Gad tells of a time when King Hiram of Tyre wanted to convert and become a Jew. He was not an Ammonite or a Moabite. King Hiram was Tyrian. It was technically lawful for him to convert if he wished, but King David told him no. He was a Gentile king and needed to remain such. King David told him:

“If you do this and observe the commandments that were ordered to the children of Noah [Noahide Laws], your father, then God will bless you all the days of your life. We are both His allies; but we are different from you by the Law of truth, sealed by the seal of Shaddai, called children of the true. We must therefore obey the whole Law that HaShem commands of us.” *Ancient Book of Gad the Seer 9:7-10*

So, we have King David stating that if you follow the Noahide Laws and remain Gentile, you will be doing what God has planned for your life. It is unwise and unnecessary to convert.

Jubilees

The book of Jubilees was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls and was kept by the Ethiopian church in its Canon of Scripture. About the observance of the Sabbath it says:

“the Creator of all things blessed it, but He did not sanctify all peoples and nations to keep Sabbath thereon, but Israel alone: them alone He permitted to eat and drink and to keep Sabbath thereon on the earth.” *Ancient Book of Jubilees 2:31*

The theology of the Essenes was the same in this area as the theology of the Pharisees. Gentiles are not required to observe the Sabbath. If they are working and/or living with the Israelis, then they may have to observe the Sabbath in order to not pose a hindrance to the Jews.

“Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed.” *Exodus 31:16-17*
KJV

Louis Ginsberg’s Legends of the Jews

In his four volume series *Legends of the Jews* Louis Ginsberg compiled Jewish legends from many ancient manuscripts. In Volume 2, he records when Joseph was testing his brothers, Joseph wanted to see their reaction if he threatened to put Benjamin to death for stealing. Would they agree to save their own lives or stand up for their brother? Judah steps up and says Joseph’s ruling is not in accordance with the laws of the Hebrews, the laws of Egypt, or even the laws of the nations/Gentiles. In other words, it is against Hebrew, Egyptian, and Noahide Law.

“The judgments which thou dost pronounce are not in accordance with our laws, nor are they in accordance with the laws of the nations. According to our law, a thief must pay double the value of what he hath stolen. Only, if he hath no money, he is sold into slavery, but if he hath the money, he maketh double restitution. And according to the law of the nations, the thief is deprived of all he owns. Do so, but let him go free.” Louis Ginsberg’s *Legends of the Jews, Vol. 2*

Ancient Church Fathers Verify Noahide Law

Some of the ancient church fathers acknowledged that Noahide Law and the Melchizedekian priesthood existed before the Law of Moses was given on Mount Sinai.

“[Adam] teaching them by what deeds of men the one God and Lord of all is pleased; and having exhibited to them the things that are pleasing to Him, appointed a perpetual law to all, which neither can be abrogated by enemies, nor is vitiated by any impious one, nor is concealed in any place, but which can be read by all. To them, therefore, by obedience to the law, all things were in abundance.” *Clementine Homily 8.10*

“In short, before the Law of Moses, written in stone-tables, I contend that there was a law unwritten, which was habitually understood naturally, and by the fathers was habitually kept. For whence was Noah ‘found righteous,’ if in his case the righteousness of a natural law had not preceded? Whence was Abraham accounted ‘a friend of God,’ if not on the ground of equity and righteousness, (in the observance) of a natural law? Whence was Melchizedek named ‘priest of the most high God,’ if, before the priesthood of the Levitical law, there were not Levites who were wont to offer sacrifices to God?” *Tertullian, Jews 2*

Other Dead Sea Scrolls Verify Noahide Law

The Dead Sea Scrolls mention some of the same information found in the *Law of Kings*. For instance, in the *Damascus Document 9* it directly mentions the “Law of the Gentiles.” Gentile law, known as Noahide Law, is taught in depth in *Law of Kings*, chapters 8-10. The *Temple Scroll 48* mentions the laws regarding selling meat to Gentiles. *Temple Scroll 56* mentions the kings of Israel writing their own two Torah scrolls. *Temple Scroll 62* describes the official “offers of peace” that Joshua gave to the Canaanite nations occupying the land of Israel.

Essene History

In this chapter we will summarize the Essene historical account of the apostasy of the first century BC. We will first start with the historical points that the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes agreed on, e.g. the Maccabees, formation of the parties, and Israel's civil wars.

Early History

The Essenes, Sadducees, and Pharisees taught that in the time of Ezra, Israelites returned to the land of Israel, rebuilt the temple, and reinstated the temple rituals. In that day no Jew worshiped idols. Even though they had various opinions about the rituals, prophecy, and the Mosaic code, they were not divisive. Jews were just Jews. They were brothers. There were no parties, no Pharisees, Sadducees, or Essenes. This continued as the Persian rule came and went and Alexander the Great and the Grecian rule came and went. The Grecian Empire then split into four divisions. Israel was persecuted by the Egyptian and Syrian kingdoms. Then Antiochus Epiphanes arose (160s BC) and conquered Israel. He forbade the Jews to practice circumcision or study the Mosaic Law. They were to forsake their Jewish heritage and accept the Grecian lifestyle. This caused the rebellion of the Maccabees (162 BC). You can read the history of their battle that occurred in the books of First and Second Maccabees. Syrian Rule was thrown off and Israel became independent again. In 110 BC they were recognized by Rome and the surrounding nations as a self-governing nation. This was the first time they were truly independent since Nebuchadnezzar invaded Israel in 606 BC. Here is a chart of the major events from Antiochus Epiphanies (167 BC) and Hanukkah (165 BC) to the arrival of Rome in Israel (64 BC) and Rome's appointment of Herod the Great as ruler (37 BC). These can be found in any encyclopedia, although the dates may vary a year or two.

BC Event

165 Judah Maccabee restored the temple.

150 Jonathan became the high priest.

141 Simon established a Jewish commonwealth.
138 Rome recognized Israel as an independent nation.
134 Hyrcanus began rule.
110 Hyrcanus gained full independence.
110 Hyrcanus began conquests of the Gentiles.
104 Aristobulus I began to rule.
103 Alexander Jannaeus began to rule.
97 The eight-year civil war began (96-89 BC).
83 Gentiles east of the Jordan were annexed.
76 Salome Alexandria began to rule.
67 Hyrcanus II began to rule.
66 Aristobulus II began to rule.
65 Both Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II asked Rome to intervene.
64 Israel was annexed by Rome.
64 Hyrcanus was restored to rule, Aristobulus was imprisoned at Rome.
37 Herod was appointed ruler by Rome.

Essene Calendar

The Essenes kept a detailed history; but they said the Jewish calendar used by the Pharisees and Sadducees was corrupt. The Essenes used a solar calendar that was broken up as follows:

Seven years made up a shemitah. At the end of seven shemitahs there was a jubilee year (the fiftieth year). Ten jubilees created a five-hundred-year period called an Onah. Four of these created an “age” of two thousand years.

The first age of man was called the “Age of Chaos.” It lasted from the year of Creation to the call of Abraham when he was 56 years old (1-2000 AM). The second age was called the “Age of Torah.” It was from the call of Abraham to the first coming of the Messiah. (2001-4000 AM). They taught the Messiah would be God incarnate and He would establish the third age called the “Age of Grace.” At the end of the Age of Grace (6000 AM) there would be the Second Coming of the Messiah. At that time, He would establish the “Kingdom Age.” Messiah would rule for one thousand years (6001-7000 AM). After this, eternity would start.

When Judah Maccabee overthrew Antiochus Epiphanes in 165 BC, it was in the last onah of the Age of Torah. The Essene date would have been the second week of the sixth Jubilee.

Dead Sea Scroll History

This is a compilation of history as the Essenes taught it. It is from various Dead Sea Scrolls including: The *Community Rule*, the *Damascus Documents*, the *Testament of Levi*, 1Q21, 4Q385, 4Q487, 11QMelchizedek, and others. Their history is as follows:

In the sixth Jubilee (175-125 BC) Antiochus persecuted the Jews. Judah Maccabee rebelled and threw off the Syrian yoke, regaining Israel's independence.

The Maccabees rose to power in a godly fashion. For the first few decades they remained godly. In time, however, they wanted to be rulers and act as priests.

Formation of the Sadducees and Pharisees

The Maccabees wanting to be both rulers and priests caused a division in the Sanhedrin. Some said it was a righteous thing to just follow the orders of the Hasmonaean kings. These became known as the Zadokites, or Sadducees. Those who stated that holding the office of priest and king at the same time was against the Law of Moses, and therefore sin, were called the separatists, or Pharisees.

In 110 BC, John Hyrcanus wanted to be both priest and king, which was forbidden. The Sadducees supported him, but the Pharisees opposed the king, saying he did not have the right to be both priest and king. He also began to force non-Jews to convert to Judaism and be circumcised.

In 103 BC, Alexander Jannaeus forced Gentiles to observe the Mosaic Law and be circumcised. This continued the great tension between the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then Alexander Jannaeus commanded all Jews and Gentiles to begin observing the priestly code, called the "tradition of the elders" in Matthew 15:2.

Alexander Jannaeus' command led to the Pharisees' rebellion. The Pharisees refused, citing the Law of Moses forbidding such practices. They said the king had no right to force conversion or require non-priests to follow the priestly code. This plunged Israel in to an eight-year civil war from 96-88 BC.

The Apostasy Forms

The Essene date for the start of this eight-year civil war was the fifth shemith of the seventh jubilee. During the intense persecution of the Pharisees, Simeon ben Shetach fled to safety in Alexandria, Egypt, where he met two men Shmya and Abtalion, who were natives of Alexandria, but direct descendants of the king of Assyria. Simeon converted them to pharisaical Judaism.

The persecution ended and Simeon returned to Jerusalem. This was the Essene date of the seventh week of the seventh jubilee (82-75 BC). When Simeon's sister, Queen Salome of Alexandria, became the next Hasmonean ruler, Simeon and the Pharisees became very powerful. Simeon ben Shetach started mandatory Torah schools replacing the long-standing rule that the fathers teach their sons the Torah. All boys were required to attend these schools for proper indoctrination. He then brought his two Assyrian converts to Jerusalem and they succeeded him as rulers in the Sanhedrin.

Shmya and Abtalion are described as "corrupt priests" and "perverters of the Law." The Dead Sea Scrolls speak of them this way:

"...three priests who will not walk in the ways of the former priests, who completely followed the God of Israel. In their days, pride will cause many to act wickedly against the covenant and become the slaves of foreign things. Israel will be rent asunder in that generation, each man fighting against his neighbor over the Torah and the Covenant. I will send hunger upon the land, but not for bread or water, but to hear the Word of the Lord." 4Q385a
fragment 5

Elijah's School of the Prophets was directly connected to the Essene community and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Church father Hippolytus recorded a brief list of the leaders of the School of the Prophets from Moses' time down to Christian times. In his records, he spoke of the corrupt priests that led to the split, the formation of the Essenes, and eventually Jerusalem's destruction.

“Jerusalem was laid waste because Shmya and Abtalion perverted the law.” Hippolytus' *Fragments on the Pentateuch*

So exactly what did they do that caused so great a corruption?

The Oral Torah vs. the Testaments of the Patriarchs

Shmya and Abtalion changed the standard way of interpreting Torah and replaced it with what would become known as Midrashic interpretation. They were the first “Darshan”, or preachers. Their new method of Torah interpretation was called “Derush,” or oral tradition. From this point forward, legal rulings of the Sanhedrin were binding on all, and were to be enforced for all future generations.

The Essenes interpreted the Old Testament by the Testaments of the Patriarchs. According to these manuscripts Shmya and Abtalion were not just wrong on a few doctrinal issues, but they were actually bringing in part of the prophesied apostasy that was supposed to come before the birth of the Messiah. See the next chapter for a more detailed discussion regarding the theology of the patriarchal writings.

Formation of the Essenes

This is how and when the Essenes said they officially formed. They agreed with the Pharisees that forced Gentile conversion and forced observance of the priestly code by non-priests were wrong. However, they disagreed with the new doctrine that the tradition of “Oral Torah” was equal to the written Torah. They believed no one had the power to go against the written Torah and the written histories of the forefathers. This led to a complete split in the Pharisee/Essene faction and made the Essenes a completely separate faction of their own.

The Essenes looked for the first coming of the Messiah to occur at the end of the first week of the tenth jubilee (AD 32). The Essenes taught the Age of Torah would end at the end of the tenth jubilee (AD75) of which they said:

“...at the completion of ten jubilees, Israel will be walking in madness...” 4Q387

They also believed this would be the time of the start of the Messiah’s “Age of Grace.”

Pulling It All Together

To recap, the Hasmonaeans slowly changed the Law of Moses into a system of their own making. This caused a civil war and eventually the fragmentation of Judaism into three major factions: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. Later each of these three groups would further fragment into numerous sub-groups.

The Law of Moses stated:

1. Kings were forbidden to observe priestly rituals.
2. Non-Levites (regular Jews) were forbidden to observe priestly rituals.
3. Gentiles were forbidden to observe priestly rituals and many of the Jewish laws.
4. Gentiles were to observe Noahide Law.

The major problems with the Hasmonaean changes were, in order:

1. Kingly and priestly roles were combined.
2. Gentiles were to observe Jewish law and forsake Noahide Law.
3. All Jews were to observe the priestly ritual code.
4. All Jews and Gentiles were to observe Jewish law and the priestly code.

So, instead of having a priestly class observing the priestly code, the Jews observing the Mosaic Law, and Gentiles observing Noahide Law, they combined all of those into a new garbled system. But this is not the end of the story. In the first century AD most of the Essenes followed the Messiah and became Christians. Some Essenes did not become Christians because they fell into one of three forms of apostasy.

Essene Divisions

Church father Hippolytus wrote how three splinter groups developed out of the original Essenes.

- The Original Essenes (the Ancients)
- The party of the Circumcision (Hebrew Roots)
- The party of the Idolaters (Pan-Babylonians)
- The party of the Sacred Namers

"The Essenes have, however, in the lapse of time... been split up into four parties."

Hippolytus' *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

The Essenes were said to be very godly, skilled in prophecy, and lived long lives.

"But here also there are very many of them of so great longevity, as even to live longer than a hundred years. They assert, therefore, that a cause of this arises from their extreme devotion to religion, and their condemnation of all excess in regard of what is served up (as food), and from their being temperate and incapable of anger." Hippolytus' *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

The original Essenes interpreted the Old Testament laws and prophecy based on the writings of the Testaments of the Patriarchs. They said that the patriarchs, Adam (the first man) through Aaron (Moses' brother), wrote a kind of last will and testament to their children. See *Ancient Testaments of the Patriarchs* to learn about Essene doctrine and the prophecies contained in these testaments. The Essenes held these as their rule and guide of faith.

They said the testaments taught proper doctrine, including morality and prophecy. The Pharisees rejected the testaments in favor of the Oral Torah, while the Essenes rejected the Oral Torah holding the testaments as sacred. They referred to the Testaments of the Patriarchs as the ancient customs. Any Essene who went beyond the teaching of the Patriarchs, the custom of the ancients, was excommunicated for being a part of a heretical faction.

“those who continue in the ancient customs, refused to even touch these. And if they happen to come in contact with them, they immediately resort to ablution, as if they had touched one belonging to an alien tribe.” Hippolytus’ *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

First Heresy – Pan-Babylonianism

The first heretical faction would not handle any image, even a coin, because they believed any image was an idol. Today this is called Pan-Babylonianism, the belief that all traditions are pagan and idolatrous. We all know people who believe this. They believe that all holidays like Christmas, Easter, Valentine’s Day, Groundhog Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, birthdays, etc. are all pagan. Christmas trees, Easter bunnies and colored eggs are idols. Saluting the flag makes the flag an idol. These are all somehow based in paganism. No one can seem to prove it, but somehow it just is. They believe if we have anything to do with these holidays or traditions, we are practicing paganism and sinning before God.

“For some of them discipline themselves above the requisite rules of the order, so that even they would not handle a current coin of the country, saying that they ought not either to carry, or behold, or fashion an image: wherefore no one of those goes into a city, lest (by so doing) he should enter through a gate at which statues are erected, regarding it a violation of law to pass beneath images.” Hippolytus’ *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

Second Heresy – Hebrew Roots

The second heretical faction is the same one referred to in Acts 15 as the “party of the circumcision.” They believed the Law of Moses applied to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike. They rejected the concept of Noahide Law.

Today all messianic synagogues teach Noahide Law just like the Pharisees, Essenes, and ancient church fathers taught. Gentiles were never obligated to observe circumcision, kosher food laws, animal sacrifices, or the Jewish Sabbath. But today we see a revival of this “circumcision party,” calling itself the Hebrew Roots Movement.

“But the adherents of another party, if they happen to hear any one maintaining a discussion concerning God and His laws - supposing such to be an uncircumcised person, they will closely watch him and when they meet a person of this description in any place alone, they will threaten to slay him if he refuses to undergo the rite of circumcision. Now, if the latter does not wish to comply with this request, an Essene spares not, but even slaughters. And it is from this occurrence that they have received their appellation, being denominated (by some) Zelotae, but by others Sicarii.” Hippolytus’ *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

Third Heresy – Sacred Name

The third heretical faction are those who believe they have to use the correct Hebrew name of God or He might be dishonored. They also will not apply any title for God to man. They will call no man lord, for instance. Today we call this the Sacred Name Movement. One problem is that even though they say you must pray using the Hebrew name for God, they all disagree as to what the name of God is. There are a great many guesses as to what His name actually is. Some think it is Yahweh, Yehovah, Jehovah, Yahuah, etc. If it is important to use His name in prayer, but no one knows what His name is, we are all in trouble!

And the adherents of another party call no one Lord except the Deity, even though one should put them to the torture, or even kill them.” Hippolytus’ *Refutation of Heresies* 9.21

Conclusion

In this chapter we have looked at history as taught by the Essenes themselves. We have seen their disgust at the Hasmonaeans, Pharisees, and Sadducees in their blatant disregard of the Law of Moses and the writings of the ancients. When the apostasy came into their faction, it was quickly excommunicated. They were completely anti-Hebrew Roots, and very much pro-Noahide Law. The original Essenes remained pure to the Old Testament, followed Paul's writings, and became Christians.

Essene Theology

We have covered the history of the four-hundred silent years from the Essene point of view, but in this chapter, we need to stop and look at the theology of the Essenes. The legend of the patriarchs is that Adam down to Aaron (Moses' brother) all wrote a last will and testament to their children. These contain moral teachings as well as prophecy. You might expect the Pharisees with their "Oral Torah" to say the Testaments of the Patriarchs were a myth, that the writings never existed. The Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and the ancient church fathers all agree that the testaments existed, but most parties thought the testaments were lost. The Essenes said they had possession of them all and that the Pharisaical Oral Torah is fiction, while the Pharisees teach the Oral Torah is real and the Essene version of the testaments is fiction. Who is correct?

The Messiah is God Incarnate

The Pharisees said the Messiah would be only a man, not God in the flesh. The New Testament teaches that the Messiah would be God incarnate. Here is one verse among many:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." *John 1:1 KJV*

The Essenes say:

"The Lord God, the Mighty One of Israel, will appear upon earth as man, and save the seed of Adam." *Testament of Simeon 6*

"God will be seen dwelling among men on the earth, to save the race of Israel. He will gather together the righteous from the Gentiles." *Testament of Naphtali 8*

"You will be disregarded in the Dispersion as useless water, until the Most High will visit the earth. He will come as man, eating and drinking with men, and in peace He will break the head of the

dragon through water. He will save Israel and all nations, God speaking in the person of man.” *Testament of Asher 7*

Messiah Dies to Pay for Our Sin in AD 32

In the Old Testament the prophet Daniel gave us the prediction that the Messiah would die sixty-nine weeks after the command came to rebuild Jerusalem. That date calculated to AD 32.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city... from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks... after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off...” *Daniel 9:24-26 KJV*

The Essenes gave a different prophecy that also said that the Messiah would die for our sins in AD 32.

“The LORD will cast their lot amid the portions of Melchizedek, who will make them return [or repent] and will proclaim freedom to them, to free them from the debt of all their iniquities. This event will take place in the first week of the jubilee that occurs after the ninth jubilee.” *11QMelchizedek*

The Age of Grace Instituted

They referred to the Messiah as the Melchizedekian priest in the same way the apostle Paul did in Hebrew 7. They said the event of the Messiah’s death would start the Messiah’s “Age of Grace.”

“It is the time of Melchizedek’s ‘Day of Grace.’”
11QMelchizedek

The Messiah’s Priesthood

The Messiah would be rejected by the Levitical priests and put to death. The Messiah would abolish the priesthood of Levi and create a new (Melchizedekian) priesthood. This would be a Gentile priesthood for all.

“He will arise as King from Judah, and will establish a new priesthood, after the fashion of the Gentiles, to all the Gentiles.”
Testament of Levi 8

“After the Lord punishes them, He will raise up to the priesthood a new Priest... In His priesthood the Gentiles will be multiplied in knowledge on the earth and enlightened through the grace of the Lord. In His priesthood all sin will come to an end...” *Testament of Levi 18*

One thing to note is that the 11QMelchizedek fragment mentions that the jubilee year prophetically typified the Messiah’s salvation from sin. Once we understand that from their perspective some of the Mosaic Laws were just ritual and taught prophecy, then we should also understand that those laws cannot be binding on Gentiles today. For our Hebrew Roots brothers, please consider that if there are any Mosaic Laws that are not binding on Gentiles, then you have to admit it is an error to stay Hebrew Roots (denying Noahide Law) and not convert to the messianic understanding that the time of the Mosaic Law has passed.

Peter said that same thing by stating Christians are now a royal (Melchizedekian) priesthood.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” *1 Peter 2:9-10 KJV*

Conclusion

I was skeptical that the Essenes would actually have the real Testaments of the Patriarchs, but since it disagrees with the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and wholeheartedly agrees with the New Testament, it must be studied carefully. Remember even if these were fake, they are pre-Christian documents ranging from 50 to 150 BC. They cannot have been tampered

with by any Christian. We inherited our theology from the Essenes. That is why we gathered together all the fragments we could find of the Testaments of the Patriarchs (some twenty plus fragments of the forty Patriarchs the Essenes listed) and put together our book *Ancient Testaments of the Patriarchs*.

The Gospels and Acts

We have seen that the Essenes taught Noahide Law and the concept that Gentiles were not obligated to keep the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law was only for Israel. The Sadducees disagreed, teaching that the Mosaic Law was binding on everyone living. The Pharisees believed the Mosaic Law was somewhat binding on Gentiles living in Israel and working with Jews but was not binding on them outside the land of Israel. We can see many references to Noahide Law in the Gospels. Let's look at a few.

Tradition of the Elders

The Pharisees asked Jesus why He did not command His disciples to observe the tradition of the elders. From the Dead Sea Scrolls we can see that the tradition of the elders of the Pharisees was the "Oral Law" as made up by the three corrupt priests. We know this "Oral Law" required all Jews to observe a form of the priestly rituals like hand washings and special prayers before eating.

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" *Matthew 15:1-3*
KJV

Jesus could have easily answered them by saying, "Why don't they wash their hands like the tradition that *your* elders teach? You mean by saying the prayers and washing their hands before they sacrifice animals while on duty in the temple? Because they are not priests, you idiots!" Again, it would be a sin for non-Levitical Jews to perform temple rituals. It would also be a sin to perform them outside the prescribed manner, which is in the temple, not in a corn field.

Jesus said the perversion of the priestly code being forced on Jews was making void the entire Torah.

“But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” *Matthew 15:9 KJV*

Kosher Food Laws

Another example of the corruption was that everyone was expected to eat only kosher food (as compared to Deuteronomy 14:21). Jesus was speaking to the crowd which contained Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, non-sectarian Jews, Noahide Gentiles, and Romans. So, there were people who ate anything and everything and those who ate only kosher. It was to this crowd He was speaking in Matthew 15.

“And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”
Matthew 15:10-11 KJV

The disciples, hearing this and knowing that was Essene doctrine, not Pharisee doctrine, asked Jesus to explain what He truly meant.

“And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.” *Matthew 15:16-20 KJV*

Levitical priests must keep ritual purity when doing the temple services and Jews were to eat kosher. But what you eat is not what makes you impure. Gentiles, Noahides, and Romans need to accept the Messiah, not stop eating what they normally ate.

The Party of the Circumcision – Acts 15

If a Gentile wanted to convert to Judaism and it was lawful for him to do so, he would go through a year-long study. When he could prove he knew all that was required of him to the satisfaction of the local rabbis, he would undergo the procedure of circumcision, then a baptism. Only then would he be considered a full-fledged Jew. So, circumcision was not a small thing. It meant you had become a Jew and took upon yourself to do all that Moses required the Jews to do. You were now under the Mosaic covenant.

We have seen the “Party of the Circumcision” before. They were excommunicated by the Essenes because it was considered heresy to teach such doctrine. Now we see them trying to get the Christians to follow the Sadducee tradition instead of the Essene tradition.

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” *Acts 15:1-2 KJV*

Church father Epiphanius of Salamis recorded, in his history book *Panarion* 2:28, that the ring leader of this Party of the Circumcision at the Acts 15 council was a heretic named Cerinthus.

Now after everyone gave their reasons for or against the Gentiles being obligated to observe the Law of Moses, James and the other apostles drafted this letter to be sent to all Gentile believers to avoid any further confusion.

“Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men

among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner;” *Acts 15:22-23a KJV*

The letter plainly says:

“The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.” *Acts 15:23b-29 KJV*

Stay away from idols, fornication, and eating blood. All these were Noahide laws. No mention was made of any obligation of circumcision or any other part of the rituals of the Law of Moses. James said that all of the apostles agree there is no need for Gentiles to observe any of these things. We will see it come up again in the next chapter.

Nazarite Law

In Numbers 6:1-21, we have the ritual of a Jew dedicating himself to God for a time by taking the Nazarite vow of not drinking wine, touching anything dead, or cutting his hair. The most famous Nazarite was Samson, whose strength was in his hair (Judges 13-16). A Jew could be a Nazarite for a few months or even a lifetime. When the Jew wanted to complete the ritual, cut his hair, and go back to normal Jewish life he must finish the ritual by entering the temple and performing a sacrifice. It is forbidden for

Gentiles to enter the Temple. It is equally forbidden to do Jewish rituals like animal sacrifice.

When the apostle Paul went to James in Acts 21, Cerinthus had already convinced many Jews that Paul had become completely apostate. James thought it best to quietly correct the issue by having Paul do the Nazarite vow, which ends by a public sacrifice in the temple. If Paul did this himself and paid for a few others to do it, it would prove Paul was not apostate from the Law of Moses.

“Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.” *Acts 21:23-24 KJV*

Paul did this to show Cerinthus was wrong. Meanwhile the apostle James reiterated that Gentiles are forbidden to do temple rituals like the Nazarite vow.

“As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.” *Acts 21:25-26 KJV*

We continue to see how the law kept Jews and Gentiles apart.

Paul's Noahide Law

Titus and Circumcision

The apostle Paul warned Titus to put a stop to anyone from the Party of the Circumcision who was teaching that Gentile circumcision was mandatory.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.” *Titus 1:10-11 KJV*

Paul went on to say that these “heretics” continue to strive about the Law. If they cannot be reasoned with, they must be excommunicated.

“But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.” *Titus 3:9-11 KJV*

In Galatians Paul warned us that it is strictly forbidden to allow yourself to be circumcised according to the Law of Moses if you are a Gentile believer.

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” *Galatians 5:1-4*

Paul's Rule for the Churches

If you enter into the covenant of circumcision you are binding yourself to all that Moses required of the Jews. The apostle Paul said he *required* all of

circumcised believers (Jews) to not forsake following their customs. He, likewise, *required* the Gentile believers to not adopt the Jewish lifestyle.

“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called everyone, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.”

1 Corinthians 7:17-18 KJV

Peter and Cerinthus the Judaizer

We see that Peter lived in a Gentile manner but was afraid of Cerinthus' Circumcision Party. When they were around, he acted hypocritically, and the apostle Paul called him out on it.

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” *Galatians 2:11-14*

The Greek word here for “live as Jews” is Judaize. You have probably heard numerous sermons about the Judaizers, those people who try to get Gentiles to live under the Law of Moses. The Hebrew Roots adherents are modern day Judaizers.

So, if the Law of Moses was not a necessary moral law, what was it for? It was a system of rituals that would teach us and lead us to Jesus Christ. It was a kind of teacher or schoolmaster.

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” *Galatians 3:24-25 KJV*

No Longer Jew or Gentile

If we understand that no Gentile was under the Law of Moses, then the Law of Moses was only for the nation of Israel. When Paul says there is now no Jew or Gentile, but we are one in Christ, he means the Law was done away with for the Jew. To put it in today’s language “there is now no Hebrew Roots nor Noahide.”

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” *Galatians 3:28 KJV*

Most of the Gentile world left Noahide Law and became idol worshipers. They were without any hope at all since they forgot the promises of God and abandoned the one and only hope in the Messiah.

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” *Ephesians 2:11-12 KJV*

The Mosaic Law was that thing which created enmity between Jews and Gentiles. Now that it has been set aside, the Jews may leave their Mosaic Law and Gentiles may leave their idolatry and Noahide Law. Both now can become a new man in Christ.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in

Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.” *Ephesians 2:13-17 KJV*

The Gentiles who accept Messiah are no longer Noahides, called “Ger” in Hebrew and strangers in this passage. Gentiles are no more idolaters, called “Acum” in Hebrew and aliens in this passage.

“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;” *Ephesians 2:18-19 KJV*

Melchizedekian Priesthood

Paul quotes a psalm that prophetically shows that Jesus would be ordained as a Melchizedekian priest, not a Levitical priest.

“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’” *Psalms 110:4 NKJV*

“where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” *Hebrews 6:20 NKJV*

Paul then contrasts the Levitical priesthood with the Melchizedekian priesthood. He mentioned Jesus was a descendant of Judah which cannot serve as Levitical priest.

“Therefore, if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the

priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change made in the law also.” *Hebrews 7:11-12 MKJV*

Notice what Paul just revealed. Since it was illegal for a non-Levite to be ordained as a priest under the Mosaic Law and Jesus was ordained as our (Melchizedekian) high priest, that meant there had to be a change in the Law! Let’s say it again. The Law of Moses has changed.

That means there is a change in the covenants. We are under a New Covenant, or New Testament, and Moses’ old covenant is set aside to vanish away.

“In that He says, "A NEW COVENANT," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” *Hebrews 8:13 NKJV*

Ten Commandments Faded Away

We have seen that the only difference between the Noahide Law and the Ten Commandments was the weekly Sabbath ritual. Essene doctrine taught that the Sabbath was for Israel alone. The apostle Paul taught the same doctrine. Paul called the Ten Commandments (the laws written on stone) the ministry of death. He also said in his day it had already “faded away.”

“Now if that which worked death, by means of a written text engraved on stone tablets, came with glory... For if there was glory in what faded away, how much more glory must there be in what lasts.” *2 Corinthians 3:7, 11 CJB*

Conclusion

All through the epistles of Paul we see that Gentiles are commanded to remain Gentiles. They are not to convert to Judaism by getting circumcised and they are actually forbidden to follow some of the Mosaic laws.

Hebrew Roots History

Now that we have seen the concept of Noahide Law being taught by Moses, the Pharisees (from the Talmud), Sadducees, Essenes (from the Dead Sea Scrolls), Jesus, Paul, the other disciples, and the ancient church fathers; we can rest assured that the Noahide Law *did* exist. If it ever existed in any time period, then Christians today are not bound to the Law of Moses and anyone who says we must adhere to it is in error. The ancient church fathers record that Simon Magus started the heretical Gnostic movement, but shortly after he founded it, it broke up into twenty-two distinct gnostic schools of thought. So, down through history who taught various forms of Hebrew Roots? How many distinct groups are there now? Let's look at a few.

Cerinthus and Ebion

The church fathers record that Jews from the parties of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes left or were excommunicated for teaching that Gentiles must observe the Law of Moses in the same way the Jews were commanded to. These people began to come together and eventually two major parties formed, one led by Ebion (the Ebionites) and the other led by Cerinthus (the Cerinthians).

According to Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.26; 5.1 and Tertullian, *Heresies* 1.2, the first to form was the school of Ebion. In the beginning it was not Gnostic. At first, Ebion taught that God created the world, as taught by Moses. He believed that Jesus was the Messiah but that the Messiah was only a man. So, we know he came from the party of the Pharisees. The Ebionites used only an edited gospel of Matthew. They insisted everyone follow all the Jewish customs of their day. They refused to read anything written by the apostle Paul saying that Paul was apostate from the Law of Moses. Later in time, the Ebionites became a full gnostic cult in their teachings. Fragments of the *Gospel of the Ebionites* still exist today.

Church father Epiphanius of Salamis recorded it was a man named Cerinthus who formed his own Party of the Circumcision, and that he was the leader of the heretical group recorded in Acts 15. Various church fathers record that Cerinthus was the one who cut up the Gospel of Matthew to create the Gospel of the Ebionites. Epiphanius says,

“The Cerinthians... are a type of Jew derived from Cerinthus and boast of circumcision” Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 2:28

Cerinthus caused the trouble at the first Jerusalem council in Acts 15.

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” *Acts 15:1-2 KJV*

“Cerinthus lived in Asia and began his preaching there... Now this man is one of the ones who caused the trouble in the apostles’ time, when James wrote the letter to Antioch and said, “We know that certain which went out from us have come unto you and troubled you with words, to whom we gave no such commandment.” Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 2:28

God instructed Peter to travel to the house of Cornelius, to witness to him. When Peter arrived, he realized Cornelius was a God-fearer (Noahide). Peter knew the “Traditions of the Elders” said that a Jew could not even enter the house of a Gentile.

“And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” *Acts 11:2-3 KJV*

This was also the work of Cerinthus and his Circumcision Party.

“He is also one of those who opposed St. Peter because he had gone to St. Cornelius when Cornelius had been vouchsafed a vision of an angel and had sent for Peter... And so Cerinthus stirred the circumcised multitudes up over Peter on his return to Jerusalem by saying, “He went in to men uncircumcised. ...For, because he was circumcised himself he sought an excuse, through circumcision if you please, for his opposition to the uncircumcised believers.” Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 2:28

Cerinthus also caused the controversy mentioned in Galatians 2.

Another time too, he and his friends caused a discord at Jerusalem itself, when Paul arrived with Titus, and Cerinthus said, “He hath brought in men uncircumcised with him” — speaking now of Titus — “and polluted the holy place.” And so Paul says, “But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But because of the false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ, to whom we gave place by subjection not even temporarily. (Galatians 2:3-4)” Epiphanius of Salamis, *Panarion* 2:28

Cerinthus eventually left the Ebionites and formed his own Gnostic cult, teaching that Jesus was not the Christ but that the Christ consciousness descended onto Jesus at His baptism and later left before His crucifixion. This is called Adoptionism.

Tertullian wrote, in *the Flesh of Christ* 16, that Alexander the Coppersmith left idolatry, became a Christian, but then began teaching the Ebionite Adoption doctrine and was then excommunicated by the apostle Paul (1 Timothy 1:20). Looking at these texts, it becomes obvious that Alexander left the faith, became Ebonite, then, under the influence of Cerinthus,

started teaching Adoptionism. He was then excommunicated by Paul and began following Cerinthus.

After the death of the apostle Paul, Cerinthus' school grew to the extent that he became widely known as the arch-enemy of the apostle John.

There were various other Gnostic cults that taught that circumcision and the Law must be followed, the Alcibiades and the Elchasai, for example. But let's skip ahead to our time.

Seventh Day Adventism

In 1863, Seventh Day Adventism was founded by Ellen G. White, a self-proclaimed prophetess who predicted a great many things that never happened. One of their central teachings was that true Christians must observe the Sabbath. In her mind, this was just attending church on Saturday. She believed the modern Jewish rituals done on the Sabbath were an invention of medieval times and not necessary. The Sabbath was the true mark of God and those who attend church on Sunday were taking the mark of the beast. Once a Christian was told to observe the Saturday Sabbath and they ignored the warning, they were damned for all eternity. Today the denomination is a bit easier on non-Sabbatarians.

Ellen White was married to Mark White, who was a non-trinitarian. In her many revelations from God, she was never once told about the trinity but instead God supposedly told her she and her husband would gather all the denominations into one and head up the new one world church. This, of course, never happened.

British Israelism

British Israelism holds the view that the lost ten tribes of Israel migrated into Europe and eventually into the British Isles. The British are the physical descendants of the lost tribes and therefore are still bound to the covenant of Moses and must begin to adhere to its laws. They also teach that God divorced the Jews (the two tribes that returned to the land of Israel) because they rejected the Messiah. They no longer exist. They were scattered into the world and became Gentiles. The Jews that are in Israel

now are not real Jews. This makes them anti-semitic, and dangerous to the state of Israel.

All replacement theology systems should be ignored because the biblical prophecies state that God still has a plan for the real Jews, and they were supposed to return to their land for the second time in AD 1948. See *Ancient Prophecies Revealed* for details on those predictions. Since this actually happened, then the Jews living in Israel must be the real Jews.

By 1906 there were almost 2 million British Israelites in the USA. In 1919 the British-Israel-World Federation (BIWF) was founded in London, and in 1922 Covenant Publishing was founded. Their ideology spread into various other groups including the Ku Klux Klan, and in the 1920s, the Christian Identity Movement.

By the 1960s many small Pentecostal denominations were teaching this doctrine. Today very few Pentecostal denominations still teach this. We will see what the future holds with the Hebrew Roots Movement.

Sacred Name Movement

Another offshoot of the Sabbatarian groups was the Church of God Seventh Day. In the 1930s Clarence Orvil Dodd, a member of a Church of God (Seventh Day) in Salem, West Virginia, began teaching what would later be called the Sacred Name doctrine. The idea behind this was that God expected us to find out His Real (secret) name and use only that in prayer, otherwise He may not answer our prayers. At first the sacred name was “Yahweh.” But in time break offs would argue the true name was Jehovah, Yehovah, Yahovah, or Yahuah. Remember that this was one of the three “heresies” that the Essenes (keepers of the Dead Sea Scrolls) would excommunicate a member for. The Sacred Namers also believe that the name “Jesus” is a pagan term stemming from “Je” and “sues” or “Zeus.” They believe when you say the name “Jesus” you are saying, “Hail, Zeus!”

It can be clearly demonstrated that this is not an issue God has a problem with. When God helped King David capture an enemy city, David renamed that city Baal-Perazim. The name means “Lord of breaches.” Notice he did

not name it Adonai-Perazim. Baal is sometimes used as the name of a false Canaanite god called Baal, but its root meaning is just “lord.” God will answer our prayers if we ask respectfully, no matter what language we use.

“And David came to Baalperazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baalperazim.” *2 Samuel 5:20 KJV*

Today we have numerous Sacred Name Bibles like the *Sacred Name Bible*, *Divine Name KJV*, the *Proper Name Version*, etc. These are merely KJV or another translation that has taken the references to “the Lord” and replaced them with one of the names listed above. Some even replace the phrase with a paleo-Hebrew name very few can even read.

World Wide Church of God

The Worldwide Church of God (WCG) was started by Herbert W. Armstrong. Their doctrine (sometimes called Armstrongism) was based partly on British Israelism. They taught that it was required to observe the Mosaic Law, including the Sabbath, kosher food laws, and the seven festivals in order to be saved. When they became non-trinitarian, they were classified as a cult. After the death of the founder in 1986, the WCG repudiated some cultic doctrines and became trinitarian. This caused many to leave the denomination and form their own cults.

The Modern Hebrew Roots Movement

The modern Hebrew Roots Movement really started in the mid-1990s. In 1997 a church in Colorado Springs published what they held to be a prophecy about the end times. In it they stated that they believed God revealed to them that He would raise up His end time church. This started with the Pentecostal Movement, which led to the Faith-Healing Movement, which in turn led to the Charismatic Movement. Now the final form was being revealed which they called the Hebrew Roots Movement. This would be the last great awakening before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Reaction from Messianic Jews

The messianic synagogues in America formed alliances to combat cults and heresies. There is the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (MJAA) and the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (UMJC). Almost all of the messianic congregations belong to one or both of these groups. Both groups teach that Gentiles were never under the Law of Moses and that Noahide Law existed. The Law of Moses was for ancient Israel alone. They agree with the apostle Paul that the Mosaic Law was added to Noahide Law at Mount Sinai (Galatians 3:17) and pointed to Jesus Christ, Yeshua the Messiah (Galatians 3:24). They reject the two major divisions of Hebrew Roots Theology, both the “One Law” theology and the “Two-House” theology. See the next chapter for definitions to these doctrines.

Other Hebrew Roots Errors

We have already covered many of the errors from the Hebrew Roots Movement.

1. Circumcision is required.
2. Sabbath keeping is required.
3. Eating only kosher is required.
4. Keeping the seven feasts is required.
5. Using the “Sacred Name” is required.

In addition to these, there have been sub-groups of the Hebrew Roots Movement that teach the following:

Unified-House Theory

This is the idea that all believers in Messiah, both from the house of the Gentiles and the house of the Jews, are unified into one house which must keep the Law of Moses.

Two-House Theory

Two-House theology is taught by some Hebrew Roots groups. It is similar to British Israelism. British Israelism teaches that the Jews in Israel are not real Jews and that the British are the real Jews and are bound to the covenant of Moses. Two-House theory is a twist on that. It's not a specific ethnic that are the real Jews. The real Jews realize they need to keep the Law of Moses because the “Holy Spirit” reveals it to them. Those of us who do not think we should keep the Law of Moses just think we are believers. If we truly were, we would think like they do.

One-Law Theory

One Law theology is a name for the idea that every Jew and Gentile are under the same law: one law for everyone living in Israel. It was true that every Jew and Gentile living in Israel back then was under the same Law of Moses.

“One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.” *Numbers 15:16 KJV*

They interpret this to mean that every Jew and every Gentile must observe every aspect of the Mosaic law. We have already seen that no Gentile and no non-Levite Jew could do any of the four-hundred plus laws dealing with temple rituals. No Gentile can become descended from Levi, walk into the temple, and start sacrificing animals. The one law that applies to all Jews applies equally to all Gentiles means each must follow what the Law of Moses requires of him. This is made very clear in Exodus:

“And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.”
Exodus 12:48-49 NKJV

There is no exception for a Gentile who wants to observe the Passover. He can only do so if he is circumcised (full conversion to Judaism). The same law applies equally to the native born and the sojourner.

Denial of the Trinity

Some Hebrew Roots groups are saying that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, but that He was just a man. This is the same gnostic heresy that Ebion taught. In Christian circles, if a group says they are Christian but denies the doctrine of the trinity, they are classified as a Christian cult. Jesus said we must believe in His divinity or we will die in our sins.

“Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” *John 8:24 LITV*

Denial that the New Covenant Exists Today

Some of the Hebrew Roots groups interpret Jeremiah 31 as saying the New Covenant is only between God and Israel. Since the Jews have not accepted Yeshua as Messiah, the New Covenant doesn't come until God writes it in their hearts, which would be in the Kingdom. They say the New Covenant does not yet exist.

“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”
Jeremiah 31:31-33 NKJV

The apostle Paul clearly says the New Covenant was established by Jesus Christ and the Old Covenant was “soon to disappear” in his day.

“If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one, but God found something wrong with His people when He said, ‘Look! The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors at the time when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. Because they did not remain loyal to My covenant, I ignored them, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord: I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people...’ In speaking of a "new" covenant, He has made the first one obsolete, and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.”
Hebrews 8:7-10, 13 ISV

Denial of the Rapture

Some Hebrew Roots groups are teaching there is no rapture of the church. They say 1 Thessalonians 4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 2 are not talking about the church but a second exodus. They say it refers to the Second Coming when the angels will gather the Hebrew Roots people from all countries to Jerusalem. But the texts clearly teach that believers who have died will be caught up with the living believers to the Lord in the air, not to Jerusalem.

Pan-Babylonianism

The Pan-Babylonian movement has existed outside of the Hebrew Roots movement for a long time. Today, many in the Hebrew Roots movement are embracing Pan-Babylonian ideas. They would teach that any holiday or decoration is a pagan idol. Celebrating *any* holiday like Christmas, having wreaths or Christmas trees, even celebrating birthdays is sometimes frowned upon.

We have seen that this is one issue that the Essenes would excommunicate people for. The ancient Jewish tractate, the *Avodah Zarah*, explains everything having to do with idolatry. It defines what makes something an idol or a pagan/occultic artifact. It also shows how idols and pagan artifacts are nullified. Nullification is the process of taking something that has been turned into an idol or occult object and return it to its original form.

Jewish tradition from the Talmud is considered to be of pagan origin by Pan-Babylonians too. They must teach this, because accepting the Talmud means accepting Noahide Law, which would mean their entire theology is wrong.

The Apostle Paul is Apostate

Some, rather than saying that we have misinterpreted the apostle Paul as saying the Law of Moses has been done away with, say that he was apostate. These people are honest enough to say that Paul meant exactly what he said. So, to keep the Law alive they must conclude that Paul became apostate. This is the same idea proposed by the first century "Party of the Circumcision," led by Ebion and Cerinthus.

Replacement Theology

All of these movements amount to a form of replacement theology. Because the Jews either reject Yeshua as Messiah and/or they don't follow the Law of Moses in the way the Hebrew Roots Movement assumes it should be followed, that is supposed to prove that the Jews are not real Jews. History shows every time someone decided that the Jews were a problem, it led to the whole sale slaughter of the Jews and those who seem a little too Jewish. From the expulsions of England, Spain, and Germany, to the pogroms of Europe to Adolf Hitler's holocaust, the Jews were expelled, persecuted, and/or murdered.

Presumption

We must be careful to study and not commit the sin of presumption. King David said it best:

“Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” *Psalms 19:13 KJV*

Conclusion

The Hebrew Roots groups want everyone to follow the Law of Moses as if we were all Jews. We have seen that the ancient church fathers and all modern Christian denominations (including Protestants, Catholics, and Eastern Orthodox) believe Paul taught we are forbidden to observe the Law of Moses and it has been done away with. We also discovered that both the Pharisees and the Essenes taught Gentiles were forbidden to follow the Law of Moses. This teaching is well documented in their writings: the Talmud and the Dead Sea Scrolls. That is still the teaching of Orthodox Jews and Messianics today. In short, everyone agrees that the Law of Moses was only supposed to be used as a law system for the nation of ancient Israel; everyone except the Hebrew Roots Movement, because they misinterpret the Old Testament and refuse to study history. Jews and Christians today look at the Hebrew Roots Movement as a form of replacement theology.

We have given numerous examples to this from the writings of Moses, the Gospels, the epistles of Paul, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud, and many other ancient manuscripts dating back to 1000 BC.

We must stress that if the apostle Paul were wrong and the Mosaic Law is still in effect, we Gentiles are forbidden to practice any of its rituals. However, if the apostle Paul was correct in saying the Mosaic Law was added to basic moral law (Noahide Law) then taken away at Christ's first coming, we are free to study/ observe it for the purpose of learning prophecy. However, it cannot be said to be mandatory for anyone today.

Do not let anyone tell you that you *must* observe rituals that, anciently, were forbidden for you to observe.

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- **Ancient Apocalypse of Ezra**
Called 2 Esdras in the KJV
- **Ancient Testaments of the Patriarchs** Autobiographies from the
Dead Sea Scrolls
- **Ancient Law of Kings**

Noahide law

- **DVD 1 – The Prophetic Timeline**
- **DVD 2 – The Church Age**

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