

The Nature of Yeshua in the Pauline Epistles and Hebrews

bring the nations into 'obedience' would therefore mean to bring them into the family of this one God"¹⁸ (cf. 3:29-30).

While one might be tempted here to think that the nations in view of Romans 1:5 are only the pagans at large, we need not overlook the fact that many Jewish people themselves had strayed from obedience to God, as the tenor of Romans ch. 2 makes clear. Even with the pagan Greeks and Romans needing to acknowledge Israel's God as the Creator, and Israel's Messiah as the Redeemer—so did many Jews need to be restored to complete fellowship, and disobedience for them would especially involve rejection of the good news of their promised Messiah. **The "obedience of faith" involves the total ramifications of the gospel message**—which for pagans would obviously have more aspects to it, as they would have to first acknowledge Israel's God, appreciate on some level Israel's Scriptures, and then see Yeshua for who He was as Redeemer of humanity. We need not try to limit "the nations" or the "obedience of faith" of Romans 1:5 to any one group of ancient people.

As Paul's opening greeting to the Romans closes, he issues "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah" (Romans 1:7b), with *charis humin kai eirēnē* (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη) combining traditional Greek and Jewish greetings. Normal Greek letters tended to only include the salutation *chairein* (χαίρειν) or "greetings" (cf. 1 Maccabees 10:18), which Paul has replaced with the similar sounding *charis* or "grace." He has attached this with *eirēnē* (εἰρήνη) or "peace," the Septuagint equivalent of *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם). One also sees how Paul commonly uses specific terms for the Deity, referencing God as "Father" and Yeshua as "Lord." Paul's theology of the Godhead is carefully balanced, as the close relationship of both the Father and Son are recognized. The Father is mentioned first as God,¹⁹ but Yeshua is also recognized as a part of the Godhead as "Lord." By no means does Paul simply consider Yeshua to be a human master by calling Him *Kurios* (κύριος). The title *Kurios* was used in the Greek Septuagint to render the Divine Name YHWH (יהוה), and Paul absolutely considers Yeshua the Messiah to be the LORD manifested to the world in human flesh (cf. Romans 9:5; 10:9).²⁰

Romans 6:1-15

"Yeshua 'Lives to God'"

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Messiah Yeshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Messiah, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Messiah, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin,

¹⁸ Wright, in *NIB*, 10:420.

¹⁹ Cf. D. Guthrie and R.P. Martin, "God: God as Father (2.2)," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 357.

As is noted in this article: "In the opening salutation in all the letters under Paul's name God is described as Father. It forms a basic assumption behind all that the apostle writes in these letters."

²⁰ Cf. L.W. Hurtado, "Lord: Appellation Formulas (3.3)," in *Ibid.*, 566.

As noted in this article: "[T]he single most frequently found use of *kyrios* [or 'Lord'] in Paul (about 100 times in the letters we are considering here) is as the designation of Jesus without any other title, simply 'the Lord.'"

but alive to God in Messiah Yeshua. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!"

The inquiry posed by Romans 6:1 is doubtlessly prompted by what was previously communicated by Romans 5:20: "but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."²¹ If God's grace is superabounding via the arrival of Yeshua the Messiah onto the stage of history, and His sacrifice for sinful humanity—should it really matter whether or not God's people sin? *Grace is there to cover sin, right?* As the Moffat New Testament renders Romans 6:1, "Now what are we to infer from this? That we are to 'remain on in sin, so that there may be all the more grace'?", placing the inquiry in quotation marks, acknowledging the likelihood that as the letter to the Romans was being read aloud, some people might be thinking this in their heads. And it is important to recognize the thought of not only ancient people, but many people throughout history: if God's grace is present in its highest form, perhaps the beneficiaries of it can live (to some degree or another) in sin. Romans ch. 6 decisively communicates how such an attitude is absolutely improper, insulting to the power of the gospel, and incompatible with the work of the Messiah.

The idea that Believers who have benefitted from the transforming power of the good news, being redeemed, would ever want to continue living within a realm of sin and death, is **absolutely reprehensible to Paul**. He communicates, "What a terrible thought! We, who have died to sin—how could we live in sin a moment longer?" (Romans 6:2, Phillips New Testament). That any man or woman of God, who has received forgiveness from sins—would actually want to continue in sin's sphere of influence—is an anathema to Paul. The Torah includes the steadfast admonition, after all, "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).

Being justified or declared innocent from sins, while involving an initial clearing of one's guilt before God, does involve a continual process of sanctification by which sin is removed, *not facilitated*. As Paul had communicated previously in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Messiah; and it is no longer I who live, but Messiah lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." It may also be observed how Paul's statement in Romans 1:2 is paralleled by the thought of Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." Individual born again Believers are to have died to the power and influence of sin, even though the power and influence of sin still reign in the world at large; they are to be committed to seeing the life of Yeshua manifested in their own lives. More corporately, being people of the Kingdom to come, the redeemed in Messiah are to be living much of that future quality of existence now, with its power already breaking into the present evil age. Cranfield excellently states,

"In more than one sense the [Believer] has already died and been raised with Christ; but in another sense his dying and being raised with Christ is a matter of present obligation, something which ought now to be in the process of being fulfilled, and in yet another sense it lies ahead of him as eschatological promise."²²

²¹ This entry has been adapted from the author's commentary *Romans for the Practical Messianic*.

²² Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 296.

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There have certainly been a wide variety of approaches witnessed to Paul's assertion in Romans 6:3 throughout religious history: "Or do you not know that all of us who were immersed into Messiah *Yeshua* were immersed into His death?" (TLV). Romans 6:3-5 are customarily interpreted by evangelical Christians as the rite of water baptism, following a man or woman's profession of faith in Yeshua (Jesus), representing an outward sign of an inward change. The water baptism or immersion of born again Believers is to symbolically represent their identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua. That people were baptized or immersed in water, shortly or immediately after their profession of faith, is witnessed in the Book of Acts:

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?' And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days" (Acts 10:44-48).

"And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They said, 'Believe in the Lord Yeshua, and you will be saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household" (Acts 16:29-33).

The verb of significant interest, describing the process here, is *baptizō* (βαπτίζω), more neutrally meaning, "wash ceremonially for purpose of purification, wash, purify, of a broad range of repeated ritual washing rooted in Israelite tradition," but more theologically meaning "to use water in a rite for purpose of renewing or establishing a relationship w. God, plunge, dip, wash, baptize. The transliteration 'baptize' signifies the ceremonial character that NT narratives accord such cleansing" (BDAG).²³ Perhaps due to some of the varied and diverse Christian traditions—across the spectrum—regarding "baptism," Messianic people prefer to speak in terms of "immersion." This is not because the term "baptism" is at all wrong, but more because of the intense amount of Christian-cultural associations or baggage that can come with it.²⁴ More than anything else, to be baptized or immersed into the Messiah, means for the redeemed to become closely associated and imbued with the spiritual reality of what He has accomplished and His salvation work. David H. Stern offers an appropriate summary in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary*:

"**Immersed** translates a form of the Greek word '*baptizō*,' usually transliterated 'baptized.' The root meaning of '*baptizō*' is 'dip, soak, immerse' into a liquid so that what is dipped takes on qualities of what it has been dipped in—such as cloth in dye or leather in tanning solution (see Mt. 3:1N). This is why being **immersed into the Messiah** (v. 3) is equated with being **united with him** (v. 5). These verses support the case that immersion is the preferred form of baptism, since baptism is compared here with burial, and burial resembles immersion but does not resemble pouring or sprinkling."²⁵

²³ BDAG, 164.

²⁴ For a general review, consult John H. Armstrong, ed., *Understanding Four Views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

²⁵ David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1995), 373.

In the view of Moo, “Baptism...functions as shorthand for the conversion experience as a whole.”²⁶ One might be drawn to think of a statement appearing in the Tanach such as “What portion do we have in David [בְּדָוִד, *b’David*]?” (1 Kings 12:16), as the claim of being “in David” was being rejected. Yet, being “in David” obviously pales in comparison with being “in Messiah.” And so with this in view, the need to be *in Messiah*, into both the substance of His person and work, is intensified—exactly what Paul has stated in Galatians 3:27: “For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah.” Wright properly directs,

“What matters for Paul is the opposite movement, coming ‘into’ the king, the Messiah; and that is effected in baptism. The point is that if the Messiah is Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified and risen one, then belonging to the messianic people means being characterized by cross and resurrection, by dying and rising. This is at the heart of that dense (and deeply personal) passage Gal 2:15-21.”²⁷

It cannot go unnoticed, in view of the clause *eis ton thanaton autou ebaptisthēmen* (εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν), “into the death of him were baptized” (Brown and Comfort),²⁸ that there have been examiners who have suggested, in various degrees, that Paul has appropriated some language of First Century mystery cults, to describe the immersion of Believers into the reality of Messiah. Cranfield addresses the problem with this, which is mainly that the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua is a *once and for all event* rooted in history with which the redeemed are to identify:

“The suggestion has been wide—and it has been fairly widely accepted—that Paul was deeply influenced by his understanding of baptism (and indeed of the Christian’s relationship to Christ as a whole) by the pagan mystery cults. It was characteristic of these cults that of central importance was a god who died and rose again, and that the initiation rites were supposed to accomplish the union of the postulant with the god. But, in spite of certain obvious resemblances, there are such significant differences between baptism as understood by Paul and the essential characteristics of these cults, as to make it extremely unlikely that Paul ever conceived baptism as a mystery of this sort. While the mysteries were concerned with the union of the participant with a nature-deity, baptism had to do with the relationship of the believer to the historical event of God’s saving deed in Christ; while the dying and rising of a nature-deity were conceived as something recurring again and again, the historical event to which baptism pointed was a once for all, unique event.”²⁹

While Romans 6:4 communicates how water immersion or baptism represents the identification of Believers in the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua—there are some additional spiritual components that need not be overlooked: “Therefore we were buried together with Him through immersion into death—in order that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” (TLV). Born again Believers *already benefit* from the power of the future, general resurrection, which is predicated on Yeshua’s own resurrection (Romans 6:5). Thomas R. Schreiner adequately details how,

“In the early [meaning, First Century] church, baptism was probably by immersion, at least as a general rule, though Christians dispute whether such a practice must always be followed literally today. Therefore, baptism pictures a person being **buried** with Christ (submersion

²⁶ Moo, *Romans*, 355.

²⁷ Wright, in *NIB*, 10:537-538.

²⁸ Brown and Comfort, 546.

²⁹ Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, pp 301-302.

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under water) and being **raised** to new life with Christ (emergence from water). This symbolizes the person's union with, and incorporation into, Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they now have the power to live in **newness** of life."³⁰

At present (2014 and 2017), there is no comprehensive Messianic view of water immersion or baptism,³¹ although it would be pretty safe to say that the vast majority of Messianic people would oppose any sort of infant baptism. Differences are going to be present more in the style of how individuals are fully immersed: whether it is more like those who individually go into the *mikveh* (מִקְוֵה)³² bath in Judaism, or the more customary Protestant-style of full immersion of bending backward and then coming up out of the water.

Quite significant to be probed by anyone who has gone through water immersion or baptism, or is contemplating some of the deeper spiritual realities of it, is how born again Believers are to be living or walking a new life in Messiah. As the Phillips New Testament puts Romans 6:4, "so we too might rise to life on a new plane altogether." Walking properly before the Lord, surely does involve obedience to Him, as Deuteronomy 13:4 directs, "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him." Such will also involve being able to discern false voices and false prophets, who are interjected into the faith community to deceive people and lead them astray (Deuteronomy 13:5). The newness of life in Yeshua, as Paul exclaims, is that each born again man or woman is a new creation: "Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Reflecting on the significance of baptism for evangelical Christians, Everett F. Harrison is right to emphasize,

"What is described is a spiritual reality of the deepest import—not a ceremony, not even a sacrament. The metaphor of baptism is clearly used in a relational sense elsewhere, as in the case of the Israelites baptized into Moses by reason of crossing the Red Sea (1 Cor 10:2). They became united to him as never before, recognizing his leadership and their dependence on him. Union with Christ means union with him in his death. It is significant that although Jesus emphasized discipleship throughout his ministry, he did not speak of union with himself till he was on the verge of going to the cross (John 14-16). Earlier he spoke of his death under the figure of baptism (Luke 12:50)."³³

Properly weighing together the Biblical words surrounding water immersion or baptism, the deep theological and spiritual importance of it, and considering the diverse traditions in Christianity—will all be important as today's Messianic community establishes more of a semblance of practice in the future.³⁴

The act of water immersion is to physically identify Believers with the death and resurrection of Yeshua (Romans 6:4). With this, Paul can assert, "For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death [*tō homoiōmati tou thanatou autou*, τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ], certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection [*tēs anastaseōs*, τῆς ἀναστάσεως]." The verb *sumphutos* (σὺμφυτος) is actually defined by *Thayer* as, "*grown together, united with*,"³⁵ although more generally it regards "**to being associated in a related**

³⁰ T.R. Schreiner, "The Letter of Paul to the Romans," in Wayne Grudem, ed., *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2167.

³¹ Consult Tim Hegg, *Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Chapters 1-8* (Tacoma, WA: TorahResource, 2005), pp 133-138 for an excursus examination of this.

³² A *mikveh* is a "gathering of water, esp. the ritual bath of purification" (Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Baveli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* [New York: Judaica Treasury, 2004], 829).

³³ Everett F. Harrison, "Romans," in Frank E. Gaebelein, ed. et. al., *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 10:3-171, 10:68-69.

³⁴ Consult the chapter, "The Waters of Immersion," appearing in *Torah In the Balance, Volume II*.

³⁵ *Thayer*, 597.

experience...*identified with*" (BDAG).³⁶ AMG further indicates, "It notes not merely homogeneousness, but a similarity of experience."³⁷ The type of experience referenced in Romans 6:5 may, on various levels, be compared to Yeshua's word of John 12:24: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

Many examiners of Romans have rightly detected that in Romans 6:4-6 there are themes of realized eschatology present, where future realities of the Kingdom to come can already be present or accessible, to some degree, in the lives of the redeemed. Much of this may be said to be rooted in Paul's word of Galatians 1:4, speaking of Yeshua who "gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age."

The issue in Romans 6:4-6 and elsewhere, is not so much the fact that Believers are people of the future Messianic Age; the issue is actually where individualistic *or* corporate dynamics are in play. The tenor of Romans 6:4-6 and following, would seem to suggest that Romans ch. 6 is far more concerned with individualistic aspects of Believers being people of the future Kingdom to come, breaking into the present evil age. Thusly, the power of the future resurrection should already be manifested to some degree *now*, even with the future resurrection of human bodies yet to be consummated. What this means, more than anything else, is that the same power which resurrected Messiah Yeshua from the dead **is to be accessed as the redeemed see sin steadily purged from their hearts and minds**. As Ben Witherington III fairly details,

"In 6:5 Paul indicates that believers live in a period of what some call 'eschatological tension': already they walk in newness, delivered from sin, but they still await the resurrection of their bodies (6:5; 8:23). As suggested in 5:12-21, once believers shared the 'image' or 'likeness' of Adam (cf. 1:23; 5:14; 8:3; Phil 2:7; a cognate in Gen 1:26), but now they share the likeness (*homoïōma*) of Jesus's death and will also share his resurrection (Rom 6:5; cf. 1 Cor 15:49)."³⁸

Moo's thoughts on Believers' experience in the present, and in future, *and* how they all come together, more fully describe,

"[E]ven as union with the 'form' of Christ's death at baptism-conversion works forward to the moral life, so the union with the 'form' of Christ's resurrection at death or the parousia [coming] works backward. It is in this sense that the believer can be said to have been 'raised with Christ' and to be living in the power of the resurrected life. Perhaps, then, as our union with Christ's death cannot be fixed to any one moment, so we should view our union with Christ's resurrection as similarly atemporal. But, while the spiritual effects of the resurrection are felt now, we must not commit the mistake of some in the early church (cf. 2 Tim. 2:18) and spiritualize the resurrection. We await a real, physical resurrection, and this physicality destroys the parallel at this point with our 'dying with Christ.' The futurity of our resurrection reminds us that complete victory over sin will be won only in that day; until then, we live under the imperative of making the life of Jesus manifest in the way we live (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10)."³⁹

The current effects of being united with Yeshua's death, with a being united to His resurrection already breaking in to the lives of redeemed men and women, is seen in Paul's statement, "We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin" (Romans 6:6, ESV).

³⁶ BDAG, 960.

³⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 1330.

³⁸ Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp 80-81.

³⁹ Moo, *Romans*, 371.

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The elimination of *to sōma tēs hamartias* (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας), “the body of sin,” while something to only be fully realized at the Second Coming, is something that is to be *in process* long before the future resurrection. The NEB has for Romans 6:6, “We know that the man we once were has been crucified with Christ, for the destruction of the sinful self.” This was modified a bit in the succeeding REB with, “We know that our old humanity has been crucified with Christ.”

Seeing the final vestiges, of the sinful nature of people fully purged, is something that is a lifelong process. Paul had stated previously in Galatians 6:14, “may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” He would say later in Colossians 3:5, “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.” In the Apocrypha, we see the sentiment expressed of how “wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin” (Wisdom 1:4).

The identification, of Believers with Yeshua’s death, is to first manifest in how the old self is to be regarded as quantitatively dead: “because anyone who has died has been freed from sin” (Romans 6:7, NIV). While commonly rendered as “freed from sin” (RSV, NASU), the clause *dedikaiōtai apo tēs hamartias* (δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας) can also be rendered with “has been justified from sin” (Brown and Comfort)⁴⁰ or “declared free from all the charges of sin” (Kingdom New Testament), as the verb *dikaiōō* (δικαίω) widely relates to being justified or declared righteous. (And in Romans 6:7, given the clear presence of “from sin,” the justification/righteousness in view is obviously a declaration of innocence verdict.) This is a usage witnessed in Paul’s preaching at Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:38-39:

“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses [*ouk ēdunēthēte en nomō Mōuseōs dikaiōthēnai*, οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωυσέως δικαίωθῆναι; you could not be justified from through the law of Moses, HCSB].”

More generally, the words witnessed in Romans ch. 6 may be easily paralleled by Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 6:11, “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah and in the Spirit of our God.”

More to the point regarding Paul’s word, “for a dead man can safely be said to be free from the power of sin” (Romans 6:7, Phillips New Testament), is the significant process of making sure that born again Believers are truly dead to, and freed from, the influence of sin. Some of the dimensions of this are stated by him in Ephesians 4:22-24, which communicate, “in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Grant R. Osborne properly observes how “There is an already-not yet tension in which the old person has been crucified and yet must still be resisted. We are no longer under the dominion of sin but are still at war against it.”⁴¹ Per the discussion of the two ages, and how Believers are people of the future Messianic Age which has begun to break into the present evil age, Edwards comments,

“Authentic Christian existence always stands with one foot in the old life and one in the new. The Christian life is one of tension between Adam and Christ, sin and grace, flesh and

⁴⁰ Brown and Comfort, 546.

⁴¹ Grant R. Osborne, *IVP New Testament Commentary Series: Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 154.

spirit, death and life. Fallen human nature, which is with us from birth to death, pulls in one direction, and the regenerated life in Christ, which extends from conversion to eternity, pulls even more powerfully in the other. Christian life is hence life between the times and between two worlds: it is not yet free from the old nature, and not fully at home in the new."⁴²

Much of the tension that exists may be said to be reflected in Paul's word of 2 Corinthians 4:16: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." The outer physical person, our definite connection to the present world and its corruption, will not be restored until the Second Coming and resurrection. The inner psychological person, our consciousness or spirit, has a definite connection to Heaven and the world to come. It will not be until all elements of the human being are redeemed and the future age is totally manifest, that the salvation of a redeemed man or woman will be complete (Romans 8:23).

Sanctification, being made more holy or set-apart, is a long process for redeemed men and women, which awaits a grand culmination of the future at the resurrection of the dead. As Paul states it, "Now since we died with the Messiah, we trust that we will also live with him" (Romans 6:8, CJB/CJSB). The verb in view is *suzāō* (συζάω), "to live together with one," but specifically involving "to live a new life in union with the risen Christ, i.e. a life dedicated to God" (Thayer).⁴³ While there are future realities yet to be experienced in the life of Believers—and the future active indicative *suzēsomen* (συζήσομεν) is what appears in Romans 6:8—the living with the Messiah is **to begin now**. In Cranfield's estimation,

"That καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ [*kai suzēsomen autō*] refers to the present life is clear from the whole structure of the argument in this paragraph and especially from the content of v. 11, which is closely related to this verse...The Christian's present life is to be a life with Christ (cf. the 'with thy God' of Mic 6.8) in the power of His resurrection...But, while the reference to the present is clearly primary, it is quite possible, since the present life of Christians is a foretaste of the life with Christ in glory, that the thought of the eschatological fulfillment of the life already begun is also present."⁴⁴

Yeshua the Messiah is the prototype example that redeemed men and women are to look to. It is to be recognized, "We know that Messiah, having been raised from the dead, no longer dies; death no longer is master over Him" (Romans 6:9, TLV). Yeshua the Messiah, the eternal, uncreated Son of God, was incarnated as a human being—and following His sacrifice for sinful humanity was resurrected from the dead, *assuring all since* that there will be a future general resurrection of the dead. And so, being in Messiah (Romans 6:4), born again Believers are to access the spiritual power present that resurrected Yeshua from the dead.

Paul further states, "For the death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God" (Romans 6:10, TLV). Believers' identification with the death of Yeshua is mirrored by 2 Corinthians 5:14: "For the love of Messiah controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died." And, the significance of Yeshua's singular work is further highlighted by Hebrews 10:14: "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

Recognizing that Yeshua "died to sin once for all," can be taken from the perspective of Him either being sacrificed for sin, or even conquering sin by His perfect life. More curious is Paul's claim that Yeshua "lives to God." Witherington makes the general observation, "There is a sense in which Christ was oriented to us and died for us, fulfilling his obligations and

⁴² Edwards, 162.

⁴³ Thayer, 594.

⁴⁴ Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, pp 312-313.

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ministry to the human race, but ever since the resurrection Jesus has lived for and to God. His orientation has been toward God since death.”⁴⁵ Kruse, making reference to the Lord’s word “MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34; cf. Psalm 22:1ff), draws the conclusion that a breach in the Godhead was restored following Yeshua’s resurrection from the dead and subsequent return to Heaven:

“We can only surmise what Paul means by saying that Christ, following his death, now ‘lives to God’. Perhaps we should understand it in this way: Following that horrendous break in relationship within the Godhead (‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’) by which human sin was dealt with ‘once and for all’, that relationship was restored so that Christ lives again to God, as he did beforehand.”⁴⁶

While the salvation work of Yeshua the Messiah is something grand to behold, Paul’s statement of Romans 6:11 to redeemed people is very heavy: “In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (NIV). Believers are to appropriate the story of the Messiah, or at least as much of the story of the Messiah as humanly possible, as *their own story*. Now unlike Yeshua, human Believers are obviously not the eternal, uncreated Son of God. But, reaching for the excellence and perfection of the Messiah is something that all of those claiming salvation are to be reaching for. While we may not be in Heaven interceding at the right hand of the Father like Yeshua (Hebrews 8:1-2), we still have a responsibility to live an appropriate life to God on Earth, in a priestly capacity serving one another and demonstrating ourselves to be examples of redeemed people who have been freed from the hold of sin.

That Believers are people of the future age, still living with the influences of the present evil age, is realized in Paul’s direction, “do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts” (Romans 6:12). What is often rendered as “your mortal body” is *tō thnētō humōn sōmati* (τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι), more literally “your body of death.” It may be observed how as long as people remain in the present evil age, in an unredeemed body, they will be widely subjected to the spiritual influences of death. While Believers have been redeemed from the ultimate power of death, they can still be swayed by it, and via inappropriate behavior in violation of God’s Instruction, place barriers between themselves and Him, having a stifled relationship.

Even with various applications present regarding Paul’s use of “members” in Romans 6:13 (some possibly pertaining to sexual responsibility), the thrust of Romans 6:13 could not be more obvious: “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness” (ESV). Believers are to see that their physical selves are disciplined, and that everything that they do be used in reflection of God’s character.

The term *hoplon* (ὅπλον) in Romans 6:13 should not go unnoticed, as in the plural (*hopla*, ὅπλα) it can mean “implements of war, arms” (LS).⁴⁷ Later in this letter, themes of warfare will be mentioned (13:12). Elsewhere, Paul has spoken of “the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left” (2 Corinthians 6:7), and how “the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses” (2 Corinthians 10:4). While presenting oneself and one’s body to the cause of righteousness is vital, God’s people are also fiercely engaged in a war against the forces of darkness.

Many Christian theologians and Bible teachers will use Paul’s statements in Romans 6:14-15 as a proof text, to assert that born again Believers are not “under the Law,” with “under the

⁴⁵ Witherington, *Romans*, 162.

⁴⁶ Kruse, *Romans*, 266.

⁴⁷ LS, 563.

Law” commonly interpreted as meaning that obedience to the commandments of the Torah or Law of Moses is not necessary for Messiah followers. While it is very true that Believers are not *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου) or “under law,” does this phrase really mean being obedient to God’s Torah? Given the emphasis within Romans ch. 6 on Believers being dead to sin (Romans 6:1-2, 7-13), immersed into Yeshua to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-5), and being crucified or executed with Him (Romans 6:6)—how could an honest reader of this section of Paul’s letter think that he would somehow allow for disobedience to God’s commandments? Paul will actually go a little overboard in describing redeemed persons like slaves of righteousness, who have the steadfast need to be obedient to the Lord (Romans 6:16-19).

What are we to make of Paul’s statement in Romans 6:14: “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” (RSV)? The Greek verb *kurieuō* (κυριεύω) means “to be lord or master of people or of a country” and “to have legal power to do” (LS).⁴⁸ Sin not being the master or lord of a Believer is directly connected to: “you are not under law.” It would be a mistake of anyone to somehow equate the sin-master and the Torah as somehow being the same; Romans 7:7 will make it clear, “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be!” The Torah is something given by God (Romans 7:22, 25; 8:7); the Torah is not the agent of sin. The sin-master is, however, quite capable of using the Torah for the purpose of causing disobedience in weak and fleshly people (Romans 7:6, 8), which in turn will merit God’s condemnation upon such sinners.

Sin is never the master over a person who has been spiritually regenerated. Sin is not the master of a born again Believer, because Messiah followers have made that key declaration of “Yeshua/Jesus is Lord!” (Romans 10:9) and have recognized His supremacy within their lives. By so doing, those who trust in Yeshua are able to receive permanent forgiveness for their sins.

How are readers of Paul’s letter to approach his usage of “under the Law,” when the obvious contrast of Believers being “under grace” has been placed before us? There are three main views present within contemporary examination regarding what “under the Law” is supposed to mean, including,

1. the Torah or Law of Moses to be obeyed by people
2. legalism, or an inappropriate abuse of the Torah⁴⁹
3. the Torah’s condemnation or penalties pronounced upon Law-breakers

The popular, and almost ingrained, common Christian understanding that one encounters—of “under law” or *hupo nomon* being obedient to God’s Torah—is **most incorrect** and should be challenged. Why it is incorrect can be fairly easy to see. Too many Bible readers have the viewpoint of “under the Law” meaning obedience to the Mosaic Law calcified in their minds, that they have become a bit constrained from thinking critically. Yet, there are two serious albeit obvious questions that should be asked from Romans 6:14-15:

1. Who is “under the Law”?
2. Who is “under grace”?

Sin is the master of the non-Believer, the one who has not received Yeshua (Jesus) into his or her life, being granted a permanent forgiveness of and a reprieve from sins. Sinners who have not recognized the Messiah are surely not “under grace.” The person who has not received forgiveness of sins via the gospel may be rightly considered to be *hupo nomon* or “under law.” The person who is not saved is “under law”—precisely because the unredeemed are **subject to the Torah’s penalties and condemnation pronounced upon lawbreakers**. Disobedience to the Torah is sin (1 John 3:4), and the consequence of sin is death and subsequent eternal exile from

⁴⁸ Ibid., 458.

⁴⁹ Cf. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 374.

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the Creator. Paul testifies further on in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.” The solution for human disobedience, to God’s Instruction, is receiving the gift of eternal life available in Yeshua the Messiah!

The Apostle Paul considers his Roman audience to comprise those who have received salvation in Yeshua, being considered people who are *hupo charin* (ὑπὸ χάριτι) or “under grace.” The status of being “under grace” is not something granted to all, but is something that is **only granted to those who are spiritually regenerated** and have been forgiven of their sins (Romans 6:3-5). *Sin is no longer the lord of these people*; Yeshua is recognized as the Lord. Those who do not have salvation in Yeshua and are not “under grace,” are instead “under law.”

The Holy Spirit given to the redeemed is to compel obedience. Having the covering of grace means that redeemed people are not severely punished for their sins when they err, because they can instead confess their sins before God and receive immediate forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Paul is quite clear, though, that being “under grace” does not at all mean that Believers have a legitimate license to sin:

“What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!” (Romans 6:15, RSV).

The viewpoint of “under law,” meaning obedience to God’s Law, has done significant damage to modern Christianity. While some Messianics complain that contemporary Christians need to consider the value of practices like the seventh-day Sabbath/*Shabbat*, appointed times of Leviticus 23, or kosher dietary laws—many Christians live, at the very least, in a state of minimal obedience to God, because even the ethical and moral commandments of the Torah are not allowed to guide their discipleship. *Even the remaining Nine of the Ten Commandments are sometimes ignored* (after the Fourth Commandment to keep the Sabbath). Only the Father in Heaven, most thankfully, can determine who is *and* who is not “under grace.”

Many have never heard the idea or the proposal that “under law” or *hupo nomon* (ὑπὸ νόμου) means being subject to the Torah’s condemnation, and that being “under grace” or *hupo charin* (ὑπὸ χάριτι), means being provided with permanent forgiveness of sins and salvation. It is quite apparent, though, that when Romans 6:14-15 is read within the scope of Romans ch. 6 in total, that the Apostle Paul does not at all consider Moses’ Teaching to be abolished or irrelevant for Messiah followers, who are to certainly obey God. A status of being “under grace” given to the redeemed cannot be used as a warrant to disregard the value of God’s Law.

It need not be overlooked that equating “under law” with the Torah’s condemnation upon sinners, and “under grace” with the salvation provided to the redeemed—is something that theologians and commentators have certainly had to consider. It is not an interpretation new to the Messianic movement. The thought that born again Believers not being “under the Law” involves them not being condemned by the Torah’s penalties, is something witnessed from the early days of the Protestant Reformation, as detected in the comments of John Calvin:

“Not to be *under law*...means that it is a dead letter which condemns us, because we have not the power to perform it. It also means that we are no longer subject to the law in so far as it requires of us perfect righteousness, and pronounces death on all who have transgressed any part of it. Likewise, by the word *grace* we understand both parts of redemption, i.e. the forgiveness of sins, by which God imputes righteousness to us, and the sanctification by the Spirit, by whom He forms us anew to good works.”⁵⁰

Calvin goes on to further describe,

⁵⁰ John Calvin, *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries: Romans and Thessalonians*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), pp 130-131.

“Since the law is the rule of good living, and has been given to govern men, we hold that if it is broken all discipline at once falls to the ground, the restraints are shattered, and ultimately no difference or distinction between good and evil is left. But our misconception here consists in our supposing that the righteousness which God approves in His law is abolished when the law is abrogated. This abrogation, however, does not at all apply to the precepts which teach us the right way to live, for Christ confirms and sanctions these, and does not abrogate them. The proper solution to the objection is that the only part of the law which is removed is the curse, to which all men who are beyond the grace of Christ are subject.”⁵¹

The Reformed theological tradition, among those in Protestantism, has been historically noted to have a rather high view of the Law of God, particularly in terms of the ethical and moral instructions of the Torah. Among more modern interpreters, Cranfield is among those few who concludes that *hupo nomon* or “under the Law” in Romans 6:14 means Believers not being subjected to the Torah’s penalties:

“[Romans 6:14] is widely taken to mean that the authority of the law has been abolished for believers and superseded by a different authority. And this, it must be admitted, would be a plausible interpretation, if this sentence stood by itself. But, since it stands in a document which contains such things as 3.31; 7.12, 14a; 8.4; 13.8-10, and in which the law is referred to more than once as God’s law (7.22, 25; 8.7) and is appealed to again and again as authoritative, such a reading of it is extremely unlikely. The fact that ὑπὸ νόμου is contrasted with ὑπὸ χάριτι suggests the likelihood that Paul is here thinking not of the law generally but of the law as condemning sinners; for, since χάρις denotes God’s undeserved favour, the natural opposite to ὑπὸ χάριτι is ‘under God’s disfavour or condemnation’. And the suggestion that the meaning of this sentence is that believers are not under God’s condemnation pronounced in the law but under His undeserved favour receives strong confirmation from 8.1...”⁵²

Cranfield finds support for “under the Law” in Romans 6:14 meaning subject to the Torah’s condemnation and penalties, and *not* being obedient to the Torah, because of some key verses in Paul’s letter where the value, integrity, and instructive purpose of the Law of Moses in holy and upright living for Believers are somehow all in view:

“Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law” (Romans 3:31, RSV).

“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12).

“For we know that the Law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14a).

“For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man” (Romans 7:22).

“Thanks be to God through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:25).

“[S]o that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:4).

⁵¹ Ibid., 131.

⁵² Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, pp 319-320.

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"[B]ecause the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*" (Romans 8:7).

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*. For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET [Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17-19],' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF [Leviticus 19:18].' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*" (Romans 13:8-10).

Among Messianic interpreters, Tim Hegg would be among those who would concur with the conclusion that for Romans 6:14-15, not being "under the Law/Torah" concerns redeemed people being freed from the Torah's condemnation:

"[T]he context shows clearly that Paul's point in this concluding phrase is that the reign of sin had its power or authority through the Torah, for the Torah condemns sin and the sinner. Paul has taught clearly that the power of sin to condemn is found in the Torah. Thus, when he concludes that the believer is not under the Torah but under grace, he is not putting the Torah and grace at odds with each other, but showing the means by which the believer is no longer a slave to sin but instead is alive unto God. The penalty of the Torah against the sinner, just and righteous as it was, was put entirely upon Yeshua and therefore the believer is no longer under its condemnation. In the place of condemnation has come forgiveness and grace."⁵³

"Under law," meaning the condemnation of the Torah upon sinners, is not a view you will see adhered to in that many Romans commentaries—but it is surely a valid interpretational option. Paul in Romans 8:1 will enthusiastically declare, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua." The venerable *NIV Study Bible* offers a similar, although slightly different, view for Romans 6:14:

"*not under law*. The meaning is not that Christians have been freed from all moral authority. They have, however, been freed from the law in the manner in which God's people were under law in the OT era. Law provides no enablement to resist the power of sin; it only condemns the sinner. But grace enables."⁵⁴

Various Romans interpreters have taken the contrast seen in Romans 6:14-15 between being "under the Law" (*hupo nomon*) and "under grace" (*hupo charin*), not as a personal status of being condemned as a sinner versus being a recipient of salvation. They instead have taken this as a contrast between the previous age of sin and death, and the future eschatological Kingdom age in which God's redeemed in the Messiah are to already be considered living.⁵⁵ Of course, there should be no denying the Biblical reality that Yeshua "gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4), and that born again Believers should consider themselves citizens of a future Kingdom of Heaven that will one day dramatically *and fully* arrive on Planet Earth at the Second Coming (Philippians 3:20-21).

But is it justified for readers to conclude that being "under the Law," commonly thought to mean obedient to the Mosaic Torah, was just a part of the previous age dominated by sin—in which there was no permanent sacrifice for human disobedience? In the view of Wright, Romans 6:14 means that "those who belong to Christ, who have died and been raised in

⁵³ Hegg, *Romans 1-8*, 151.

Cf. *Ibid.*, pp 152-155 where there is an analysis of places in the Apostolic Scriptures where *hupo nomon* is used.

⁵⁴ Kenneth L. Barker, ed., et. al., *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 1754.

⁵⁵ Dunn, James D.G. *Word Biblical Commentary: Romans*, Vol. 38a. (Dallas: Word Books, 1988). 339-341; Moo, *Romans*, pp 387-398; Wright, in *NIB*, 11:542-544.

baptism, do not live in the Adam solidarity, *and hence do not live under the law,*” to some degree meaning obedient to the Torah. He continues, thinking, “if one did live under the law, sin *would* indeed have dominion.”⁵⁶ For Messiah followers to demonstrate any strong fidelity to Moses’ Teaching, then, it would be like saying that there has not been a move forward in salvation history with Yeshua inaugurating the new era of the Father’s Kingdom.

Moo’s assessment of Romans 6:14 is a little better, as he does acknowledge how here “To be ‘under the law’ means to be subject to the curse of the law that comes because of the inevitable failure to accomplish the law.” He does continue, though, stating, “But confining the phrase only to the notion of condemnation fails to grasp the salvation-historical contrast that Paul sets up here.”⁵⁷ And so thinking that “under the Law” means being subject to a past time period, Moo concludes,

“‘Under law’...is another way of characterizing ‘the old realm’...To be ‘under law’ is to be subject to the constraining and sin-strengthening regime of the old age; to be ‘under grace’ is to be subject to the new age in which freedom from the power of sin is available....Those who are joined to Christ by faith live in the new age where grace, not the law of Moses, reigns.”⁵⁸

No Messianic Believer, who has experienced forgiveness from sins and an infilling of God’s grace, should look down upon the true statements that Moo has made regarding freedom from sin available in Yeshua. *None of us should want to be subject to the powers of the old age when no permanent solution for a human sin problem was available.* Yet, there are strong and compelling reasons why making “under the Law” and “under grace,” designations of the age of sin and death and the eschatological age of the Spirit, should be rejected.

While the salvation history motif of the two ages might seem to work for some of today’s contemporary Romans commentators, it has a tendency to *factor out* the First Century behavior of the Roman readers of Paul’s letter. Throughout the long history of Romans scholarship, too many have looked at Romans as just being a theological treatise, and not enough as an actual letter written to ancient Believers with some ancient issues needing to be resolved. Yet, a quick survey of Romans chs. 9-16 will certainly reveal that ancient issues are indeed addressed in the epistle, and so we should not be surprised to think that Paul describing the Romans, as not being “under the Law” and instead “under grace” (Romans 6:14-15), is designed to direct them in a correct spiritual path.

The main support that is offered, for the claim that God’s Torah is to be associated with the pre-resurrection era of sin and death, is Paul’s statement in Romans 5:20: “Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” Here, it is said that the Torah was introduced just to see sin and death increase. But to associate the Torah *only* with the pre-resurrection era of sin and death is a definite mistake. Take important note of how Romans 5:20 also says “**grace abounded all the more.**” God’s grace or *charis* (χάρις) was present in the pre-resurrection era *every bit* as much as God’s Law was, even with Yeshua’s final atonement still to be offered in the future and some new realities still to present themselves in the post-resurrection era.⁵⁹

Those who take “under the Law” and “under grace,” as representing two different ages, have to admit to their position’s weakness. James D.G. Dunn indicates, “The distinction between epochs is not an absolute before and after Christ, since Abraham accepted the promise

⁵⁶ Wright, in *NIB*, 11:543.

⁵⁷ Moo, *Romans*, pp 388-389.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 389, 398.

⁵⁹ For some further thoughts, consult “The Significance of the Messiah Event,” by Margaret McKee Huey and J.K. McKee, appearing in the *Messianic Torah Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

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and was justified *κατὰ χάριν* [*kata charin*] (4:4, 16),⁶⁰ recognizing how Abraham was justified according to grace. Wright also notes that for Romans 6:14-15, “the terms of [Paul’s] argument are on the two spheres in which humans can belong,”⁶¹ which would lend support to the idea that a personal condition of being might indeed be a better way of viewing the passage. And, probably working from the paradigm that “under the Law” means obedient to the Torah, Bruce surprisingly concludes, “The law demanded obedience, but grace supplies the will and the power to obey; hence grace breaks the mastery of sin as law could not,”⁶² which is surely to be the condition of those who are redeemed in Yeshua, as a status of being saved and “under grace” sees that Believers are transformed by the Holy Spirit and hence can obey God’s Torah.

Ultimately, the question that many of today’s Christians answer a staunch “No!” to, is: *Is God’s Torah a part of the future eschatological Kingdom age, or not?* Grace was definitely a part of the previous age of sin and death (Romans 5:20b), and those who are not covered by God’s grace in the Messiah are not to be regarded as people of the future Kingdom age. They are condemned as criminals by God’s Law and stand under its curse. However, while the redeemed in Yeshua are people of the future Kingdom age—before it has fully manifested—such a future Kingdom age indeed also does include a respected place for the Torah. Not only does the promised New Covenant inaugurated by Yeshua in the lives of His followers intend to see the Law of Moses supernaturally transcribed upon the heart and mind (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:16-17), but the famed word of Micah 4:1-3 (and also Isaiah 2:2-4) details how the nations are to come to Zion to be taught the Torah, thus inaugurating global peace:

“And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’ For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.”⁶³

God’s Torah certainly has a place in the future Kingdom age, and should not at all be exclusively consigned to the previous age of sin and death! But in order to arrive at such a future Kingdom age, when it is fully manifested and Yeshua reigns from Jerusalem—we each need to make sure that we stand under the covering of God’s grace *and not* under the condemnation of the Law. *We need to make sure that we have truly been saved and spiritually regenerated!*

In Romans 6:15, easily concerned about the conduct of the Roman Believers, Paul communicates, “What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!” (RSV). Unfortunately, many take a condition of being forgiven of their sins as a kind of self-justification to commit sin. But Paul would have no part of such an attitude or idea—and none of us living today should either!

Even though redeemed and blood-washed Believers are “under grace” and have been provided salvation in the Messiah, it does not mean that we are to ignore God’s Instruction. Paul is clear to issue the direction, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace

⁶⁰ Dunn, *Romans*, 38a:340.

⁶¹ Wright, in *NIB*, 11:544.

⁶² Bruce, *Romans*, 132.

⁶³ For a further review of Micah 4:1-3 and Isaiah 2:2-4, consult the author’s exegesis paper “The Torah Will Go Forth From Zion,” appearing in the *Messianic Torah Helper* by Messianic Apologetics.

may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1-2, RSV). A life once lived under the condemnation and penalties of the Torah, bereft with guilt and anxiety before God, is not something to which anyone should want to return. God's grace overcoming the power of sin is not something that born again Believers are to provoke! If we are spiritually regenerated, our natural desire should be **to want to obey God and please Him as much as we can**, as His grace transforms us from within (Titus 2:11-12). This obedience grows as we seek more of Him, study His Word, and ask Him to convict us of areas of our lives that need improvement.

Are we allowed to sin and break God's Torah because we are not "under the Law," but instead "under grace" as redeemed saints? No. Prior to salvation, the master of the unredeemed is sin, a status which causes people to be "under the Law." When the Lord Yeshua becomes a person's Master, he or she changes and is "under grace." Born again Believers are not to find themselves "under the Law," *precisely* because they are covered by the blood of the Messiah. We are no longer subject to the condemnation pronounced by the Torah upon sinners, because sin is no longer our lord.

Even while accepting the common view that "under the Law" means having to follow the Torah, Kruse's conclusion is not at all off the mark. He states, "by saying that they 'are not under law, but under grace' the apostle foreshadows his discussion of a new life in the Spirit that makes possible what the law could not achieve because of the weakness of sinful flesh (8:1-17)."⁶⁴ He does have to remark, though, "While believers who live under the new covenant of grace no longer live under the Mosaic law as a regime, this does not mean they are free to flout the moral imperatives found in the law, for these are the moral standards required of humankind by God himself,"⁶⁵ referencing Romans 8:4 and Galatians 5:14. Unfortunately, too many Christian theologians have not totally probed the Tanach significance of the New Covenant precisely providing the spiritual impetus needed for people to properly follow God's Torah (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27), even though they recognize significant principles from the Torah not to be discarded as a means of good conduct.

Believers who are born again and redeemed are not subject to the Torah's punishments pronounced upon sinners; **they are not "under the Law."** Romans 6:14-15 demonstrates our need to live responsibly being covered by God's grace, living in obedience to Him. If we have been spiritually regenerated, we need to take to serious heart what Yeshua had to endure to take away the penalty of *our disobedience* to the Law via His sacrifice (Colossians 2:14)! Being redeemed from eternal punishment should definitely be *a good motivation* for us to obey God.

Our faith in Yeshua does not nullify our need to obey God, just as Paul has said, "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law" (3:31, RSV). Torah obedience comes as we emulate our Lord and Savior, and are transformed by God's love.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Kruse, *Romans*, 269.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 268-269.

⁶⁶ For a further review of various passages that use *hupo nomon* or "under the Law," and others which use "under the Law" in an English translation but have something else in the Greek source text, consult the author's publication *What Does "Under the Law" Really Mean?* (2014 Confronting Issues mini-book).