

The Truth Series

Part 4

Acts 21

By Gary Hoffman

Matthew 5:17-19 *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 **Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**”*

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

The main question that will be asked is if the Law was nullified for the “New Testament” believer. This first study will ask “Did the LORD through Paul nullify the Law for the Gentiles in Acts 15? Did Jesus make ALL FOODS (those previously listed in Leviticus as unclean and an abomination the LORD) now OK for followers of Jesus to eat?”

Did Paul quit keeping Torah for a better, less burdensome life as a follower of Jesus?

- *15 And after those days we packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16 Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge. 17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19 When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many **myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;***
 - Note: tens of thousands of Jews believed and were still zealous for the law. This is a positive statement. We are commonly lead to believe that only very few Jews followed Jesus and we also assume that the law was done away with. The Biblical record is contrary to this line of thinking.
- *21 but they have been informed about you **that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.***
 - This is a false accusation. Paul did no such thing. He actually upheld the Law of Moses.
- *22 What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, **but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.***

- Either this was all a front to fake out those accusing Paul, or he actually did regard the Torah as fully in effect even to the point of vows.

- *25 But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.*
 - This issue is discussed in the Acts 15 verses.

- *26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them. 27 Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, “Men of Israel, help! **This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.**” 29 (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesians with him in the city, **whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.**) 30 And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.*
 - These again are false accusations which no way support that Paul nor any Jew who followed Yahshua ever abandoned the Law, vows, or the temple offerings. (The hair of a person who was completing a Nazarite vow, was to be shaven and burned in the temple as an offering (Numbers 6:3-15). This section of verses support that Paul was keeping Torah and are not support text for his abandoning the “old law” for the new grace.