The Messianic writer whose works has generated and is generating, the greatest doctrinal problems within believing assemblies today, is those of Sha’ul (Paul) of Tarsus.

This man was a native born Yisraeli, from the tribe of Benjamin, who on the day of his circumcision, was named Sha’ul (meaning, asked) as is the custom among the Hebrews (see Luke 1:57-63).

However, he also had the Roman name of Paulus (meaning, little), because he was born a Roman citizen in the city of Tarsus, which was in the area that used to be called Asia minor, but is now called Turkey.

Paul spent most of his life under the tutelage of one of the most highly honored rabbis of his day, Gamliel. Gamliel was the grandson of Hillel the First from whom a large portion of modern Judaism gets its teachings. Paul, as a Pharisee, would have had a very strict religious upbringing.

The word Pharisee comes from the Hebrew word “parash” and refers to a person who has been separated for some purpose, in this case, as a student of the religious sect of Pharisees (Acts 26:1-5). An ancient Pharisee is what we would call a Rabbi today.

Paul would have had to have had an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the Tanak (OT) by the time he was an adult. On top of this he would have had proficient knowledge of the oral traditions (Oral Law) of the Jewish religion, i.e. Judaism.

It is important to know that there is a distinction between the written Word or Torah (Law) given by YHWH through Moses (Mosheh) and the Oral Law of the Pharisees

What’s vitally important to know about Paul, is that He was a Hebrew in both bloodline and culture, and his entire life and point of view was that of a Torah obedient Hebrew scholar.

All his writings are written from the perspective of a Torah observant Hebrew teacher and they were all written to people already in the assembly of believers, most of these assemblies having been started by Torah observant Jews, or Gentiles who had already been going to Jewish synagogues (Acts 13:14-49).

To truly understand what Paul is teaching in his writings, you must look at them from a Hebrew/Torah perspective or you will misinterpret his meaning. To attempt to explain or teach Paul’s intent without the Hebrew/Torah perspective is like trying to understand the meaning of a conversation of which you’ve only heard one side.

1. To the assembly at Corinth he wrote answers to questions the assembly had sent to him.
2. To the assemblies in Galatia he sent a letter rebuking the assemblies there and clarifying the doctrine for which they were in error.
3. To Rome he wrote a letter of introduction that covered the entire Good News (gospel), as well as how to live as believers. He also covered other topics, such as, who we are in Yahushua, how to behave towards unbelieving societies we are part of, and other questions that had come up throughout the Body of Messiah generally.
4. Ephesians through 2nd Thessalonians were sent to answer a lot of the same questions already mentioned, and warned the assemblies concerning the waywardness and influence of both the Jewish religion and Gentile idol worship (religious and philosophical ideologies).
5. Both books of Timothy and the book of Titus were to these specific brothers about the organization of assemblies and the appointing of elders and servants, as well as personal encouragement to them.
6. Philemon is a personal letter to a fellow believer concerning how the brother should behave towards his ex-servant, now brother.

Though open to some debate, the order of Paul’s writings are as follows.

1. Galatians

2. 1st Thessalonians

3. 2nd Thessalonians

4. 1st Corinthians

5. 2nd Corinthians

6. Romans

7. Philemon

8. Colossians

9. Ephesians

10. Philippians

11. 1st Timothy

12. Titus

13 2nd Timothy

There is reason to believe that the book of Hebrews was written by Paul also, however, there are a few elements that could be evidence of another writer. Personally, the author believes Hebrews is one of Paul’s writings, however, it has been somewhat tainted by scribal or translational error.

Key principles to remember when attempting to understand Paul’s writings are:

1. That he was a Sabbath keeping, Torah observant, Hebrew speaking believer of Messiah (Acts 17:2; 21:21:20-24, 40-22: 3; Philippians 3:3-6).
2. That he lived this way until his death (Acts 24:10-16; 25:7-8) and he claimed to be an imitator of the Messiah, who Himself lived in obedience to the Torah His entire life (1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; 1 Peter 2:21-22).
3. That though he surely spoke other languages and that all the writings we have from him are in Greek, he wrote his books in a distinctively Hebrew style.
4. That he proved the doctrines he taught from quoting the Torah and prophets (Old Testament) exclusively (Acts 28:23)
5. That the Word or Scripture he refers to in his writings is a reference to the Tanak (Old Testament), because the Messianic Writings (New Testament) had not yet been written.
6. That the stories in the Tanak are parables or pictures to help us learn the doctrines of salvation written in the Messianic Writings. They are examples for us to learn from. (1 Corinthians 10:1-12; Hebrews 4:1-11; 2 Peter 2:4-6; Jude 7)
7. That all his readers were already fellow believers, saved by Messiah, and so all his warnings and teachings must be understood in light of this fact
8. That the Assemblies already had prior teachings upon which they were founded, to which he elaborates upon in his writings.
9. That the majority of the first Gentile believers had already been participating in the Jewish synagogue system (Acts 13).
10. That the Bereans, after they heard Paul’s message, went to the Scriptures (i.e. the Tanak) to check to be sure that what he said could be believed (Acts 17:10-11).

These 10 principles must be firmly established before we begin trying to understand Paul’s writings.

**Foundational principles of Scriptural thought and doctrine.**

**2Ti 3:16**  **All Scripture** *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction in righteousness**:

**2Ti 3:17**  That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (KJV)

“All Scripture”, from Paul’s perspective, is a reference to the Tanak (OT).

**Deu 30:15**  “See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil,

**Deu 30:16**  in that I am commanding you today to love יהוה your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to guard His commands, and His laws, and His right-rulings. And you shall live and increase, and יהוה your Elohim shall bless you in the land which you go to possess.

**Deu 30:17**  “But if your heart turns away, and you do not obey, and shall be drawn away, and shall bow down to other mighty ones and serve them,

**Deu 30:18**  “I have declared to you today that you shall certainly perish, you shall not prolong your days in the land which you are passing over the Yarděn to enter and possess.

**Deu 30:19**  “I have called the heavens and the earth as witnesses today against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore you shall choose life, so that you live, both you and your seed,

**Deu 30:20**  to love יהוה your Elohim, to obey His voice, and to cling to Him – for He is your life and the length of your days – to dwell in the land which יהוה swore to your fathers, to Aḇraham, to Yitsḥaq, and to Ya‛aqoḇ, to give them.”

To obey the Torah brings life, good and blessing, while disobeying the Torah brings death, evil and curses.

**Deu 6:24**  And יהוה commanded us to do **all** these laws, to fear יהוה our Elohim, for our good always, to keep us alive, as it is today.

**Deu 6:25**  And it is righteousness for us when we guard to do **all** this command before יהוה our Elohim, as He has commanded us.

The Torah is for our good always and by obeying it we show that we both fear YHWH and that we are living righteously before Him.

**Num 15:15**  One law is for you of the assembly and for the stranger who sojourns with you – a law that have forever throughout your generations. As you are, so is the stranger before יהוה.

**Num 15:16**  One Torah and one right-ruling is for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.

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**Lev 19:33**  ‘And when a stranger sojourns with you in your land, do not oppress him.

**Lev 19:34**  ‘Let the stranger who dwells among you be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself. For you were strangers in the land of Mitsrayim. I am יהוה your Elohim.

That both, the native born Yisra’eli and the stranger (Gentile: ger) that joins them, are equal before YHWH, like adopted sons, and one Torah is for both (There is neither Jew nor Gentile in Messiah for we are all ONE in Him-Galatians 3:28).

**Deu 28:13**  “And יהוה shall make you the head and not the tail. And you shall be only on top, and not be beneath, if you obey the commands of יהוה your Elohim, which I command you today, to guard and do.

**Deu 28:14**  “And do not turn aside from any of the Words which I am commanding you today, right or left, to go after other mighty ones to serve them.

To turn to the right or to the left of **anything** YHWH has spoken through Moses is the same as serving another deity.

**Deu 13:1**  “When there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he shall give you a sign or a wonder,

**Deu 13:2**  and the sign or the wonder shall come true, of which he has spoken to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other mighty ones *(turning to the left or the right of anything YHWH has spoken)* – which you have not known – and serve them,’

**Deu 13:3**  do not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for יהוה your Elohim is trying you to know whether you love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart and with all your being.

**Deu 13:4**  “Walk after יהוה your Elohim and fear Him, and guard His commands and obey His voice, and serve Him and cling to Him.

**Deu 13:5**  “And that prophet or that dreamer of dreams is put to death, because he has spoken apostasy against יהוה your Elohim – who brought you out of the land of Mitsrayim and ransomed you from the house of bondage – to make you stray from the way in which יהוה your Elohim commanded you to walk. Thus, you shall purge the evil from your midst.

YHWH will send false prophets and workers of wonders to do mighty signs among us, **to test us**, to see whether we love Him (by obeying Him) or whether we will follow the lies and deceptive powers of the false prophet.

**2Th 2:7**  For the secret of lawlessness is already at work – only until he who now restrains comes out of the midst.

**2Th 2:8**  And then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Master shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth and bring to naught with the manifestation of His coming.

**2Th 2:9**  The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power and signs and wonders of falsehood,

**2Th 2:10**  and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those perishing, because they did not receive the love of the truth, in order for them to be saved.

**2Th 2:11**  And for this reason Elohim sends them a working of delusion, for them to believe the falsehood,

**2Th 2:12**  in order that all should be judged who did not believe the truth, but have delighted in the unrighteousness.

A False leader will come doing “signs and wonders” and YHWH will allow a lie to be believed because people refuse to believe the Truth. What is the Truth, in Scripture?

Yahushua is the Truth! John 14:6

The Word is Truth! John 17:17

YHWH is Truth! Romans 3:8

The Torah is Truth! Psalms 119:142

What is righteousness?

Belief is the spiritual righteousness Hab 2:4/Gal 3:11

Obeying Torah is the physical righteousness Deut 6:24-25/Rom 2:13

**NOTE**: Living righteously and being a just person mean the same thing in Hebrew (STG# H6662): Tsaddiq, and in Greek (STG# G1342 and 1343): dikaios/dikaiosune.

**\*\*\*In Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, under “just”, it gives 6622 as its number, but it is an error\*\*\***

YHWH/Yahushua is Truth and the Word/Torah is Truth!

**Joh 1:14**  And the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us, and we saw His esteem, esteem as of an only brought-forth of a father, complete in favour and truth.

Yahushua and the Torah are one and cannot be separated!

**Isa 8:20**  To the Torah and to the witness! If they do not speak according to this Word, it is because they have no daybreak (light).

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**Rev 14:12**  Here is the endurance of the set-apart ones, here are those guarding the commands of Elohim and the belief of יהושע.

See also:

Revelation 1:2, 9; 6:9, 12:17 Word/Commands and testimony

Revelation 3:8; 19:13 Word and the Name

Revelation 12:11 Blood and Word

Revelation 15:3 Songs of Moses and the Lamb

Revelation 20:4 Witness and Word

**Rev 22:12**  “And see, I am coming speedily, and My reward is with Me, to give to each according to his work.

**Rev 22:13**  “I am the ‘Aleph’ and the ‘Taw’, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

**Rev 22:14**  “Blessed are those doing His commands, so that the authority shall be theirs unto the tree of life, and to enter through the gates into the city.

Both the witness of Messiah Yahushua AND the obedience to the Torah are REQUIRED to be complete and endure to the end.

**Psa 119:105**  Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**Pro 6:23**  For the command is a lamp, and the Torah a light, and reproofs of discipline a way of life,

The Word/Torah is the light that shows us the path we should walk; it’s the way we are to live. But it cannot save us from our sins or the penalty for sin, which is death. What is sin?

**1Jn 3:4**  Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (KJV)

One act of disobedience, one transgression of the Torah makes us guilty of sin (James 2:10) one act of sin brings the penalty of death upon us (Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:56). The only way to be forgiven for sin and saved from the death penalty, is for someone innocent to die in our place, for only death can free us from the death penalty (Romans 6:7) and only blood can pay for our sin (Hebrews 9:22).

Therefore, once we have disobeyed the Torah, which everyone has (Romans 3:23), the Torah can no longer “make us right”, with YHWH (Romans 3:20), only a blood sacrifice can do that.

However, once we receive the blood sacrifice and gain forgiveness for our past sin, can we go on disobeying the Torah? “God forbid!” (Romans 6:15)

If we continue to live in disobedience to the Torah we will once again bring death upon our heads (Romans 6:15; 8:13; Hebrews 6:4-8; 10:26-31).

**Psa 119:89** Forever, O יהוה, Your word stands firm in the heavens.

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**Deu 4:1**  “And now, O Yisra’ěl, listen to the laws and the right-rulings which I am teaching you to do, so that you live, and shall go in and possess the land which יהוה Elohim of your fathers is giving you.

**Deu 4:2**  “Do not add to the Word which I command you, and do not take away from it, so as to guard the commands of יהוה your Elohim which I am commanding you. (See also Deu 12:32; Pro 30:6; Rev 22:18-19)

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**Deu 4:5**  “See, I have taught you laws and right-rulings, as יהוה my Elohim commanded me, to do thus in the land which you go to possess.

**Deu 4:6**  “And you shall guard and do them, for this is your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the peoples who hear all these laws, and they shall say, ‘Only a wise and understanding people is this great nation!’

We are not to add to the Torah or to take anything away from it. We are to obey it ALL without adding to it or taking from it and it is by doing this we gain wisdom and understanding (Psalms 119:95-104).

**Mat 5:17**  “Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to complete.

**Mat 5:18**  “For truly, I say to you, till the heaven and the earth pass away, one yod or one tittle shall by no means pass from the Torah till all be done. (Luke 16:17)

In the above quoted verses, the word “destroy” is the Greek word “καταλύω” (*kataluō*), which is a compound word meaning, “to loosen down”, and refers to a doing away with or reducing or diminishing in some capacity. Scripturally speaking, and in the context of these verses, it refers to causing the Torah to “pass away”.

Modern teachers would have us believe that because of the death, burial and resurrection of Yahushua the Torah no longer applies to us, it has been “done away with” by the blood of Messiah, no longer having relevance in a believer’s life.

The very concept of this is foreign both to the entire Scripture and to what the Messiah Himself, is saying in this very passage.

The word “complete” in verse 17 is the Greek word “πληρόω” (plēroō), which means “to make replete, that is to cram (full)”. This Greek word has the meaning of making something full as in the process of filling something up, like taking a half a glass of water and filling it to the brim.

As we have said before, the Torah cannot be added to nor taken away from, by ANYONE, so the Messiah cannot, in any way, intend for us to interpret this passage, to mean that the law no longer applies to us.

What the Messiah is saying, is that the Torah, in its totality, shall not be diminished from, in any way.

The Torah is as relevant today as it was when it was given three and a half millennia ago, and it remains today the **only** standard of righteous living for which believers can live righteously before YHWH. Consider Ephesians 2:8-10,

**Eph 2:8**  For **by favour you have been saved, through belief**, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of Elohim,

**Eph 2:9**  **it is not by works**, so that no one should boast.

**Eph 2:10**  For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.** (KJV)

I hear the first two verses quoted a lot, but not so much verse 10. No one takes the time to critically think about what is being said here. In fact, your average everyday believer today is not encouraged to think critically about anything the pastor tells them.

Ephesians 2:8-9 clearly teaches that we are “saved by grace through faith” and “not by works”, and we agree wholeheartedly. It is our contention that modern teachers misunderstand what this means. We are saved (justified) from sin and death, by favor only and not works, but what about after that?

Looking at Ephesians 2:10, we see that believers in Yahushua are supposed to walk in the good works that YHWH ordained before the Messiah came to die.

The only standard of “good works” set forth in the Scripture is that which YHWH gave through Moses to the children of Yisra’el on Mount Sinai. The Torah IS the “good works” that YHWH before ordained that we should walk in them.

The word “fulfilled” or “completed” in verse 18 is the Greek word “γίνομαι” (ginomai), which has a wide variety of meanings based on the context in which it is used, however in this context it takes on the meaning of “completely full” or finished.

What's significant about verse 8 is that nothing shall pass from the Torah until **ALL** is completed.

Now, as far as I can tell, there is not a single Christian or Jewish teacher in the world that suggests everything that’s been written in the Scripture has been finished, we are all still waiting for somethings to be finished, i.e. the return of Messiah.

So, according to this passage, the Torah is still relevant and in force today. Any teaching that says the Torah is no longer necessary to live by today, is a false teaching according to YHWH, through Moses (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; 13:1-5) and Messiah Himself (Matthew 5:17-18).

Any teaching that says you don’t have to obey the Torah is teaching you to serve another deity (Deuteronomy 28:14) and no matter how many miracles accompany the teaching, it’s still a false teaching (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Matthew 7:22-23). Any teaching that says Torah “is for Jews” and that Gentiles don’t have to obey it, is a false teaching (Exodus 12:49; Numbers 15:15-16).

**Ecc 3:14**  I know that whatever Elohim does is **forever**. There is no adding to it, and there is no taking from it. Elohim does it, that men should fear before Him.

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**Mal 3:6**  “For I am יהוה, **I shall not change**, and you, O sons of Ya‛aqoḇ, shall not come to an end. (See also: James 1:17)

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**Ecc 1:9**  What has been is what shall be, what has been done is what shall be done, and there is **no** **new matter under the sun**.

The foundational perspective of how to understand Messianic doctrine, is founded on the principles laid out below.

1. YHWH does not change His commands once they are given. (Isaiah 55:11)
2. The Torah (law) that YHWH gave to Moses is as authoritative and binding today as it was when He gave them to Yisra’el on Mount Sinai. (Matthew 5:17-18).
3. Not a single commandment has been done away with, they are all binding today. (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Ecclesiastes 3:14; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19)
4. Messiah did not change the Torah or our obligation to keep it today. (Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 2:17
5. Nothing can be taken from the Torah or added to it by

 anyone. (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Ecclesiastes 3:14;

 Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19 and Deuteronomy

 13:1-5

1. Obeying the Torah is “by definition”; life, good and

 blessing. (Deuteronomy 30)

1. Not obeying the Torah is “by definition”; death, evil

 and a curse. (Deuteronomy 30)

1. Not obeying the Torah is “by definition”; (sin). (1 John 3:4
2. Obeying the Torah is how we live righteously. (Deuteronomy 6:24-25)
3. Obeying the Torah makes us wise and understanding. (Deuteronomy 4:5-6)
4. Though the Torah cannot save us from past sin, it can keep us from sinning in the future, if we obey it. (Romans 6:15-16)

Since all these principles are scripturally true, how then can we understand the writings of Paul, considering our teachers tell us that Paul says, we are no longer required to obey the Torah, or keep the Sabbath, or obey the dietary laws, etc.?

YaH willing, this ministry will help you find answers to your “New Testament” questions in an “Old Testament” (Hebrew) understanding and will explain why the Jews throughout the history of “Christianity” have vehemently rejected the good news of Messiah Yahushua.