

## Ask the Rabbi

### Submitted Question #10:

Christian theology often plays off "law" and "grace" against each other as if the law was obsolete in the new covenant. It is good for Gentiles like me to remember that the offerings in the Temple did not change any law or commandment, so why should the offering of Yeshua make the law obsolete?

### The Rabbi's Answer:

First of all, your statement that Yeshua made the Law obsolete is inaccurate. What was in the process of being made obsolete was the Mosaic Covenant (Hebrews 8:13). That is because it was being replaced by the New Covenant (there is an alternative view to which I do not subscribe, that the *B'rit Chadashah* is a "renewed" covenant). The Law and the Covenant are two different things. The Covenant was God's contract with Israel as to how the Law was to be applied.

In order to understand Paul, it would help to do two things: (1) Forget the English word "law" and (2) start thinking "statute." The word used for "law" in Greek is νόμος (*nomos*), the word used for "commandment" in Greek is ἐντολή (*entolay*), and the word for "law" in Hebrew is חוק which does not appear in the Mosaic Scriptures. What does appear in the Mosaic Scriptures is the word תּוֹרָה (*Torah*) which has the connotation of "God's teaching" or "God's will." Now, in the Mosaic Covenant, the תּוֹרָה also had the force of statutory law in that it carried penalties and was enforceable by the government of Israel. What Paul is saying throughout his writings is that in the New Covenant we have died to the statutory aspect of the Law – not to the תּוֹרָה or teaching of the Law). In his early life, Paul followed the Law as a body of statutes, i.e. legalistically, but was released from legalism by the תּוֹרָה written on his heart and in his mind by the *Ru'ach HaKodesh*. That is why he can say on the one hand that the Command (the statute of law) put him to death and, on the other hand, that the essence of Law (the *Torah* – God's teaching) is good and holy.