4 Attacks Against … Torah Informed Christians

1Pe 3:15 … always *be* ready to *give* a defense (*KJV- answer*) to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear

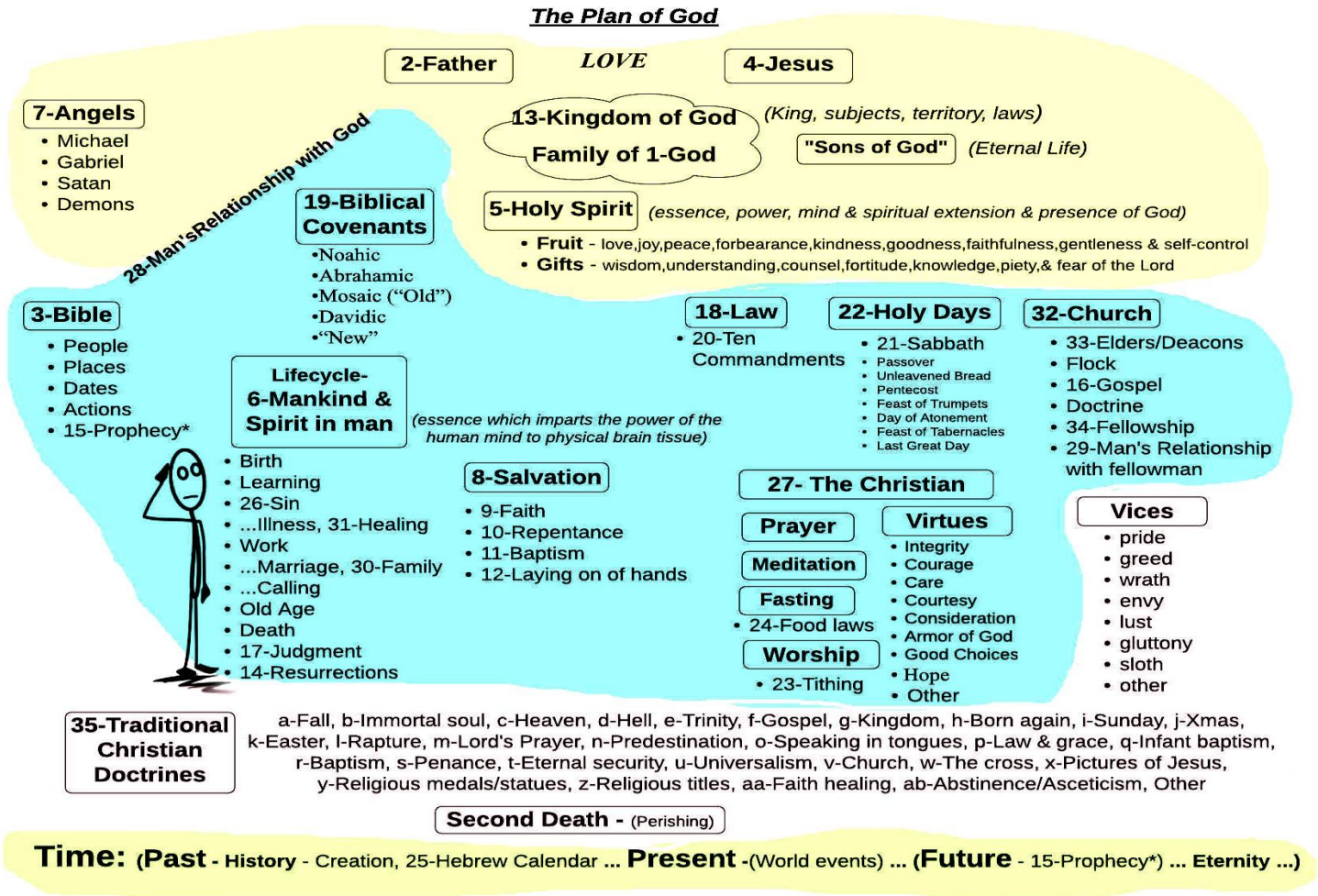
While viewing some family updates from my daughter Shannon (who lives "out west") … I came upon a Facebook advertisement featuring **4 slick graphics** that attack "what we believe" in the Church of God! (… ***How rude!)***

In today's message, we'll explore an area of religion called "apologetics"… which refers to our **defending the faith** against those who may sincerely believe they are "right" … while they teach **error** that might lead some astray! (Sometimes their deception is intentional!?!)

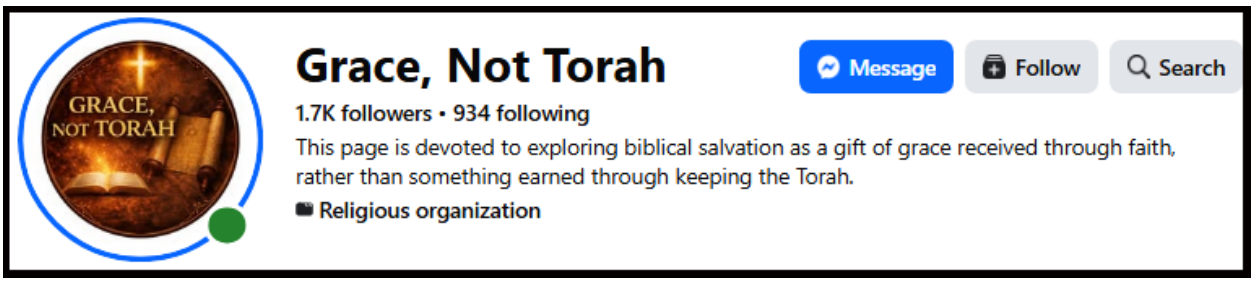
We'll look at their 4 images to first see "***what they are trying to say***" … and then we will look deeply into each image to discern where the problems are with:

- their reasoning,
- their interpretation of scripture, and
- their conclusions

… so we can be **equipped** to know some **techniques** they might be using against us in exploring the subject of being "Torah Informed Christians" or ***any other*** subject of discussion.



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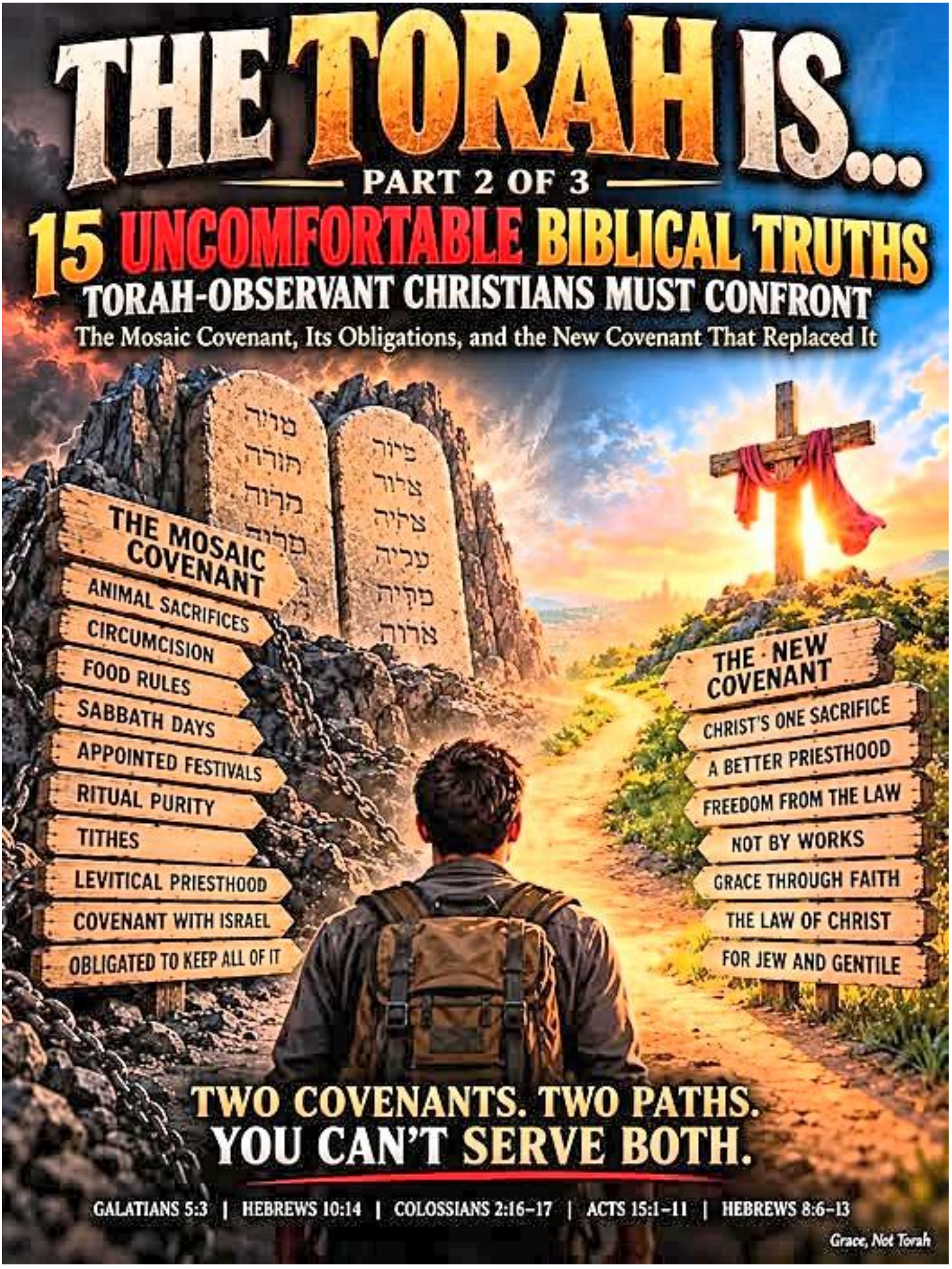


Luk 19:41-44 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will **not leave in you one stone upon another**, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Mat 23:37-38 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! **Your house is left to you desolate**

Mat 24:1-2 Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, **not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.**"

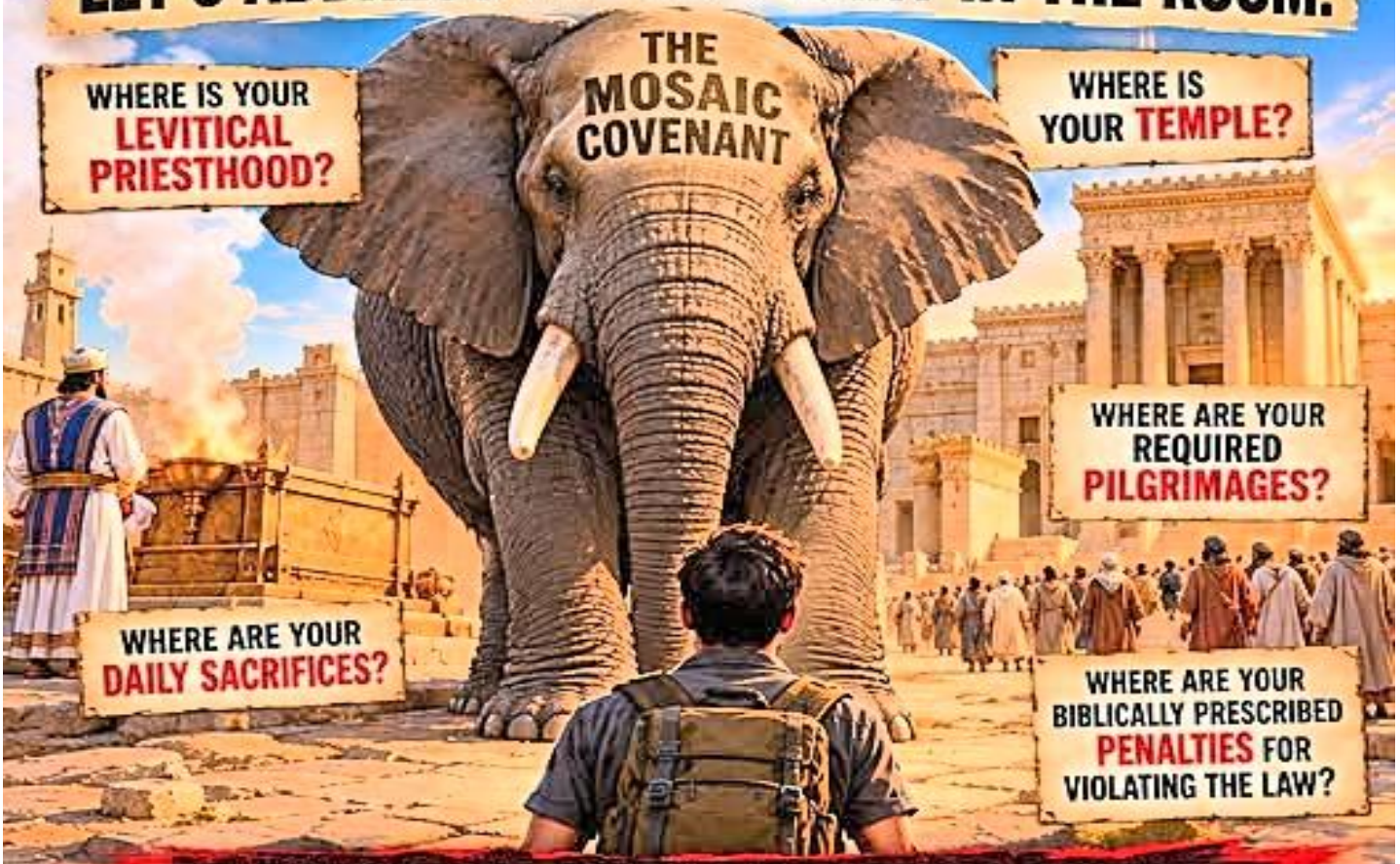

THE TORAH IS...
PART 1 OF 3
THE TORAH
• LAW OF MOSES
• TEN COMMANDMENTS
• ORDINANCES
• RULES
• FIRST FIVE BOOKS
• OLD COVENANT
• GIVEN AT SINAI
LEADS TO DEATH
BRINGS CONDEMNATION
BRINGS WRATH
WAS REPLACED
WAS CANCELED
WAS TEMPORARY
EXPOSES TRANSGRESSIONS
NEVER MADE ANYTHING PERFECT
WAS A GUARDIAN
CANNOT JUSTIFY
AND MORE...
GRACE IN CHRIST
• NOT BY THE LAW
• NOT BY WORKS
• BUT BY FAITH
OLD COVENANT
2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-11
NEW COVENANT
2 CORINTHIANS 3:11
THE TORAH WAS NEVER EVIL.
IT SERVED ITS GOD-GIVEN PURPOSE UNDER THE OLD COVENANT.
JESUS CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED WHAT THE LAW COULD NEVER ACCOMPLISH.
ROMANS 8:3-4 | GALATIANS 3:21-25 | HEBREWS 8:6-13
Grace, Not Torah


THE TORAH IS...
PART 2 OF 3
15 UNCOMFORTABLE BIBLICAL TRUTHS
TORAH-OBSERVANT CHRISTIANS MUST CONFRONT
The Mosaic Covenant, Its Obligations, and the New Covenant That Replaced It
THE MOSAIC COVENANT
ANIMAL SACRIFICES
CIRCUMCISION
FOOD RULES
SABBATH DAYS
APPOINTED FESTIVALS
RITUAL PURITY
TITHES
LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD
COVENANT WITH ISRAEL
OBLIGATED TO KEEP ALL OF IT
THE NEW COVENANT
CHRIST'S ONE SACRIFICE
A BETTER PRIESTHOOD
FREEDOM FROM THE LAW
NOT BY WORKS
GRACE THROUGH FAITH
THE LAW OF CHRIST
FOR JEW AND GENTILE
TWO COVENANTS. TWO PATHS.
YOU CAN'T SERVE BOTH.
GALATIANS 5:3 | HEBREWS 10:14 | COLOSSIANS 2:16–17 | ACTS 15:1–11 | HEBREWS 8:6–13
Grace, Not Torah

THE TORAH IS...

PART 3 OF 3

DEAR TORAH-OBSERVANT CHRISTIANS, LET'S ADDRESS THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.



IF THE MOSAIC COVENANT REMAINS BINDING ON CHRISTIANS, HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

HEBREWS 7:12	HEBREWS 8:13	GALATIANS 3:25	ROMANS 7:6	ROMANS 6:14	ACTS 15
A change in the priesthood necessitates **a change in the law.**	The first covenant **is obsolete.**	We are no **longer under our guardian.**	Believers have been **released from the law.**	Not under the law, **but under grace.**	The apostles **rejected** the demand that Gentile believers **must keep the Law of Moses.**

GOD ESTABLISHED A NEW AND BETTER COVENANT.

HEBREWS 8:6 | SO WHY ARE YOU INSISTING ON THE OLD ONE?

Grace, Not Torah



Exploring … Image #0

- Problem 1 - the mission statement of "Grace, Not Torah" is nice, but it ***misrepresents*** what the Church of God believes!?!

"This page is devoted to exploring biblical **salvation as**
- **<u>a gift of grace received through faith</u>**, rather than
- **<u>something earned through keeping the Torah</u>"**

The Church of God agrees with both points!?!

- Salvation <u>is</u> a gift received through faith (**Eph 2:8-9, Rom 11:6**)
- Salvation is <u>NOT</u> achieved by our works (our keeping the Law) (**Titus 3:5, 2Tim1:9**)



Our reason for being "Torah informed" is not to earn salvation.
We do not believe "salvation by works" or "legalism" - It's a **<u>Straw Man</u>** argument

We <u>do</u> believe … there are two key purposes of God's Law: (Judicial & Educative)

1. To convict us as sinners (law breakers) … who **<u>need</u>** salvation through Jesus
2. To show us the best way to live (Loving God & Loving fellow man) **NOT** lawlessness!

From : CGI Article - <u>Paul & the Law- Understanding the Hard Sayings</u>

When Paul is speaking **negatively** about the law, he is pointing out "the law" is **<u>not a good way to salvation</u>** because we have all sinned / broken the law
When Paul is speaking **positively** about the law … he is speaking about good "rules of life" that show us how to **love** (NOT how we might earn salvation) - God's law reveals **<u>God's standards of righteousness</u>** as seen in scripture (OT & NT)

The woman's quote (in the cartoon) is odd (not quoting scripture)

- The scriptures referenced at the bottom do NOT establish their assertion that the Temple was destroyed ***<u>because</u>*** Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as Messiah !?!
- Actually, the subjugation of Israel (eg by Rome) is clearly prophesied in the Torah because of national unfaithfulness to God (that the Torah predicted)
  Deu 31:29 *(Moses)* For I know that after my *(Moses)* death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." *(also "Blessings & Cursings" **Deu 28, Lev 26**)*

References to the Old Testament being "fulfilled" and the old system "abolished" do not reflect the whole of scripture …

- The new covenant is not described as a "brand new thing" … Instead it is described as a "Renewed covenant" where God's law (not "new" law) is written in human hearts.
  Jer 31:33 But this *is* the covenant that I will make **<u>with</u>** the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, & write it on their hearts
- **Ezek 36** speaks of the Kingdom when Israel regathered, given God's spirit, new heart (… the New covenant is not fully established until the return of Jesus)
- **Heb 8:13** …Now what is **becoming** obsolete and growing old is **ready** to vanish away.

Exploring … Image 1of 3



2Co 3:7-11 But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.
2Co 3:11 For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.

We agree with Paul … the New Covenant when fully present will be better than the Old

Rom 8:3-4 The law was without power, because the law was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son to earth with the same human life that others use for sin. By sending his Son to be an offering to pay for sin, God used a human life to destroy sin. He did this so that we could be the kind of people the law correctly wants us to be. Now we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit.

We agree with Paul …Our keeping the Law cannot save us (& we don't want to be sinful)

Gal 3:21-25 Does this mean that the law is against God's promises? Never! That would be true only if the law could make us right. But God did not give a law that can bring life. Instead, the Scriptures showed that the whole world is bound by sin. This was so the promise would be given through faith to people who believe in Jesus Christ. Before this faith came, we were all held prisoners by the law. We had no freedom until God showed us the way of faith that was coming. In other words, the law was our guardian leading us to Christ so that we could be made right with God through faith. Now the way of faith has come, and we no longer live under a guardian.

*We agree with Paul …Law can't save & **Rom 6:1** We should NOT sin to need more grace*

Heb 8:6-13 But the priestly work that has been given to Jesus is much greater than the work that was given to the other priests. In the same way, the new agreement that Jesus brought from God to his people is much greater than the old one. And the new agreement is based on promises of better things. If there had been nothing wrong with the first agreement, there would have been no need for a second agreement. But God found something wrong with his people. He says: "Look, **the time is coming**, says the Lord, when I will make a new agreement with the people of **Israel** and the people of **Judah**. It will not be like the agreement I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt. But they broke that agreement, and I turned away from them, says the Lord. This is the agreement I will make with the people of Israel at that time, says the Lord. I will put my teachings in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. People will no longer have to teach their neighbors and relatives to know the Lord, because all people will know me, from the least to the most important. I will forgive them for the wicked things they did, and I will not remember their sins anymore." God called this a new agreement, so he has made the first agreement old. And anything that is old and worn out is **ready to disappear**.

Techniques used to Manipulate/Deceive…in the Torah vs New Covenant Debate



Framing the debate -

They are attacking ***"Torah-Observant Christians"*** which they narrowly define as… Christians who must ***enter into*** or ***remain under*** ALL of the Mosaic covenant & ALL its legal requirements

In the Church of God, we might more accurately identify ourselves as …

Torah-informed, New Covenant Christians — It emphasizes the Torah's importance while distinguishing the New Covenant from the Mosaic covenant.

A. Techniques involving Scripture manipulation or selective interpretation

#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
1	Proof-texting	Selecting one verse to establish that the entire Torah has been abolished.	2 Peter 3:16 *(Paul is confusing)*
2	Cherry-picking	Quoting verses about freedom from the law while ignoring verses about **keeping** God's commandments.	Romans 3:31
3	Selective omission	Quoting **part** of a passage while leaving out qualifying statements.	Matt 5:17-19 *(heaven & earth)*
4	Context stripping	Removing a verse from its historical, literary, or covenant context.	Col 2:16-17
5	False generalization	Treating a statement about a particular law or circumstance as applying to every command	Heb 7:12 *(Priesthood changed)*
6	Paul-only interpretation	Using Paul's writings to override or reinterpret Jesus' teachings.	Matt 5:17-19 *(heaven & earth)*
7	Ignoring Old Testament continuity	Treating the Old Testament as irrelevant to Christian doctrine.	2Tim 3:16-17 *(All scripture given)*
8	Ignoring NTestament reinforcement	Overlooking commandments reaffirmed by Jesus and the apostles.	Rom 13:8-10
9	Misusing silence	Arguing that because a commandment is not repeated in exactly the same words, it has disappeared	Matt 4:4 *(live by every word)*
10	Isolating difficult passages	Using a difficult Pauline passage without reconciling it with clearer statements elsewhere	2 Peter 3:15-16 *(Paul is confusing)*

2. Techniques involving misleading terminology



#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
11	Equivocation	Using the word "law" as though it always means the same thing: Torah, sin's penalty, ceremonial regulations, or a governing principle.	Rom 7:22-25
12	Terminology substitution	Replacing "God's commandments" with the less specific expression "Jewish rules."	1 John 5:3
13	Loaded language	Describing obedience as legalism, bondage, or an attempt to earn salvation.	Rom 6:16-18
14	False labeling	Calling all who observe biblical commandments a Judaizer	Acts 15:1-2
15	Category confusion	Treating moral, ceremonial, civil, and sacrificial instructions as though Scripture explicitly classifies them into modern theological categories.	Deu 5:31-33
16	Redefining grace	Presenting grace as permission to disregard God's instructions.	Rom 6:1-2
17	Redefining freedom	Defining Christian liberty as freedom from obedience rather than freedom from the penalty of sin.	Rom 6:18
18	Redefining fulfillment	Assuming that because Jesus fulfilled the Law, its teachings & principles have no continuing relevance	Matt 5:17
19	Old Testament dismissal	Using the expression "Old" Testament to imply that everything contained in it is obsolete.	Luke 24:44-45 *(OT teaches Jesus)*
20	Covenant conflation	Treating the Mosaic covenant & God's underlying standards of righteousness as interchangeable.	Heb 8:10

3. Techniques involving faulty reasoning

#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
21	False dilemma	Presenting only two choices: either obey the Law to earn salvation or reject the Law entirely.	Rom 3:28-31
22	Straw man	Portraying Torah-observant Christians as believing that obedience ***earns*** salvation.	Eph 2:8-10

#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
23	Non sequitur	Concluding that because salvation is by grace, obedience is unnecessary.	Titus 2:11-14
24	Overgeneralization	Concluding that because certain regulations changed, all commandments changed.	Heb 7:12
25	False equivalence	Equating obedience to God with attempting to justify oneself through works.	Jam 2:17-24
26	Circular reasoning	Assuming the Law is abolished because Christians are not under the Law, then using that conclusion to explain every relevant passage.	Romans 6:14-15
27	Argument from association	Associating Sabbath or festival observance with salvation by works simply because some groups teach it incorrectly.	Col 2:16-17
28	Appeal to convenience	Favoring an interpretation because it makes Christian practice easier or more culturally acceptable.	Mat 7:13-14
29	Appeal to tradition	Assuming a popular Christian interpretation must be correct because many churches teach it.	Mark 7:7-9
30	Argument from consequence	Rejecting an interpretation simply because it might lead to uncomfortable obligations.	John 14:15

4. Techniques involving <u>misrepresentation</u> of Jesus & the New Covenant



#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
31	Jesus-versus-Moses framing	Presenting Jesus as contradicting or correcting His Father's previous moral instructions.	John 10:30 *(They are 1!)*
32	Grace-versus-obedience **framing**	Suggesting that grace & obedience are incompatible	John 14:15
33	New Covenant discontinuity	Assuming the New Covenant means an ***entirely new*** set of divine standards.	Jer 31:31-33
34	Externalization argument	Claiming God's Law was merely external and therefore has no place in Christian life.	Heb 8:10

#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
35	Fulfillment equals abolition	Treating fulfillment as synonymous with cancellation.	Matt 5:17-19
36	Jesus-only emphasis	Emphasizing Jesus' sacrifice while overlooking His teaching about obedience.	Matt 19:16-19
37	Selective covenant emphasis	Discussing the New Covenant's better promises but ignoring its written-on-the-heart commands	Heb 8:6-10
38	Blood-of-Christ misapplication	Suggesting that because Christ paid for sin, God's definition of sin has changed or disappeared.	1John 3:4-5
39	Love replaces commandments	Teaching that love makes specific commandments unnecessary.	1John 5:2-3
40	Spirit-versus-Law dichotomy	Presenting the Holy Spirit as replacing the need for God's commandments.	Rom 8:4



5. Techniques involving the <u>misuse</u> of particular New Testament passages
These are especially important because many discussions about the Torah being "abolished" repeatedly revolve around a relatively small number of passages.

#	Technique	Passage commonly used	Important counter-reading
41	Romans 6:14 absolutism	"Not under law but under grace."	Rom 6:15 asks whether this means we may sin.
42	Romans 7:6 oversimplification	"Released from the law."	Rom 7:7-12 describes the Law as holy, just, and good.
43	Romans 10:4 misinterpretation	Christ is the end of the law.	Examine the meaning of *telos*, including goal or culmination.
44	Galatians 3:25 isolation	"We are no longer under a tutor."	Gal 3:24-29 concerns the Law's role in leading to Christ.
45	Galatians 5:1 expansion	Freedom from bondage means freedom from Torah.	Examine the immediate context of circumcision & justification.
46	Ephesians 2:15 generalization	Christ abolished the law of commandments.	Examine the context of hostility, separation, and Jew-Gentile reconciliation.

#	Technique	Passage commonly used	Important counter-reading
47	Colossians 2:14 simplification	The handwriting of requirements means the ***entire*** Torah was nailed to the cross.	Examine the debt record, forgiveness, & surrounding context.
48	Colossians 2:16 dismissal	Nobody can judge Christians regarding Sabbaths or festivals because they no longer matter.	Examine verse 17 and its description of shadow and substance.
49	Hebrews 7:12 expansion	A change in the priesthood means the entire Law was abolished.	Examine what changed in priesthood & administration.
50	1 Timothy 1:9 misuse	The Law is not made for a righteous person, so Christians do not need it.	Examine the Law's purpose & the context of lawless behaviour

6. Techniques involving psychology, persuasion, & social pressure



#	Technique	How it is used	Scriptures
51	Fear conditioning	Suggesting that examining Torah continuity will lead to legalism or loss of salvation.	2 Tim 1:7
52	Guilt manipulation	Making people feel guilty for wanting to understand or obey biblical commandments.	Acts 17:11
53	Group conformity	Suggesting that faithful Christians should simply accept the church's established interpretation.	Rom 12:2
54	Authority intimidation	Discouraging questions by implying that only trained theologians can interpret these passages.	Acts 17:11
55	Ridicule	Making Sabbath or festivals appear foolish or outdated.	Gal 4:16
56	Poisoning the well	Describing Torah-observant teachers as heretics before examining their actual arguments.	Prov 18:13
57	Selective historical narrative	Presenting early Christianity as though all Jewish practices immediately disappeared.	Acts 21:20-24
58	Moving the goalposts	Changing the standard of evidence whenever a commandment's New T continuity is demonstrated	Isaiah 8:20
59	Suppression of Q's	Discouraging believers from investigating difficult passages	1 Thes 5:21
60	False certainty	Presenting disputed interpretations as though there is no legitimate interpretive question.	Prov 18:17



Exploring … Image 2 of 3

- "The Mosaic Covenant, Its Obligations, & the New Covenant that replaced it"
  (Actually …
  - (33) the New Cov does NOT obliterate the old … it is a renewed covenant
  - (22) we are not trying to earn salvation via the obligations (7) the OT is relevant to Christian doctrine (13) obligations are not legalism (20) God <u>has</u> standards of righteousness that are not thrown away

- "Two covenants. Two paths. You can't serve both"
  (Actually …
  - (7) the OT is relevant to Christian doctrine
  - (21) False dilemma … both covenants have teaching from God
  - (24) Overgeneralization -- not "everything" changed
  - (32) Poor framing -- grace & obedience are NOT incompatible
  - (35) Fulfillment does NOT equal cancellation

- Gal 5:3 -
  - (45) Freedom from bondage does not mean freedom from Torah
  *- I am saved through Christ, and I study God's instructions to understand how to live obediently under the New Covenant. I believe we should examine each commandment in its biblical & covenantal context rather than assuming either that **everything** continued <u>unchanged</u> or that **everything** was **abolished**.*

- Heb 10:14 - For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified
  - (5) - False generalization - Jesus fulfilling sacrifices does not abolish all of the OT
  - (24) - Overgeneralization - Because certain regulations changed, NOT all does



- Col 2:16-17 - So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival

- (48) … but the Body of Christ - you are not judged for things abolished
- (8) Ignoring NT reinforcement - We have examples of Jesus & others

- Acts 15:1-11 - Jerusalem conference Re: Circumcision
  - (40) - Spirit vs Law dichotomy - Holy Spirit does not replace law
  - (7) - the OT is relevant to setting Christian doctrine

- Heb 8:6-13 - He is also Mediator of a better covenant
  - (21) False dilemma … both covenants have teaching from God
  - (33) New Cov discontinuity - Assuming New Cov means entirely new standards



Exploring … Image 3 of 3

- Torah-***Informed*** Christians are NOT trying to keep ALL elements of the Mosaic covenant (eg sacrifices, priesthood, Temple worship) … We understand that **God's standards of righteousness** as seen in scripture (OT & NT) are ***still*** the model that we need to follow as we follow the example of Jesus & faithful Christians

- *From the CGI-STP Biblical Covenants*- "The offer of the New Covenant to the world as a whole is a future event. Thus, its full effect will not occur until the return of Christ and His thousand-year reign. But God today is calling people to His Church and the accompanying New Covenant relationship, and a few elect individuals are responding. Upon repentance and baptism these individuals can receive God's Holy Spirit and enter into this New Covenant (Mt. 26:26–27; Heb. 10:9–10); and those who indeed will abide by its terms (acceptance of Christ's sacrifice and God's grace, obedience, faith, etc.) shall receive its incredible promises of eternal inheritance and immortality within the Family of God."

- God established a new & better covenant. **So why are you insisting on the old one?**
  We're not?!? We use scripture & reason to assess God's standards & our conduct & worship reflects this.


Which Old Testament Laws Apply Today?

- **"…**Which OT laws should we keep today? ***All of them.***
  We keep - retain - every stroke of the pen of God's law, & we study that law to discern the ***meaning*** & ***intent*** of that law. We then ***carry out*** the ***spirit*** of the law in our daily lives.
  We recognize that the law of Moses is a ***perfect expression of the will of God*** as it applied to those people in that time & in those circumstances. It would be the height of folly to treat that law with distain or to ignore it, for it forms the ***foundation*** of the ***way of life*** Jesus enjoins on all of His servants.

Mat_5:18 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.

Today we explored over ***60 techniques of deception*** used by those who want their ideas to prevail. As Paul warns us…

Col 2:4, 8 – "I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments... See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition.

In a secure congregation, we can come together to navigate clever arguments & outright error - we don't need to confront this error alone!

