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Romans 10:4

Is Messiah the end of the law?

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By: Chuck Henry



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1. Introduction

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Rom 10:4

For **Messiah is the end of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Many say this verse means that the Messiah *ended* the law, that is, the Torah, which contains Yahweh's commands and instructions.

**This issue is important because it affects whether we accept the Torah and obey Yahweh's commandments.**

Since the text says that Messiah is the end of the law for righteousness, does this mean that Yahweh's law, His Torah, has ended?

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2. The meaning of the word “end”

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In Romans 10:4, the word “end” is translated from the word **telos** in the Greek text.

*Strong’s* dictionary entry for this word states:

G5056 **telos**, from a primary **tello** (to *set out* for a definite point or *goal*); prop. the point aimed at as a *limit*, i.e. (by impl.) the *conclusion* of an act or state (*termination* [lit., fig., or indef.], *result* [immediate, ultimate or prophetic], *purpose*); spec. an *impost* or *levy* (as *paid*).”

Further study confirms that *telos* in Romans 10:4 refers to the goal, object, aim, or **end result** of the law, not its termination.

Accordingly, the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 1168, defines *telos* as “**the object or aim.**”

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3. Other Scriptures which use the word “telos”

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Comparing other verses containing the word *telos* demonstrates and confirms its meaning.

### 3.1 Rom 6:21-22

Rom 6:21–22

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the **end [telos]** of those things is death.

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of Yahweh, you have your fruit to holiness, and the **end [telos]**, everlasting life.

**Note:** These verses are in the *same* letter to the Romans.

If *telos* means the *termination* of the things referred to, then we have the following:

- Verse 21: The *termination* of shameful things in our life is death.
- Verse 22: Freedom from sin, slavery to Yahweh, and fruit unto holiness result in *terminating* everlasting life.

Obviously, this does not represent the correct interpretation of these verses. However, if *telos* means the *end result*, the goal, or the aim, we have the following:

- Verse 21: The *end result* of *shameful* things in our life is death.
- Verse 22: The *end result* of freedom from sin, slavery to Yahweh, and fruit unto holiness is everlasting life!

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3. Other Scriptures which use the word “telos”

## 3.2 1 Tim 1:5

1 Tim 1:5

Now the purpose [KJV: “end”; *telos*] of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.

- Does this verse say that the commandment has *ended*?
- Certainly not, however, the commandment’s *end result* or *purpose* is “love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.”

## 3.3 Jam 5:11

Jam 5:11

Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by Yahweh [KJV: “have seen the end (*telos*) of Yahweh”]--that Yahweh is very compassionate and merciful.

- Does this verse mean that we have seen Yahweh cease to exist?
- Certainly not, however, we have seen the *end result* of Yahweh--that He is “very compassionate and merciful.”

## 3.4 1 Pet 1:9

1 Pet 1:9

Receiving the end [*telos*] of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

- Does this verse state that faith has *ended*?
- Certainly not, however, the *end result*, goal, or aim of faith brings us “the salvation of our souls.”

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4. A Fresh Look at Romans 10:4 and *Telos*

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With the meaning of “end” [*telos*] freshly in mind, let us review Romans 10:4, quoted again here for convenience:

Rom 10:4

For **Messiah is the end [*telos*] of the law** for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- Does this verse say that the Messiah *ended* the law?
- Certainly not; instead, by the type of life he lived, he is the *end result*, goal, or aim of the law’s instructions concerning how to live.
- Now that we know that Romans 10:4 says that Messiah is the *end result*, goal, or aim of the law “to everyone who believes,” what does this mean for us today? It means that we should follow his lead. Good disciples emulate their teacher.

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5. Further study of the Biblical use of the word “end”

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Deu 17:20

That his [i.e., the King’s] heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom [KJV: “to the **end** that he may prolong his days in his kingdom”], he and his children in the midst of Israel.

Here, the KJV translators used the word “end” in the same sense as in Romans 10:4. The *end result, goal, or aim* is that the king would “prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children...”



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6. Further study of the context of Romans 10

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### 6.1 Rom 10:5

Rom 10:5

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, **the man who does those things shall live by them.**

Here, Paul quoted from Leviticus 18:5—

Lev 18:5

5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, **which if a man does, he shall live by them:** I am Yahweh.

Paul carried these words to their logical end to emphasize the need for redemption. If we had no sin, we would need no redemption. But as Paul previously explained in this same letter to the Romans, all have sinned:

Rom 3:23

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of Yahweh.

Since all have sinned, all need redemption, and we cannot redeem ourselves. Redemption has always come from Yahweh. The idea that anyone could ever redeem themselves from sin is foreign to the entire Bible.

### 6.2 Rom 10:6-8

Continuing with the text in Romans 10, here are verses 6-8:

Rom 10:6-8

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Messiah down from above)

7 or, Who will descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead).

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## 6. Further study of the context of Romans 10

8 But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach).

Here, Paul refers to Deuteronomy 30:11-14 —

Deu 30:11–14

11 For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off [NIV: “not too difficult for you or beyond your reach”].

12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?

13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?

14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

- **Question:** *Is it too difficult to keep Yahweh’s commandments?* The Bible answers no.
- Likewise, it is not too difficult to follow the Messiah, who is the *end result* of the law, and live faithfully to Yahweh.

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7. Historical Context of Paul's Writings

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It is crucial to consider the historical context of Paul's letters. In Paul's day, the law was accepted as valid and not abolished, but Paul had to contend with people rejecting the Messiah. In other words, the environment was *Pro-Law*, but *Anti-Messiah*; therefore, Paul emphasized the Messiah. By the way, he also spoke highly of the law (e.g., Rom 7:12).

In our day, however, the situation is turned **180 degrees opposite!** The Messiah is accepted, but the law is rejected. In other words, the setting is *Pro-Messiah*, but *Anti-Law*. Reading Paul's letters with a mindset opposite to the prevailing point of view with which he dealt skews the meaning of his writings. On the other hand, reading Paul's letters with the proper historical setting in mind promotes understanding of his writings.

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8. Conclusion

## 8. Conclusion

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Many say that the Messiah *ended* the law.

Romans 10:4 teaches us that the Messiah is the *end result*, goal, or aim of the law “to everyone who believes.” What does this mean for us? It means that we should follow his lead. Good disciples emulate their teacher. Moreover, the Messiah left us an example that we should follow his steps:

1 Pet 2:21-22

21 For to this you were called, because Messiah also suffered for us, leaving us **an example, that you should follow his steps:**

22 Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth.

In addition to the previous evidence already put forth showing that Romans 10:4 does not teach that Yahweh’s Law has ended, we find the following declarations:

1 Joh 5:2-3

2 By this we know that we love the children of Yahweh, when we love Yahweh and **keep His commandments.**

3 For this is the love of Yahweh, that we **keep His commandments.** And His commandments are **not burdensome.**

Yahshua is on record in Matthew 4:4, quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3 —

Mat 4:4

But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

Yahshua also stated:

Mat 5:17

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

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8. Conclusion

Fulfill does not mean destroy. If it did, the text would read, “I am not come to destroy, but to destroy.”

## In closing...

Heb 12:1–2

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Yahshua, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the stake, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of Yahweh.

Let us look to our example, who lived his life in such accord with his Father’s instructions that it can be said that he is the *end result*, goal, or aim of the law.

And let us receive the end [*telos*] of our faith—the salvation of our souls.

1 Pet 1:9

Receiving the end [*telos*] of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

