

Torah Teachings

Biblical Definitions: “Lawlessness”

Source: “*Messiah – Volume 1 – Understanding His Life and Teachings In Hebraic Context*” by Avi Ben Mordechai

NOTE: I have added my comments in square brackets as such [].

LAWLESSNESS

In the *Tanakh*, lawlessness can be derived from the Hebrew word אָוֵן *aven*, Strong’s number 205, meaning iniquity, wickedness and sorrow. Also, the Hebrew word אָוָה *avah*, Strong’s number 5753, plays into the sense with a meaning of bending, twisting, distorting and perverting.

The Greek word *anomia* (Strong’s Number 458) is again and again translated “iniquity” or “lawlessness” In the *B’rit Cbadashah*. it is derived from Strong’s number 459, *anomos*, which means “*avoid of the Mosaic Law*” and “*transgression of G-d’s commandments written down for Moshe at Mount Sinai.*” *Anomos* can also refer to contempt and violation of law or departure from law in a general sense. However, unless otherwise noted by context, such as in a setting of Greek and Roman law, Y’shua HaMashiach [Yeshua/Jesus The Messiah] and the *B’rit Chadashah* writers most-often used the idea of “lawlessness” to describe a devious attitude or lifestyle with respect to rebellion against the Mosaic commandments of the Hebrew Torah. To help us understand this Yochanan [John] wrote in his first epistle, Chapter 3 verse 4:

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.
(1 Yochanan [John] 3:4)

Based on the Hebraic perception that **sin is lawlessness** (iniquity) and sin (iniquity) refers to a lifestyle contrary to the Mosaic Law, Israel is said to have sinned and committed iniquity against G-d and His Torah commandments in *Mizmor* (Psalm) 106:

Verse 6: We have sinned like our fathers, we have committed iniquity, (lawlessness) we have behaved wickedly... [Emphasis mine]

Verse 35: But they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices... [Emphasis mine]

Verse 36: And served their idols, which became a snare to them. [Emphasis mine]

In *Mizmor* 119:133 and 125:5, the great King David further defined lawlessness (iniquity) in reference to those who turn away from the Torah:

Establish my footsteps in Thy word, and do not let any iniquity (lawlessness) have dominion over me. [Emphasis mine]

*But as for those who turn aside to their crooked ways, **the Lord will lead them away with the doers of iniquity** (lawlessness). Peace be upon Israel. [Emphasis mine]*

Hundreds of years later in Jewish history, the prophet Dani'el besought the L-rd on behalf of Israel confessing the sins of his fathers and calling the sins of his people "iniquity":

*Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, **we have sinned, committed iniquity** (lawlessness), **acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances.** (Dani'el 9:4-5) [Emphasis mine]*

When Y'shua [Yeshua/Jesus] spoke concerning the idea of sin and lawlessness, He referred to attitudes of inward and outward contempt against keeping the Torah commandments of Sinai. This is pictured in the following verses:

*Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; **depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.**" (Mattityahu [Matthew] 7:22-23) [Emphasis mine – NOTE: The ones being addressed here are those who are not obedient to keeping/doing the Torah. They are doing things their own way. They are more interested in keeping/doing the traditions of men than being obedient to Yahweh's Teachings and Instructions--Torah.]*

*The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will **gather** out of His kingdom **all stumbling blocks** [This includes Jews who are not obedient to Torah as well as believers in Christianity], and **those who commit lawlessness**... (Mattityahu [Matthew] 13:41) [Emphasis mine – NOTE: Who do you think these "stumbling blocks are?" To find out, you will need to read the Scriptural definition on "Stumbling Block."]*

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but **inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.** (Mattityahu [Matthew] 23:27-28) [Emphasis mine]*

*And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you... "And **because lawlessness is increased,** most people's love will grow cold." (Mattityahu [Matthew] 24:3, 12) [Emphasis mine]*

Even the great Sha'ul (Paul) understood that one who is lawless is also not committed to the Mosaic Law. Hence, he wrote the following words to the believers in the cities of Corinth, Thessalonica and personally to Titus:

*Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have **righteousness and lawlessness**, or what fellowship has light with **darkness**? (2 Corinthians 6:14) [Emphasis mine]*

*Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the son of destruction.... (2 Thessalonians 2:3) [Emphasis mine]*

*...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might **redeem us from every lawless deed** and purify for Himself **a people for His own possession**, zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:13-14) [Emphasis mine]*

Interestingly, the above phrase, “a people for His own possession” alludes to *Shemot* (Exodus) 19:5 and G-d’s commandment to the Israelites to obey and keep His covenant:

*Now then, if you will indeed **obey My voice** and **keep My covenant**, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. [Emphasis mine]*

On this idea, G-d defines “His people” as those who keep His covenant given to Moshe. These are His possession among all the peoples. (More on this in Chapter four of the second volume of this teaching series. [NOTE: You will need to purchase his book to get the rest of the story.])

I hope this sheds some light upon the Biblical definition of “Lawlessness” compared to what man has defined “Lawlessness” to be. It makes a big difference when we use the Bible as our dictionary. Especially the Old Covenant/Testament since the New Covenant/Testament did not exist at the time Yeshua/Jesus was here.

Shalom,

One Crying In The Wilderness



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