

# The Owner's Manual

*What Every Christian should know about  
The Law of Moses*

Volume Two:  
What Maimonides Missed

By

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## What Maimonides Missed

### Filling in the gaps

We've reached the end of Maimonides' list of 613 *mitzvot*, or Torah precepts—supposedly the complete picture of God's instructions transmitted to us through Moses in the first five books of the Bible. If you're like me, you're feeling a little disappointed, maybe even a bit angry, that the Rambam and the sages upon which he relied missed so much that's patently obvious to even the casual observer this side of Calvary. In light of what we've discovered by paying close attention to the Torah, a quick survey of Maimonides' list reveals that it contains nowhere near 613 unique points of agreement with Yahweh's instructions. By my count, there are 86 pointless duplicates or corollaries which clearly don't deserve to be listed separately, 70 misstatements, twisted quotes, or outright perversions of the Torah's text, 78 significant omissions, misinterpretations, or unwarranted extrapolations, and 74 blatant instances of missed or ignored significance (and I was extremely generous here—the evidence of rabbinical cluelessness is ubiquitous). In other words, Maimonides dropped the ball in half the precepts he covered.

But by examining the Torah's actual text, we've been able to identify the broad sweep of God's instructions in the areas Maimonides assumed he'd covered. And with the benefit of twenty-twenty hindsight in the light of Yahshua's finished work, we should now have a new appreciation of the Torah's prophetic revelation of His role in achieving our redemption, atonement, and cleansing. The question is, now that we can perceive the rabbis' failure to discern Yahweh's plan and purpose as revealed in the passages they *did* cover, can we trust their claim to have identified all of the issues raised in the Torah? I, for one, doubt it.

And that, my friends, is the *raison d'être* of this present work, *The Owner's Manual, Volume 2: What Maimonides Missed*. Here's my *modus operandi*. First, I scanned the entire Pentateuch for instances where Yahweh was telling somebody—*anybody*—to do something. (This includes the places where Moses is seen issuing instructions that clearly originated with Yahweh, though the text doesn't say "And Yahweh said..."). Next, I reviewed the Torah passages that were quoted previously in the context of Maimonides' 613 Mitzvot, and removed the overlaps from my working list. Repeats of precepts we've already seen were deleted as well. What's left is a compendium of scripture passages to which Maimonides did not refer and that did not arise in the course of our exploration of his list. Some of this is small snippets of scripture that fell between the cracks; some broader subjects Maimonides skipped altogether; whether out of

carelessness or an agenda of obfuscation remains to be seen. I tried to be scrupulous in my perception of God's instruction, however. I did not restrict myself to passages that begin, "And Yahweh commanded Moses, saying...." However you slice it, the number of Torah prescriptions that were overlooked in Volume I is prodigious. The raw scripture in my working file (before I formatted it and added any commentary) filled 85 pages. That ought to tell us *something*.

What can we expect to see? Having covered so much of the Torah already, we should have a reasonably good feel for the general mindset of Yahweh, and we're going to see more of that—more instruction about the human condition, our failures and what to do about them, and the connection between a holy God and His people. Maimonides glossed over quite a bit of information about the priesthood, the Levites, and the temple. So we'll go back and review what he missed in those areas. And there is a whole body of scriptural instruction defining the promised Land—a confusing and seemingly contradictory maze of geographical description that the Rambam, a Spanish Rabbi who settled in Cairo, scrupulously avoided.

Maimonides covered quite a few of the scriptures concerning the offerings and sacrifices described in the Torah, and we will endeavor to finish that job. He skimmed over much of the instruction concerning the symbolic appointments Yahweh scheduled with His people throughout the year—and he missed their significance entirely. So we will revisit the seven *miqrym* and other events God set apart for our edification. There are things he missed concerning man's relationship with his fellow man; we'll pick up the slack there. And finally, there is a significant amount of warning and admonition, especially in Deuteronomy—promises of blessing or cursing that depend solely upon how seriously God's people regard His word.

When we're through, we will have discussed virtually everything God said to do in the first five books of the Bible. As we've already established, however, most of Yahweh's instructions are symbolic: He is telling His people to rehearse, to act out as if on stage, the various elements or details of His plan of redemption. The Sabbath *means* something. Circumcision *means* something. The formula for making the priestly incense *means* something. Practically every facet of the Torah's beautiful gemstone reflects something external, something beyond the jewel itself. They reflect the light of Yahweh, His love, His glory, His purpose, His plan. If we look no further than the precepts themselves, we rob ourselves of a beautiful, fulfilling experience—the experience of knowing God.

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A word about format: you'll recall that in Volume One, I listed the precepts by number (1-613, the order being provided by Judaism 101). A mitzvah summary, based on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, was then given (set in *italics*), and this was followed by the actual Torah text from which the mitzvah was derived (set in **boldface** type). Only then did I wade in with my commentary.

For this present volume, the format will look similar, but of necessity, some things will have changed. The numbering system is totally without significance this time. It's only there so we can easily reference other precepts. I will begin at #614, not because Maimonides' 613-mitzvah system had any real merit, but simply to avoid confusion. As before, a summary statement in italics for each numbered observation will be provided. But this time, the synopsis is my own, and thus should be taken no more seriously that we did with the Rambam's mitzvah statements. Indeed, I intend to use the summary statements as an opportunity to get to the heart of each precept or principle in a nutshell, not to merely restate the obvious. The *real* information, as before, will be in boldface type—the salient passage from the Torah. And as before, my commentary will follow.

Though my purpose is to provide as comprehensive a survey of the Torah as possible, I am fully aware that I'm going to miss some things. Forgive me; I'm only human, seeing things "through a glass, darkly." I pray that Yahweh's *Ruach Qodesh* will teach you where I've failed, making God's Word "a lamp to your feet and light to your path."

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