

## Noahide Laws or Noachide Laws

We received the following question in an email recently:

*"I have recently become aware of something called the Noahide laws apparently promoted by some Lubavitcher Jewish Rabbis as being the way for non-Jews to live acceptable lives. This idea has been introduced to some world leaders among them George W. Bush and the Pope. Apparently, beheading is the penalty for idolatry under these laws, and confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord would constitute idolatry. Is this some sort of likelihood as an end times scenario, or would you think it is of little consequence and maybe Anti-Semitic propaganda? Thank You for your consideration."*

**Setterfield:** I am familiar with the Noahide (or from the Hebrew, Noachide) approach advocated by some Rabbis as a way to incorporate Gentiles into the Jewish religion. The first mention of this is in the Babylonian Talmud, which itself originated somewhere between 200 AD and 500 AD. In this Talmudic tradition, it was pointed out that the whole of humanity were the sons of Noah. Therefore, they were thereby obliged to keep these 7 Laws which were meant to originate from God's Covenant with Noah. If a Gentile kept those 7 Laws they were considered "righteous" and thereby worthy of heaven. These Laws have been traditionally enumerated as follows:

1. Do not deny God.
2. Do not blaspheme God.
3. Do not murder.
4. Do not engage in sexual immorality, bestiality or homosexual relations.
5. Do not steal.
6. Do not eat flesh taken from a living animal (that is with its life-blood still in it).
7. Establish courts and a legal system to uphold these laws.

However, while these seven laws are very good in and of themselves, they are a relatively recent development within Judaism from a Talmudic tradition only, it has no mention in the New Testament. It was therefore not a practical consideration at the time of Christ and the Apostles. It is claimed that the Scriptural warrant for this approach comes from God's commands to Noah in Genesis 9, as well as to Adam and Eve. The symbol of the rainbow is often used by Noahide groups as the Laws are claimed to be part of the rainbow covenant of Genesis 9 with all the earth. But the 7th Law about establishing a legal system and courts does not appear in those early chapters of Genesis.

Various rabbinic sources have added to these 7 Laws, so that some have stipulated that as many as 30 Laws should be observed. As you mention, those sons of Noah or Gentiles (all of humanity except the Jews) which do not follow these Laws must suffer the penalty of beheading. That is according to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 56 a. Yet this is not mentioned specifically in Genesis 9 and so is a gratuitous addition to God's comments. So are these additional 30 Laws, and other traditions. Interestingly, proponents of this system from the time of Maimonides (about 1200 AD) right up to the time of Rabbi Schneerson (about 1990) have considered Christians to be in violation of these Laws because of Trinitarian concepts and the person of Yeshua (Jesus). They therefore require the death penalty. Some modern rabbis state that this is only a maximum penalty and other lesser penalties are appropriate.

As far as beheading and the end-times is concerned, I am personally of the opinion that most Christian martyrs that are going to be beheaded for their faith will suffer this fate from the hands of the Islamic community. Those treated in such a fashion by the Jewish community will be miniscule compared with

the Islamic version. Already, since its inception, Islamic jihad had killed over 60 million Christians, many by beheading. Daniel 8 and 11 read in conjunction with history suggest that Antichrist may come from an Islamic country (Turkey). So the Islamic religion is probably where the chief danger to Christians will arise, not from the Jewish community, even though some can be extremely zealous.

There is one final comment about all this. In the early church, Gentiles were accepting the Lord in large numbers while the Jewish response was more limited. The time came to make a decision as to what laws should be imposed on the Gentiles in this context. There was a great gathering about this in Jerusalem, and the whole situation is discussed in Acts 15. Here are a few relevant verses from that chapter (which I suggest you might like to look up). The chairman of the meeting was James. He stated:

*"Men and brothers, listen to me. Peter has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this agree the words of the prophets as it is written 'After this (that is after I have visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for my name) I will return and build again the dynasty of David...so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.' Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled and from blood."*

The Council then wrote letters to all the churches to that effect. Note that not even the keeping of the Sabbath was commanded the Gentiles. Furthermore there are only 3 or 4 "abstinences," not 7 Laws to enforce. The decision of this council is meant to be God's normality for Gentile Christians, not the Noahide Laws imposed by these modern branches of Judaism.

I hope that answers your questions. Get back to me if there are any further problems.

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[https://www.barrysetterfield.org/Noahide\\_Laws.html](https://www.barrysetterfield.org/Noahide_Laws.html)