

WHAT DOES "THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE" REALLY MEAN? : PT. 1

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As some of my readers will already know, there are so many people today -- both worldly people, and even some of our Christian brethren -- who either knowingly, or possibly due to ignorance, misuse the Bible verse that is contained in the title of this series. We sometimes hear it said in our favorite TV shows, in a movie, or somewhere else. But quite often, the people who are quoting it don't even understand what the verse actually means, much less who first said it, and where it originated from. They may not even know that it is actually a verse from the Bible! How sad!

Quite frankly, as a Bible-believing Christian, what irks me the most is the fact that such people quote only part of the verse, which opens the door for them to distort the true meaning of the phrase in whatever way they please. In other words, that word "truth" can be interpreted to mean whatever "truth" is being promoted in that particular television show or movie. In short, the word loses its real intended meaning

as spoken by Jesus in John 8:32, as we see here:

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 8:32, KJV

So tell me; isn't it time to set the record straight by clearly explaining what the verse REALLY means, and not just what some television executive, movie producer or director, script writer or actor wants you to think it means? As I've mentioned a number of times before, most people in movieland -- which I personally refer to as -- "Unholywood" -- and the modern entertainment industry have no or very little respect for the Bible. They may use it as a source for some of their movie plots, but they don't truly honor it as the inspired Word of God. After all, if they did respect the Bible, they would not be so quick to use artistic license as a means to grossly distort some of its stories.

I am sure that many of you will know what I'm talking about. They will change names and/or places, alter events, insert fictitious characters, and do whatever else they feel may be necessary, in order to make the story flow, and to produce a more exciting movie that will draw in the crowds. Of course, Hollywood has always done this. However, there was a time a number of decades ago, when movie producers demonstrated at least a small degree of respect for the sacredness of the Scriptures and the Divine.

I am reminded of a few of the early movies which centered around the life of Jesus, or in which the Lord appeared. In said movies, they never showed Jesus' face. One well-known example with which you are undoubtedly familiar is 1959's "Ben-Hur", starring Charlton Heston and Stephen Boyd in the leading roles. "The Robe" -- a 1953 Christian-oriented film starring Richard Burton, Jean Simmons and Victor Mature -- is another movie where the Lord's face is never revealed.

But boy how things have changed in our modern day! I cannot even keep track of how many different versions of Jesus we have seen over the years! But please don't get me wrong. I'm not saying that it is necessarily wrong to show an actor's face when they play the part of Jesus. In fact, I think it makes for a better movie or television show, because we can more intimately connect with the character of our Savior, as portrayed by the actor. We simply need to make sure that we do not begin to idolize that actor, as sometimes occurs.

In my opinion, a few actors have done a rather excellent job in playing the part. For example, I am reminded of the 1977 TV mini-series "Jesus of Nazareth" starring Robert Powell in the leading role. Although Powell admitted that he was not a religious person himself, his portrayal of the Savior was really quite powerful. Directed by Franco Zeffirelli, the four-part series keeps the viewer spellbound from beginning to end. I also liked Brian Deacon in the 1979 movie "The Jesus Film", which very closely follows the Gospel of Luke.

In fact, it may interest some of my readers to know that you can download the "Jesus Film Project" app to your iPhone or your Android phone and watch this excellent movie for free, along with hundreds of other free Christian-oriented movies, mini-series and short films. The developers of the app state that they will add more content to the app as time goes by.

However, sometimes Hollywood does things which are really beyond being ridiculous. A case in point is the 2014 movie entitled "Noah", starring Russell Crowe in the lead role, Jennifer Connelly and Anthony Hopkins. Folks, honestly, that movie really made my jaw drop! Like many other people who viewed "Noah", my initial reaction upon reaching the movie's conclusion was "What in the world was that?" It was just that bad. What am I talking about? Let me briefly tell you.

The minute that the so-called "rock giants" made their first appearance in the early moments of the film, I realized that "Noah" was in very serious trouble. Sadly, from that point forward, it was simply downhill to the very end. From rock giants, to mysterious glowing stones, to a magical seed which sprouts an entire forest in seconds, to a storm which goes from rain drops to gigantic ocean waves encompassing the Ark in mere seconds, to Noah himself being depicted as a maniacal psychopath who is bent on making certain that the entire human race perishes, everything about this film was just wrong.

I haven't even addressed the blatant Biblical inaccuracies yet. For example, any Bible-knowledgeable person knows that all three of Noah's sons had wives prior to entering into the Ark. Thus, the Scriptures teach us that eight people were saved from the flood waters, as we can easily conclude from the following group of verses:

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons'

wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood."

Genesis 7:7, KJV

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark."

Genesis 7:21-23, KJV

"And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:"

Genesis 8:15-18, KJV

"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

1 Peter 3:20, KJV

While both the Book of Enoch and the KJV Bible mention the Watchers -- see Daniel 4:17 -- the Fallen Angels who are mentioned in Genesis, and the Watchers who are mentioned in Daniel, are not the same beings. According to the accounts of the writers Enoch, Peter and Jude, the Fallen Angels were in fact imprisoned in the bowels of the Earth in order to await judgment from God. Like so many other things in this film, the ridiculous rock giants were a wild fabrication of director Darren Aronofsky's warped imagination. And by the way, neither is Darwinian macroevolution supported in the Bible. There are other Biblical inaccuracies in this movie as well, but I will leave it at that.

Regarding the actors, I have long admired the work of the main cast of characters. That is, Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly, Anthony Hopkins and Ray Winstone, and to some

degree, Emma Watson as well. However, I can't for the life of me figure out what inspired any of them to lend their collective talents to that horrible film. I believe that they all gave good performances; and I do not blame them directly for the dismal failure of the movie. The fault lies with the story itself, and with its writers, Aronofsky and Handel, in my view.

So as I noted earlier, with "Noah", Hollywood has clearly demonstrated its arrogance, and its lack of respect for the Bible. After having watched so many Biblically-themed movies over the decades, I can only conclude that it is not that Hollywood is incapable of making Biblically-accurate movies. After all, they definitely have the money and the resources to conduct in-depth research. It is simply that they don't want to. As I said before, they seem to like to chop up and distort the truth and to twist Biblical facts, if it results in attracting the masses and earning a greater profit.

In Darren Aronofsky's case, it is a double tragedy. While some reviewers of this film have pointed out that Aronofsky is an atheist, upon conducting my own limited research, I discovered that he comes from a Jewish background, and that both his parents are Conservative Jews. While Mr. Aronofsky notes that "there was very little spiritual attendance in temple", being Conservative Jews, one would think that his parents would have at least imparted to him an accurate, Scripture-based account of Noah and the Ark. If so, it most certainly doesn't show in this movie, and it should really be called "Noah, According to Darren Aronofsky". So if you want the truth, please stick to your Bible!

While I have trashed Hollywood with my previous comments, let me also mention here that in more recent years, there have been attempts made by certain people and companies to produce content which is more suitable for the Christian audience. One example of this is Pinnacle Peak Pictures, which was formerly known as Pure Flix. You may possibly enjoy some of their movies.

Having now shared all of the above with you -- yes, I realize that I went off on a bit of a tangent -- let us return to our main topic of discussion. That is, of course, the phrase "the truth shall make you free". As I mentioned at the beginning of this same series, the phrase was spoken by Jesus in the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John. But to understand what the Lord actually meant by His words, and to put the verse in

its proper context, we need to look at the surrounding verses of Scripture as well. Consider the following:

"As he [Jesus] spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abrahams seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

John 8:30-36, KJV

So the first thing that we need to recognize here is exactly who Jesus' audience was. As you can see, Jesus was actually addressing His Jewish listeners "which believed on him". But they were absolutely clueless concerning what the Lord was talking about. In fact, they erroneously assumed that they were ALREADY free and that they weren't in bondage to anyone or to anything. Thus they ask "how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" The first thing that Jesus tells them is that despite what they have chosen to believe, they are in fact in bondage to sin, being the servants of sin.

Why are these Jews unable to see this? Quite simply, because they are convinced that their observance of and adherence to the Laws of Moses -- or Mosaic Law -- makes them righteous, sinless and perfect before God. In fact, if we turn to the Gospel of Luke, we find a very clear example of this rather sickening attitude. Notice how in the very first verse, we are told "certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous":

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than

the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Luke 18:9-14, KJV

We see the very same holier-than-thou attitude clearly on display in the story of the woman who was caught in the act of adultery, as related by John in his Gospel. In fact, the incident below occurs about twenty verses before the verses I shared with you earlier from the Gospel of John. While the Scribes and the Pharisees judged this woman harshly based on the stiff mandates of the Mosaic Law, Jesus extended Mercy, Grace and Forgiveness to her. Consider the following verses:

"And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with [his] finger wrote on the ground, [as though he heard them not]. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard [it], being convicted by [their own] conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, [even] unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Stated another way, due to their self-righteous pride, these Jewish listeners in John chapter eight were convinced that they possessed the power to save themselves through their own works. That is, by keeping the Laws of Moses. According to the Scriptures, the definition of sin is violating, breaking or transgressing the Laws of God, as the Apostle John clearly informs us in the following verse:

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

1 John 3:4, KJV

So, because like many Jews of that time period, they deceived themselves into believing that they faithfully kept the Laws of Moses, they likewise believed that they were sinless. Of course, as modern Believers in Jesus Christ, we understand that this certainly was not, and is not, the case whatsoever. Why not? Well, because as I point out in a number of my other articles, righteousness can't be obtained by striving to keep the Laws of Moses, no matter how hard an individual tries to do so. It is really an exercise in futility. Consider what the Apostle James wrote in the Epistle which is named after him:

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."
James 2:10, KJV

According to some accounts, there are some 613 commandments -- or "mitzvoth" -- found in the Old Testament. Attempting to keep every single one of them is humanly impossible. It is in fact an extremely heavy burden to bear. But, you see, the Lord fully understood this. This is why Jesus said the following at the end of Matthew chapter eleven:

"Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke [is] easy, and my burden is light."
Matthew 11:28-30, KJV

I am personally convinced that when the Lord used the phrase "heavy laden" in the previous set of verses, He was in fact referring to the heavy burden of trying to keep the mandates of the Mosaic Law, in order to merit one's Salvation. I also believe that Jesus is saying that He would take this burden upon Himself, and fulfill the requirements of the Laws of Moses, by offering His own life on a Roman cross, as payment -- that is to say, a ransom price -- and Atonement for all of our sins. This truth is made plainly evident by verses such as the following:

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."
Matthew 20:28, KJV

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45, KJV

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Acts 20:28, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

1 Corinthians 7:23, KJV

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 1:13-14, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

1 Timothy 2:5-6, KJV

In case you don't realize this -- those Jews obviously did not -- there is a major problem with the mentality of trying to merit one's own Salvation. You see, as the Apostle James wrote in the previous verse, if a person falters in keeping even one commandment of the Mosaic Law, he is in fact guilty of breaking all of them. As a result, he has forfeited his Salvation. So much then for striving to establish our own righteousness that way! Forget it! Yet as the Apostle Paul writes, that is precisely what these First Century Jews were attempting to do, as we see here:

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and GOING ABOUT TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Romans 10:1-3, KJV

Not only were those Jews endeavoring to establish their own righteousness outside of Christ, but as we have already seen, they were convinced that they were sinless before God because of it. However, as you the reader probably already know, this erroneous belief is totally contrary to the plain truth which is clearly expressed in the following group of verses. That truth is that we're all born in sin, and remain in sin, until we are washed clean by the Blood of the Lamb of God:

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

Psalms 51:5, KJV

"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

Ecclesiastes 7:20, KJV

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 3:23, KJV

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

1 John 1:8-10, KJV

The previous Scriptural truth leads directly to yet another inevitable -- and perhaps uncomfortable for some people -- conclusion; and that is that if we are all sinners before the Lord, then we certainly have no righteousness of our own. As with the previous set of verses, this sound truth is likewise confirmed in Scriptures such as the following:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

"They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Psalms 14:3, KJV

"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"

Psalms 130:3, KJV

"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:20, KJV

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."

Romans 3:10, KJV

As I briefly mentioned a moment ago, the only way in which the stain of sin can be removed from our lives, is by being symbolically washed in the Blood of the sacrificial Lamb of God, who is none other than Jesus Christ. Consider this set of Bible verses which makes this Scriptural truth so very plain:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:22-24, KJV

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And

he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:14-20, KJV

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

Romans 3:25, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:13, KJV

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

Hebrews 9:22, KJV

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"

Hebrews 10:19-20, KJV

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate . . . Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:12, 20-21, KJV

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

1 Peter 1:2, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, KJV

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 2:2, KJV

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:14, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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WHAT DOES "THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE" REALLY MEAN? : PT. 2

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What Is Meant By The "Righteousness Of God"?, Righteousness Without The Law, Both Moses And The Prophets Wrote About The Coming Righteousness Through Christ, Old Testament Messianic Prophecies, We Are Covered By Jesus' Righteousness, Garments Of Salvation And Robes Of Righteousness, No One Is Justified By The Laws Of Moses, Dead To The Law By The Body Of Christ, Some Key Points Of Apostle Paul's Teachings, God Knew That

No One Could Keep The Entire Mosaic Law, Nobody Can Attain To God's Idea Of Sinlessness, Righteousness And Perfection On Their Own, Believing In Jesus Is The Better Way, Jewish Religious Elders Used Mosaic Law To Condemn Control And Take Advantage Of The People, Heavy Burdens Grievous To Be Borne, Fear Of The Jews, "For By The Law Is The Knowledge Of Sin", "The Law Was Our Schoolmaster" To Bring Us To Christ, "The Law Was Given By Moses But Grace And Truth Came By Jesus Christ", Works Of The Law Or Grace: It Is One Or The Other

Continuing our discussion from part one, exactly what is meant by the phrase "righteousness of God" which the Apostle Paul referred to in Romans 10:1-3? Well, as you may possibly already understand -- that is, if you are a serious student of the Scriptures -- Paul very clearly informs us what this righteousness is, as well as how this righteousness can be obtained, in the following two verses which are found in the third chapter of this very same Epistle. Paul writes the following:

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe . . ."

Romans 3:21-22, KJV

But what does Paul mean by "righteousness of God without the law"? It is my understanding that he is referring to how righteousness can be obtained outside of the strict mandates of the Law; meaning, of course, outside of the Mosaic Law. But look at what the Apostle writes next. He says that this righteousness is manifested -- that is, revealed -- "being witnessed by the law and the prophets". What is that all about? Quite simply, Paul is informing his readers that both the Law -- meaning Moses -- and the Prophets wrote about this coming righteousness. Then Paul drops the bomb and writes "which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." And there it is!

Now, regarding "the law and the prophets", if you need some Scriptural proof concerning what Paul is talking about in those previous Scriptures, consider this following group of verses that are found in the Gospels:

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is

[one] that accuseth you, [even] Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for HE WROTE OF ME. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

John 5:45-47, KJV

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

Matthew 5:17, KJV

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Luke 24:44, KJV

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

John 1:45, KJV

As you can see, we are told a number of times in the Gospels, as well as by the Apostle Paul, that Moses, the Psalms and the Prophets all wrote about the coming suffering Messiah who would die for the sins of the world, and by so doing, impart His righteousness unto us. In actuality, there are literally hundreds of such verses found in the Old Testament. Here are but a few of them for your personal consideration. The first one is what Jesus was talking about in John 5:45-47 above:

"The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken ... I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require [it] of him."

Deuteronomy 15, 18-19, KJV

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good."

Isaiah 7:14-15, KJV

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among

the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Micah 5:2, KJV

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

Isaiah 53:4-8, KJV

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

Psalms 22:7-8, KJV

"Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion."

Psalms 22:12-13, KJV

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

Psalms 22:14-15, KJV

"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me."

Psalms 22:16-17, KJV

"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

Psalms 22:18, KJV

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Psalm 16:7, KJV

"He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."

Psalm 34:20, KJV

Returning to Romans 3:21-22, do you understand what Paul is saying when he writes "the righteousness of God without the law" and "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ"? If not, let me explain it to you a bit more. The Apostle Paul is clearly saying that we can obtain the righteousness of God, without observing the 613 mitzvot -- or commandments -- of the Mosaic Law, just by placing our faith in the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ; because He is our only righteousness. Period. We in fact put on Jesus' righteousness when we are symbolically washed in His Blood, without the need for any of us to fulfill every precept of the Laws of Moses. That is why later on in the same Epistle to the Romans, Paul also writes the following:

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

Romans 10:4, KJV

In short, Jesus did what none of us could possibly do. He met the harsh requirements of the Mosaic Law, being the perfect Sacrifice -- that is, an unblemished lamb -- for sin. As a result, by believing in what He did for us, we obtain His righteousness before God. We are in essence covered by His righteousness as with a garment. In fact, it may interest you to know that the Scriptures describe this righteousness we receive from Christ as a Garment of Salvation, and as a Robe of Righteousness; as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem."

Job 29:14, KJV

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Isaiah 61:10, KJV

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 22:8-14, KJV

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels . . . I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Revelation 3:5, 18, KJV

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:9, 13-14, KJV

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:7-9, KJV

To reiterate the previous point, that is precisely what the Apostle Paul is saying in his Epistle to the Romans. We do not have to try to earn our righteousness ourselves. It is not as if we could do it anyway, as we have already seen. In fact, Paul proclaims the very same truth when he addresses the people in the synagogue in Antioch, as we see by the following two verses:

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, FROM WHICH YE COULD NOT BE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW OF MOSES."

Acts 13:38-39, KJV

Do you see that? Paul plainly says "from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." To reiterate, we do not have to be heavy laden. We do not have to carry around that heavy burden and weight of trying to fulfill the mandates of the Mosaic Law in order to merit our Salvation. Jesus in fact freed us all from that load when He willingly took the sins of the world upon Himself, as He hung upon that Cross. Let me remind you again of what Jesus said in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28, KJV

As the Apostle Paul wrote, Jesus became our righteousness outside of the Law. The Apostle Paul expresses this very same profound truth in a number of other verses which are found in his writings. He tells us plainly that Believers no longer have to depend on the Mosaic Law for righteousness, but only upon Jesus Christ. We have in fact become dead to the law in that regard, as we see here:

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Romans 3:19-20, KJV

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God . . . But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

Romans 7:4, 6, KJV

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Galatians 2:21, KJV

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith . . . Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:"

Galatians 3:11, 13, KJV

"Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Galatians 5:4, KJV

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;"

Colossians 2:13-14, KJV

So let me summarize for you the most important points which are found in the previous group of verses:

1. No one can be justified or made righteous by observing the Laws of Moses, also known as the Mosaic Law.
2. By embracing Christ's sacrificial Atonement for our sins, not only are we justified and made righteous before God, but

we also become dead to the Law; meaning that we no longer depend upon it to merit our Salvation.

3. If it were possible to be justified and made righteous by keeping the Mosaic Law, then truly, Jesus died in vain, and His death was not necessary.

4. If we believe that keeping the Laws of Moses can save us, then we have in essence forfeited the Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

5. Jesus not only redeemed us from the curse of the Law, but He in fact met its harsh requirements, and nullified it, when He hung upon that Cross. That is what Paul is talking about when he says "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

What you need to understand is that God the Father knew from the very start that no one would ever possibly be able to keep every single commandment under the Laws of Moses. As I pointed out earlier, it was, and still remains, a totally impossible feat. Yet certain people -- even in our modern day -- still foolishly try to do that very thing. Sadly, they are just beating the air, because their dead, self-righteous works amount to nothing before God.

In the Gospels, it is evident that Jesus likewise knew that it was humanly impossible for anyone to observe all 613 laws which were incorporated into the Mosaic Law. In some of His teachings, the point that Jesus was trying to help people to understand was that no matter how hard they tried, they would simply never be able to attain to God's idea of sinlessness, righteousness and perfection by striving to keep the Laws of Moses. As a result, they would never be able to merit God's Mercy and Forgiveness on their own either. They obviously needed some outside help.

I am also convinced that in some situations in the Gospels, one of the reasons why the Lord quoted the Mosaic Law was to challenge the thinking of the Jewish religious elders, and to show both the Scribes and the Pharisees that they were not as righteous or sinless as they believed themselves to be, and as they pretended to be before the common people.

But concerning the Lord's regular listeners -- that is, the common people who heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37) -- I also

believe that whenever Jesus mentioned the strict mandates of the Mosaic Law, He was not doing so to condemn people for their failure. Rather, He was merely trying to help them to see the futility of their situation, so that He could then point them to a better way. And what way was that? That's an easy question to answer:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6, KJV

In contrast, the Scribes and the Pharisees constantly used the Mosaic Law as a bludgeon to condemn the common people, to financially milk them, and to keep them under their absolute control. Jesus thoroughly exposed these doctors of the Law in verses such as the following. Please notice that in the second set of verses, the word "lawyers" is derived from the Koine Greek word "nomikos" which refers to one who is learned in and teaches the Mosaic Law:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, [that] observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay [them] on mens shoulders; but they [themselves] will not move them with one of their fingers."

Matthew 23:1-4, KJV

"Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, [ye] lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers."

Luke 11:45-46

Let me remind you one more time of what Jesus said at the end of Matthew chapter eleven. I want to make sure that you really see and understand the connection between what Jesus said, and what the Jewish religious elders actually did:

"Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28, KJV

Not only did those self-righteous, merciless, crafty Jewish religious elders rely upon the harshness of the Laws of Moses

to condemn, manipulate and control the people, but they also relied heavily upon fear as well. This becomes evident in verses such as the following:

"Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS."

John 7:11-13, KJV

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus."

John 19:38, KJV

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you."

John 20:19, 26, KJV

As should be quite evident to you by now, being a legalistic Pharisee who eventually came to Christ, the Apostle Paul had a very deep understanding regarding these matters. God opened Paul's spiritual eyes and he came to fully grasp the purpose, meaning and intention of the Laws of Moses. While, yes, they were meant to teach the Israelites how to live a godly life, their ultimate purpose was to show them that they could never be good enough to merit God's Forgiveness and Salvation. They were meant to show people their sin, and by extension, their need for a Savior. Consider these two verses:

". . . for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Romans 3:20, KJV

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Romans 7:7, KJV

It is for this reason that when Paul writes to the Church at Galatia, he informs his readers that the purpose of the Laws

of Moses was to serve as a schoolmaster, to shepherd people, and to bring them to Christ, as we see by this verse:

"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
Galatians 3:24-25, KJV

You see that? The Apostle Paul says it yet again: "we are no longer under a schoolmaster." We are no longer under the Law. We are under Christ. We are in fact covered by His Blood. We are forgiven, redeemed, saved, justified and made righteous through His Sacrifice, and NOT by striving to keep the Laws of Moses. Moses brought us the harsh mandates of the Mosaic Law, while Jesus brought us the Grace and Mercy of God, and never the twain shall meet. It is one or the other. This is in fact what John the Baptist declared in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, as we see here:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth . . . And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
John 1:14, 16-17, KJV

It is by God's Grace alone through faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ that we are saved, and NOT by the Law, or by trying to keep the mandates of the Law, meaning the Mosaic Laws of the Old Testament. To reiterate, it is one or the other, but NOT both. This singular truth is made so evident in verses such as the following:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works [meaning the works of the Law], then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."
Romans 11:6, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness [meaning keeping the Law] which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost;"
Titus 3:5, KJV

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid."

Romans 6:14-15, KJV

So as you will hopefully understand by now, with Christ's atoning Sacrifice on the Cross, God replaced the difficulty -- and in fact, the impossibility -- of obtaining Salvation through adhering to the harshness of the Mosaic Law, with the free gift of Grace, which was paid for in full, by Jesus Christ. As we learned earlier, Jesus paid the ransom price for our Salvation in the form of His own blood which was shed on the Cross. That is the gist of the matter. It is likewise the truth which the unbelieving Jews of Jesus' day refused to accept; and it is the same truth which many unbelieving Jews continue to refuse to accept today as well.

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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WHAT DOES "THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE" REALLY MEAN? : PT. 3

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We Are Slaves To Sin Without Christ, The Penalty For Sin Is Death, Dead In Your Sins, What Is The Truth The Jews Would Know?, I Am He, Salvation Can Only Be Obtained Through Jesus, Jesus Is The Mediator Of The New Covenant Between God And Man, Jesus Frees Us From Sin Death The Fear Of Death And The Burden Of The Mosaic Law, Jesus First Declares His Mission In

Nazareth, Bondage Of The Fear Of Death, Worry And Fear Of The Unknown, We Have Peace With God Through Christ, No Peace For The Unbelieving Wicked, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading

At this point in our discussion, some of you may possibly be wondering what all of this has to do with the title of this article. Actually, everything. We have in fact now come full circle. You see, it was necessary for me to explain all of these things to you, so that you can better understand what Jesus meant when He said to the Jews "the truth shall make you free."

As you may recall from the beginning of this article, the Jews to whom Jesus was speaking erroneously assumed that they were already free, and that they were not in bondage to anyone or to anything. Thus they asked the Lord "how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" The first thing that Jesus tells them is that despite what they have chosen to believe, they are in fact in bondage to sin. After all, telling a person that they need to be made free implies that they must be in bondage to something, right? So Jesus informed those self-righteous Jews that they were the servants of sin; and that point alone must have really ruffled their feathers.

Please note that while the KJV Bible uses the word "servant" in those verses that are found in John chapter eight, if we look at the original Koine Greek word that is used there -- *doulos* -- we see that the Lord was actually telling them that they were the SLAVES of sin. They were in bondage to sin. The problem here is that according to the Scriptures, the penalty for sin is death, as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come . . . I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

John 8:21, 24, KJV

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 5:12, 21, KJV

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6:16, 23, KJV

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

1 Corinthians 15:56, KJV

"Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

James 1:15, KJV

Not only does the Bible clearly inform us that we will die in our sins if we fail to accept the Salvation which is offered to us by Christ, but it also makes it plain that we are in fact ALREADY dead in our sins in this present life as well. Consider the following group of verses which confirm this point:

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Romans 8:10, KJV

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;"

Colossians 2:13, KJV

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 2:1, 4-7, KJV

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

1 Peter 2:24, KJV

So let us now more closely examine what Jesus said to the Jews on that particular day. But first, let me refresh your memory by sharing those verses from John chapter eight with you again:

"As he [Jesus] spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abrahams seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: [but] the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

John 8:30-36, KJV

Jesus tells them that if they continue -- or remain, abide -- in His word, they will know the truth. What truth is the Lord talking about? Obviously, the truth of who He is, and what He came to do for humanity. That is why just a few verses before that, Jesus told them "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." This is not the first or only time that Jesus declared who He was to His listeners by using the phrase "I am he." Consider the following short group of verses:

"The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he." John 4:25-26, KJV

"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John 8:28, KJV

"Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he." John 13:19, KJV

So that is the profound truth that Jesus was talking about. Those Jews needed to recognize that He was their promised and prophesied Messiah and Savior. He was, and is, the Way,

the Truth and the Life. Jesus is the ONLY way to the Father, and the ONLY Mediator between God and man, and NOT the Laws of Moses. The Laws of Moses could not save them or make them righteous in the sight of God, as we have clearly learned by the preponderance of Scriptural evidence which I have shared with you in this series. Consider the following group of verses which clearly reveal that it is only through Jesus that Salvation can be obtained, because He became the Author and Mediator of a new and better covenant between God and man:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

John 14:6, KJV

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Acts 4:12, KJV

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

1 Timothy 2:5, KJV

"But now hath he [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

Hebrews 8:6, KJV

"And for this cause he [Jesus] is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Hebrews 9:15, KJV

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Hebrews 12:24, KJV

To reiterate, Jesus told the Jews "I am he." If they simply believed Him, that wonderful truth would indeed make them free. It would release them from the bondage of sin. It would free them from the death penalty which is the result of sin. It would free them from the bondage of trying to save themselves through observance of the Mosaic Law.

Lastly, it would free them from the fear of death as well. Recognizing Jesus for who He was, and is, would free them from all of these various things. In fact, as some of you may recall, when Jesus first began His public ministry in Nazareth, one of the very first things He declared was how He would free the captives, and set at liberty those people who had been bruised, as we see here:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,"

Luke 4:18, KJV

Exactly what were they delivered from? What were they set at liberty from? What were they bruised by? Personally, based on everything I have shared with you in this series, I am inclined to believe that the Lord was referring to the weight and the harsh mandates of the Mosaic Law, and to the cruel people who continuously imposed it upon them: those self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, and the doctors of the Law. Jesus not only frees people everywhere from all of that legalism, but also from sin and death as well. Now regarding the fear of death which I mentioned earlier, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as in the Epistle to the Romans, we find the following three verses:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Hebrews 2:14-15, KJV

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Romans 8:15, KJV

Let me call your attention to two phrases in those verses:

1. through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
2. the spirit of bondage again to fear

Exactly what do those two phrases mean? To be quite honest with you, I am not absolutely certain. However, I do have some ideas which I would like to propose for your personal consideration. First of all, it is a given fact that many people fear death. But why is that? Well, for some people it is more a fear of the pain which may possibly accompany their death; while for others it may be the fear of not knowing what will follow their death.

But consider the First Century Jews who were beholden to the Laws of Moses, and the crushing weight of legalism which continually bore down upon them. If, like them, you were convinced that you had to keep all 613 mitzvot, or commandments, in order to merit God's favor, Mercy and Salvation, you would find yourself in quite a predicament. If, like those misguided Jews who Jesus spoke to, you were told that you had to establish your own righteousness in order to be accepted by God, you might begin to worry and question, "Have I done enough? Have I kept enough of the commandments? Have I been good enough? Will God even accept me when I die? Am I going to Hell?"

That is the problem with trying to establish your own brand of righteousness. You find yourself in a constant state of worry and fear, and you just never know if you have made the grade or not. You have no peace in your heart. Because you don't know for certain what your eternal fate will be, it will in fact cause you to fear death, and what may come after your death. Because you've rejected Christ, you will spend your entire life trying to keep as many commandments as you possibly can, in the hope that it will satisfy God's requirements. You will be in bondage to the Law for your entire life. Not only that, but because the Law declares all people sinners, you will fear death even more. That could possibly be what "all their lifetime subject to bondage" means, in my view.

Thankfully, if you are a Believer in Jesus Christ, then you don't have to worry about any of that, because you realize that Jesus has already paid the full ransom price for your Salvation. You don't need to try to prove your goodness to God through your own legalistic works. All you have to do is freely accept God's Mercy, Grace and Forgiveness through the Sacrifice of His Son. You already know the truth, and the truth has indeed made you free. Furthermore, because you know the truth concerning Jesus Christ, and have accepted

Him as your Lord and Savior, you can experience the peace which passes all understanding as well. Consider this group of Bible verses:

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

John 14:27, KJV

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33, KJV

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Romans 5:1, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;"

Ephesians 2:13-14, KJV

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:7, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him [Jesus] should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Colossians 1:19-20, KJV

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Isaiah 26:3, KJV

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Isaiah 41:10, KJV

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them."

Psalms 119:165, KJV

In contrast, wicked people who knowingly reject Jesus Christ will never know this kind of inner, spiritual peace; not in this life, and most certainly not in the next. They will in fact continually suffer emotional and spiritual turmoil, as we can determine by these two verses:

"There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."
Isaiah 48:22, KJV

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."
Isaiah 57:20-21, KJV

Dear friend, now tell me something. Isn't trusting in Jesus Christ, and accepting His free gift of Salvation, so much easier than being in bondage to the Laws of Moses and trying to prove your own righteousness, goodness, merit and worth? You have now heard the full Scriptural truth regarding this matter. Will you let it make you free? The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. It is my hope that you have found it to be both informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were mentioned in this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts
Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace
Message to the World
Salvation is Free Through Jesus Christ
Striving for Perfection: Are You a Sinless Saint?

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