

Righteousness and the Laws Of Moses

'Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes' (Romans 10:4).

When Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross as the ultimate Sacrificial Lamb of God (John 1:36), He ended the need for animal sacrifice as a means to righteousness but He did not end the overall Laws of Moses. Some of the Ten Commandments plus many of the over sixty different laws God gave to Moses and the Children of Israel still stand throughout the world today, but Jesus fulfilled the sacrificial law, so animal sacrifices are no longer the standard for people to follow as a means of showing righteousness. Jesus said to John the Baptist, "Allow My baptism now, for this is the fitting way for us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Jesus is now our righteousness and we need to look to Him to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness. 'If we confess our sins (to God), He is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9).

The blood of animals is no longer sufficient to make us righteous and since Jesus came to usher in the age of Grace, reforming the age of Law through the grace of God, the standard of His righteousness is much higher than it was prior to Jesus' death. Only the Levitical high priest could offer the blood sacrifices for himself and the people and only our High Priest Jesus, could offer His blood for His people. The Bible teaches us as follows; 'Once each year with (animal) blood, only the high priest alone could offer for himself and for the errors of the people. The Holy Spirit is indicating, the way into the Holy Place was not yet revealed while the first tabernacle was still standing, which is a symbol of the present age (of grace) where gifts and sacrifices are offered that are incapable, concerning the conscience, of making the worshipper perfect, being only meats, drinks and various washings, fleshly ordinances imposed until a time of reformation. Jesus, having come as a High Priest ... through the greater and more perfect Tabernacle (His own body), not made with human hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption. If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify to the cleanness of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Jesus, Who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason Jesus is the Mediator of a New Covenant, since a death has occurred for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance ... When every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." Moses sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry in like manner with the blood. According to the law, nearly everything is cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission of sin ... Jesus has not entered into holy places made with human hands, which are representations of the truth, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ... Now once at the end of the age (of the Law), Jesus has been revealed to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It is appointed for mankind to die once and after this, their judgment, so Jesus, having been offered only once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time ... to those who are eagerly waiting for Him for their salvation' (Hebrews 9:7 to 28).

Continuing ... 'It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins ... we will have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus only once for all of mankind. The priest stands day by day ... offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins, but Jesus, when He had offered one Sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God ... By one Offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us saying, "This is the covenant I will make with them. After those days (the days after Jesus died) I will put My laws on their heart, I will also write them on their mind. I will remember their sins and their iniquities no more." Where remission of these sins and iniquities are, there is no more offering for sin. Having boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way He dedicated for us a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh and having a Great Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for He Who promised is faithful' (Hebrews 10:4, 10 to 23).

Jesus said, "This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Our righteousness is now by faith. Jesus was saying, righteousness is a way of life, not a religion. Yes we do live by grace, but our way of life must exceed, surpass, go beyond that of empty religion or we cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus said these things regarding righteousness, "I tell you, unless

your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (religious leaders), there is no way you will enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:20). "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ..." (Matthew 6:33). Self-righteousness is rejected by God as sin because we have no righteousness of our own. 'I may be found in Jesus, not having a righteousness of my own ... but what is through faith in Jesus, the righteousness which is from God by faith' (Philippians 3:9). 'Jesus told a parable to certain people who were convinced of their own (self) righteousness and who despised all others. "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this, 'God I thank You I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.' The tax collector standing far away would not lift up his eyes to heaven but beat his chest saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other (self-righteous Pharisee), for everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled but those who humbles themselves will be exalted'" (Luke 18:9 to 14). Notice here, the Pharisee prayed not to God, but to himself.

Our thoughts must be righteous and pure. 'Flee from lusts but pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart' (2 Timothy 2:22). Our behaviour must be righteous and holy. 'Just as He Who called you is holy, you yourselves must be holy in all of your behaviour. It is written, "You will be holy for I am holy"' (1 Peter 1:15 & 16). Our actions must be righteous. 'Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad and give the glory to God, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. The Bride was given permission to array herself in bright, pure, fine linen, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of God's servants' (Revelation 19:7 & 8). Baptism is a righteous action. Seeking the Kingdom of Heaven and seeking God's righteousness are righteous actions. Serving the Lord is a righteous action. The only way to attain the level of righteousness God demands of us is through the blood of Jesus. 'If you will confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. With the heart one believes and is made righteousness and with the mouth, confession is made to confirm salvation' (Romans 10:9 & 10). Without God we can do nothing to please Him (John 5:30). Without the blood of Jesus, our righteousness is to God like filthy rags such as were once used to wash or wrap dead bodies. 'We have all become as one who is unclean and all our righteousness is as a filthy rag' (Isaiah 64:6).

Many of the Laws given to the Children of Israel still stand in our societies today and in fact, some countries use the Bible as a basis to draft their laws but those laws do not make people righteous. The laws were given to show people God's standard of righteousness so all mankind would be made aware of right behaviour, wrong behaviour and sin, but through the blood of Jesus we have been discharged from the law as a means of righteousness. 'We have been discharged from the law, having died to what we once held, so we serve in newness of the Holy Spirit ... I would not have known about sin if it were not for the law' (Romans 7:6 & 7). 'Because of the law, no flesh will be justified in God's sight, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. Apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus to all and on all those who believe. There is no distinction. All (humanity) have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Jesus Whom God set forth to be an Atoning Sacrifice through faith in His blood for a demonstration of His righteousness through the overlooking of prior sins. God ignored their former sins without punishment to demonstrate His righteousness at this present time so He would Himself be just and the Justifier of those who have faith in Jesus' (Romans 3:20 to 26).

The justness, fairness and righteousness of God is revealed again in the Scriptures. Before Jesus came, before the Law was given, before Noah's flood, God overlooked the sins of humanity. After Jesus died and before His resurrection, He went down into Shoal, the waiting place of the dead and preached the Gospel to all who had died before He came, so all humanity would have a chance of living with God in the spirit while those on earth lived in the flesh with God. 'Jesus suffered for sins once, the Righteous for the unrighteous so He could bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit in which He went and preached to the spirits in prison (in Shoal) who before (Noah's flood) were disobedient when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ship was being built ... All people will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead, for to this end the Gospel was preached even to the dead so they might be judged equally as men in the flesh but live as to God in the spirit' (1 Peter 3:18 to 20; 4:5 & 6).

God's righteousness exceeds and surpasses justification and salvation of Gentiles. Through His righteousness we have reconciliation between Jew and Gentile by a 'law' of faith by which all Gentiles must humble themselves, because the laws we now follow were first given to, and established by the Jewish people. 'A person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Is God the God of Jews only? No! Is He

the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also and since there is one God who will justify the Jews by faith and the Gentiles through faith, do we nullify the law through faith? No, we (the Jews) established the law' (Romans 3:28 to 31). 'There is no distinction (in God's heart) between Jew and Gentile, for the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on Him. Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved' (Romans 10:12 & 13).

Living under grace does not mean we can live unrighteously. It means we have a spiritual 'safety net' to give us time to repent should we sin. The age of grace in which we live should be treated with respect and thankfulness for our salvation. We need to be thankful for His grace and mercy to us before we were saved. He loved us before we loved Him (1 John 4:19). Grace is mode of behaviour and it is also a token of the Lord's patience and mercy toward us. 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus. I always thank my God concerning you, for the grace of God which was given to you in Jesus' (1 Corinthians 1:3 & 4). 'By grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves, it is the gift of God' (Ephesians 2:8). 'God saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Jesus before times eternal' (2 Timothy 1:9).

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus our Messiah. Amen.

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