

Our Need For God's Law

Austin Del Castillo

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I have a message here that the intention I have for it is that it be somewhat basic in our understanding of what God is requiring of us for us to develop as His people and find ourselves included in the first resurrection and thus in God's eternal Kingdom. In doing this, however, I found it needful to also point out that there has been an ideology that has for many centuries been set in motion to undermine the way that our God has chosen for us to follow to become members of His eternal Family.

I would like to start at the place where we are today as a society. As Western values continue to decay around the world, nowhere more dramatically than here in the United States of America, we are "gifted" with having to witness the heartbreaking attack on the concept of law and order. Our social order is disappearing before our very eyes.

We see this from the lack of common morality of the one who currently occupies the office of President of the United States. To the radical members of our legislature in Washington DC, to the woke governors of many of our states, and to the do-nothing mayors of our cities, as well as the many attorneys general who refuse to prosecute criminals because of their obvious woke agendas. At the foundation of this madness, we find the very society itself refusing to submit to most of any kind of code which comes from the Bible. We have again arrived at the level of disorder and lawlessness, which is spoken of in the book of Isaiah, chapter 59, verse 14, where it says,

Isaiah 59:14 Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; the truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter.

Brethren, the backbone of justice in any healthy society are the concepts of law and order based on wisdom and truth. Even though law is either being neglected outright or attacked in our present society, my concern in this message is dealing with how we ourselves regard God's law as a people, His

saints, in the course of our growing grace and knowledge towards our place in eternal life in His Kingdom as priests and kings under Jesus Christ.

In our day, we find that there are millions of adherents of mainstream Christianity who have been taught that the law of God was done away with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It has been replaced by God's grace, and all that is needed is faith in Jesus to gain salvation, which is commonly viewed as going to heaven by these people. Now this idea that grace covers everything that is required of a believer allows them to remain basically unchanged people in the worship of their God. Concern about qualifying in any way for salvation is dismissed. "Just love Jesus and believe in Him, and you've got it made."

Now my concern in talking about these things is the adage about "what happens in the world will eventually enter the congregations of God's people." Indeed, these ideas concerning salvation that are not biblical have long ago entered the congregations of God's people. I mentioned earlier that there is an ideology that was set in place to undermine the process that God put in place for us to attain salvation. That ideology is what is known as Gnosticism from which the root of the word means "to know" in the original Greek.

Basically it is the idea that the physical universe is evil and corrupt and the spirit universe is pure and good. This philosophy maintains that a part of God is in all of mankind, and it takes special knowledge, *gnosis*, for that part of mankind to find its way back to heaven. You may begin to see that this is where the idea that we have a soul originated. Just so we understand, Gnosticism did not start as a religion. It was a philosophy that some scholars believe began in the churches of the first century. When I read this, I knew that those who believe this thing are really off base, even, I am going to say, naive.

It is historically obvious that Gnosticism was around as far back as the Greek philosopher Plato and later with the Hellenists, which greatly influenced the Jews in Judea under the rule of Alexander the Great. Some historians believe Gnosticism goes back even further than that. Personally, I suspect that Gnosticism was put in place by Satan after the sin of Adam and Eve. I suspect this because one of the ideas of this philosophy is that the universe,

being physical and corrupt, was created by a lesser being than the purest God and therefore this lesser being's laws are invalid.

You will find that wherever Gnosticism is found in Western religions, it promotes the idea that the law of God is to be rejected or put under the authority of a mere man to be manipulated at his will, such as in the Pope in the Catholic Church. This rejection of God's law in religions is known as antinomianism. It is the idea that is rooted in Greek that really means "against law." As a philosophy, Gnosticism has attached itself to any number of religions around the world, including the Eastern ones. Considering the influence that Gnosticism has established so firmly among most Protestant organizations, it seems to me that it is crucial for us as God's people to be able to prove to ourselves and to those who ask us that the laws of God are upheld through the entirety of Scripture.

It is also important to understand that what the apostle Paul was fighting in the books of Galatians and Colossians was this Gnostic influence that had entered those congregations through the Jews that had practiced Hellenistic Judaism for so much of their lives but were now among God's people. Paul also covered other topics in these books, but reading them with two specific scriptures in mind as we go through them, will be of great help to us. The first scripture I am thinking about is John 10:35. This is Jesus speaking to the Jews.

John 10:35 "If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), . . .

This gives us a principle to think about here. Here Jesus, in reasoning with the Jews that have surrounded Him and wanted to stone Him, actually reveals a supremely important truth about Scripture. It does not contradict itself. This is one of the great tools of Bible study. If we read a scripture that seems unclear to us, we go to the rest of the scriptures that are clear on that subject. In time and with God's help, we will come to a better understanding of that scripture.

Secondly, please turn to II Timothy 3, verse 16, where we read:

II Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This is our God telling us that He is the Author of every true scripture. His Word stands even when translators get it wrong, and they often do. He presents us with a needed evidence of what is true in His Word. He did not forget anything. He presents us with all the truth we need to work with in obtaining our salvation. Yes, even in what some call the Old Testament.

Let us look at a couple of examples in the New Testament that uphold the need for the Old with all its laws. Let us look at the verse above the ones we just read, and that verse 15, where it reads:

II Timothy 3:15 [Paul writing to Timothy] And that from a childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ.

Just think about what Paul is saying here to Timothy. He is saying that the Holy Scriptures are able to lead him to salvation. The only Holy Scriptures available to Timothy at the time were what is called today the Old Testament. Men could attain salvation knowing only the Old Testament. Who was able to attain salvation without ever knowing the New Testament? How about Job and Noah and Daniel?

If we read Hebrews 11, we find quite a number of people whom God considers righteous, and they are now dead, awaiting the first resurrection. David himself will again be a commander over Israel. You can read that in Isaiah 55:4.

What was the most epic battle that was ever fought on earth? Would you agree that it was the battle between Jesus and Satan for rulership of the earth and perhaps our universe that took place out there in the Judean desert? How

did Jesus choose to conduct His fight? He used scriptures from the Old Testament exclusively. Every time that Satan tempted Him, He completely defeated Satan even after 40 days and nights of fasting.

Please never allow yourself to think that the Old Testament is done away. It can serve in our quest for eternal life. The Bible is one complete book. Many things in the Old Testament will be reinstated in the future. We can see this, for example, in the book of Zechariah, chapter 14, where nations are going to be made to follow the laws in the Old Testament once again. Just knowing what I just pointed out, it should be obvious that God's law—all of it—is not done away. When all mankind has become a spiritually living Bible individually, meaning one with God the Father and Jesus Christ and with each other, maybe we can consider that all is fulfilled at that time. Not before.

In the meantime, let us consider what Jesus Christ stated in the New Testament in Matthew 5, verses 17 through 19. Now, I know this is a very well-known scripture among us, but it is good to rethink about it.

Matthew 5:17-19 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Whom is it that we believe concerning God's law having authority in the New Testament? Spiritually blind theologians or Jesus Himself? That is a question that should occur to all of us. Anybody who feels that they have enough intelligence and degrees in the hodgepodge of men's ideas can say anything they want. But the Word of God trumps them all in the minds of those who are His.

Again, as if to reinforce God's thinking, please turn to Matthew 19:16. We all know what the situation is at this point here.

Matthew 19:16-19 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall do no murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

How can any converted mind think Jesus was confused and not know what He was saying? It is obvious to any honest reader that Jesus is referring to the Ten Commandments in telling this young man what is required to enter into eternal life in New Testament teaching. Obviously this is preceded by acceptance of Christ's blood on the cross in payment for our sins. Anywhere along our journey in the way to eternal life.

Hopefully this helps any of us who are somewhat new among us, but also helps us older members who think about what our loving God requires for us or of us to attain eternal life. It is by no means a free ride. We will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ when that time comes, and we will be judged according to the holy fruit we actually produced in this life. God's law is the guide to our progress in all of the Bible.

The final book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, chapter 14 tells us something that we need to really understand and lean upon.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

May we all continue to appeal to our Father and our head Jesus Christ for all the help that we need to accomplish what we must as we obey His law, in spite of our oft failures, to take our intended place in our Father's Kingdom.