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## In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

By  
**Elder Enoch Ofori Jnr**






7<sup>th</sup> Day Pentecostal Assemblies
| Sabbath School Lesson



## Introduction

### Eternal God of Mercy and Justice




“Christ and the Law” as a topic of Christian discussion has been a controversial subject for centuries in Christianity. Often, the tendency has been to drive a wedge between Christ and the Law of God with the argument made that each belonged to a different dispensation in salvation history:

the Dispensation of Law belonged to the past, the O.T era, while Christ brought a new dispensation called the Dispensation of Grace.

The flaw of this theological argument is that both Grace and Law can be traced back to the Old Testament era and forward into the New Testament era. The God of our salvation is a God of Grace and Law, a God of mercy and justice.

That is why the topic ‘Christ and the Law’ is itself problematic, as it presupposes an adversarial relationship between Christ and the Law. It should be ‘Christ is the Law’, for in Christ Jesus is fulfilled all the fullness of the purposes and effects of the Law of God. So then, was the Law even necessary in the first place?



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law is Because God is

The Law of God flows from God (Yahweh Elohim) and therefore from Christ who is also God in His nature: He is the exact representation of the Father having all His attributes. (see John 1:1-4, 14; Php 2:5-6; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:8; John 10:30).

Simply put, *the Law is God's holy character reduced to words* so that by obeying those words we would take after His character. It's the standard of behaviour God wants us to live up to. God's deep personal attachment to the Law of the Ten Commandments as a reflection of His own righteous character is evidenced by the fact that it's the only Law in the entire scriptures which He wrote Himself with His own finger. We read in the Book of Exodus: "And He gave unto Moses, when He had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God" (Ex 31:18).

"And the tables were the work of God, and the writing of God, graven upon the tables" (Ex.32:16, see also Ex 34:28; Deut 10:1-5).



## The Law is Because God is

These tablets of the Law, engraved with the writing of Yahweh, known as "the testimony", were to be put into the Ark of the Covenant under the "mercy seat" (Ex. 25:16, 40:20) in the tabernacle God instructed the Israelites to build for Him in the wilderness. The mercy seat, made of pure gold, was actually the lid of the ark, a box of wood overlaid with pure gold. At both ends of the mercy seat stood two cherubim of gold with their wings stretched out over the mercy seat, as they looked towards each other toward the mercy seat (called 'ha-kapporet' in Hebrew). (Ex.25:10-20).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law is Because God is

More than just one of several sacred articles in the most holy place of the tabernacle (called the holy of holies, which is the inner chamber of the sanctuary or most holy place), the mercy seat was a representation of the throne of God. Accordingly, God told Moses, "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 25:22, see also 26:34).

The mercy seat is a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16) and of righteousness. Indeed, righteousness is the foundation of God's throne as stated in Ps. 97:2.:

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne"  
(NASB; see also Ps. 89:14).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## The Law is Because God is

The foundation of justice and righteousness is what is represented by the tables of testimony being placed under the mercy seat, in effect becoming its foundation! This same throne of grace and of righteousness and justice is a throne of power from where God sends redemption to His people. The Psalmist extols Yahweh. Elohim who dwells between the cherubim of glory:

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

"Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Thy strength, and come and save us.

"Turn again, O God and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Ps 80:1-3).



**IN RIGHTEOUSNESS & IN JUSTICE,  
IN STEADFAST LOVE & IN MERCY.**

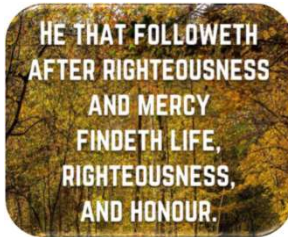


In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law is Because God is

Mercy and righteousness define the throne of God, but then righteousness is the foundation. It is the essence of God. However, it is on the basis of His mercy (symbolized by the 'mercy seat') that He deals with us humans – which is itself one of the inherent qualities of His righteous character . We read in **Ps 103**:



"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

"He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger for ever.

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.

"Like as a father pitieth His children, so the Lord piteth them that fear Him.

"For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.

"As for man, his days are like grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth .

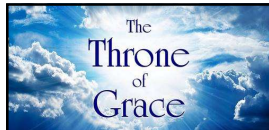
"For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him and His righteousness unto children's children.

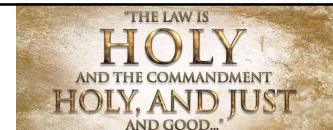
" To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them" (Ps 103:8-18).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law is Because God is



God sits on a throne of mercy and righteousness, and from His throne come His mercy and righteousness toward those who fear Him. Neither negates or replaces the other.

Forgiveness, mercy, forbearance and grace are concepts usually associated with the New Testament. But the truth is that they have been ascribed to God all along in the Old Testament scriptures. Sometimes it is conveyed in symbolic language as in the exquisite design of the ark of the testimony; at other times, it is expressed in the very stirring physical language of Hebrew poetry where the greatness of God's mercy, for instance, is compared, in tangible terms, to the incalculable distance between heaven and earth! (Please read **Neh. 9:17**).

The Law of God kept under the mercy seat bears the exact stamp of the righteous nature of the Holy One enthroned between the cherubim. Hence "all Thy commandments are righteousness" (**Ps 119:172**), a truth the Apostle Paul re-echoes in **Rom 7:12**:

"So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (NASB).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

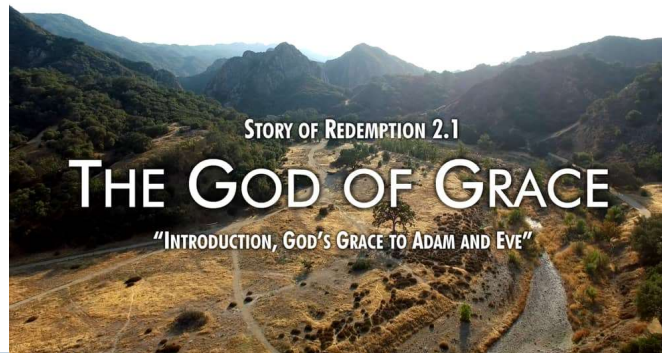


26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the livestock on the land."



## The Law is Because God is

But then, there was grace – grace has always been present with God. But Adam would not avail himself of that by asking for forgiveness upon frank confession. Instead, he got into an exchange with God, answering back God that he was not to be blamed but the woman He (God) gave to be with him. The woman also joined in the blame game, accusing the serpent of deceiving her, “and I did eat” (Gen 3:9-13).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## The Law is Because God is

The buck stopped at the serpent; he bore the ultimate responsibility. Yet unconfessed sin is un-forsaken sin – sin covered and hidden in the bosom. This is exactly what Adam did. He did not accept responsibility for his transgression; he did not own up to his failure as the head of the human family. So he neither confessed nor pleaded for pardon. This was an example Job refused to follow, choosing instead the path of confession and repudiation of sin:

“If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom” (Job 31:33).

Adam’s approach, which is preferred by majority of people, only leads to the forfeiture of divine mercy and therefore the blessings of confession:

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but who so confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Prov 28:13).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law is Because God is

Mercy brings forgiveness and restoration. Indeed, “*mercy triumphs over judgement*” (Jam.2:13 NASB). The plan of salvation has not changed since the days of Adam. That is why we are not consumed – it is because “*His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness*” (Lam 3:22-23).

That is also why no believer comes to God by himself. He is called and chosen by God on the basis of His grace and mercy. His mercies are renewed every morning so that His original plan to have man bear His righteous image is not aborted but renewed.

In such manner was Israel called and chosen. God in His mercy would restore man to his former glory.



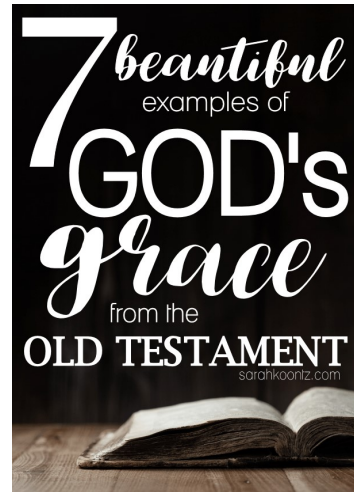
In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Chosen to be a Nation of Divine Character

The status of Israel as God’s chosen nation was not a choice made by Israel herself or something achieved by personal merit or personal effort. It was an act of divine grace performed in exercise of God’s sovereign will. Of all the nations of the earth, God moved in grace to make Israel His own special people:

“He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him as the apple of His eye” (Deut 32:8-10; see also Isa 51:1-2; Deut 10:14-15).

For what purpose? To be a kingdom of priests unto Him; a holy nation, a nation that would bear His holy character (Ex 19:5-6). The re-introduction of His Law would play a central role. By restoring His character to Israel (by teaching them His laws), God would restore them to the position of glory and dominion given to Adam to serve as a model for the rest of humanity. (Deut 4:5-8; 28:1,13)



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Chosen to be a Nation of Divine Character

The proclamation of the Law to Israel was a work to which God attached so much importance that He personally spoke (and later wrote) it out of “*the midst of the fire*” – the fire being a reflection of His own glowing glory as “*the consuming fire*”! (see Deut. 33:2; Heb 12:29).

Because of the awesome sights and sounds which accompanied the giving the Law on Mount Sinai, the Israelites begged Moses to ask God to cease speaking and that they would hear and obey with just he, Moses, speaking (Ex 20:18-19). Moses replied them, saying, “Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not” Cv.20; cp Heb. 12:18-21).

Later events proved Moses right. The Israelites broke the very first and second commandments spoken to them out of the midst of the fire in the absence of Moses, while he was on the mount with God to receive the tablets. In response to their flagrant transgression, God threatened to destroy Israel because these could not bear His character, which was the very purpose for raising the nation, a people called by His name (in Hebrew *Shem* “reputation”, “character”, etc).

In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Chosen to be a Nation of Divine Character

What stood between the people and the Law was not ignorance of the will of God, but the doing of it. They had heard of it, but they had no desire or strength to do it.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law





## The Opposition of the Heart

If the Law of God would implant the divine nature of holiness in the people, the heart needed to be subdued to submit. This was anticipated in the *Torah* (broadly speaking the *Pentateuch*, the Five Books of Moses) itself, and it was picked up by nearly all the prophets who lived through and thundered against the unfaithfulness of Israel in the post-Mosaic and Joshua eras. The Prophet Jeremiah, in particular, highlighted the central role of the uncircumcised heart in keeping the people from devotion to God, noting that the heart was “desperately wicked” (Jer 4:4, 17:9). An “uncircumcised heart” is a Hebrew idiom for a stubborn or rebellious attitude towards God (Deut.10:16). It is a heart that hears, that knows the will of God but won’t do it.

The heart of man is  
“deceitful and  
desperately wicked.”

The Law has come to Israel amid great fanfare, including loud trumpet blasts on top of a smoking mountain, but as the nation waited at the foot of the mountain, it is quite clear that the Law containing God’s righteous character cannot be received by auditory transmission (i.e. by hearing), much less by words engraved on lifeless stone tablets!



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## One Greater than the Heart

For the Law to find fulfilment in people’s lives, there was a need for something greater than the Law itself to bring its purposes to fruition. Moses by the Spirit duly acknowledged this when he said to the Israelites, “... the LORD hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day” (Deut. 29:4).

In Deut. 30:6, he again said to Israel, as part of His long parting sermon in the wilderness just across from the Jordan:

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live”.

The unmistakable goodness of the Law was without question; the problem was the stubbornness of the heart. Moses declared:

Man’s worst ill is  
stubbornness of heart.

The Goodness  
of the Law



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## One Greater than the Heart

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

"In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes, and His judgements, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them;

"I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go and possess it. "

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

"That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for *He is thy life, and the length of thy days*: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give them" (Deut. 30:15-20).

I CALL HEAVEN AND EARTH  
TO WITNESS AGAINST YOU TODAY,  
*that I have set before you*  
**LIFE AND DEATH,**  
THE BLESSING AND THE CURSE.  
THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE,  
*that you may live,*  
YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS;  
TO LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD,  
TO OBEY HIS VOICE,  
**AND TO CLING TO HIM;**  
**FOR HE IS YOUR LIFE,**  
AND THE LENGTH OF YOUR DAYS:  
**DEUTERONOMY 30:19-20**



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

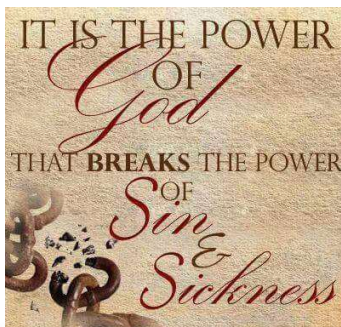
## One Greater than the Heart

Man stood in need of an external power to break the power of sin (the obstacle to the Law) within the heart; someone to fulfill all the requirements of the Law and put us in a position to conform to it. Man desperately needed a Saviour to save him from himself:

"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate that do I.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the Law that it is good.

"Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:15-17).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



**THE MISSION  
OF THE MESSIAH**

LUKE 4:16-22

THE GOSPEL OF  
**LUKE**

## In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law





## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Even so, the salvation promised Israel through the Messiah also provided for the inclusion of the nations (Heb. 'goyim'). Indeed, for both Israelites and non-Israelites everything boiled down to faith in the divine prophetic promise of a Saviour who would take away their sins. That is why Isaiah is famously called the "evangelistic prophet" – he proclaimed the gospel of faith in the Messiah's death as the perfect sacrifice for sin with vivid details long before the Gospel writers of the New Testament. (Previously the blood of the sacrificial animals only 'covered' [Hebrew 'kaphar'] sin. Hence "*kapporet*", meaning 'atonement cover', 'mercy seat').

He proclaimed:

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.


"He is despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isaiah 53:1-3).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

A hint there of His rejection by many in the Jewish nation as well as by others among the Gentiles, among whom His Name would be preached (see [John 1:10-11](#); [Rev 1:7](#)).

Of course, the clarion call is, "*Who has believed our report?*" This reinforces an earlier proclamation made in only the previous  men won and that our God reigns! The prophet wrote:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" (Isaiah 52:7).

This is not just a picturesque language of Hebrew poetry but a historical representation of how salvation was largely conceived in ancient Israel. Salvation was something physical, something concrete; it was deliverance from invaders; victory in war, deliverance from the Pharaoh and the mass grave of the Red Sea.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Thus the Prophet paints for us the picture of a messenger from the war front bringing good news of the reign of God. The war went well with Israel/Judah, and God who reigns over Zion was victorious. He reigns in victory.

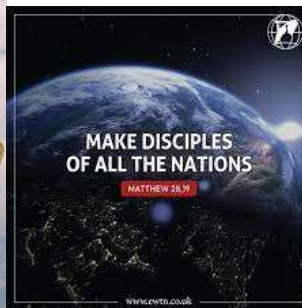
This is the cultural historical background to the word 'gospel' in its current New Testament biblical usage. It is the English translation of the Greek word "*éuaggéliōn*" (Strong's #2098 pron. 'yoo-ang-ghel-ee-on') which itself is a translation of the Hebrew word "*besorah*," which comes from the verb (root) "*basar*". '*Basar*' means to 'bear good news or tidings', but this same word in its noun form means '*flesh or meat*'. And the cultural linguistic background connection is that in ancient Hebrew culture "*when good news is brought, a feast with meat is prepared.*" In other words, good news was to be celebrated. (See Prov 25:25). (References: *Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible*, p. 306; *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p. 142).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

This same concept of receiving good news with joy and celebration has been carried over into the present (N.T) era of salvation history. Christ won; *He overcame the enemy in death* and therefore sent messengers from the war front to proclaim His victory over sin and death everywhere:



"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations [Grk 'ethné'; Heb. 'goyim'], baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt 28:18-20).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

The language of salvation is even now expressed in military terms. We read in Colossians 2:13-15:

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your heart, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, “having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them having triumphed over them through Him [i.e the cross]” (NASB; cp Gal 3:13-14).

Again we read in Ephesians 4:7-10:

“But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. “Therefore it says,’ WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.’ “(Now this expression, ‘He ascended’, what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? “He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things)” (NASB; cp. 2 Cor 2:14-16).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

In the Hebrew, the saving work of Jesus comes out clearer both phonetically and conceptually in the Hebrew word for “salvation” which the bearer of the good news “proclaims”. He is said to publish (announce) “*yeshuah*” which is “salvation” (literally, “Yah saves”). “*Yeshua*” is the proper Hebrew name of Jesus, a shortened form of the Hebrew name ‘*Yehoshua*’ (Joshua).

That is why the good news is centred on the person of YESHUA, the Person whose very Name is salvation (Acts 4:12), and on His work of setting men free from the burden of sin! (See 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 12-17).



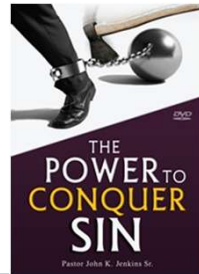
In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Yeshua is the master and conqueror of the heart of sin, for the Father has given Him “power over all flesh” (John 17:2) to the extent that He is able to change hearts of stone, given to evil and lawlessness, into hearts of faith, obedience and service. (See Matt. 3:7-9; Ez. 11:19-20; 36:25-27). The Law was simply to instruct people in the way of God but had no power over their inner selves, their self-will (the master within), “which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph. 4:22<sup>b</sup>).

The power the Law lacked, Jesus has -- not to compel or threaten -- but to enable; to make the heart responsive to the call of the Law of God. After His resurrection, He joined two disciples of His incognito on the road to Emmaus (a village) and expounded to them the scriptures concerning Himself, and the impact on their hearts was so profound in an indescribable way, “They said one to another”, after they recognized Him whereupon He vanished from their sight, “Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:13-32).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

Seeking God's  
Righteousness

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

By His death, Christ Jesus broke the power of sin and death, which is of the devil, so that He might “deliver them who through fear of death [the devil] were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).

In Christ alone, therefore, is the righteousness of God *realized by continual faith in Him*. It is solely by the power of His gospel that we are able to please God. Hence the Apostle Paul's statement in Romans 1:16-17:

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith”.

Paul terms this “righteousness of God” elsewhere in the Epistle of Romans as “the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:25-26). This obedience does not come from one's personal effort or power but from the divine power generated through faith in Yeshua (see John 1:10-13). By this power, stony hearts, that would previously not keep God's Law, will now be willing and able to keep it, so long as they do not draw back from faith, they do not draw back from trusting in the Redeemer (Heb. 10:37-39).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

Seeking God's  
Righteousness



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

### REVERENCE FOR THE HEART

Messiah has opened by His Spirit what was previously a no-go area for the Law of God – the heart! At long last, a solution has been found to the problem of the hardness of the heart long identified in the Torah. Moshe himself prophesied of it that YHWH would circumcise the heart of His people so that they might love Him with all their heart and with all their soul (**Deut. 30:6**).

The prophet Jeremiah elaborated on this same prophecy by emphasizing *how* the LORD (YHWH) would go about putting His love and reverence in the heart of His people:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD;



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the LORD, I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying Know the LORD; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:31-34).

### REVERENCE FOR THE HEART



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

This is what the New Covenant is all about -- the Law of God in the inward parts and hearts of His people -- and *it was scheduled for the days that are coming* but not in isolation. The prophetic 'coming days' also held the promise of the offering of the perfect sacrifice for sin and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon "**all flesh**". These *three prophetic events* were designed by the heavenly Father to converge in the making of a New (or, properly speaking, Renewed) Covenant with the same house of Israel. The Letter to Hebrews attests to all three when it states: "**For by one offering** He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

"And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: 'I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM'. He then says, 'AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE'.

"Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin" (Heb. 10:14-18 NASB).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Here, the Holy Spirit "**testifies to us**" that it is the once-and-for-all perfect sacrifice of the Messiah that has made possible the true forgiveness promised in the New Covenant (see Rom 3:24-26; 1 John 2:12). But it is a testimony that goes beyond the inspired prophetic word. The Holy Spirit also testifies (Greek "**marturei**", derivative "**martyr**") to us of the reality of the New Covenant, together with all its elements by His *inward written testimony*.

In 2 Corinthians chapter three, the Holy Spirit is not just telling us – 'This is it, I prophesied by Jeremiah and it has come to pass' – but He actually does the inward work of writing on the tablets of the human heart. From both Jeremiah and Hebrews, we know this writing to be the writing of God's Law in the hearts of God forgiven people.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

And what a glorious work God's Holy Spirit does -- a breathing walking letter from Christ; a people who live and manifest the holy Law of God in their lives; a people who testify inwardly and outwardly to Christ's work of grace in their lives. The content of the letter is no different from the message read and proclaimed from it. If a letter carries bad news, so will its message be; likewise, if it contains good news.

And Christ's letter, which true believers are, contains good news because it is "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God." The Apostle Paul wrote:

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our heart, known and read by everyone.

"You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

"Such confidence we have through Christ before God.

"Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

"He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant -- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life"

(2 Cor 3:2-6 NIV).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

The outcomes are fixed: When the letter (written text) communicates truth without the involvement of the Spirit, it produces death, but when the Spirit communicates the same truth, He gives life.

Why is it so?

The truth is, it is only the Spirit that can communicate truth to the heart. When the Spirit communicates, it is not just words written on paper or etched in stone *but a sword in the hand of the Spirit* by which He pries open (circumcises) the heart and inscribes the word. The word communicated is not an abstract idea or mere information but "living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb 4:12).

That is the way to receive God's truth, His Law, to have life. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17), penetrates deep into the heart uncovering its contents -- "the thoughts and intents of the heart" There, in the deep recesses of the heart, the Spirit by His sword (word) provokes an inward conviction, leading to repentance. (See 2 Cor. 7:9-10).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Such was the experience of the audience on that momentous day of Pentecost when the Apostle Peter preached in the fresh anointing and power of the Holy Spirit:

“Now when they heard this [the sword of the Spirit], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37; see also Cor. 2:4-5).

The logical next step is repentance (in Hebrew ‘*teshuvah*’, a return to God, like the Prodigal Son). Peter did not delay in making that godly call to action:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (v 38).

In the absence of the Spirit ministering the Word in the form of the Sword of the Spirit, the heart cannot be impacted this intensely and why back in Jeremiah, God, who is Spirit, was at pains to stress that He would put His Law in the “inward parts” of His people and write it on their hearts.

A LAW IN THE  
INWARD PARTS



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

In the Hebrew, the word translated “inward parts” is “*b'qirbam*” (Strong’s #7130 from the root ‘*qereb*’), meaning ‘the centre, within, in the midst’. It has to do with the core of being, the seat of life. It is transformation from within so that the previous inward nature is done away with; the previous contents of the heart are erased for God’s Law to be written in their place.

The heart is never in a neutral state, spiritually and morally. It either has God’s Law or Satan’s law of sin and death (see Rom 7:22-23). Yes, Satan also writes his law in the hearts of those who obey him:

“The sin of Judah is written with an iron pen, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horn of your altars” (Jer. 17:1).

Again, there is no mismatch. The content of the heart, which is sin (the transgression of God’s law) inscribed on its tablets, is actually lived out by the people. The horned altars erected in honour of pagan gods reflect the sin in their hearts. That’s why Jesus came with heavenly power to break the demonic power and work of sin in the human heart.



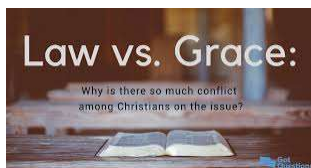
In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

For the ancient Israelites, the heart ('*lev*') was not merely an organ for pumping blood through the blood vessels of the circulatory system. To them, the heart was the seat of sensation and of one's cognitive ability; the place where you think and make your decisions. It is where the conscience is found, where you weigh and discern things and know what is true and what is not true.

It is here, *in this tense psychological, emotional conflict zone*, that God has written His holy, righteous and good Law under the New covenant. And the result speaks for itself: "*You are a letter from Christ*" -- your very life matches the holy writing of the Spirit within.

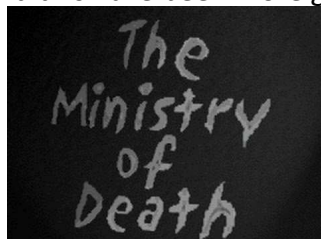


In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

We do not serve God in the old way -- what Paul calls "the ministry of death." Under that order, sin was the order of the day. The uncircumcised hearts of the people had no room for God's commandments which were just confined to cold lifeless stone tablets. The sad outcome was, of course, mass deaths, being the wages of sin (*Rom. 6:23a*). Hence the name "*the ministry of death*" (*2 Cor 3:7*). Out of a population of 600,000 men (excluding women and children) who were brought out of Egypt, only two of the Exodus generation (Joshua and Caleb) made it to the Promised Land.

How could this have been more glorious than the New Covenant "*ministry of the Spirit*"?



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Despite all the spectacular phenomena which accompanied the making of the Old Covenant, including the brightness of Moses' face, the life-giving ministry of the Spirit is exceedingly glorious in comparison (v. 8).

Its greater glory lies in what it does in the lives of God's people -- it produces "righteousness," rather than "condemnation," in their lives (v 9). This is only possible when the Spirit comes in and writes the Law in the heart. The Spirit cannot fail. Whereas "the flesh profits nothing", the Lord Jesus assures us that, "it is the Spirit that gives life, ... the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63).

The words which  
I have spoken to  
you are **spirit**  
and are **life**.

JOHN 6:63

Note the words carefully: It's not just any words which give life but 'the words that I Yeshua speak, the words themselves are composed of spirit and because of that they give life'.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

However, the bare written text of the law kills! It's communicated without power onto the auditory senses and received with the flesh, leading to condemnation. This is because now you know (heard) it, but because you are unable to do it, you stand condemned as a transgressor or law-breaker. (See Mark 16:16; John 3:19; Heb. 4:2).

That is exactly why there's a need for all to embrace the New Covenant of Christ, the King of glory, who is the unfading Glory behind it all. This is the glory which eclipses all the transient glory of the Old Covenant ministry of death represented by the veiled fading glory of Moses' face (vv. 10:13).

With Christ, we boldly declare that the glory remains. He's at the centre of everything. Without Him, there is no true forgiveness, no inward work of the Spirit and therefore no writing of the Law in our hearts. It's only in Him that "the veil (read 'foreskin, sin, obstinacy') over the heart is taken away.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

The book of Exodus furnishes us with the interesting background to this metaphorical reference to the veil. After Moses came down from Mount Sinai the second time with the tablets of law (after he had broken the first set in his rage at the golden calf), the reflected glory of God shone so brightly on his face that the Israelites could not approach him, although he himself was not aware of it. As a solution, Moses put a veil on his face when he faced the people to talk to them but took it off when he appeared before the LORD (Ex 34:29-35).

It was a rather interesting back and forth pattern: “on” in the presence of the people but “off” in the presence of the LORD (YHWH). The lesson is that the people could not endure the glory of Yah shining in Moses’ face (see 2 Cor 4:6) because they had not turned to Yah; they had not devoted their hearts to Him. Something still separated them from the glory of God.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

And it persists to this day not only among Jews who have not yet accepted Yeshua (Jesus) as the promised Messiah of Israel, but also among all readers of scripture who have not turned to Christ for Him to work on their hearts (but merely read scripture as religious formality or for intellectual stimulation or curiosity) (v. 14-15).

The facial veil of Moses only served illustrative purposes; it pre-illustrated the spiritual veil that covers the hearts of all carnal men which only Jesus is able to remove -- but only if they turn to Him as Moses did (v 16). For Moses turned to no one else but the Lord Jesus (known as YHWH, Ex 34:6-8) when he took off the veil after talking to the terrified Israelites.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

The Apostle Paul zeroes in on the truth in verse 17:

"Now the Lord is that Spirit [in whose Presence Moses took off the veil]: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (cp. John 14:16-18; 1 John 1:3; Matt. 28:20).

What "liberty"?

Liberty (freedom) to view the unfading glory of the Lord. That is the main advantage of the New Covenant – freedom to see the glory of the Lord who is the Spirit, freedom to do His will, freedom to live in His presence. That is the freedom granted us by the Spirit of Christ which is also His agent of transformation:

"But we all, with open face [no veil] beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into that same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (v 18).

It's a glorious beginning to a glorious ending -- an ending which never actually ends because the Spirit is always life, always glorious. And we are been changed into that same image of glory which is the glorious likeness of Christ by a process of gradual transformation from one degree of glory to another degree of glory.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

It is the ancient path of the righteous described in different terms, namely, "the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day [KJV 'perfect day']" (Prov 4:18 NASB; cp Ps 17:15). It is a shining path we must both walk and view in a mutual interplay where as we walk -- progress along the path -- we see and retain more of the glory. Christ is our model of glory we must constantly look at and reflect, as we walk along the path of life towards Him, "the Author and Finisher of our faith", who is the "full day", aka, "the day dawn", "the day star", "the bright and morning star" (Heb 12:2; Pet 1:19; Rev 22:16).

Once we look to Him in faith and obedience, He is well able to keep us from falling and to present us "faultless before the presence of His glory with joy. To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 1:24-25).

**PRESENTED FAULTLESS BEFORE  
THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY**



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

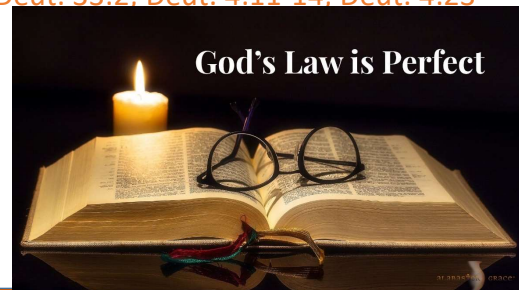
Since, as noted earlier, the Law of God is a reflection of His own character (Rom 7:12), His glory can't be decoupled from the Law -- viewed /received without veil. This glory even existed in ancient times. That is the very glory which rubbed off on Moses as He spent time with the Lord the Spirit (for 40 days and 40 nights on Sinai) and in the tabernacle *without veil*.

Thankfully, we can have the same experience by turning to the Lord the Spirit (Yeshua) and looking at His reflected glory in the Law without the obstruction of a veil; the law that is itself fiery and spiritual like its Originator and Author (Deut. 33:2; Deut. 4:11-14; Deut. 4:23-24; Jer. 23:29; Rom 7:14; Heb 12:29; Jam 4:12).

In James chapter one, Elder James (*Ya'acov*) employs the same metaphor of a looking glass (a mirror) to hammer home his point that the reflected glory of God in His Law must be looked at with a view to retaining the image in our own lives for the reward of blessing.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

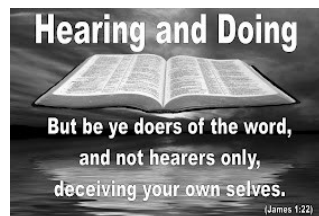
He writes:

"But be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

"For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass.

"For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed [doing]" (James 1:22-25; cp Rom 2:13).



The inadequacy of the Old Covenant has been rectified -- divine power to behold and to fulfill the call of God's word or law [James does not distinguish between the two, vv. 22 & 25] has been bestowed. He uses the analogy of a man looking at his real image reflected in a mirror but who soon forgets how he looked like (when he goes away) to make the point that we too see our true natural original image in the 'mirror of God's word' when we hear the word.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

That image is not the natural face of the carnal man but the original face of the original man God created in His own image and likeness. That is the image (righteous character) the mirror of God's word reflects back on to the hearer (or reader) which he must retain to do. The mirror (here the Law or word) is well able to reflect the original glorious image of man because that is itself a reflection of God's righteous character. That is why it is called "**the perfect law of liberty**," infusing into man the perfection of God which delivers from moral and spiritual corruption (Ps 19:7-11).

Is this not characteristic of Christ? Is He not perfect (1Pet 2:22)? And does He not grant freedom from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the righteousness of God when a person turns to Him? (See John 8:3-11, 34-36). In short, the image of the mirror of God's word *is a picture of the ideal man or woman of God, one who has been reconciled to the God of glory by the blood of Christ* (Rom. 5:10; 1 Pet. 3:18), whereby He has made a new covenant that rests not on the weakness of human strength but on the power and all-enabling grace of God! (See Heb. 8:7-8 compare to 7:15-16).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

Go through the list of God's commandments (Ex. 20:3-17), and one realizes that none of them brings disgrace but glory only!



- Starting with the first two commandments, the King of Glory Himself is your adoration, and not anything else that is not 'God', that is not to be worshipped, the work of man's hand and imagination (Ex. 20:3-5).
- As befit His status His name is to be revered. It is the sanctified, exalted Name (YHWH) that saves, not some cheap manta to recite or used to make empty vows (Ex. 20:7; Matt 6:7-8, 5:33-37).
- "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8-11). The fourth commandment of the Sabbath memorializes both Elohim's acts of creation in six days and His rest for His people (past, present and future (Heb. 4:1, 4, 9; Isa 66:22-23). After the cross comes rest.
- "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12). Parental honour is the way to show respect and gratitude for one's origins and parental sacrifice, in a similar way to how our observance of the Sabbath shows gratitude and honour to God. He commands us to uphold both in Lev 19:3: "Ye shall fear [reverence] every man his mother, and his father, and keep My Sabbaths; I am the LORD, your God."



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law



- “Thou shalt not murder” (Ex. 20:13). An image of God doesn’t destroy another image of God. It is high crime (Gen 9:6). Life is from God and is sacred.
- “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Ex. 20:14). Marriage is a uniting of two souls, a man and a woman by God; a union to be kept intact by mutual faithfulness. It’s not the place of the man or the woman to dissolve by unbridled lust what God has put together (Mat 19:6; Heb. 13:4). A sound marriage is fundamental to spiritual, familial, and societal stability.
- “Thou shalt not steal” (Ex. 20:15). Stealing is not only a betrayal of self-dignity but also of faith in God. With the God we serve being the possessor of all things (Gen 14:19), we will not lack. He will bless the work of our hands (Deut. 28:12; Eph. 4:28).
- ‘Thou shalt not give false testimony against your fellow’ (Ex. 20:16). Avoiding falsehood, whether in the context of testifying in court (as the context suggests) or as a habit of lying, avoids the main character trait of Satan -- falsehood, of which he is the father or inventor (John 8:44, Eze 28:15).
- “Thou shalt not covet” (Ex. 20:17). Covetousness is an evil desire that breeds bitterness and envy and may even erode faith in God and in one’s own potentials and talents. God will bless you and has blessed you in your own unique way.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Messiah Perfects the Role of the Law

What underlies everything is love (the foundation) -- love for God and for your fellow human being. ‘On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets’ (Matt. 22:37-40). That is to say, “Love is the fulfilling [keeping] of the law”, in that, love does no harm to his neighbor; to wit, love does not murder, steal from, commit adultery or any other harm (forbidden by God’s Law) against his neighbour (Rom13:8-10).

What could be more beautiful than this! If all humanity understood and practised this, where would the hatred be, where would the greed, the gross and rampant sexual immorality, the murders and the slander?

Little wonder, Elder James also calls *God’s Law of Love* “the Royal Law” -- a Law of heavenly royalty, a Law for people of noble, godly character who radiate love for all and therefore are enabled by divine grace to uphold the Law in all its precepts of love! (Jam 2:8-12).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

WHAT IS  
THE ROYAL LAW



## A Covenant of the Spirit

Moses' prayer for God to go "**among**" (Heb. '**qereb**') the Israelites after the rebellion of the golden calf, for they are a stiff-necked people (Ex 34:9), has been answered under the New Covenant as specified in Jer. 31. In Jeremiah His answer is that "**I will put My law in their inward parts**" ('**beqirbam**', **qereb**) v 33. Thus "among us" is not just being among the people as in accompanying them but *being in the midst of their being, in their hearts*, where the spirit of stiff-neckedness lived. This is the only credible answer to the stubbornness of the heart.

In essence, man now becomes the new Ark of the Covenant in which are kept the tablets of testimony or Law (as a witness to the covenant (Ex 40:20; 31:18; Deut. 4:13) and all associated items of glory. This is what the Holy Spirit ultimately witnesses and authenticates. The Spirit testifies with our own renewed human spirit that "**we are the children of God**" (Rom 8:16; see also 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## A Covenant of the Spirit

Thus, we have in us what is in the Father -- His character/Law (on tablets of human hearts), His Word (being 'the golden pot of manna', John 6:31-33; Job 23:12; Deut. 8:2; Jer. 15:16), and His power for signs and wonders (symbolized by Aaron's rod, Ex 4:17; Mark 16:17). Moreover, He's enthroned in our hearts as King with the cherubim of glory overshadowing the throne (the mercy seat) so that while He dwells in us by His Spirit (1 John 3:24; Acts 5:32), that same "Spirit of glory" rests upon us, overshadowing us (1 Pet 4:14; Act 2:2-4).

In the Letter to the Hebrews, we read that "**the ark of the covenant, overlaid round about with gold**" contained "**the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron rod that budded, and the tables of covenant**; And above it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (Heb. 9:4-5).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## A Covenant of the Spirit

As Spirit-filled New Covenant believers, all this splendor of the Divine has been transferred to us. A better Ark of the Covenant has come with the coming into force of “a better covenant” (Heb. 8:6) whereby the old golden box of the Old Covenant will no longer come to mind (Jer. 3:16).

This is the greater glory of the New Covenant -- Emmanuel, God with us, transforming us from within (where He dwells by His Spirit). The New Covenant cannot be perfected without the Spirit. *In fact, it cannot even begin to exist without the key role of the Holy Spirit.* To make the New Covenant viable, the Spirit has to be poured out copiously in these “last days” (of the New Covenant) so that God’s people are empowered to do His will.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## A Covenant of the Spirit

In the original Hebrew (in Joel 2:28), the word translated “pour out” literally means ‘spill forth’ (Strong’s #8210 ‘shaphakh’), making “I will pour out” literally ‘I will spill out’ [‘esh-po-wkh’] My Spirit [Ru-hi] upon all flesh [‘basar,’ ‘flesh,’ also ‘good news’]. The difference between the two is that ‘spill out’ conveys a sense of suddenness and spontaneity as evident in the imagery (word picture) of “a rushing mighty wind,” as the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and fell on the disciples gathered together in the “upper room” (Act 2:1-3; 1:13-14; cp John 3:8).

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the people of God, whereupon they are filled with the Spirit, bridges the gap between Heaven and earth with direct communication between God and man partially restored (compare Gen 3:8). Hence

“your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour [spill] out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Act 2:17-18; Joel 2:28-29).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## A Covenant of the Spirit

The spiritual media (means) of communication with heaven are the prophecies, visions and dreams which are not isolated experiences by a select few but the experiences of all the servants and hand-maidens of God upon whom He pours out (of) His Spirit --“*your sons, your daughters, your young men and your old men*”! (See Job 33:14-17).

Even the different tongues or languages in which the disciples spoke that day were a sign of reconciliation between God and man and even among all humanity of different nationalities in one new body, even the body of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua, who is “*the Saviour of the world*” (Eph. 2:14-18; John 4:42; cp. Acts 21:28-29). They spoke not unknown languages but the languages of the different countries from which Jews of the dispersion, along with some proselytes (Gentile converts), had come to observe the feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:4-12).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## A Covenant of the Spirit

This was an astounding miracle; this miracle of everyone hearing the disciples speak in their own native language signified the reversal of the curse of Babel, where God “*confounded the language of the whole earth; and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth*” (Gen. 11:9; cp Zeph. 3:9).

All these heavenly visions and Spirit-empowered utterance in different intelligible languages point to man’s reconciliation with God. This is the whole point of Jesus’ ministry on earth -- to reconcile us to God. Hence His name *Emmanuel* – ‘*God with us*’. (In the Hebrew, it’s ‘with us [is] God’, i.e., “*immanu El*”, with emphasis on the benefitting party – ‘us’) (see 2 Cor. 5:19).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

It because of His mission of reconciliation on earth whereby He restores the holiness and values of heaven to man that Christ did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them, to make them full! He made it clear in the *Sermon on the Mount*:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled” (Mat 5:17-18).



He came to make FULL (Greek “*pleroo*” v. 17). Christ did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to make alive in the hearts and lives of people their call of righteousness. Christ is the righteousness of God at work in our lives for the manifestation of God’s righteous life in us. To this end, He brought greater grace and truth.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

The phrase “**till all be fulfilled**” or accomplished (Greek Strong’s #1096 “*ginomai* v. 18) does not speak of the cross as the end of the law (as some interpret it to mean). This is because this “**till**” refers back to an earlier “**till**” in the text emphasizing the same point – “**till heaven and earth pass**” not one stroke of a letter (the smallest letter, the Hebrew ‘*yod*,’ or the Greek ‘iota’) shall pass from the law till all be accomplished. When will all be accomplished? Not till heaven and earth pass away! Not “**until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began**” (Acts 3:21).

This envisages the end of the world after which “**a new heaven and a new earth**” [without the sea] will be inaugurated in its place (Rev. 21:1; 2Pet 3:13; cp. Isa 66:22-24 & Rev 21:27, 22:15; Isa 51:4-6, 7-8; 65:17).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

Yes, Christ by His suffering and death fulfilled some of the O.T prophecies but the heaven and the earth have since continued since the cross! "Heaven and earth" (the universe) are invoked in reference to the continued validity of the Law because already God has summoned them as His witnesses in His dealings with humanity (Deut. 4:26, 32; 30:19, 31:28, 32:1; Ps 50:4; Isa 1:2). Because Messiah doesn't want us to be arraigned and found guilty before the universal Supreme Court of the Creator, "from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away" ((having given their testimony against humanity, Rev 20:11; Matt. 24:35), He came with greater grace for the truth to operate in us.

This was what John the Baptist testified of when he "bore witness of Him, and cried, saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me. And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the Law was given by [i.e., through] Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:15-16).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

Jesus brought grace and truth after the Law had come through Moses. *This is the natural progression of a story that has climaxed in Christ!* The original Greek text has no "but" between Moses and Christ, a conjunction which introduces an idea or element of contrast. All John is saying is that with the coming of Christ we have all received of His fullness and also received "grace upon grace." Why? Because ("for" v. 17) Torah came through Moses; "grace and truth were realized" through Yeshua Messiah (NASB).

This is where see "grace upon grace", grace in addition to grace (v. 16). In short, the coming of Christ added grace to a grace that already existed, but His is one of superabundance in a way that has infused truth into man as never seen before!

The earlier grace meant is, of course, the Law of God given through Moses. It was given in grace. It was a favour God bestowed upon Israel by making known to them His noble and righteous laws, a privilege not extended to the other nations, even though the Israelites were themselves obstinate (Deut. 4:5-8, 9:4-6; Neh. 9:13, 20).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

Although it was given on the basis of grace (see Ex 34:4-9), the Law was limited in its ability to make people obey. Christ, the greater Moses/Prophet (Acts 3:22-26; Heb.3:1-6), consummates the process begun with Moses by His all-superabundant grace which makes men receive and live the truth, the fullness of which He embodies!

So, the mention of Moses and the Law in connection with the work of Christ is actually complimentary, not a denunciation. But then, something greater has come – Jesus who is “full of grace and truth” (v 14).

Friend, the opposite of grace is never the Law of God but disgrace (Rom. 3:23). Similarly, the opposite of the Law is not grace but lawlessness (2 Chron. 15:3-5; Hos. 4:6-7, 8:11-12; 2 Tim. 2:19). That is why Christ brought not only grace but “grace and truth.”



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

NOW WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL DEFINITION OF TRUTH?

Psalm 119: 142 answers:

“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness and Thy law is the truth”

The Apostle Yochanan (John) concurs:

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

“He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4).

Since a person who doesn't keep the commandments of God doesn't have the truth in him, it stands to reason that it's the commandments that constitute “the truth”. In short, to keep the commandment is to have the truth. This is the direction of true divine grace – towards the truth (Tit 2:11-14), not towards lawlessness or immorality as some have turned the grace of God into, being ungodly persons who were beforehand “ordained to this condemnation” (Jude 1:4, 5-8; also Matt. 7:21-23; Rom 2:4-8).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

The commandments of God are the benchmark by which we know that we ourselves, or a person, walk in the truth. Without obedience to the commandments, scripture says, we cannot know God in a meaningful salvific way because the truth is not in us. Without obedience to the commandments, we have absolutely failed *the test of love* by which God accepts that we love Him:

*"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not grievous [burdensome]" (1 John 5:3, also John 14:15; Ex 20:5-6).*



***His Commandments  
Are Not Grievous***



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

Considering His inward work of grace -- our souls purified by faith in His blood, His Spirit living within us, circumcising our hearts and writing the Law within -- Christ actually sets the bar (standard) higher. He demands obedience right from the heart. That is how our righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, which focuses on the outward (*Matt. 5:20*). With the standard set by Christ, we obey not just the letter of the law but the spirit of the law. The obedience starts from within where the very desire and motivation for sin has been removed.

Hence *"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).*



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

Christ does not undo the old law, namely, ‘*thou may commit adultery*’. Instead, He repackages it for us in a fresh new way where the evil desire in the heart, which produces the actual sin, is outlawed. He builds a ‘fence’ around the commandment giving it a new freshness and vitality. (1 John 2:7-8; Rom. 7:6-7). In other words, don’t have the desire at all, or sin will come (result) outwardly because sin is already there (in the heart as lust)! (Jam. 1:13-15).

In the language of scripture, in Hebrew thought, *it is the eyes that follow the heart, not the other way round*. The eyes merely feast on what is already in the heart. That was why Christ insisted that “*whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*”. Thus, the eyes only desire (or focus on) what the heart is already longing for, the evil desires the heart is already nursing. The eyes, like other body parts, are only a facilitator. That’s why the Master recommends that we pluck or cut off any offending body part, as appropriate –and that by the ‘spiritual surgery’ of the Spirit to save the whole body from being thrown into hell (Matt.5:39-30; Rom.8:13; Col. 3:5).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

That the heart is the seedbed of sin goes all the way back to the Torah. It is evident in the language of the instruction to the Israelites to make tassels or fringes in the edges of their garments so that they might look upon them and remember all the commandments of the LORD:

“And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

“Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

“And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them, and that ye seek [follow] not after your own heart and your eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring.

“That ye may remember, and do all My commandments, and be holy unto God” (Num. 15:37-40).

In simple terms, the tassels (Hebrew “*tzitzit*”) the people of Israel were commanded to make on the corners of their garments were to function as a *mnemonic device* (something that helps you to remember something else), so that they may look upon it and remember to do all the commandments of YHWH. And how was that important to their spiritual wellbeing? “*So that you do not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot*” (NASB).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

So long as the 'tzitzit' made them remember to do all the commandments of God, they were a kind of defense mechanism against the spiritual harlotry of their hearts! The law of the tzitzit was not made in a vacuum, on a whim. It came after 10 members of the 12-member team sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan brought back "an evil report", and their report spread and fear despair throughout the camp of Israel. Although Moshe had told the team to "be of good courage" (to be mentally and spiritually strong), they went *seeing and evaluating with a heart of unbelief, their eyes following suit*, and they brought back a bad report of the land.

Even though they admitted that the land was, indeed, good – "flowing with milk and honey" – they said the inhabitants of the land were too strong for Israel to defeat. There were giants in the land, "the sons of Anak", they said, and "we became like grasshoppers in our own sight [when we sized them up], and so we were in their sight" (Num 13:33 NASB).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

Who told them the *Anakim* saw them as they saw their own pitiable selves in the imaginations and hallucinations of their own heart?

Anyway, the Israelites, having the same heart of unbelief, also began to see in their minds' eyes the giants, the feared Anakim, the sons of Anak, devouring them! It was not a sudden rush of unbelief; their heart was already given to spiritual harlotry – it was "not steadfast towards Him" (Ps 78:37 NASB). Indeed, the LORD complained that, up to this point in time, they had "tempted Him" (put Him to the test) ten times, despite having seen His glory and miracles (Num. 14:22).

But Caleb had a "different spirit" (presumably along with Joshua) "and hath followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land hereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24; also 37-38).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

The “different spirit” (which can be equated with one’s heart) showed in Caleb’s faithfulness to Yah – he followed Him “fully.” But the rest of the adult population of Joshua and Caleb’s generation were condemned to die in the wilderness because, obviously, their spirit was at odds with God, resulting in unfaithfulness towards Him at every turn. God framed their unfaithfulness in terms of marital infidelity which was the case spiritually, as He was married to Israel by the covenant He had made with them:

28 “Say unto them, *As truly as I live*, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you:

29 “Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me,

30 “Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning* which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

31 “But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

32 “But *as for* you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

33 “And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

34 “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise. (Num 14:28-34).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

God had had enough of their grumbling spirit of unbelief and rebellion. Early on, after their deliverance from Egypt, the children of Israel grumbled against Moses that he had brought them up from Egypt to kill them and their children and livestock with thirst, all because they had no water to drink (Ex. 17:1-4; cp. Num. 11:13).

They had forgotten so soon the great works of power God had performed to free them from slavery (Ps 106:13-14). Their hearts were still in Egypt (Acts 7:37-40; Num. 14:4), as is true of many believers today. Their hearts are still in Egypt, the world of sin and enslavement to Satan, the modern-day Pharaoh. Otherwise, why would an Israelite man stubbornly refuse to rest on the Sabbath, a covenantal sign of rest and freedom from bondage, and had to be punished to serve as a warning to others? (Num. 15:32-36; see also Isa. 66:22-24/Rev. 21:27; Deut. 5:12/Ex. 31:16-17/Matt 11:28-30; Matt 12:12/Luke 13:10-116; Heb. 4:4, 4:9-11).



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## Greater Grace and Truth

This refusal to commit to freedom and rest, to walk in the freedom and rest of God, was a further immediate impetus for the law of tassels, which were visual reminders of God's commandments attached to one's own clothes. The examples of Israel, our spiritual fathers in the faith (1Cor. 10:1), whose real-life stories of their spiritual struggles were written for "our learning and admonition" (Rom.15:4; 1Cor. 10:6, 11), clearly teach us that we need to guard our hearts from unbelief, lust, arrogance, fear, rebelliousness and vain thoughts (Prov. 4:23). The Master Yeshua says, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45).

So, it's good to answer the call to be good men and good women, but ultimately everything boils down to a good heart: a heart purified, converted, regenerated, cleansed and filled with God's Spirit. That is the heart God seeks:

"O that there were such an heart in them." He says, "that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!" (Deut. 5:29).



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## Greater Grace and Truth

That is why Yoel, the man who prophesied of the mass outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days, calls on us to rend our hearts, and not our garments, and return to the LORD (Joel 2:12-13). In Hebrew thought, garments ("*bege*d" meaning '*treachery*') are associated with deception. Since clothes cover the true shape and look of our bodies, they can be used to disguise the true nature and identity of a person.

By wearing Esau's clothes, plus animal skins on his neck and hands, Jacob (meaning '*supplanter or heel holder*') deceived his dim-sighted aged father, Isaac, into believing he was indeed Esau and stole the blessing of the first born (Gen. 27). (Note that this stolen blessing was eventually reversed and Jacob, now be renamed *Yisra'el*, paid it back to Esau, Gen. 32:13-33:11). What Jacob retained was his true blessing -- the covenantal blessing of Abraham, the blessing of the birthright, Gen. 28:1-5, 10-17; Gen 25:27-34; Heb. 12:15-17).



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## Greater Grace and Truth

In his old age, Jacob's trickery came back to haunt him. His older children sold off their brother Joseph ('Yah has added', 'adding'), whom they hated for his dreams (of greatness), into slavery and then played on him a similar trick he played on his own father. To make their father conclude that Yosef had been torn into pieces by a wild beast, they killed a goat and dipped his tunic of "many colours" in the blood. They then presented it to their father to see if it belonged to his son Joseph or not. The trick worked! He concluded as they had planned: 'It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces', he exclaimed in anguish (Gen. 37).

Clothes may deceive man, but God will not be deceived by our appearances. He sees not as man sees; He looks at the heart (1Sam. 16:7). This is what informs the call to rend our hearts and not our garments. God is not calling for change of appearance, for cosmetic change, but fundamental inward change; the transformation of the true inner man and woman.



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## Greater Grace and Truth

It's a call to tear apart the heart of lust, unbelief and hypocrisy and return it to the Lord for 'repairs.' He will sprinkle clean water upon us, and we shall be clean from all our filthiness and from all our idols. "Moreover", He says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you: and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezek. 36:25-27 NASB).

The result is a new creation – a Spirit-enabled 'heart of flesh' – that is able to follow Yahweh. To such a man will He look, he who trembles at His word. Although the universe, the heaven and the earth, is His, He, the High and Exalted One, who inhabits eternity, will 'contract Himself' to dwell with him that is of "a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive [i.e., regenerate in the way of godliness] the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 66:1-2; Isa. 57:15; cp John 14:23; Eph. 2:1, 5-10 for NT reflection).



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## Greater Grace and Truth

In the end, it's only in Christ Jesus that there is no condemnation for people doomed to die by the lusts and sins of their own hearts (which is the case for all mankind). He is the true *tzitzit*; the tassels we wear on our souls and are spiritually reminded of God's righteousness to do it. This explains the command, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom 13:14; see also Gal. 5:16). The Greek word translated "put on" is "*enduo*" (Strong's #1746) and means "to clothe or be clothed with (in the sense of sinking into a garment)". In other words, wear the Lord Jesus Christ as a piece of clothing (Gal. 3:27; 1John 2:6).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Greater Grace and Truth

The implications are mindboggling because of Who Christ is! For this is Christ who did no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth (1Pet. 2:22, Heb. 4:15, 1John 3:5); this is Christ who was no law-breaker (John 8:46; John 12:50), this is Christ who has been "made higher than the heavens" and therefore we must set our minds on the things above, not on things on earth (Heb. 7:26; Col. 3:1-2). But this is also Christ crucified -- who, by His death put to death sin on the cross so that we are no longer animated by the lusts in our bodies but by Christ living in us by whom we have "crucified the flesh with its passions and desire" (Rom. 6:6, 11-12; Gal. 2:20; Gal. 5:24).

Putting on Christ is a negation of unrighteousness, a negation of sinful lusts and of law-breaking. Hence "make no provision" ('forethought, provident care or supply') for the flesh to fulfill its desires. (See Rom 8:5-6).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Greater Grace and Truth

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In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Christ Jesus sets us free from the condemnation of the Law before whom all men stand accused as sinners (Rom. 3:9-19) -- but not to condemn the Law itself. The Law of God stands as a standard of God’s righteousness and a witness to God’s righteous judgment. And there’s no contradiction here. Christ as the embodiment of the Law of righteousness cannot condemn what He personifies – it will be a negation of Himself (Heb. 1:9).

To free us from condemnation, therefore (which we rightly deserved), He does two things: He pays the penalty for sin as the Law (Torah) requires (Gen. 2:17; Lev. 17:11; Deut. 21:22-23; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:22).

Second, having freed us from condemnation by the FULL PAYMENT OF THE PENALTY with His blood (Rom. 8:33-34; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:26, 28), He aligns our life with the righteousness of the Law. (He still does not take away the law of God). These are the two legs of our condemnation-free status in Christ – all coming from Himself



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

This is the message of Romans 8:1-4:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

“For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

“That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit”.

The text is clear: condemnation has passed by those who are in Christ Jesus – and they alone. For it's only in Christ and through Christ that the sinner who stands condemned before the judgment seat of God is set free. But curiously the Law is the witness to this person's status of freedom. He lives not in disharmony with God's will but in harmony with it as expressed in His Law. Hence the statement, “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”.



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Thus, when all is said and done, the Law is the outward evidence which testifies as to whether a person is condemned or set free (see 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 20:11-15; Rom. 2:13).

The grace of God in Christ Jesus does not do away with God's Law. That is why it's “fulfilled” (Greek “*pleroo*” to fill, complete, make replete, etc.) in the lives of those who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (of whose spiritual nature the law is the same, Rom. 7:14)

“The Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is not different in (basic) content from the ancient law of God's righteousness (Rom. 7:7; 1Cor. 10:1-12; Col. 3:5; Heb. 4:2). *The only difference lies in operation.* The difference lies in the former's enabling power of life, which is how the Law is received in and through Jesus (after “the power of an endless life”, Heb.7:16). In other words, it's not the bare (lifeless) text of the law that is seeking compliance from a person who is carnal and at the same time enslaved to sin. Instead, it is the Law of God endowed with the Spirit of life that is received and absorbed into the heart and life of the believer who walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Vast difference then in how the law operated before and after Christ's coming. Formerly, prior to the coming of Christ, the ability of the Law to instill righteousness in people was *weakened* by the opposition of the flesh, whose desires clash with the spiritual virtues of the law (Rom. 7:14; Gal. 5:17; Rom. 8:7). But God sent His Son Yeshua fashioned in human form, and He "condemned sin [not the Law] in the flesh" by His exemplary life of victory over sin -- while still flesh and blood (Heb. 4:15) -- and eventually broke its power over all believers by His death whereby He released us into the freedom of the Spirit, where sin does not prevail but the righteousness of the Law! (See Rom. 6:12-13).

Previously, as noted, we had the Law in a weakened (powerless) state being proclaimed to the carnal nature (the flesh). The result was a continual life of sin (though knowing God's will), leading to condemnation. This was the spiritual environment in which the Law operated, so that when the Law came (in the sense of its promulgation), sin abounded even more, in intensified rebellion against God.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

However, God, in His mercy, would not give up on man. Accordingly, grace (not condemnation) abounded more and more in response to increasing sin and rebelliousness provoked by the hostility of the flesh towards the law (Rom. 7:7-16), not to undermine or overthrow righteousness (the goal of the law all along) but to put righteousness on the throne.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

We read:

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:20-21).

What the Law could not do, the grace of God in Christ has achieved because Grace deals with the sin problem at its root – it puts to death the body of sin!

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

"God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for you 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.

"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?

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

"Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:1-2, 14-18).



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Please, let's realize that "not under the law" does not mean not keeping or living in conformity with the Law of God, since when we are under grace we are not supposed to "continue in sin," which is "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Not being under the law, for Paul, in the broader context of his epistle, means not being under the penalty (or condemnation) of the law. This is surely the outcome of trying to keep the Law of God by one's own effort without Christ, who alone is able to condemn sin in the flesh. Minus God's grace in Christ, we are only doomed to be under "the law of sin and death" whereby sin exercises dominion over people (see Ps. 119:133).

Being under grace and therefore not under the penalty of the law as a condemned sinner is all about whom or what you surrender yourself as a servant to obey. If to Christ, He makes you free from sin (the transgression of the law) making you a servant of righteousness – the same goal sought by the Law. Truly, when a person comes to know this "truth" in Christ, He sets that person free. Free from what? Free from being a servant of sin so that they might be made the sons of God in whom dwells the word of God (John 8:31-37; Rom. 8:14).



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Christ is indeed the goal of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believes (Rom. 10:4). This is traditionally rendered as “the end of the law” in many English Bibles, although the word “end” can itself be understood as ‘goal’ or ‘desired result’ or even ‘end result’.

The Greek word usually translated as ‘end’ is ‘telos’ (Strong’s #5056). It’s used 42 times in the New Testament. In four or five places, it has the meaning of ‘finish, cessation, and termination’. “But in the majority of cases [including Rom. 10:4] its meaning is either (1) ‘aim, purpose, goal’ toward which a movement is being directed (1Tim. 1:5; 1Ke[Pet] 1:9); or (2) ‘outcome, result, consummation, last part’, of a process not obviously being directed and which may or may not terminate” (David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, p. 396). Similarly, *Strong’s Greek Dictionary* defines “telos” as “the point aimed at, the conclusion of an act or state, result, purpose, a term, termination, outcome, etc.”



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

From what the Apostle Paul has said so far about the Law of God in chapter 8 and other places in Romans, translating ‘telos’ in the sense of ‘termination’ (in Rom. 10:4) cannot be justified. As far as the context is concerned, it’s best to render ‘telos’ as “the goal at which Torah aims is the Messiah” as the *Complete Jewish Bible* renders it, or as the NIV does: “Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes”. By culmination, it’s meant ‘climax or point of highest development, zenith’. That is to say, it’s Christ who brings to the goal or perfection the righteousness of God the Law seeks to instill in people.

The point the Apostle Paul is advancing is that *faith is central to righteousness* (defined in the Law) in both the Hebrew Scriptures (of the O.T.) and the Apostolic Scriptures (of the N.T.). Moreover, the Torah itself acknowledges this basic truth.



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

But the problem is that non-believing (i.e., non-Messianic) Jews, having missed this truth, have gone about establishing their own righteousness which is not of faith (**Rom. 10:3**)! This is the very same issue the Apostle addresses in **Romans 9:30-33**, namely, the righteous requirement of the Law can only be obtained on the basis of faith (as demonstrated in the life of Gentile believers in the Messiah):

“What shall we say? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

“But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

“Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as if were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone;

“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed”.



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## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Faith and obedience have the same goal -- righteousness. But then, the letter depends on the former to be realized. The righteousness required by the Law can only be attained through faith in Christ Jesus. That is why Paul prayed for God's mercies for his people Israel

“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. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth” (**Rom. 10:2-4**).

Again, the immediate context (starting with the last few verses of chapter 9) clearly shows “end” is to be understood as ‘goal or point aimed at’. That is, the Law points to Christ as the One who makes its righteous requirements real in people who believe in Him. (The same truth of **Rom. 8:3-4** has been expressed differently here).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Indeed, this has been a message of the Torah itself all along – without faith, which impresses truth upon the heart, the keeping of the law is not possible. The plain truth is that people cannot please God by mechanical obedience or self-effort (Ezek. 33:13; Rom. 8:8). That is why when Moses says of “the righteousness of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them [which include avoidance of incest, homosexuality and the command to love one’s neighbor as oneself, Lev. 18:5ff]” (v5), he also speaks of “the righteousness of faith” (so named by Paul) in the same Torah:

“For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

“It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

“Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it?

“But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deut. 30:11-14).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

In Romans chapter 10, Paul applies ‘the word is near thee, not in heaven, but in thy mouth and in thy heart’ to Christ who is the Word of God, the embodiment of the Law:

“But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (That is to bring Christ down from above) [Christ from ‘above’ like the law].

“Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) [the place of the dead likened to the ‘deep’ of the sea’, Deut. 30:13; Gen. 1:2].

“But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach” (Rom 10:6-8).

“The righteousness of the law” and “the righteousness of faith” were both proclaimed in the O.T, and they are still being proclaimed now. And they are not two different kinds of righteousness that are opposed to each other but the same righteousness from God which only takes faith to attain! (See 1 Cor. 10:6-11).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

The author of Hebrews emphasizes the same point when he says:

“For unto us [N.T. believers] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the ancient Israelites]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb. 4:2).

In the absence of faith, the outcome is not obedience but sin (Heb. 3:17-19), “for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom 14:23b).

That is why confession with the mouth that Jesus is Lord over one’s life without believing with the heart is insufficient for righteousness and salvation.

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom 10:9-10).

He who confesses without the heart believing is already condemned as a hypocrite, who draws near the Lord with his mouth (parrots devotion to Him) but his heart is far from Him (Mat 15:7-8). As a heart estranged from God does not produce righteousness, the sincerity of a person’s profession of faith in Christ is only authenticated by his departure from lawlessness.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

Confession of Christ as Lord must necessarily lead to righteous living, as the Apostle Paul makes clear in 2 Tim. 2:19:

“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity [i.e., lawlessness]” (cp Luke 1:6).

That is the bottom line. We can’t believe in Christ and be habitual transgressors of God’s law (which is “iniquity”). It is through faith in Christ -- and only through that faith -- that we (believers in Yeshua) establish the righteousness of the Law in our lives. Even though we might know the Law (as Israelites trained in the law surely did, Rom. 2:17-24), we approach it as sinners trapped in the body of sin and can never meet its requirements apart from saving faith in Christ (Rom. 7:24-25). This explains Paul statement in Rom 3:28-31:

“For we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

“Or is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not the God of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also,

“Since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

“Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law” (NASB).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

We see then that faith in Christ is not antithetical (opposed) to the Law of God. Through faith in Messiah Jesus, we establish the Law! It follows then that without faith, we trample upon the law (and not uphold it).

Therefore, faith in Christ is the sole instrument of our salvation -- evidenced by our Christ-enabled ability to uphold the Law of God in our lives.

This is the exact same point the Apostle Paul makes, once again, in **Ephesians 2:8-10**. We are saved by grace (in that “**while we were yet sinners Christ died for us**”, **Rom 5:8**) through faith. Not of works (typically, evil works of our sinful nature and, at best, the “**filthy rags**” of our pretended righteousness, **Tit. 3:3**; **Isa. 64:6**). “**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**”

WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

created for  
**good works**

EPH 2:10

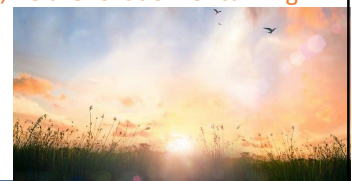


In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Christ Sets Free; the Law Stands as Standard and Witness

In other words, “**good works**” flow from God’s creation, “**His workmanship**” (Greek “**polema**”, ‘a thing made, a work, workmanship’) which is us believers (**2 Cor. 5:17**). This is what happens in our life when we have been saved by grace through our faith in Christ. We walk in the “**good works**” which “**God prepared beforehand**” for us. This takes us to God’s original plan for man, whom He created in His own image and likeness. “**Good works**” are the evidence of God’s salvation -- the logical outcome of Christ’s salvation work, which is to save us from our sins (**Matt. 1:21**).

This is “**the gift of God**” earlier mentioned in **Eph. 2:8**. The Father’s gift cannot be anything unrighteous or unlawful in any shape or form. For “**Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning**” (**Jam. 1:17**; see also **John 7:19**).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

Until the coming of the Messiah, all humanity was born into condemnation. (The believers of old were only granted pardon in anticipation of the perfect sacrifice to come by Yeshua, [Heb 9:15](#); [Rom 3:24-26](#)). There was no escape for any of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. Our fate was sealed -- until "[the fullness of the time \[promised in Genesis after the fall\] was come](#)":

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

"So that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

"Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba! Father!

"Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God" ([Gal 4:4-7 NASB](#)).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

The phrase "[born of a woman, born under the Law](#)" does not refer to Law keeping or a so-called dispensation of the law (as though grace was unknown to Noah, Abraham and Moses). Instead, it refers to mankind's condition of life under the judgment of the Law. For under this condition was the promise of a Redeemer made in [Genesis 3:15](#) -- the fullness of which was reached when God sent forth His Son, "[born of a woman](#)" [i.e., the seed of the woman] "[born under \[the condemnation of\] the law](#)."

So then, 'born of a woman' does not just refer to Miriam (Mary) Jesus' mother, but the primordial "[mother of all living](#)," *Chavvah* (Eve, [Gen. 3:21](#)), who ended up passing on death and curses to her descendants because of her transgression of God's commandment ([Gen 2:17, 3:1-6, 13; 1Tim 2:14; Rom 5:12](#)).

Before then, man did not stand in need of a Redeemer. He only had God for Father and for fellowship ([Luke 3:38](#)).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

But following sin, the breaking of God's Law, humanity came under the judgment of the Law, pronounced on Adam and Eve and the deceitful serpent, alongside the promise of a Saviour:

"And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel.

"Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

"And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:14-19).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

The judgment pronounced persists to this day. The painful process of human birth is a clear indication that man is literally born under the judgment of the law. The painful contractions at the onset of 'labour' are all signs to both mother and child and any other observer that the judgment of the law is still in force.

Even after birth, it takes nearly a year (or for some, another 9 months) for the child to walk, whereas the babies of lower creatures, mammals like sheep, who were not directly judged, walk shortly after birth. Not to mention that the mothers never went through all the birth pains human mothers go through.

The lower creatures only suffer mortality and other ills because man who was to rule over them himself came under judgment for transgression. Since a servant cannot be greater than his master, they too have to participate in man's punishment and suffering (limitation) until "the restitution of all things" (Acts 3:21). Until then, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom 8:19-22).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

It is clear in the scriptures and from the experience of everyday life that the judgment for sin passed against Adam has passed to all people, even those who did not commit the exact same sin Adam committed. We read in **Rom. 5:12-14**:

“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:

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come” (see Job 14:1).

This is the judgment and curse of the law Christ came to redeem us from, by bearing the curse Himself on our behalf (**Gal 3:13; Deut. 21:22–23**). He bore this curse, this punishment for sin, which is physical and spiritual death (or separation from God), by His death on the tree so that he might reconcile us to God (**1 Pet. 3:18**), making us sons of God and therefore servants of righteousness (**John 8:34-36; Rom 6:16-18; 1 Pet. 2:24**).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

Christ didn’t come to worsen our woes by doing away with the law of God, which is God’s own voice, and thereby entrench us in rebellion against the Father. Instead, He came to *save us from both the penalty and lifestyle of sin* (**Mat 1:21**). That’s why there’s no condemnation to those of us who are in Christ Jesus “**For the law of Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death**” (**Rom 8:2**).

When the Apostle Paul speaks in terms of the Law (Torah) being “**our school master**” he primarily means the ceremonial law of animal sacrifices which God instituted as a **type** of the true atonement to come so that, in time to come (“in the fullness of time”), we will come to have faith in the shed blood of Jesus (**John 1:29; Heb. 9:22; Gal 3:23-25**). Even if Paul meant the Ten Commandments, as some see it, do you abandon the fundamental principles you were taught at school simply because you are no longer under a school master?



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

That the ceremonial law is our “school master” that has been totally replaced by faith is seen from verse 19 of Galatians chapter 3:

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator.” (See Ex 40:20 vs Deut. 31:24, 26).

Notice! The law being discussed “was added because of transgression.” Straightaway, this tells us there was an *earlier law* being transgressed -- “for where there is no law, there is no transgression” (Rom 4:15) -- which necessitated that another law be made to address those transgressions by way of animal sacrifices. Those sacrifices essentially foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice to come by Christ Jesus!

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body has thou prepared Me:

“In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure.

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.

“Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

“Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second.

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:4-

10).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

This is the offering for sin we are to have faith in -- and not the old “school master” who merely taught us by the animal sacrifices that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb 9:22). “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev 17:11).

The result is that we have all become the children of God on the basis of this faith in Christ’s blood (Gal 3:26). Through baptism into Christ, we put on Christ and have the same standing before God (Jew, Gentile, male or female) with equal access to salvation;

“for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:27-29).

BUT TO ALL WHO  
BELIEVED HIM AND  
ACCEPTED HIM,  
HE GAVE THE RIGHT  
TO BECOME

Children of God



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

As the children of God by faith, we are not expected to be disobedient to God but to obey Him out of love (which is the fulfilling of the law), not out of fear or compulsion as a slave would. For a son whose very heartbeat resounds with the cry 'Abba Father', his will is already surrendered to the Father (see Luke 22:42; 11:2; Matt 6:10).

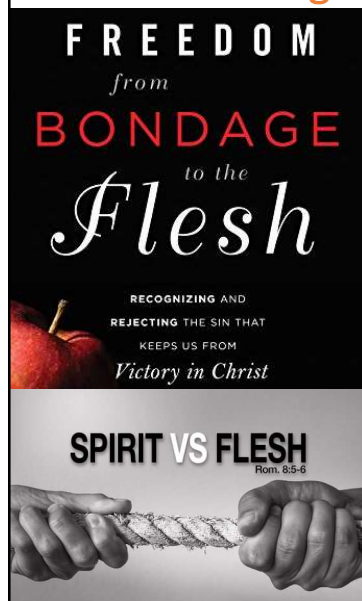
The true believer, like Isaac, is a son of the Spirit who remains in the Father's presence, fulfilling His will as promised by the Spirit. Ishmael, by contrast, is the son of the flesh, who is cast out!

This is the message of the allegory of Galatians 4:21-31.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Bondage by the Flesh versus Sonship by the Spirit



The allegory revolves around 'two women', 'two sons' and 'two covenants.' And I may well add, 'two mountains, Sinai and the other, by metonymy, "the Jerusalem above" -- the exalted place (topographically comparable to earthly Jerusalem situated on mountains, Ps 48:1-2; 125:2; also Heb. 12:22-24).

The chain of ideas in the passage is neatly laid out:

"Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law [in the original Greek no 'the'], do ye not hear the law?"

"For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman.

"But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

"Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage which is Agar [Hagar].



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Bondage by the Flesh versus Sonship by the Spirit



“For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

“For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

“Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

“So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman but of the free” (Gal. 4:21-31; cp. Gen.21:9-14).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

In the first of the parallel chain, “**the son of the bond-woman**” corresponds to one of two covenants -- Sinai -- and “the son of the free woman” to obviously the New Covenant (long promised in the Old Testament scriptures).

In the second of the parallel chain, the Sinai covenant corresponds to the “**Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children**.” This is a clear reference to non-Messianic Jews who are ‘blind in part’ as far as the Messianism of Yeshua is concerned (Rom. 11:25) and therefore continued with the animal sacrifices and other rituals superseded by the sacrificial death of Yeshua Messiah.

The New Covenant (made with the same House of Israel), on the other hand, correlates to the “**Jerusalem above which is free, which is the mother of us all**” – “us all” meaning Spirit-filled Gentile converted believers and Jewish Christ-followers. These, in accordance with the promise of abundant fruitfulness to the barren (Isa. 54:1), outnumber the children of the present/earthly Jerusalem which is in bondage!



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



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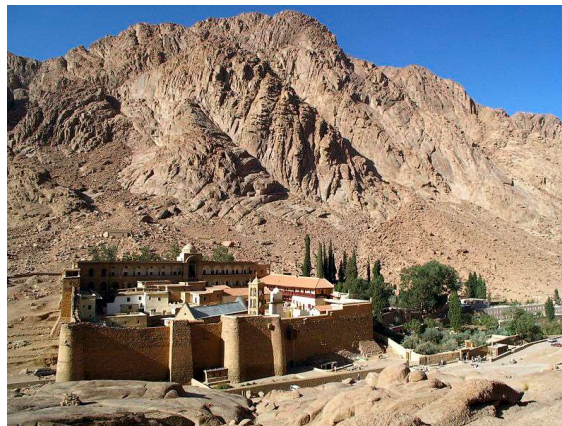
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In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

Does this mean the Sinaitic Covenant is obsolete and leads to bondage? Certainly (**Heb. 8:13**), but not the voice of Yah which spoke His Law out of the midst of the fire! That still **continues** in the New Covenant in *the new location of the heart and mind* (**Heb. 8:10-11**), instead of *the old location of stone tablets associated with the Sinaitic Covenant*.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

The allegory itself doesn't support the proposition that the voice of God containing His Law has been done away with ('cast out') along with the Sinaitic/Old Covenant, if Abraham, in the allegory, represents God, the spiritual Father of both the ancient Israelites and the new "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16; cp. Ps 125:5).

Ishmael was cast out, the not because he was the son of Abraham, but *because of the woman by whom Abraham had him*. So then, the essential difference between the two sons is in the manner of their birth and the statuses of their mothers: the first son of Abraham, born as a result of the fleshly suggestion of Sarah, was by the bond-woman; the second son of Abraham, born as a result of a divine promise, was by Sarah, the actual wife, who was the free woman.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

The same applies to the two covenants. The essential difference between the old and the new covenants lies in *how they came into being*. At Sinai Israel spoke by the confidence of the flesh, with no divine or spiritual input whatsoever:

"All that the Lord hath said we will do" (Ex. 19:8, 24:3,7-8).

But the promise of the Spirit, with regard to the New Covenant, places God at the centre of the action:

"Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah

"...I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

All the action is on YHWH: “I will,” “I will,” I will,” “I will.” The result is that the people who truly receive the New Covenant from God, whereby He puts His Law in their inward being and writes it in their heart, will “**know Him**” – i.e., His will and do it.

The New Covenant recalls the divine promise to Abraham of a son by Sarah which was fulfilled with the birth of Isaac:

“And He said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and, Lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him” (Gen 18:10; see also 17:15-21).

By contrast, the Old Covenant recalls the way of the flesh conceived by Sarah as a means to ‘help’ her husband, Abraham, fulfill the divine promise of descendants made to him (in Genesis 12, 13 and 15):

“And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai” (Gen 16:2).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

In his true self, Abraham does not beget children into bandage – except with a bondwoman!

So with God! When the Divine encounters the flesh, the result is a son in the bondage of the flesh and thus cannot please God (Rom. 8:8; cp. Matt. 3:7-12; John 8:39).

Therefore, what is heavenly must stay heavenly, considering that “A man can receive nothing [of heavenly origin] except it be given him from heaven” (John 3:27). This is what the New Covenant is. It is from the Spirit Above received with the same Spirit from Above dwelling in the believer!

So, what is the Apostle’s point for which he gave the allegory? His question is, “ye that desire to be under law [Greek nomos], do ye not hear the Torah?”



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

For those who would force themselves into legalistic obedience, including the observance of 'ritual laws' like circumcision (see Gal 3:1-3, 5:2; 1 Cor.7:19), the solution is to be born free from Above, because nothing you do as a child of the flesh will turn you into a son of the Jerusalem above, which is free, where obedience is unforced, natural and Spirit-generated (Gal 5:14; Isa 2:2-3; Heb 12:22-24).

The model is the love Isaac had for his father: he obeyed out of love (Gen 22:7-11, 26:5; cp. Gal. 5:6; 1Tim. 1:5). The principle at work is this: "...that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but  
the Spirit gives birth to spirit"  
John 3:6



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## Redeemed from the Condemnation of the Law

The flesh on the other hand, profits nothing and so ends in failure (John 6:63). This is where the motivation to obey is not love but fear (Ex 20:18-20; Heb. 12:18-21) -- and that not by the empowerment of the Spirit but by self-effort; mechanical obedience by the flesh which always fails! The son of the bond woman is doomed to be cast out. For the flesh cannot be heir of the spiritual blessings of God (1Cor 15:50, Eph 1:3).

Pentecost then is the answer to the inadequacy of Sinai. By the Pentecostal power of the Spirit, believers are born again as sons and daughters of God free from the bondage of the flesh. Here, love is the norm and Christ reigns in the heart by faith. Of this the apostles testify:

"And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5:32).



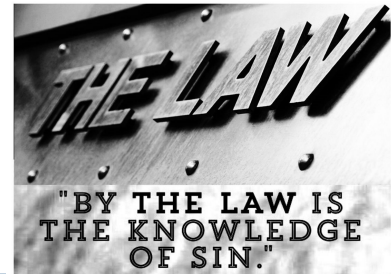
In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law as a Teacher and Punisher of Sinners

As one final observation (a corrective to an error), the Apostle Paul's statement in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy chapter 1 that "the law was not made for a righteous man but for the lawless" does not mean that Law of God is inherently evil. What he means is that the Law is made for the ungodly so that they might learn from its holy precepts and change for the better.

"By the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20, 7:7); it follows that by the law is also the knowledge of righteousness, given that if one learns to avoid sin, he/she will be practising righteousness by default. After all, all the commandments of God are righteousness (Ps 119:172), even as "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## The Law as a Teacher and Punisher of Sinners

By the commandments of God, therefore, righteousness is clearly shown, because sin is clearly defined so that we might eschew it. (See 1 John 3:4-9). That is why David said in his prayer of forgiveness to God after his grievous sin with Bathsheba:

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

"Cast me not away from Thy presence and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

"Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit.

"Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee" (Ps 51:10-13).

Teaching transgressors the ways of God do not make those ways deviant like the transgressors but is aimed at reforming them.



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law



## The Law as a Teacher and Punisher of Sinners

Clearly then, the Apostle Paul is not equating the Law of God with wickedness when he states in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy chapter one:

“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.  
 “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers.  
 “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind [homosexuals], for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;  
 “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (1 Tim 1:8-11).

In the above scriptures, all that the Apostle Paul is saying is that the Law has a godly mission to accomplish in the life of the sinner. It’s similar to what the Lord Jesus (the Word or Law of God) says of Himself in the Gospels:

“I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mat 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31-32).



In Christ is the Righteousness of the Law

## The Law as a Teacher and Punisher of Sinners

Here, Christ is in no way equating Himself with the sinner, since His role in the sinner’s life is a transformative salvific one. That is why the Apostle says, “the law is good, if a man uses it lawfully”; that is to say, if a person uses it to achieve the purpose for which the Law was made, which is, to use it to teach sinners the ways of God and to point to the need for the Saviour (Rom. 3:19-21; 1 Pet. 2:24-25), not to use it to engender fear or manipulate people. For the righteous, the Law has largely served its purpose in his life, since he lives in conformity with its dictates.

But what if the sinner, refusing God’s grace in the Messiah, fails to learn righteous deeds from the Law? He stands condemned before the holy Law of God, and he will suffer punishment in the fire of God’s wrath reserved for transgressors of His Law (Isa 66:24; Rom 2:4-13).



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## The Law as a Teacher and Punisher of Sinners

Remember, Christ, the Redeemer and merciful Saviour, is also a Lawgiver – “the only Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy” (Jam. 4:12; Isa. 33:22; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Heb. 10:30-31).

To keep all humanity from this terrible fiery judgment did Christ come, but “men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:18-19).

But if you will truly put your trust in Christ as your Saviour, He’s well “able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). He is the Righteous One who is able to make a person truly righteous (Rom 5:19; 1John 2:29).



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## Yahweh, Our Righteousness

In conclusion, the Law, so far as it an expression of God’s character, shows the way to the Father, but CHRIST IS THE WAY. It is the same ‘way’, which is, “holy, righteous and good” (Rom. 7:12). But there is a difference in being shown the way and being transported in a vehicle along the way to the destination!

*Christ is that ‘vehicle of Grace’ to the Father. Hence, He is “the goal of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4).*

*“For God has done what the Law could not do [its power] being weakened by the flesh [that is, the entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit]. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin; [God] condemned sin in the flesh – subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power [over all who accept that sacrifice]. [Lev 7:37.] So that the righteous and just requirement of the Law might be fully met in us, who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit – our lives governed not by the standard and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the (Holy) Spirit” (Rom 8:3-4 Amplified Bible).*



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## Yahweh, Our Righteousness

In Christ we come to embody the Law itself – a letter from Christ written by the Spirit of the Living God. In this instance, we are not trying to follow the Law; *we are the holy Law of God in flesh and blood*, living out His truth everyday of our lives!

Yeshua, the Christ, is “YHWH our Righteousness” (Jer. 23:6, Rom. 3:31; 1 Cor. 1:30-31).

Through Him we died to the self (Gal. 5:24) so that He might take full residence in us (John 14:21, 23; 15:10; Php. 2:13).

That fullness of Christ is fullness of Divine character (Cor. 2:9-10) as defined in His “holy, righteous and good” Law (Rom 7:12).



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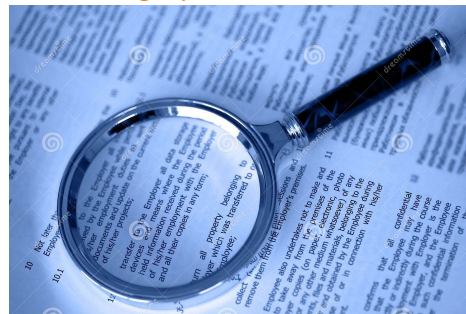
## Yahweh, Our Righteousness

Messiah bridges the gap, bringing God to us (as Emmanuel) and taking us to God so that we “might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet 1:3-4). We exercise His freedom in righteousness (Gal. 5:13-14; Jam. 1:25).

The Prophet foretold it, and He has fulfilled it – Messiah came to “magnify the Law and make it honourable” in our lives of faith:

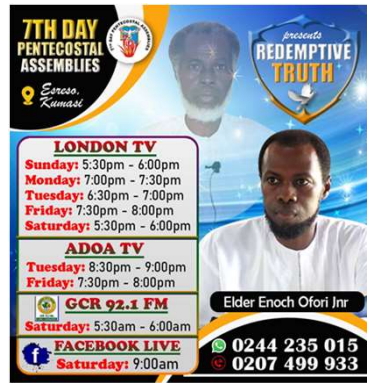
“The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make *it* honourable” (Isa. 42:21).

Halleluiah! Amen!



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***For more enlightenment on the liberating transformative power of the Messiah, please contact:***

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