

## Freed from legalism

If we live under demands that need to be fulfilled by us it is a heavy burden. Imagine being told that you owe someone a lot of money and that you have to work every night to pay off that debt. Someone then pays the debt for you and you are free from that obligation as it has been fulfilled. If someone does you a favour expecting you to repay the favour you normally walk around with this load of guilt on your shoulders until the favour has been repaid. Once that has been done the burden rolls off your shoulders and you feel free. Your obligation has been fulfilled. So it is with the Law and the Prophets. Jesus came to fulfill them.

Matthew 5:17-20 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### 1) Jesus is the end of the Law and the Prophets

- Jesus is the central figure of all scripture.
  - Jesus is the focus of all scripture directly and indirectly.
  - Jesus is the fulfilment of the law and all prophecy
  - Where there are interpretations of the fulfilment of the law or prophecy that leave Jesus out then it's not a true interpretation.
  - Luke 24:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
- Galatians 3:22-24 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.
  - Not only is Christ the fulfilment of the Law, but the Law existed for the purpose of bringing us to Christ.
  - Once we have come to Christ the purpose of the Law has been fulfilled.
- Merely abolishing the Law and the Prophets and reinterpreting scripture apart from their fulfilment in Jesus takes our eyes off him and his glory and sets them on humanism.
  - Humanism is giving prime importance to human matters rather than divine matters.
  - One such interpretation is the unhealthy focus on the political state of Israel rather than on the Jews becoming a nation under the Lordship of Christ.
  - John 5:39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.
  - John 5:46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.
- Aspects of the Law that Jesus fulfilled:
  - The blood sacrifices
  - The temple priesthood
  - The food laws. He declared all foods clean.
- All the promises of God are fulfilled in Jesus.
  - 2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

## 2) The assurance of the complete fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets

- Matthew 5:18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
- The physical heavens and the earth – the created order – will pass away when the Lord comes back.
  - 2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.
- What Jesus was saying is that all scripture will be fulfilled before Jesus comes back again, and even then his return itself and all that happens will be a fulfillment of scripture.
- When Jesus comes back and takes us to be with him we will be changed to be like him in entirety
  - 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.
  - The full and absolute righteousness of the Law will find its complete fulfillment in us on that day.
  - The Law won't be needed at all as judgment will take place and no Law will be necessary in the new heaven and the new earth where there will only be righteousness.
  - The nature of Law is to restrict wickedness and in the absence of wickedness there is no need for Law.
- The assurance that we hold onto is that every promise in Christ for now and eternity holds true for all of us in him.
  - This truly is good news.

## 3) Freed from legalism

- The good news for now is that we have been set free from legalism and the need to be legalistic through Christ.
  - Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
  - Legalism is an excessive adherence to the law.
- The scribes and Pharisees were extremely legalistic and added their own system of sub-laws to the law.
  - In contrast to the two commands of Christ, the Pharisees had developed a system of 613 laws, 365 negative commands and 248 positive laws... By the time Christ came it had produced a heartless, cold, and arrogant brand of righteousness. J. Stowell
  - This type of legalism was truly a burden on people's shoulders that they couldn't carry.
  - It was this legalistic righteousness that Jesus condemned saying that "unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.":
- The righteousness that pleases God isn't the adherence to a legal system but that which is by faith in him and his finished work on the cross.
  - Romans 10:1-4 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.
- Does this nullify the Law? No, the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us through Christ.
  - Romans 8:2-4 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
  - The law says do not worship idols and the Spirit within us refuses to worship idols and only worship Jesus.
  - The law says do not lie and the Spirit within us only wants to be honest.
  - The law says do not murder and the Spirit within us want to love our enemies.
- The law is upheld without the weight of legalism on our shoulders.