

Truth and Spirit Ministries

Are You A Slave Or A Son? PART II

By Denise Bostic

CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW

All Christians need to understand that Jesus Christ has brought the Old Covenant Law to an end. What does this mean exactly? According to *Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [5056] it means: 1. *End, i.e. a termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be.* Why did God bring an end to the Old Covenant? Its terms and conditions were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Jesus said, **“Think not that I have come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill”.** (*Matthew 5:17*) This word fulfill means: to satisfy, execute, finish, accomplish, complete, end, expire, full up fulfill, perfect. [4137, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*] Through Jesus' life, death, burial and resurrection, He satisfied the righteous requirements of the Old Testament Law that God demanded. He did this in our stead by being our substitute. He shed His blood on the cross for us because **“without shedding of blood is no remission (of sin).”** (*Hebrews 9:22*) He became the sacrificial Lamb to atone for our sins so that we might be forgiven and reconciled back to God. Since He fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law for us, we now receive His righteousness because of what He has done for us. He accomplished for us what we could not obtain by our own efforts. Since this is the case, we cannot obtain salvation or anything that pertains to salvation by keeping works of the law. Jesus completed this work for us and declared, “it is finished!” Now we believe and trust in Him to be our righteousness.

In light of this fact, why are some keeping works of the law that Jesus brought an end to? When people teach that we must keep the Sabbath (a literal day), tithe, obey Levitical food laws (such as abstaining from “unclean” foods), observe Jewish festival days and other Old Covenant rituals, they clearly do not understand how Jesus fulfilled the entire Law of Moses. **If these rituals are still in effect for believers today as some claim, then Jesus did not fulfill the law.** But He did fulfill all the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament prophets and the righteous requirement of the Law (*Matthew 5:17-18*). Jesus brought an end to the law by fulfilling every part perfectly and He is now our righteousness. **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”** (*Romans 10:4*) He satisfied the righteous requirements of the law that God demanded. He accomplished what no other human could ever accomplish.

Jesus came as God in the flesh to dwell among men. (*John 1: 1-14*) Since He is God, we know that it is impossible for God to lie. (*Matthew 5:17, Romans 8:1-4, Hebrews 6:18*) Jesus declared right before He died on the cross, **“It is finished.”** (*John 19:30*) Jesus did a complete work on the cross. He told the Father that He completed the work that He sent Him to do. (*John 17:4*) Christ is all sufficient as our atoning sacrifice. He is identified as the One who is the Author and Finisher of our salvation. (*Hebrews 12:2*) Again, our salvation is not only eternal life, but also everything that accompanies salvation. Those who are so zealous for teaching believers that they are to observe Old Covenant laws overlook the most obvious fact- that the New Testament Church was not commanded by Jesus (the Head of the Church) to observe the ordinances of the law and the Apostles did not teach believers to do so either. **An important point needs to be made here.** Some Jews who converted to Christ may have kept the law for a period of time, not yet understanding that Christ had set them free from it. History proves that some Jews who converted to Christ were still adhering to the Law of Moses after their conversion. This is made evident by Paul warning Christians about the dangers of reversion to the religion of Judaism after being saved by faith in Christ and His grace alone. (*Romans 7, books of Galatians and Hebrews*) This message was first and foremost to the Jewish Christians because it was they who were born under the law and (they) who were delivered from it by Christ. (*Romans 7:1-6, Galatians 3:13, 4:4-5*)

It is important that we understand as New Testament believers how the law is fulfilled in Christ so that we will not walk in the letter of the law but after the Spirit. As this article continues, believers may begin to understand the differences between natural Israel and the Church. One (Israel) is in bondage to the Law of Moses; the other (the Church) has been set free by the law of Christ. (*Galatians 4*) One bears the yoke of the law; the other bears the yoke of Jesus. Bearing the yoke of the law prevents us from bearing the yoke of Jesus. The first yoke is heavy and is unbearable because it is of bondage; the latter is light and easy

because we are empowered by Christ and His Spirit. (*Matthew 11:29-30, Galatians 5:1*) As a Jew, the Apostle Peter spoke about the unbearable heaviness of the “yoke of the law” from first-hand experience as one that knew the impossibility of bearing such a burden. He advised the Jerusalem Council that it would be fruitless to make the Gentiles try to keep what Israel herself could not keep. (*Acts 15:10*)

This same “yoke of the law” is what Jesus wanted to relieve Israel from when He gave the invitation for the weary to come to Him to receive rest by taking His yoke instead. **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** (*Matthew 11:28-29*) Of course, this also applies to those weary of bearing their sins, but also of those weary of trying to obey God through seemingly endless rules and regulations. Why would we want to go back to a life of bondage and live as those who do not know and rely on Christ? **We are not children of the slave woman but children of the free woman.** (*Galatians 4:31*) When a person makes the transition from law to grace, they make the transition of slave to son of God. **“So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.”** (*Galatians 4:7*)

THE LAW OF CHRIST

How does a son of God live under the New Covenant? We live by the power of Christ and His Spirit. We need to understand that we cannot follow our flesh and the Holy Spirit at the same time. These two are opposed to one another. Our carnal mind is not subject to the law of God. (*Romans 8:7-8*) The Apostle Paul rebuked the Galatians for trying to perfect their Christian walk by works of the law that he equated with works of the flesh. (*Galatians 3: 1-5*) According to the Gospel, if the Spirit leads us, we are not under the law. (*Galatians 5:17-18*) **The Holy Spirit took over when Christ became the end of the law (of Moses). He will now lead us into all righteousness.** (*Romans 10:4, John 16: 8,10*) Has God left us without law then? No! **New Testament believers are now under the Law of Christ.**

Because the Apostle Paul preached a gospel of grace alone, he was greatly persecuted by the law keepers of his day. He was also accused of being lawless (or without any law) because of his message. Zealous to reach souls with the Gospel of Christ, Paul said he became all things to all men that he might win some. He set the record straight as to what law that he was really under when he declared, **“ Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law.”** (*1 Corinthians 9: 19-23 NIV*) When we are under the Law of Christ, we are now supernaturally empowered by His Spirit to live a life in Him. He enables us to do what our sinful flesh could never do. The letter of the law tries to change people from the outside, but God changes people from the inside through the indwelling of His Spirit. (*Hebrews 8:10*)

Jesus said you couldn’t serve two masters. (*Matthew 6:24*) This is why God released believers from servitude to the Law of Moses in order to serve Christ. (*Romans 7:1-6*) Now we only have **one Master**. God’s plan for Jews and Gentiles is to take them from **slave** status to **son** status. We are all slaves to something before we come to Christ. All of us are slaves of sin; the law or both (like Paul) until Christ sets us free to walk in the liberty of His Spirit. Even though at the present time the physical nation of Israel is under slavery to the Law of Moses (*Galatians 4:24,25*), it is still God’s plan and will for them to come to Christ, be born into the Kingdom of God by His Spirit and receive their inheritance as sons of God. (*Romans 11:26*) No one can keep God’s law without fault, only the sinless, spotless Lamb of God has done that perfectly. **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** (*Romans 3:23*) Only a perfect, sinless substitute could take away the sins of the world. Jesus was this perfect substitute. John the Baptist declared, **“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”** (*John 1:29NIV*) No one can receive salvation through works of the law but only through Jesus Christ the Savior. He wants to set natural Israel free and give them eternal life in Him as well. Right now (the nation as a whole) are blinded in part until the fullness of the Gentiles come into the Kingdom. (*Romans 11:25*)

PREACH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

Meanwhile the Church is to preach the Gospel with supernatural signs following to those Jews who will come to Christ presently. The supernatural signs following authenticate that this Gospel is from God. The Church will not be able to win Israel to Christ by becoming just like her, rather we must preach Christ and His Kingdom to prove to Israel that Jesus is indeed their Messiah, the Living One for whom they have been waiting for.

Jesus wants to reveal Himself through the Church through supernatural signs and wonders in order to reach others with the Gospel. If we blend Christianity with the religion of Judaism by observing the Law of Moses, we are sending Israel a message that Jesus Christ has not fulfilled the Old Testament law and we are preaching a gospel of works instead of salvation by grace and faith in Christ thus preventing them from entering into the Kingdom of God. We weaken the power of the message of the atoning work of the cross when we mix law and grace in the gospel message. We must preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified and in the demonstration of the Spirit's power in order for God to open their eyes. We are warned in scripture not to preach any other gospel than what Paul preached. In Galatians chapter one, the Apostle Paul condemned the message of those who relied on Judaism (or works of the law) as another gospel or means of salvation.

NOT UNDER LAW BUT GRACE

Who were these Judaizers and where did this term come from? Elsewhere in scripture they are also referred to as the circumcision (group) or of the concision (mutilators of the flesh). (*Galatians 2:12, 5:6-12, 6:12-15, Philippians 3:1-3*) In *Galatians 2:14* Paul asks Peter why he is conforming to Jewish customs and separating himself from Gentile converts as if they were still "unclean" now that he knows the truth of the Gospel. In the Greek a term is used to describe this way of life. **"But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before all, If you being a Jew, live (as) a non-Jew and not (as the) Jews, why do you compel (the) nations (or Gentiles) to Judaize?" (Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Third Edition)** Those who "Judaized" were those who had professed Christ as Savior but still adhered to the Old Testament law and taught others in the Church that they must do likewise in order to receive salvation in Christ and the blessings of Abraham. That their message was one of legalism is made clear when Paul rebuked the Galatians for receiving the legalists false teaching and turning back to the Jewish religion or the works of the law. (*Galatians 1:6, 5:6-10*)

Paul clearly spells out that believers are not under law but grace because they now trust in what Christ has done for them and have received the indwelling of his Holy Spirit. Paul teaches that once believers are in Christ that they are to follow the Holy Spirit, who will then lead them into righteousness and holiness. (*Galatians 6:16-18*) To turn to another useless religion will take us away from Christ. (*Galatians 4:8-11, 5:1-4*) **When we go back to Jewish ritualism, we are in danger of departing from the true faith and the One who has saved us by His blood sacrifice because we are in essence saying that what He did was not all-sufficient and that there is some other way.** But we know that He is the only way to be reconciled to God. He is the only way to receive our inheritance because everything is now in Him. We cannot earn our inheritance by works of the law because it is freely given to sons of God. We cannot receive justification with God through adherence to Jewish rituals. We do not gain any special favor by practicing works of the law. If we could be made right with God through works of the law, then Christ did indeed die for nothing. (*Galatians 2:11-21*) We have no right to boast of what we have done, only the Lord deserves the glory for the work He does in us. (*Ephesians 2:8-10*)

Are believers in Christ commanded to keep the Law of Moses in the New Covenant? According to the New Testament scriptures we are not to be under the law but die to it. Why? **Because the law only identified what sin is but it couldn't save us from sin.** (*Romans 8:2-4*) The law doesn't forgive our sins; it only condemns us of sin. (*Romans 3:20, 8:1-4, II Corinthians 3:6-9*) Jesus set us free from the law of sin and death. He also set believers free from the Law of Moses. (*Romans 7:6*) The law doesn't give us life only death. (*Romans 6:23, II Corinthians 3:6-8*) God knew that fallen man could not keep His Holy Law without fault and this is why He prepared the sacrifice of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Someone had to pay the penalty of death that was required in the law for us. Someone had to die in our stead to pay the price. This is precisely why we trust in Jesus to save us **because we couldn't save ourselves.** Brethren, do you understand now why we cannot obtain these things by our own works or efforts? This is what makes the sacrifice of Christ so powerful and amazing! The Good News is truly good news, praise God! There is power in the cross! To preach a gospel of works is to take away from what Jesus Christ has done for us. Now don't misunderstand what I am saying. Just because we are now under grace does not mean that we are without law and are free to sin all we want. No, now we are under the law of Christ and His righteousness. We are also not without any type of works as Christians.

WORKS OF LAW VS WORKS OF LIBERTY

In the book of James, the Apostle teaches that faith without works is dead. He goes on to explain what kind of works we are now to do under the New Covenant. He makes it clear that we are not to be under the Law of Moses but a new and higher law, the royal law of love and the law of liberty (of Christ and the Holy Spirit).

(James 2: 8-12, Galatians 5:1, 13-14, 18, Romans 8:1-4, II Corinthians 3:6-17) When we walk after the Spirit and in the love of God, we are fulfilling all the law. We cannot break any laws when we are following the Spirit of God. (Galatians 5:23) **If we try to follow a set of rules and regulations, at some point we will fall short.** James makes it clear in this passage of scripture that we cannot keep the Law of Moses because if we break one point, we make ourselves guilty of the whole law and are condemned under the penalty of that law, which is death. (James 2:10) Now that Jesus has set us free from the law, we are no longer under its penalty. This is why James teaches that we are not to judge situations after the Law (of Moses) but by the law of liberty (of Christ). Do you see the difference brethren? Now when we fall short of God's glory, we can ask God for forgiveness and He will forgive us and cleanse us from sin. Instead of being condemned by the law, we now have forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus. (I John 1:7-9) Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse us from all sin and unrighteousness. In the New Testament, we believers are now empowered by God's Spirit to obey God. Without Christ in us, we have no power or ability to obey God. (Romans 7) Thank God for the liberating power of Jesus Christ!

There is a difference between works of the law and works produced by the power of the Spirit. Jesus said, **"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."** (John 6:63 NIV) We cannot fall for another gospel that does not count. Is it any wonder that many Churches are weak and powerless when they teach legalism instead of Christ and the New Covenant? It is the pride of man that says that he can work for what only God says He gives freely by His grace. God's grace is not only His unmerited pardon extended to us but also being empowered by the Spirit to do the works of Christ in our lives. The blood of Christ saves us. (Hebrews 9:12) The power is in the blood sacrifice of Christ. (Matthew 28:18, Revelation 5:12) We are told not to reject Christ's blood sacrifice and not to insult His Spirit of grace. (Hebrews 10:26-29)

God has divinely empowered us by His grace and we are not to insult His Spirit by turning our back on this wonderful gift and returning to sin or the law. The Hebrews (which were born again believers) were in danger of doing just that. Why? Because they were turning back to the rituals of the Jewish religion and slowly turning from the truth of the Gospel. The Galatians were also in danger from falling away from Christ and His grace for the same reason. We must not make this same mistake today. We cannot be deceived; keeping rules only leads to keeping more rules. Where do we draw the line? As Paul said, **"a little leaven leavens the whole lump."** (Galatians 5:9)

THE DANGERS OF LEGALISM

What is leaven? Jesus told His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. The leaven Jesus was speaking of was their teaching. What were they teaching? Legalism. The danger of reversion to Jewish rules and regulations is that it becomes legalism. Legalism will spread like a deadly cancer choking the spiritual life out of believers. Legalism enslaves and kills believers spiritually and prevents them from serving Christ in the newness of the Spirit. **"For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."** (II Corinthians 3:6) Like the Galatians, we cannot try to obtain by the flesh what can only be obtained by the Spirit. Legalism is fleshy, man-made rules and regulations imposed on us from outward sources instead of living a life of divine empowerment by the inward leading of Christ and His Spirit. When Christ became the end of the law for all those who believe, it was no longer necessary for believers that come to Christ to be under the guidance of the law. Why? Now we are under the guidance of Christ and His Spirit. There is more to this statement than meets the eye.

Before Christ came, God's people (Israel) were commanded to obey and do all of the Law of Moses and rightly so, for the law had not yet been fulfilled by their Messiah. But now that Christ has come, it is no longer God's will for believers to be under the law. Why? **God's requirements had changed.** The Old Covenant law was only to be a temporary system to keep God's chosen people until their Messiah (Savior) could come and fulfill its righteous requirements. Now God requires that we must believe in His Son and what He has done for us in the atoning work of the cross and this can only be done by faith. (John 3:16-18) Now we live by the law of faith in Christ. The Apostle Paul said it so well, **"For through the law, I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."** (Galatians 2:19, 20)

The Bible says, **"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."** (Romans 14:23) The keeping of the law is not of faith therefore works of the law are not an acceptable way to justify us before God. (Galatians 3:11-12) God requires faith and without it we cannot please Him. (Hebrews 11:6) Once we come to faith in Christ, we cannot revert back to what Christ has set us free from. We must stay in faith according to Hebrews 10:38,

“Now the just shall live by faith: if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” We must keep our faith in Him and what He has done for us.

When one begins rule keeping, they begin to go down the slippery slope of legalism. It looks very holy and righteous but it is rooted in pride and self-sufficiency. We will take pride in what we have done instead of what Christ has done for us and through us. In reality our own works are insufficient to justify us before a holy God. Jesus said, **“Without me you can do nothing.”** Jesus also said, **“The flesh profits nothing but the Spirit gives life.” (John 6:63)** Our flesh will not obtain anything from God. It is by faith in Him that we are to live. (Galatians 3:11) We are now to let Christ and His righteousness live through us as we yield to Him.

We are to contend for this same faith that was once delivered to the saints and not be led away into false doctrine. (Jude) The bible talks about a great falling away in the end times. There is more than one way of falling away. This is not only talking about those who forsake Christ for the world **but also those who forsake Christ for religion. (Matthew 7:15-23, I Timothy 4:1-3, II Peter 2:1-3)** If we try to receive salvation or the blessings of God based on our own works then we will miss the Gospel of Christ and His grace. Beware of those who teach law but not grace and neglect to support their teachings with New Covenant doctrine. We must not teach Old Covenant doctrine when we have New Covenant standards given. The law of Christ is the higher law. Those who go contrary to what Christ says in the New Covenant are not speaking by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus and backs up the message of the cross and the New Covenant by His power. He does not back up works of the law by His power. Why not? The reason is that God is no longer working under the Old Covenant Law, but New Testament Grace.

This is why legalistic Churches lack the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. They are following rules and regulations instead of the Spirit of Christ. Remember, a telltale sign that someone is teaching falsely is that you rarely, if ever, hear them put the emphasis on Christ and His Spirit. When there is a lack of presence and power of the Holy Spirit, there is also lack of personal relationship with, reverence and yielding to the Holy Spirit, our Helper. Those who preach Christ and Him crucified or grace alone are the ones that receive the real persecution. Those who walk after the flesh always persecute those who walk after the Spirit. (Galatians 4:29) We must be servants of Christ and not men pleasers. The Apostle Paul said it so well, **“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10, 5:11)** Indeed we must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

YOU ARE SONS AND HEIRS WITH CHRIST

Let's sum up what we have been learning. The difference between the natural Israel and the spiritual Church is clearly seen. The physical nation of Israel as a whole are not born again believers and as of yet do not accept Jesus as their Messiah although there is a remnant being saved by grace now. (Romans 11:5) Once believers are in Christ, they are set free from or die to the law and are no longer servants (to the law), but are sons receiving their inheritance through faith in Christ. (Romans 7, Galatians 3&4) This message is first and foremost to Jews because they are born under the law. (Galatians 4:4-5, Romans 9:4)

According to the scriptures, Jews as well as Gentiles must be adopted as God's sons. (Romans 9:4, Galatians 4:4-5) Jesus came to redeem those under the law (Israel) so that they might be adopted as God's sons. (Galatians 4:1-7, Romans 9:4) **Gentiles, who never had the law, also are adopted as sons once they are born again. (Romans 9:24-26)** So we understand that Jews and Gentiles are **both** adopted at the cross of Christ. The Church is a born again body of believers made up of both Jews and Gentiles united by the cross of Christ. Jesus Christ broke down the wall of partition (the law) because it prevented the majority of Jewish people, women and all Gentiles from having access into the very presence of God (the Holy of Holies). (Hebrews 9:7-8, Ephesians 2:8-18) This is a fact that some may not know or understand. The old system of the Law of Moses and the Levitical Priesthood actually prevented the common people from having personal access into the presence of God. Only the high priest could enter into the Most Holy Place and even then only once a year. (Hebrews 9:6-7)

All believers must understand that the law was against us, not for us. This is why its purpose was fulfilled in Christ and then abolished, wiped out, canceled and changed by God Himself. The purpose of the law had now been completed now that faith (Christ has come). Jesus could only accomplish what even the law could not do because it was weakened through sinful flesh. (Romans 8:3, *Ephesians 2:15, *Colossians 2:14, *Hebrews 7:12) The law was like a barrier keeping sinners away from a Holy God. Now that we have been set free from the law, sin and death we have personal access into the presence of God through the blood of

Christ through forgiveness of sin. (*Hebrews 10:15-22*) Christ brought an end to the law so that righteousness could be imputed by faith to all who believe. (*Romans 33:20-30*)

All believers now have right standing with God and can now enter into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus. (*Hebrews 10:19-22*) **Through His perfect righteousness, He obtained for us what we could not obtain for ourselves.** The way to salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. It is a free gift that none of us can earn. (*Ephesians 2:7-9*) This is why none in the Church should be advocating law keeping. To do so is to go against the Law of Christ. He is the Head of the Church and to teach others that they are under Old Covenant Law is to go against His Word. Natural Israel is still in bondage to the Law of Moses, the Church is set free by Christ and are sons of the living God. (*Galatians 4:21-31*) We are now set free to serve Christ in the newness of the Spirit. We are set free from death, sin and the law (of Moses). (*Romans chapters 5, 6 & 7*) Now that we have been set free from these, we are now free to follow the Holy Spirit and receive our inheritance in Christ. (Read the whole chapter of *Romans 8* and especially verses *14-17)

We in the Church should not fall for the message of false teachers who say that we must follow works of the law in order to obtain our inheritance. We do not receive our inheritance in Christ through the law. We do not have to work for what God gives to us freely because He has promised it to those that are in Christ. Paul wrote, **“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”** (*Galatians 3:18*) Paul elaborates further in verse 29, **“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** Now that we know the difference, how can we go back to being slaves now that we are set free with the status of sons and joint heirs with Jesus Christ? How can we go back under the law in light of what Christ has done for us? Yes, the law is holy, just and good; it’s just that we could not live up to its righteous requirements. (*Romans 7:7-14*) Aren’t you glad that Jesus did? Now we trust in what He has done for us. Now many sons are born because of His sacrificial atonement. **“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory...”** (*Hebrews 2:10*)

If you have accepted Jesus Christ and are born from above- you are God’s son and He wants you to know that you are no longer a slave to sin or the law. You do not have to fear death because He has given you eternal life. You have a heavenly Father who loves you and gave His Son’s life for you so that you might be His son forever. God’s word can be summed up in this, **“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...”** (*1 John 3: 1*) This magnificent truth will set us free and bring glory to the One who died to make it all possible.