

DELIGHTING IN THE JUST HOLY AND GOOD LAW

For your Good always...

My dearly beloved brethren and sisters and Young people –

The Law of Moses contained so much positive guidance and inspiration for those who looked to understand and obey God .

We come this week to take some exhortations from the just ,holy and good Law that God gave to Israel..

David says Psa 119v18..***open thou my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law***

Today our first talk – the one page notes – is analytical as we summarise the whole Law

Our study this will not so much be about how the Law was wrongly interpreted and applied by the Jews (a topic which occupies so much of the NT)

You will receive later a set of detailed notes to cover the purpose of the law and the problems of Judaism..

Today we may touch on this aspect only briefly .

OUR PURPOSE – to remind ourselves of the mind of Yahweh our God

To day the Law of Moses is ridiculed and mocked- and is written off completely by most religions and society generally.

- But we want to take to heart the eternal principles that are found in the first national Law God gave to the world
- To appreciate that the eternal God has not changed his values just because the world has.
- To realise There are not two different Gods as many imagine..(a severe Harsh God of the OT and a loving all forgiving God of the NT) -He has same morals , same principles, same expectations
- To see how much Yahweh our God and especially His Law are seriously misunderstood by our world today .
- To defend God's holy, just and Good law from the unfair and vicious attacks of the New atheist movement
- *PP- Richard Dawkins on God and the law – absolute blasphemy – midweek talks will answer this specifically*

- To learn how the truly spiritual Jew would have read and applied the Law
- To see how God's mind that had to be carefully passed on to the next generations
- There will be a focus on Deuteronomy especially, because in that book we clearly find expressed **the intended spirit of the Law** Deuteronomy adds to the legislation ...rationale , .feelings , emotions, motives and encouragement ...But FIRST

PP THE POSITIVE BENEFITS OF GOD'S LAW 10v13

- Even though so much of the Law was given for regulation, or control . Remarkably, it also included much wise counsel that we now know led to good health, long life , peaceful living and the avoidance of disease. (live long in the land). **Deut 6v24..God's laws are always for our good...both in this mortal life and for that which is to come .**
- **PP** Within His worship routines and rituals God incorporated frequent washings, proper sanitation , isolation of disease and avoidance of dangerous foods -plus many other profitable minor regulations .
- NOTE..Not one single example from the Law of Moses can be presented that was not beneficial to human life.
- With the benefit of science and modern medicine we now comprehend that most of these regulations -were highly useful and positive in their health outcomes, in their living conditions ..(God had said..Keep my commandments and *I will bring none of these diseases of Egypt on you*)
- **PP** When you think how often man's medicine made such huge mistakes over the centuries..(bleeding the sick, applying leeches , puncturing skulls to let out demons, no hygiene practised in hospitals) . It has been rightly said that until the 20th century most doctors did more harm than good..... Yet God had the best ways to live written in his Law .
- These positive health benefits.. which were so far ahead of human science and learning – are a further proof to us that God's Word is inspired.
- **PP** take one example of a very sundry Law that had positive benefits for mankind – always was for the good of His people .
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The importance of the Law PP

- ❖ Was the basis of the Two Covenant God made with Israel (Deut 29)-
- ❖ Israel thus became the first and only true Theocracy to have ever existed , It was designed to be perfect union between religion and the state/ one the few to ever work well at times
- ❖ It clearly laid down God`s morality and the civil code necessary for national life to work
- ❖ It also contained a full code of worship
- ❖ It also gives us an insight into what the Kingdom will be like
- ❖ It also had many teaching mechanisms and prophetic messages

THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS ..are usually called THE LAW OF MOSES Also called the PENTATEUCH

TIMING OF PENTATEUCH..(the five books)

Genesis covers the first 2500 years of human history and the foundation of the world-Gods perspective

- Then -last 4 books are uniquely given for His chosen people Israel These latter 4 books expanded the principles and promises given in the foundation of the world -into a national law

Exodus covers the history of the first 12 months out of Egypt

Leviticus was delivered inside 1 month (see Num 1v1)

Numbers 1-14 The second year

Numbers 15 to end- 38 years of hopeless wandering

Deuteronomy – delivered in 1 month

- PP God`s law was delivered by the angels to Moses
- We must always remember- It is God`s law – Moses was just the mediator of it
- The same God we serve/ gave this Law to Israel His chosen people

- Never imagine the Law was a mistake or a failed experiment/ it was absolutely right in its historical context
- -Gods law was never intended to be a **formula for a man to earn salvation by works- but it could generate faith**
- It could inspire the spiritual thinkers who set their hearts to find God

PP. The FIRST vital thing we must recognise is that God gave most of this law to regulate an unspiritual NATION.

A nation newly freed from slavery they had no national law, no worship code , no structure, no government, no justice system nor any national identity See 1 Tim 8-10

The national code of law God gave had to cut off and restrain all the excesses that are native to our fallen human nature , It also had to define precise punishments for all violations, as any national legal code has to do.

- Sometimes we find Yahweh was merely regulating things that He knew would happen in the nation , **not necessarily what He approved** or wanted to happen.
- (eg..some things like divorce were strictly regulated , because of the hardness of men's hearts /taking captives in war was also specifically controlled/also managing debt and bankruptcy were controlled)
- But the Law (esp Deuteronomy) also encouraged people to act on the higher motivations of gratitude to the love of God .
- **BY CONTRAST_** The law of Christ was concerned with shaping **individual characters, not regulating a nation.** We should not try and reconcile these two quite different things .
- Some of Christ's teachings for individuals - Resist not evil, Forgive endlessly, Turn other cheek..could not and would not work nationally.

PP MANY PARTS OF THE LAW CONTAINED LAWS DESIGNED TO TEACH CHARACTER and PRINCIPLE

- ❖ **FIRST-NEGATIVE or limited natural benefits here**
- ❖ **Laws of uncleanness** Childbirth laws
- ❖ **The lepers**
- ❖ **Laws against mixing seeds/fabrics etc**
- ❖ **Unclean animals**
- ❖ **OTHER_ POSITIVES -mainly given for education in Godliness**
- ❖ **The Jubilee Year**
- ❖ **The sabbath**
- ❖ **Laws designed to generate compassion**
- ❖ **A Spirit of generosity was always encouraged**
- ❖ **The Nazarite**

PP IF A PERSON CORRECTLY APPROACHED THE LAW- they could learn much of eternal spiritual value

- An appreciation of God's holiness
- Clear direction on Divine morality
- The impossibility of divided service (so clear against idolatry)
- The native uncleanness of our sin prone nature
- The principles of reconciliation to God-where the pinnacle was to share fellowship offerings
- That Joyful worship and thankfulness matters to God
- Generosity derived through the appreciation of mercy
- The need for the Redeemer, the Lamb of God yet to come

PP - Israel could enjoy a foretaste of Kingdom life (*Deu 11:20*) *And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates:*

(Deu 11:21) That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. (long life and heavenly conditions)

WE ALSO APPRECIATE HOW MUCH THE LAW OF MOSES WAS A GREAT ADVANCE FROM THE LAW CODES OF THE COMPARITIVE NATIONS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

PP The Old Testament law is much more fully appreciated when it is compared to existing laws and codes in the ancient world.
Just one typical Example of many :- The Code of Hammurabi says :-

If a free nobleman hit another free nobleman's daughter and caused her to have a miscarriage, he must pay ten shekels of silver for her unborn child. If that woman dies, they must put the offenders daughter to death.

PP If by a violent blow he caused a commoner's daughter to have a miscarriage, he must pay five shekels of silver. If that woman dies, he must pay $\frac{1}{2}$ mina of silver. If he hit a free nobleman's female slave and caused her to have a miscarriage, he must pay two shekels of silver. If that female slave dies, he must pay $\frac{1}{3}$ mina of silver.
(Hammurabi, laws 209-214)

PP Note how unfair was the Code of Hammurabi

- Different penalties applied for different classes of society
- Women are treated as being of lesser value
- Children die for the sins of their parents

PP Gods Law was a great leap forward cp to code of Hammurabi.

- ❖ "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod 20:15)
- ❖ Murder, always incurs a death sentence (Exod 21:12)
- ❖ Children do not get punished for the sins of their parents (Deut 24:16)
- ❖ No respect of persons in the justice code (Lev 19:15)
- ❖ Women are not treated a second class citizens or chattels

THE GREATNESS OF THE LAW OF MOSES.. HOW DIFFERENT IS GODS LAW TO CULTURES EXTANT AROUND THEM -It was so different to the laws of the ancient civilisations and their codes of government ,justice, medicine, theology and cultures

In almost all nations and societies there are 2 classes- those who dominate /rule and take tribute and those who are dominated and pay tribute (they are taxed and they serve) .These are the tribute producing class.

Under Gods law there was no class system..which was based on wealth or power or dynasty.

God totally removed the traditional worldly structures of society

SO HOW DID GOD MAKE HIS LAW So different ? PP

NOTE THE unique Laws for KINGS IN ISRAEL

- No king could appoint prophets , priests or the judges.

- God made these appointments and also sent His prophets to oppose and to openly rebuke kings
1. Kings were to be kept humble by the Word-not lifted up in pride
 2. They could not make any law that was out of step with God's ways
 3. They were not supposed to accumulate wealth , wives or military power
 4. Priests also could and did openly rebuke kings

The trend was toward a wide distribution of assets and the tithing laws ensured a fair and equitable taxation

PP UNIQUE LAND OWNERSHIP LAWS

1. Inheritances Could not be sold
2. None could accumulate land , and the priests had no farmland
3. Debts were cancelled every 7 years
4. Mortgages were released at the Jubilee, owners restored
5. Inheritance law were supreme (orphaned daughters inheriting and the raising up seed laws)
6. Absolutely no cheating – removing the ancient landmarks
7. Tribal unity was preserved (so you always had local family support)
8. There was no drift from farms to cities-the community was kept stable
9. No interest or usury to fellow Jews was allowed.
10. There was a well organized welfare support system
11. Relatives could redeem land that had been left vacant by death

OTHER UNIQUE QUALITIES OF GODS GOOD AND HOLY LAW

- One God vs many gods of the nations - even Christianity has tried to accommodate 3 gods
- The Gods of ancient world were remote/angry/ immoral/ often at war/ were feared /had to be appeased – men were their terrified slaves
- Bible has one God, Man created in Gods image, man designed to have dominion, and God is to be loved and imitated
- But he is a God who demands absolute loyalty .a God to be loved
- We see God takes one small family , builds a nation, as his unique Bride, makes a covenant with one nation
- The Law of Moses uniquely created the domestication of religion – bringing worship into the home. See Duet 6
- Remember -God gave 10 COMMANDMENTS – not 10 suggestions

PP But why was the Law so complicated ?

- God was both revealed and also concealed (there are secret things God conceals) hear ...Deut 29v29
- *The secret things belong unto Yahweh our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever .. (it is the privilege of Kings to search them out)*
- God has always conveyed His gospel message in signs, symbols, rituals and songs .
- Getting real value from the Law required thought and discernment
- You could find many prophetic shadows
- This has always been God's way of sorting out true saints from unwilling conscripts-
- This was the same reason Jesus spoke in parables and used hard sayings ..to identify dedicated seekers

▪ Come to Gal 3v 22-23 (Pauls Pedagogue)

Lets look at what the law was intended to do.

- **PP** The law was a schoolmaster ..a pedagogue..it fulfilled the role of the slave (armed with large stick) sent to sit behind the Greek schoolboy to ensure his attention to the teacher .
- *Not so much an instructor or an educator but rather a strict disciplinarian- it **made you learn** /look forward -it restrained human lust, and made one long for a better way to find God*
- **PP** *See Weymouth v22)*
- ***But Scripture has shown that all mankind are the prisoners of sin, in order that the promised blessing, which depends on faith in Jesus Christ, may be given to those who believe.***
- ***Before this faith came, we Jews were perpetual prisoners under the Law, living under restraints and limitations in preparation for the faith which was soon to be revealed.***

- ***So that the Law has acted the part of a tutor-slave to lead us to Christ, in order that through faith we may be declared to be free from guilt.***
- ***But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor-slave. (Greek – pedagogue***
- ***The Law made men aware of sin constantly/10th Commandment “thou shalt not covet”..trapped them under sin...made them look in faith to the better way to come . No one could live it perfectly...no one could earn life by works***
- ***See how much it made them prisoners***
- ***So the Law would focus an Israelites attention on the desperate need for a redeemer to come – for the Lamb God would provide.***
- ***Note 6 times here ...faith ..as opposed to - shut up, imprisoned,***
- ***The detailed code of offerings and sacrifices ...**was never intended to be any more than a mechanism to make people think about their spiritual life , to appreciate their need of forgiveness and their relationship to God .*****
- ***But how easily ritual can become an end in itself.***

*How easily human nature resorts to a salvation by works mentality..
Rich Young Ruler-.”What must I **do** to earn eternal Life”*

PP What God intended the Jews To see in His Law

- God’s eternal plan for the world and His promises enlarged
- Their national role to be examples of God’s greatness and character to the world (a wise and understanding people-God manifestation)
- That human nature is prone to sin and needs God’s redemption and forgiveness
- That God would provide the one true Lamb /the seed of Abraham for the final and effective covering of sin
- That being condemned by the letter of the Law they could only be saved by their faith and trust in God

PP HOW THE JEWS FAILED– They fell into a scoring mentality DR/CR system ..and inevitably failed

- The law was weak through the flesh (Rom 8v3)
- The law worketh wrath (Rom 4v15)
- The letter of the law killeth (2Cor 3v6)

- The law cursed (Gal 3v13) was a bondage (Gal 4v3, 5v1) was weak and beggarly (Gal 4v9)
- Was a handwriting of ordinances (Col2v14)
- Was useless to convert the flesh (Col 2v20-23)
- Was faulty (Heb 8v7) –Carnal ordinances (Heb 9v10)
- Had weakness and unprofitableness (Heb 7v18)
- Waxed old and decayed (Heb 8v13)
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PP WHERE LAW KEEPING FAILED

- The Jewish mindset was “the man that doeth all the law shall live by it “ (Rom 10v5)..I sin ..I have to sacrifice...it costs me. ..
- No human could keep it perfectly (Rom 8v3)
- The Law cursed the man who failed in any one aspect of it (Gal 3v10, James 2v10)
- It was therefore a yoke that no one could bear (Acts 15v10)
- The Jews also assumed they were a privileged nation as a right of birth

PP THE LETTER vs THE SPIRIT

- Scribal interpretations were often aimed at justifying the flesh
- Loopholes were found (the Corban Law) –using one law to negate another
- Exceptions where God regulated bad behaviour were expanded to justify wickedness (the divorce law)
- Major principles were ignored(much oppressing of widows occurred

PP Gods aim was THE TRANSFER FROM THE RITUAL TO AFFECT CHARACTER

- Duet 10v15-16 CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART
- *Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.*
- *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.*
- *(Deut 10:15-16)*
- To most Jews circumcision became a symbol of national distinction and their elevated status – a symbol of pride
- Should have seen the intention was not cutting the natural flesh ..but the need to control and crucify the affections and lusts that so easily cause us to sin.

- Jewish hearts will be circumcised eventually Deut 30v6,..will happen in the future
- PP For us we read Rom 2v28-29
 - *But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*
 - (Rom 2:29)
 - See also Eph2v12 Both Jews and Gentiles are included in this

CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF HOW THE LAW SHOULD HAVE BEEN INTERPRETED
PP Gods comments on Sabbaths and fasts

- *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?*
- *Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*
- *Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*
(Isa 58:5-7)

PP WHAT THE LAW COULD NOT DO

- It only provided forgiveness for a **limited group of past sins** on the the Day of Atonement-mostly sins of ignorance
- The blood of bulls and goats did not really take away sin- unless they saw God's redeemer in them (Heb 10v1-4)
- Lawkeeping did not change the conscience -nor did it improve character (Heb 9v9)
- The Law never promised justification by works (Gal 3v11)
- The Law never promised eternal life by works

PP KEEPING LAWS and focussing on AVOIDANCE DOES NOT CHANGE HUMAN NATURE (Jews multiplied legislation)

- If you have died with Christ and have escaped from the world's rudimentary notions, why, as though your life still belonged to the world, do you submit to such precepts as "Do not handle this;" "Do not taste that;" "Do not touch that other thing" --referring to things which are all intended to be used up and perish--in obedience to mere human injunctions and teachings?
- **These rules have indeed an appearance of wisdom where self-imposed worship exists, and an affectation of humility and an ascetic severity. But not one of them is of any value in combating the indulgence of our lower natures. Col 2v20-23 Weymouth**

PP THE LAW AND US

- ❖ God`s high standards of morality, separation, honesty, fairness and justice are clearly revealed to us -Same God
- ❖ God`s Laws encouraging generosity and thoughtfulness teach us to love our neighbour as ourselves.
- ❖ **PP -We are not under the specific laws given to the Nation of Israel**
- ❖ **Some were** are renewed in the New Covenant (Rom 6:14-15) / 9 of 10 Commandments are renewed (but none of the worship rituals nor the justice code were)
- ❖ The Law does , however, provide us many wonderful examples of Godly Christlike behaviour and good practice before God .
- ❖ **PP LET US DELIGHT IN THE POSITIVES OF GOD'S LAW**
- ❖ Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
- ❖ But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
- ❖ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)
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PP THE LAW , JUST HOLY AND GOOD

- The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. (Psa 19:7)
- Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. (Rom 7:12)
- But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; (1Tim 1:8)
- No wonder then – that so much of the Law of Moses will be reinstated in the Kingdom to shape unspiritual nations
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THE END

GOING TO USE SOME SUMMARIES TO ILLUSTRATE THE SCOPE OF THE LAW.

PP THE LAW contained a full range of guidance for the nation

- Selected History with observations and reflections on it
- The details of the tabernacle and its service
- Worship and sacrifices, vows
- Laws concerning morality
- The priesthood and the Levites
- The Sabbath and the feasts, jubilee years
- Blessings and cursings , blessings on tribes
- Laws of uncleanness , unclean animals, lepers
- The criminal code of law and justice
- Moses Ends with- God's new covenant with Israel
- Moses prophetic songs and blessings

There was a civil code- laws for the current good of all in society

PP-Many Jewish laws were so far ahead of its place in history

- ❖ **Wise Laws for health reasons**
- ❖ **Safety issues-first OHS code is here**
- ❖ **Honesty in commerce**
- ❖ **Wise agricultural practices**
- ❖ **Moral issues- all kinds are dealt with by God**
- ❖ **Tithes and offerings -Care for the poor and disabled- a unique welfare system**
- ❖ **Proper treatment of servants**
- ❖ **Laws for warfare and national security**
- ❖ **Marriage and family issues-women were especially respected and cared for –**
- ❖ **Conservation issues**

PP THERE WAS ALSO CASE LAW to facilitate a Justice system ..examples –

Examples and precedents were to be applied elsewhere

- ❖ **Theft (only given livestock as our guide)**
- ❖ **Blasphemy- Something God especially abhors**
- ❖ **Defiance**
- ❖ **Immorality**
- ❖ **Witchcraft and sorcery**
- ❖ **False prophets**
- ❖ **Care for servants**
- ❖ **False witness**
- ❖ **False accusations**
- ❖ **Suspected Apostasy**
- ❖ **Cities of Refuge**
- ❖ **Inheritance Laws**
- ❖ **Captives in War**

PP THE WORSHIP CODE WAS VERY DETAILED &SPECIFIC

- ❖ **Sacrifices**
 - ❖ **Priesthood**
 - ❖ **Tabernacle/Temple**
 - ❖ **Levites**
 - ❖ **Vows**
 - ❖ **The Sabbath**
 - ❖ **The Jubilee Year**
 - ❖ **Feasts (including tithes and firstfruits)**
- Incorporated a generous social welfare system**