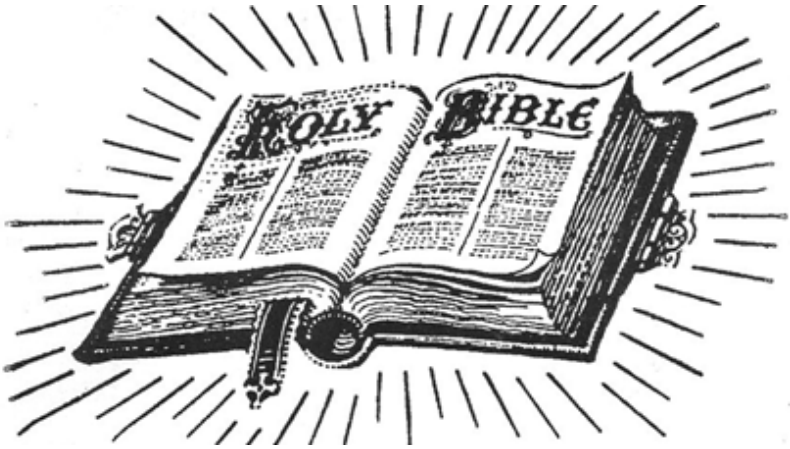


Bible Lessons



**“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and
truth came by Jesus Christ.”**

John 1:17

Volume 48, No 4

October • November • December

Quarterly Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of Jesus Christ and His Church

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BIBLE LESSONS FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2016

THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER

THE LAW AND GRACE

On July 18, 2016, the Lord called my father, Bro. Leslie Busbee, to his heavenly home after a long illness, thus ending a long and useful life of consecrated service. One of the many facets of his ministry included the Bible Lessons, which he began writing in the 1980's. As a memorial to him, I delved into the archives and felt it would be good to use this set of his lessons for the fourth quarter. Bro. Leslie wrote:

“We feel greatly inspired to set forth a study of the difference between the Law and Grace. There is a lot of this dealt with in the Scriptures. It is needful for everyone to come to a clear understanding on this subject, which must be revealed by the Holy Spirit. This we trust will be to all who consider the truths in these lessons.”

“There is a danger of being unbalanced in our understanding of the basis of our acceptance and favor with God. There is a ‘law spirit’ that can take hold of a person which will not allow one to bear with his fellow man. This law spirit can blossom into spiritual pride—the attitude that Jesus confronted in His earthly ministry. This attitude is not dead—it is prevalent today and is easy to fall into.”

Amen! I must add, there is also a great danger of becoming unbalanced far to the other side. There is a “loose spirit” prevalent in the world today which promotes a cheap “grace” and opposes the biblical doctrine of holiness. Bro. Leslie goes on:

“May God help us to see the truth on what the grace of God is. May we seek to be as the apostle Paul said: ‘Found in him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Philippians 3:9).’”

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

OCTOBER 2, 2016

THE COVENANT OF FAITH TO ABRAHAM

Gen. 12:1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee:

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

Gal. 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Heb. 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

MEMORY VERSE: Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. —Galatians 3:6

CENTRAL THOUGHT: God established His relationship with mankind on the terms of faith and exemplified it in the covenant He made with Abraham.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Genesis 17:2 “Covenant”: a compact; a contract; an agreement between two or more parties.

Galatians 3:15 “Confirmed”: ratified or made authoritative.

Galatians 3:17 “Disannul”: invalidate or make of none effect.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first in our series of lessons on the subject of the law and grace will be that of the covenant of faith to Abraham. Now Abraham is a very important character to the Christian. He is important because God laid the basis of His work with the souls of men in His dealings with Abraham. He showed in His dealing with this man that all of His goodness and mercy will be granted to mankind in accord with their belief and trust in Him. Abraham obeyed God, but it was because of his faith that he obeyed. Faith comes before obedience, for it is the work that God does in the heart of man to persuade him; divinely-wrought conviction.

God's dealings with Abraham shows the goodness, longsuffering, forbearance, and patience of the Lord. Had He laid down a rigid law first, there would have been no room for tolerance and pity. But we see God laying aside, for the present, the high-demanding standard of His law and stooping in love to establish an accord with mankind on the terms of love and faith.

One would have to read the entire story of Abraham to get the overall picture, but we make mention of Abraham's call from God at the first and then the revealing of His wonderful covenant (which came about 24 years later). All this time, God was working and dealing with Abraham, bringing him to the place of utter trust and dependence on Him.

The law was placed to one side to make room for the establishment of faith. This is a very important thought. The law was

not given until 430 years after this. Faith had the priority over the law. It was necessary for Abraham to draw near to the heart of God in confidence, love and assurance. This was accomplished in the covenant of faith that God made with him.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God promise to do with Abraham and his seed?
2. What was God's purpose in making a covenant with Abraham?
3. How old was Abraham when the covenant was made?
4. Who was the "seed of Abraham" to whom the promises were made?
5. What did it take on Abraham's part to see the covenant confirmed and brought to pass?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

God singled out Abraham from the ancient world in the midst of idolatry and darkness. It seems that Abraham was the only man in his area that clung to the knowledge of the true God that had come down from the forefathers. In response to this integrity, God revealed Himself to Abraham and gave him the command to leave his native country and journey to a place which would afterward be shown to him.

Thus began the life of faith for which Abraham is so noted. Worshiping, seeking and pleasing God became the sole occupation of this dear man. Dwelling in the land of Canaan as a stranger and enduring the long wait for a son who was to be his heir, Abraham rode out the years of his earthly pilgrimage devoted to the covenant that God had made with him. The promise of God's inheritance was his constant companion and guide. Triumphant in the final test put on him by the Lord in the offering up of Isaac, this man emerged upon the pages of history as the "Father of the faithful" whose posterity reaches into the realm of the Christian age. We that are saved and redeemed through the blood and righteousness of Christ are blessed with faithful Abraham.

The faith that he had was not just for his own benefit. It was for us, also, because it substantiated the great communion of man with

God. It showed that God wanted man to trust in Him and not in his own abilities. God purposed to establish this truth to man. Thus He dealt with Abraham upon the principles of faith alone.

And still today, God designs to establish every soul in a faith and a confidence in Christ that nothing will move. We are to have for the basis of our hope and fellowship with God, His righteousness revealed in what Christ did for us in the New Testament plan of salvation. God knew there would be an inclination in the soul of man to try to trust in his own righteousness and good works; thus, He seeks to offset this temptation by working on the principles of faith first. If every soul could but grasp this truth and seek to come to God according to faith as He planned, there would be success and victory every time. It would heal a man's backsliding and forever hold him fast in the grace of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Recently, a couple of our children took an airplane trip that encompassed the local area over our house. While we took pictures of them up in the air, they were also taking pictures of us from their vantage point. When we compared the pictures later it was interesting to see the vast differences. Our viewpoint was very limited as we were only able to see the small plane and unable to see much else. Their viewpoint took in not only our neighborhood, but also the horizon, the sky and the beautiful beyond.

This makes me think of Abraham standing in the middle of the countryside in his conversation with the Lord. No doubt Abraham strained his eyes and maybe even tiptoed to see as much land as he could: north, south, east and west. His vision was hindered by the limitations of his surroundings. But God was looking from heaven with an eternal point of view. He was looking into the future as well as the past when He made this covenant with Abraham. And yet, Abraham's faith was able to accept his part in the magnificent scheme of things. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8).

We too are surrounded by our own earthly circumstances,

dimensions and perceptions. But to imagine from a heavenly point of view takes the same kind of faith that Abraham had. "For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Every decision and action here on earth becomes small and insignificant when compared to that eternal perspective.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

OCTOBER 9, 2016

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

Exodus 19:10 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

20 And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

20:1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the

land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

31:18 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.

MEMORY VERSE: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. —John 1:17

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The law given to Moses on Mount Sinai was accompanied with fearful and awesome signs and visible and audible manifestations of God's power and majesty, and was written by God upon tables of stone.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It was in the third month since the children of Israel had departed from Egypt. They were camped in the wilderness before the mountain of Sinai. This was the same as mount Horeb where Moses had been visited by God in the burning bush. God was choosing this time to speak to them His Law and Commandments. This was a literal nation of people, and the commandments which God was to give them were to come accompanied with an outward show of power and audible sound. It was so fearful a sight that Hebrews 12:21 states that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

Try to imagine from the language of our lesson just what it would have been like to have been there. Thunders and lightning proceeded from the mountain enveloped in a thick black cloud. A prolonged, loud trumpet blast was heard in the midst of black smoke which ascended as from a furnace. The whole mountain was shaking greatly. Then God's voice spoke from the midst of all of this terrible sight. It caused the people to want to back off and flee. It did not

draw them nigh to God. It filled them with fear and terror.

God called Moses up into the mount and communed with him for forty days and nights. He presented unto Moses, at the end of the forty days, two tablets of stone with the Law written thereon with His own hand. This was the giving of the Law to the people by Moses. It is good for us to have this scene well stamped in our minds and to view its every aspect. Try to put yourself in the place of the people.

It did not take long to show that the people were not of any disposition to keep these laws. At the end of the forty days, Moses found them in the camp worshipping a golden calf. The first two commandments were broken already. No wonder Moses felt like breaking the tablets of stone into pieces. What good were they if the people would not keep them?

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did God do at Mount Sinai?
2. What kind of things were seen there?
3. What effect did this administration of the law have upon the people?
4. Upon what were the commandments written by God?
5. What was the first commandment given? Read the other nine in chapter 20, verses 4 through 17.

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is good to remember two sayings in the New Testament as we consider this lesson. Paul said in Galatians 3:19, "Wherefore then serveth the law? [For what purpose was it given?] It was added because of transgressions. . . ." Then Paul stated in 1 Timothy 1:9 "that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient," that is, the unrighteous. God knew that all this throng of people were unrighteous. The law would serve as a restraint to the people, but it also was a means of causing them to sense their own personal guilt. This was to help prepare them for the sense of their need for the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who would come to

be their Savior.

The law was given in such a way and manner as to show man's inability to keep a written, carnal commandment. This was God's way of showing us in the New Testament age not to preach or teach His Word with a law spirit. Just telling people is not enough. They must sense the Savior's love and power for themselves.

Those who promote and preach the gospel should possess the same spirit of grace that Jesus had. Yes, it was a frightening experience to see the terrible display of the power and judgment of the wrath of God on Mount Sinai. But for all of this power and display, how far did it get with the people? Did it justify them and give them victory to live spiritual and faithful lives? May God help us today.

How do we administer His Word today? Are we guilty of this same error? Do we beat people with the gospel and merely try to show them their error? If we do, we have nothing less than a law spirit. If we do not point people to the bleeding sacrifice of the Lamb of God, dying on Calvary, our preaching will miss the mark. Our dealing with other souls will be defeated. No matter how hard we try, the soul remains in darkness and prison until he or she beholds the wonderful grace of God. Let us not be guilty of administering the laws of God as was done on Mount Sinai. It will not work. The heart must be touched and softened by the Holy Spirit and won to full salvation. Then the laws can be deposited in their rightful place. Of this we will study later.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, ...But ye are come unto mount Sion ...” Hebrews 12:18, 22a (read the entire passage, verses 18-29).

“... A significance has been found in the fact that the law was given from Sinai on the fiftieth day after the deliverance from Egypt.” --*Smith's Bible Dictionary*, see *Pentecost*.

If my calculations are correct, the Passover lambs were killed on a Thursday evening. The Passover was kept during that night while the death angel slew all the firstborn of Egypt. Then Pharaoh “thrust

out” the children of Israel early Friday morning. That was the day of their deliverance and the beginning of their exodus. Counting 50 days forward from that day would put the giving of the law (the covenant) at Sinai on Saturday, the Sabbath day. Note also that the establishing of that covenant came *in the morning* of that day (see Exodus 19:16-25). This was the *50th day following the beginning of the exodus and the 51st day following the day the Passover lambs were killed*.

Now, here is a very interesting aspect of type and antitype: Jesus Christ kept His last Passover observance on Thursday night, knowing that He was the Lamb Who was to fulfill all its type and shadow. Following that last Passover supper, He allowed the mob to arrest Him that night and take Him as a lamb to be slaughtered. He was crucified the next morning, which was Friday morning. He died as the Passover Lamb for the new dispensation *on Friday evening*, fulfilling all that the Thursday evening Passover lambs were a type of. And guess what! *It was exactly 51 days later* that the Messenger of the new covenant (the Holy Spirit) came down on mount Zion, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, *in the morning* (see Acts chapter 2) and established the covenant of the new dispensation. Just as the old covenant was established on Saturday morning, 51 days after the slaying of the Passover lambs in Egypt, so the new covenant was established on Sunday morning, 51 days after the slaying of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb (and exactly 7 weeks from the day of His resurrection). There were exactly *50 days between* the slaying of the Old Testament Passover lambs and the establishment of the first covenant at Sinai and exactly *50 days between* the slaying of the New Testament Passover Lamb and the establishment of the new covenant at Pentecost.

These parallels are not coincidental. God planned them that way. God has done all things in perfection! He fulfilled every type and shadow of the Old Testament to the most perfect detail when He established the New Testament! Is it any wonder that Sunday came to be called “the Lord’s Day,” and became the great memorial day of the new dispensation? This day was never intended to be kept as the Sabbath of Sinai, but as a memorial of something far better! Not only was it the day Jesus arose from the dead, it was also the day a better covenant replaced the old one (see Hebrews 8:6-13). God

wrote the old covenant on two tables of stone; the new one He writes on the fleshly tables of men's hearts by His Spirit.

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

OCTOBER 16, 2016

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Romans 3:9b For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

5:12 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:

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 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.

7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

Galatians 3:19 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 hand of a mediator.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto

Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

MEMORY VERSE: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

—Acts 13:39

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Four hundred and thirty years after God had established the covenant of faith with Abraham, He gave the Law to help man to be conscious of his errors and sins, and to help prepare man for the Savior that was to come.

LESSON BACKGROUND

All the writings and statements of our lesson today are from the hand of Paul, being inspired of the Holy Spirit. He was dealing with the great problem that had arisen in his day concerning the departure from the old law system to the new life in Christ. This is yet a problem in our day—a problem that arises when many well-meaning and sincere people fail to grasp the truth concerning the difference between the law and grace. In our lesson it is clearly stated that the real purpose of the law was not to justify mankind, but rather to bring mankind into condemnation. It was to awaken in the heart of man the knowledge of the sinfulness of his condition before God. It was to help him to realize his need of a Savior. God did not want man to go on unaware of his sin, and yet He did not want man to have any feeling that by good works he would merit favor with God. Thus the law was added to the covenant of Abraham that was established 430 years before on the principles of faith.

In Romans 5:14, Paul mentions how that "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." The time he was referring to, the time from Adam to Moses, were the years when there was no law given. Now Adam had a law; he had a direct command from God. He and Eve knew full well and had been warned not to partake of the forbidden fruit. Their disobedience brought spiritual death immediately and the expectation of physical death. But after they

were driven out of the garden and their posterity began to multiply in the earth, there were no commandments or laws given to them. Their conscience was their law, the only law that they had. And yet death reigned.

God wanted man to be saved and brought into His fellowship. In His mercy, God instituted faith to bring righteousness before He dealt with the sin question. Then later He gave the law to help men to see their sin. View God's wisdom and longsuffering and love for mankind in this.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did God not give the law before the covenant of faith?
2. What would have happened if man would have been brought into condemnation before mercy was given?
3. How should this affect our attitude toward sinners and those “without” today?
4. Was the law given to justify man?
5. What was the purpose of the giving of the law?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

As the Israelites journeyed toward Canaan, they were under the terms of the faith that Abraham and God had covenanted on long before. This was the grounds for God's deliverance for the people from Egypt. It was the faith of Abraham that had merited for them this great inheritance promised for them in the land of Canaan and their own faith that brought them out of the land of bondage.

Now the law was to be given. As we studied in our last lesson, the law was given, accompanied with terrible sights and sounds. Fear was stricken in the hearts of the people. They turned away in terror, entreating Moses to not allow that voice to speak again. *But it was the covenant of faith that they disregarded and broke when they failed to wait for Moses when he was up in the holy mount. It was not the breaking of the law that drew the wrath of God. It was their unbelief and idolatry.*

It is the same today; breaking moral laws is not the thing that

brings God's displeasure. God's Son has shed His precious blood for this, and mankind can be freely forgiven for all manner of sin, but it is the unbelief and the rejection of the Savior that seals man's doom. We need to be aware of this. If a man is lost, it will not be because he is a murderer, or a gambler, or a drunkard. It will be because he rejected the plan of salvation and the faith of Jesus Christ.

Now the law was added to the plan of faith so that mankind could see wherein he was guilty before God. It was never meant to bring righteousness. One could not successfully live up to the law in his own power and strength. We shall see in further studies that a traditional law system along with the ceremonial part of the law prevailed, which, in so adhering to, man felt a sense of righteousness. But man lost sight of the spiritual element of the law. His false cloak of righteousness was whisked away before the plain teaching of Jesus and His apostles. The ceremonial and traditional laws crumbled, exposing the proud Jews to be just what they really were: sinners in the sight of God in need of a Savior. What Paul spoke of in Romans 7 was his law experience. It did not bring life; rather, it brought death. The condemnation for his breaking of the law brought miserable and wretched death to his soul. It was this sense of condemnation and death that prepared his heart for Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

"And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." A personal 'knowledge of sin' in an honest heart brings inward pain and most of us humans like to avoid the inward pain and discomfort of being guilty. Just like the Pharisee we can look out and see people in much worse shape than ourselves (at least we think they are) and reason, "I am not so bad after all." Then again, we can enumerate the many good things we have done, thinking the good surely outweighs the bad. We can also play the blame game. "It was their fault." "They made me do it." You have probably heard the saying, "If it's not broken, don't fix it." All of these excuses are lying to us, telling us we are not broken. Exalting self is a dead-end road that will get us lost.

When we humble ourselves and accept responsibility, the knowledge of sin (being broken) can bring us unto the next step or question: Is there any help for me? Is there any hope for me? Can I be fixed? "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Dear sinner friend, you are broken! You don't work right. Your sins testify against you and the people you have hurt and wounded. No pretensions about it. Look over on yonder hill and see the Son groaning, bleeding, dying on the cursed tree. Paying the price of your sins and mine. Are you tired of trying to fix your life your way? I hope so. Look to Jesus, open your heart's door, believe in Him and He will make you new.

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

—Bro. Bob Wilson

OCTOBER 23, 2016

WEAKNESS AND FAILURE OF THE LAW

Romans 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.

Galatians 3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Hebrews 7:11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

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

MEMORY VERSE: 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. —Romans 8:3

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The Law was weak and failed because it did not provide an atonement sufficient to really justify the soul; it did not furnish victory and power to enable one to triumph over sin.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Romans 7:7, 8 “Lust; concupiscence”: These two words are from the same Greek word meaning *strong desire*.

Hebrews 7:18 “Disannulling”: abrogate, which means *to repeal, put away, or do away with*.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today comes from the teachings of Paul. We see in these that by the law was the knowledge of sin, and not the deliverance from sin. Being honest and speaking the truth, he was forced to admit that the Law of God in itself had no other effect

upon him but to bring him into condemnation. Therefore he declared that the law was a failure as far as really saving and justifying a man from his sin. The law was good and just and holy, as he goes on to say in this seventh chapter of Romans. But it was sin working in his heart and life that asserted itself in the face of the law and brought him into condemnation and bondage.

Sin will do this. Sin has a power and a strong hold on a person. All the law did was to bring sin to light and magnify it. The law failed so that man could be brought to a sense of his real condition and need. The law concluded all under sin so that the promise of faith by Jesus Christ might be equally given to all.

The priesthood of the law was insufficient. A man's priesthood came to an end at his death. The writer in Hebrews grasped the truth of Psalms 110:4, where in prophecy Christ was declared to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. . . ." (The concept points to an eternal and unchanging priesthood.) In Christ, the law was changed, and the priesthood was changed.

The law did not bring perfection because it was weak through the flesh. It had no power to work upon the heart and the affections and to change men from sin to righteousness. The blood of bulls and goats that were the atoning offerings was not sufficient to cleanse the conscience of man from the stain of sin. The law had failed and mankind was found in a worse state than before. He lay buried in the graveyard of sin with the gates locked by the law. Who would deliver man from the awful plight that he was in? Would there a Savior? Yes, thank God, there was a Savior!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the main factor in the heart of man that caused the law to fail?
2. What was the condition of Paul before the commandment came, and what happened when the law came?
3. How could the holy and just law of God bring out sin in mankind?
4. Was the priesthood under the law good enough? Why?
5. Why could not the blood of bulls and goats take away sin?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The law of Moses failed to bring the true reformation of mankind. God wills that we be persuaded of this. Just to tell a man where he is wrong without providing means to correct and reform is the spirit of the law.

When I was a little boy, my aunt was at our house taking care of my mother and her household duties on the occasion of a new baby. One day she told me that I could go outside and play, but I was to stay in the yard. I found that to stay in the yard was not my desired pastime when across the street were some of my friends engaged in lively play. I had the "law" that I was not to go over there, but the desire overcame me. Soon I was across the street enjoying the company of my friends. Then I heard the front door slam and my aunt was on the porch. "All right, Leslie!" I was caught. I was condemned to a good hard spanking. When she finished she said, "Now you can go back out and play, but stay out of the mud." That was the law. We had just had a good rain and there was plenty of mud outside. It seemed that I could find nothing else to do but to play in the mud. Soon I found myself in the mud. I heard the back door slam and my aunt was on the porch. "All right, Leslie!" So I got another spanking.

This is a good, clear example of the law. The law said, "Thou shalt not covet!" But there was a disposition in the heart of man, void of the love of God, that caused his affections to wander. Thus, lust took hold and man was caught. The law said, "Thou shalt not kill." But man, void of the love of Christ, knew not how to handle injury and the offences of others. Hatred, the forerunner of murder, sprang up. Man was caught and condemned by the law. That is all that the law did. It failed in that it provided man no cure for his ills or escape from the bondage of sin. The law alone will still fail today. It takes the love and grace of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit to liberate a man from sin.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

I can think of no better illustration for this lesson than that of

raising children. As Bro. Leslie stated, it takes something more than “law” to bring a child’s heart into subjection.

The law is important, as we have already learned. We start out with do’s and don’ts. The swift, keen application of a little switch, administered calmly and accompanied with instruction and explanation, goes a long way in helping adjust a child’s willful behavior.

But little ones grow bigger. The strict, firm discipline, so necessary to train good habits into character, isn’t going to win or hold an older child’s heart. Somehow, we must learn to transition from law to grace. If the law, as mentioned earlier, is a means--like a bus driver taking children to school--to get children to Christ, let us take care to not leave them on the bus! CHRIST is our goal: get the children to Christ.

Teenage struggles mirror the transition from law to grace. I remember agonizing over some of my teens’ behavior, and the Lord speaking clearly to me: “They are experiencing Romans 7.” Expecting rigid rules to bring perfection will only result in discouragement and defeat. We must be patient as they learn to wean from our “law” and draw their strength from Christ for the disciplining of their flesh.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

OCTOBER 30, 2016

CORRUPTIONS AND MISUSE OF THE LAW

Mark 2:23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

3:1 And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the

sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

MEMORY VERSE: But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully. —1 Timothy 1:8

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Because of the blindness and corruptness of man's heart, the law that God gave by Moses was misused, misapplied, and corrupted by traditions and commandments of men.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Some of the greatest problems that Jesus encountered in dealing with the Jews and the Pharisees had to do with the Sabbath Day. We have two cases mentioned in our lesson today about this misuse of the law. It is very easy to be legalistic about a carnal commandment and lose sight of the real essence and purpose of the law. God never instituted any of His laws just to put man in a strait jacket or bondage. God's laws for mankind were given with man's betterment and profit in mind.

The law had provided (Deuteronomy 23:25) that one could pluck corn from his neighbor's land when passing thereby. But the

Pharisees had lost sight of the true essence of the law. They counted the picking of the handfuls of grain as work that was forbidden. Because of limited space, we did not include in the scripture text of the lesson what Jesus said in response to the Pharisees' condemnation of the disciples. But He reminded them of a time when David broke the law of the tabernacle by eating of the shewbread when he was hungry. Reading the story from 1 Samuel 21 shows that David, in his flight from Saul, was in a real strait. God was merciful to David.

God had instituted His laws for the profit of mankind. Jesus said that the Sabbath was made for man; that is, it was made for the profit and benefit of man. Man was not made for the Sabbath. If he had been made for the Sabbath, then the spirit of the law would have to be satisfied regardless. Jesus also said that He was the Lord of the Sabbath. What did He mean? Harmonizing with the context, we are persuaded that He meant that the Sabbath was His dominion and He could handle and control it as He willed.

See the misuse and corruption that the Pharisees had allowed in their hearts concerning the law? The man with the withered hand could not be healed on the Sabbath, according to their way of thinking. And yet at the same time, they had allowed traditions to creep in that would excuse a man from supporting his parents in their time of need if he would give the money to the priests and Pharisees. Jesus sternly rebuked such evil. We have the same problems today. There is a danger of having a law spirit, and failing to realize the mercy and goodness of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. The Pharisees were endeavoring to uphold which law?
2. Is it possible to become unreasonable in upholding the law?
3. In what way was the Sabbath made for man?
4. What had the Pharisees done to the law?
5. Can you think of how this can be done today?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Besides bringing mankind into condemnation and guilt because of sin and disobedience, the law contained a danger of being corrupted. Along with the law sprang up twisted traditions and formal obligations, imposed by the leaders of Israel. The law commanded: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother." But somehow through the years, because of covetousness, the idea crept in that if a man would give the money that he would ordinarily use for the support of his parents to the Pharisees and the priests, he would be free from the obligation of taking care of his parents. Think of the mothers and fathers who suffered! This tradition had crept into the law system and the leaders held it over the people as important as the law. Think of the money that was padding the pocket of the temple leaders. Their tradition had a religious cast that attracted many. "Give your money to the Church!" Covetousness had taken hold of the people's hearts. They made the commandments of none effect through holding this tradition over the people.

This is something that has hindered the work of the Lord many times. The taking advantage of the law for a man's own personal promotion or benefit is corruption of the law. It is very easy to just obey and do without really understanding the principles and essence of the law. God does not want this. To go through a motion or a ritual or a form of worship is not sufficient with God. He desires a person's heart and understanding to be enlightened so that he or she can be aware of just what is taking place in his or her relationship with the Lord.

Religion can be just a form. "Do this and you will be blessed." That is the religion of so many, and it is a law spirit. The kind, compatible, merciful attitude is gone. There is no love or mercy or forbearance. It becomes a cold, hard, legalistic procedure. This leaves the way open for corruptions and misuse of the law. May God help us to keep in view the real end of the commandment which is "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Timothy 1 :5).

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

While teaching in the temple, Jesus was dealing with a crowd of self-righteous people and told them a parable of two men who went up into the temple to pray. It starts out describing two very different types of men; the one was a Pharisee and the other was a publican.

Let's take a look at the Pharisee. The title alone sets him apart, as he had great knowledge of the laws and gave strict adherence to the commandments. As we observe the Pharisee walk into the temple to pray, we will notice that he has clean hands and his clothing is of quality material. His posture is regal and stately. As he adjusts his robes, he senses the presence of another and looks over to see a publican who is also making a petition. Inwardly the Pharisee is thinking, "What is this publican doing here? Did he not know that this was a place of complete holiness and protocol? And look at those garments! Oh well, on to the task at hand. Maybe he needs to see what a righteous man looks like. I will make sure that I speak loud enough for him to hear so that he may be able to follow my example." The Pharisee then clears his throat and starts to speak, "I am so thankful to you Lord that I have never had to stoop to cheating or stealing or other criminal acts for my daily bread. I am grateful to say that I have never treated anyone unjustly nor have I ever been unfaithful to my wife. I am blessed, Lord, that I have been spared the life of sin, even as this publican. You know my frame and how that I want to serve you in all things and how that I fast twice in the week even when it is not easy or convenient. I am thankful for all the blessings that you have bestowed upon me as it allows me to give abundantly to the work of the Lord. May I ever be your humble servant. Amen."

Our attention now turns to the publican. He is standing there stoop shouldered, ashamed of the deeds he has committed. His eyes are not able to reach the heavens so he looks down in contemplation, "What words are there to say? How does one petition the Holy God of Israel?" His voice breaks with emotion as he tries to speak, even as his fist doubles up. Finally, he beats his fist against his chest and utters, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus tells us that only the publican went away justified. And yet, in this parable there were two sinners...

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

NOVEMBER 6, 2016

OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS SAVED BY THEIR FAITH

Habakkuk 2:2 And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Hebrews 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

MEMORY VERSE: We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak. —2 Corinthians 4:13

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It took faith in God for the Old Testament saints to triumph in their lives for God.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Habakkuk 2:4 “Faith”: Trust; reliance; confidence; believing concerning things unseen and not received as yet.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet who was greatly concerned about the work of God. He stood upon his watch tower of prayer to see what God's answer would be to the great burden of his heart. "The just shall live by his faith." That was the answer of God to him. All down through the ages of the law it was the faith of the people that was to carry them through. It was to be faith in God as their real righteousness. Despite the failings and misgivings of the law, it would take faith and real steadfast persuasion to carry the souls of men forward to victory.

From the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we draw a recounting of many of those heroes of faith. The writer starts in the first part of the chapter by saying that the elders (ancients, or saints of old) obtained a good report. The Greek text reads “by faith they were attested.” In other words, they were tried and proven. The pressure and trying circumstances, in the midst of which these saints believed God, was a refining fire to their faith. It caused their souls to tread the high places of victory and salvation. Faith was manifested in Abel, Enoch,

and Noah. Then the covenant of faith was established in Abraham. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, manifested faith in God, also. It took faith to conceive and bring forth Isaac in her old age. Note the fact that the early-day saints of God were human beings, but they had the divine quality of faith in their lives.

Such are we today if we are saved in Christ. We are human beings. We have mortal and physical occupations to render, but there must be sure and definite fabric in our lives of faith and trueness to God. These Old Testament saints have proven a great blessing even down in our day. The faith that they manifested and put on exhibition is the same faith that we need today to lead victorious lives for Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the quality in the lives of the saints that enabled them to triumph?
2. Is faith needed yet today?
3. Of what value is the record of their faith?
4. What was "that better thing" provided for us today that they did not have?
5. Will their faith be of any value to them in the judgment?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The testimonies of faith and triumphs of the Old Testament saints are of great spiritual value to us today. We are joined to them in a mutual faith. Without us they could not be made perfect. And yet without them, we could not have had the faith that we now have. We have the fulfillment of their faith, and yet our faith is like theirs. We are reaching forth to the second coming of Christ as they looked forward to the first coming of the Savior. It was their faith in the future and the promises of God that had not yet been fulfilled that was accounted to them for righteousness.

Their faith prevailed beyond death. The deadness of Sarah's womb, the extreme age of Abraham's body, Jacob's blessing to Joseph's two sons as he was dying, Joseph's command concerning his bones, Moses' renunciation of Egypt despite the wrath of the king—

all of these were faith triumphing over the presence and threat of death. Time ran out on the writer; many more could have been rehearsed, but it was the same story with each of them. They held fast their persuasion and faith in God in the face of extreme contradictory forces. Overcoming daily with faith and steadfast confidence in God and His unfailing promises, these people went forth in their lives for the will of God.

This is the same faith that we need today. As they needed it, so we need it. As they had it, so can we have it. The faith of Abraham is what brought the real work of God along through those many years of time. It is this faith that we need in Christian lives today. It is a mutual and shared faith. It is a tie that binds us together. It holds us fast to the will of God; we are clinging to the promise and we dare not go against the good Lord. May we be inspired as never before to cling to and stand for the truth of Jesus Christ and keep His faith unto the end.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

How wonderful to think that one day we will meet all the family of God! Not just those saved by grace, but those dear ones who were saved by their faith. You might say, “Well, they weren’t baptized like we are today; or, they weren’t saved by Christ’s blood nor did they know about what we have the privilege of knowing. But look in I Corinthians 10:1-3: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea...And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

We read of numerous saints of old who had great faith and had many close encounters with God. Noah had to have a close connection with God to get all the details on how to build the ark. Moses followed God’s leadings in bringing Israel out of Egypt. Many more saints of old were directed and led by God during the Old Testament times. Thank God for all of the faithful saints of old who have influenced our lives today!

—Bro. James Bell

NOVEMBER 13, 2016

JESUS CHRIST BROUGHT FORTH UNDER THE LAW

Galatians 4:1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

MEMORY VERSE: The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. –Luke 16:16

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ was born, grew to manhood, and began His ministry under the law. He respected, honored, and obeyed the law, but it was for the purpose of redeeming those who also were under the law to the spiritual sonship of the New Covenant that He was to establish.

WORD DEFINITIONS:

Galatians 4:4 “Made under the law”: born under the law.

Galatians 4:5 “Adoption”: sonship.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Christ Jesus came forth into this world under the jurisdiction and authority of the law. Joseph and Mary respected and obeyed the laws of God. When Jesus was taken as an infant to the temple in Jerusalem, it was in obedience to the law. The law had given the commandment that every male child that was the firstborn was to be holy unto the Lord. Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord and to offer the sacrifice that was commanded in the law—a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons (Luke 2:22-24). At the age of twelve, Jesus was taken, after the custom of the law, to Jerusalem and the feast.

Jesus alluded to the law many times in His ministry. The scriptural rebukes with which He overcame Satan in the days of temptation were taken from the law. The leprous men that He healed were commanded to go and show themselves to the priests, after the manner of the law. His quotations from the law were time and time again a reproof to the Jews who professed to be keeping the law. Jesus was fully aware of their problem. He knew that they were not keeping the law, and they knew it, too. Thus they were enraged when Jesus tore their playhouse down. He showed them that there was not any shelter in their superficial religious system. Christ was under the law, but He was bringing in a better hope all the time.

There was an overlapping of the law system with that of grace. From the days of John the Baptist, God was bringing forth the New Testament plan of salvation. The animal sacrifices had lost their

value in the face of the real sacrifice, the Victim for the salvation of men, who walked and talked in their midst. Christ was not bringing to the souls of men another carnal commandment of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." He was bringing the Spirit of adoption, or sonship. He was the Son of God, and was to give His life on Calvary that we might be sons of God even as He was. Thus, we are to no longer be as servants who take commands, but we are to be in the bosom of the Father, obeying and serving Him with a joy of acceptance, being His heirs. It was no longer to be a system of where men obeyed to gain favor, but it was favor granted as a gift of righteousness, winning the heart and affection to an obedience that satisfied the obeyer and the Obeyed.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you think of different incidents that showed Jesus being subject to the law?
2. Who does He want to redeem and what are they to receive?
3. In what ways is the Spirit of adoption superior to servitude under the law?
4. How was Christ made a curse?
5. Why can there be no flesh justified by the law?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

In the previous lessons we have studied the establishing of God's relationship with man on the principles of faith and the giving of the law, which came 430 years later. We have viewed the purpose of the law, why it failed to bring real perfection to the soul, how it was corrupted and misused, and how that faith was employed during the time of the law for those who really served God.

Today we will behold the Savior—brought forth into the world, born of a woman, born under the law. But let us bear in mind the truth that Christ was not born under the law to continue under the law. No, He was brought forth to rescue and to redeem those who were condemned and under the sentence of death by the law. He came to bring to men the access to eternal sonship with the Father.

We see Him bearing the curse of the law for us. In other words, He took the punishment that the law prescribed for offenders. He became "sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (Verse 19).

The world had become guilty before God. The law had justified no one, and mankind lay in spiritual death and degradation. Satan had taken over many lives with evil bondage and disease. The religious system that professed to be holding to the law was corrupted with covetousness and self-righteousness. But Jesus came forth into the world, taking upon Himself human flesh. He was born of a woman just as every other man had been born. He entered into the realm of the great conflict with Satan. There were important and serious consequences at stake as Jesus made His advent into the world. But thank God, He came and we shall behold the glory and blessing of His salvation in the remaining lessons of this study.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

In the 7th chapter of Romans the apostle Paul vividly describes his experience under the law – how that the law was unable to give him dominion over and deliverance from the law of sin and carnality that was warring in his members against the spiritual law of God. But he continues in chapter 8 to say that the "law of the Spirit of 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."

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Jesus came to provide the missing link, so to speak, of the law. As Paul said, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). But it had no power to transmit its holiness to the moral nature of man. It took the Spirit of life emanating from Christ Jesus to accomplish that. Jesus became the true spiritual substance of what the law was all about. Uniting with Him in spirit will completely fulfill the righteousness of the law in us. Therefore

our focus should no longer be the law, but Christ, the fulfillment of the law. "... He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:17). He says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest [Sabbath]. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). It is the rest of faith (see Hebrews 4:1-11).

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God...that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:4, 6b). "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (substance) is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16-17).

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

NOVEMBER 20, 2016

THE NEW COVENANT WRITTEN IN THE HEART

Hebrews 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for he shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

2 Corinthians 3:3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.

6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

7 But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

8 How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

MEMORY VERSE: This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. —Hebrews 10:16

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The laws of God are no longer a written set of rules that we must obey, but in Christ Jesus the Holy Spirit writes the laws of God upon the tables of our heart, with His power and love blending and harmonizing the holiness of the Lord with the humble, yielded soul.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The epistle to the Hebrews seems to be a special message to the Jews revealing the change from the Old Testament to the New, from

the old law system to that which is through the grace of God. Paul is most generally regarded as the author, although some have speculated that the author could have been Apollos. But regardless of who wrote this wonderful book, it was surely inspired and anointed of God.

While Moses was upon the holy mount receiving the commandments and pattern for the worship of God, he received two tables of stone whereon was written, by the finger of God, the ten commandments. Upon returning to the camp of Israel, he was dismayed and sad to see the people worshiping the golden calf. In his wrath, Moses cast the two tables of stone to the ground, breaking them to pieces. Later God called Moses up again unto the mount, and Moses hewed out two tables of stone and the commandments were written again on these stones. When Moses returned from the second stay in the mount, his face shone so brightly with the glory of God that the people could not look upon him.

In the lesson for today, the law was termed a covenant. But now we see a new covenant being made, in Christ Jesus, with all who are saved in Him. This time, instead of on tables of stone, the laws of God are inscribed upon the tables of the heart of man. This means that God's law of holiness and righteousness is impressed vividly upon the affections and desires. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant. This is where the law of God should be. Merely to have the law written out to be obeyed is not enough. The soul of man must be cleansed from sin and the truth written indelibly upon the heart and mind. This is accomplished in the New Testament plan of salvation wherein the soul is saved and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the law written on stones fail?
2. In Christ, where are the laws of God written now?
3. What is the difference between the two?
4. Who writes the law upon the heart?
5. What is the result in the life of one who has the laws of God written upon his heart?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Oh, the wonderful truth of our lesson today! We are living in the time of abounding grace; there is no excuse for disobedience and sin today. God has not only commanded, but He has provided the wonderful free gift of righteousness, justifying us without the deeds of the law, and has sent the Holy Spirit, making Him available to all.

The Holy Spirit coming into the soul to take up His sacred abode brings power and inspiration to do and to be. The Holy Spirit burns in holy love a standard of purity and holiness that is well-pleasing in God's sight—right in the soul of man. Sin is purged out and the love of God reigns supreme. There is no desire to do wrong. What temptations come by way of the flesh are subdued and overcome. Thus we are victorious over sin and death. "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:56-57). We overcome all things through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who has conquered sin and the power of death. We are thus delivered from our enemies and the power of Satan so that we can live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world.

See how firm and sure this is. See how uncertain and shaky the old system was. See how souls did fail under that way of the law! It was impossible to live up to the law, but in Christ Jesus the power of the Holy Spirit is made available to us. Oh, how we need to consecrate our lives and yield our all to Him! He wants to sanctify the soul and make us His sacred dwelling. He wants to write upon every heart the laws and commandments of the Lord. Hereby the commandments of God are not grievous: the love of Christ constrains us.

Look at the new covenant and compare it with the old. Behold, today this principle still is true. Trying to live for God in our own strength is to be under the law. It will generate bondage and self-righteousness and pride; but, to fully realize our helplessness and plead for the mercy and grace of God will qualify us for receiving the grace of God and the gift of righteousness. Thus, the laws of God are written and imprinted upon the mind and heart. We can live for God victoriously.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." These words were penned by Zechariah, from the Lord, to Zerubbabel. This message is so important for us to remember today. Zechariah 4:7 says, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain..."

Are there some big things opposing us, keeping us from accomplishing the will of God in our lives? Perhaps it is a big mountain of fear; fear of people or fear of the unknown. Perhaps it something in our personality that we have struggled with over and over, and it has hindered us on more than one occasion. Zerubbabel had a mountain in front of him, but God was going to give victory and turn it into a plain. Mountains can be intimidating and seemingly insurmountable.

Jesus' disciples on an occasion were unsuccessful in casting out a devil. They asked Jesus and He said, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). The Lord wants us to overcome all hindrances that would hinder us from the will of God, whether they be in us or out in front of us. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Caleb, at 85 years of age, said, "Give me this mountain" (Joshua 14:12).

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." Let us take our eyes off of our insufficiencies and trust and believe in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

NOVEMBER 27, 2016

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH VERSUS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LAW

Romans 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for

Israel is, that they might be saved.

2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3 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.

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6 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:)

7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)

8 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;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

MEMORY VERSE: For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. –Romans 10:4

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The only true way to be righteous in the sight of God is to confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead. This faith and its confession makes us to be His workmanship and new creation unto good works that are pleasing to God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have for our lesson today a most sublime and clear teaching from the Bible. It brings the two kinds of righteousness into comparison and declares that Christ brings an end to the law for righteousness.

We may as well acknowledge the truth: there is no way that a man can be made righteous just by endeavoring to keep God's commands. If man could keep God's commands, he might be made righteous that way, but man, without the grace and love of the Lord Jesus, is incapable of living up to the holiness of God. Thus the covenant of faith that God established with Abraham emerges as the triumphant link of God with man. As we have seen, the inserting of the law proved that faith was the only means by which a man could be justified. Truthfully and honestly, the law made nothing perfect neither did it justify anyone. To be righteous by the law, one had to do what it said; but, no one could really do what the law said. It paved the way for grace and mercy to come when it brought man to a sense of his own guilt.

As we have already learned, the law was good and just, but the sin that was in mankind rendered the law incapable of bringing righteousness. But when Jesus came and paid the perfect price for man's redemption, clearing the offences out of the way, the Father's loving favor of strength and inspiration was brought down. And Paul's great desire was to see his fellow Israelites come to this realization. He wanted them to be saved. He bore witness of their zeal for God, but he was forced to confess that it was not according to knowledge. They were going about to establish their own righteousness.

Beware of this! The danger of such a state is not past. May we gain an understanding of what God's righteousness really is and escape the snare of self-righteousness.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Paul's concern for Israel?
2. What kind of righteousness were they going about to establish?

3. Were they aware of what they were doing?
4. Is it possible for us to do this today?
5. How can we be sure that we are not seeking our own righteousness?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The righteousness of the law was summed up this way: The man that does those things shall live by them. Paul declares that this is foreign to the true righteousness. The law is not of faith (Galatians 3:12). To seek to get righteousness through the law is vain endeavor. The law was given to make man conscious of his sin. A sincere Israelite faithfully offered sacrifices for his sins with respect for the promised Savior that was to come. He felt the load and guilt that his sins heaped upon him. The law made sin to be more exceeding sinful.

In other words, the righteousness of the law was not a reality. It sounded good on paper, but it could not be brought into actuality. Instead of bringing righteousness, it brought more awareness of sin. Instead of bringing life, it produced death; however, it was serving the wonderful purpose of preparing men to receive the wonderful gift of righteousness through the Lord Jesus Christ. It was as Paul said in Galatians 3:24, 25, a "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." The Greek word from which schoolmaster is translated is *paidagogos* or "paidagogue" which means a child leader, that is, a servant whose office it was to take the children to school. In our society, a school bus picks up a child at his home and transports him to school. Paul likens the law to this. When the school bus arrives at the school, the child gets off and has no further need for the school bus while he is at the school. The law was a means of preparing us for Christ. But when we receive Christ, we need the law no longer, for He is our law and we follow Him as our Shepherd.

Note what the righteousness of faith says. It stills human endeavor and points the soul to rest and faith in Christ. "Say not, who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? Say not, who shall descend into the deep to bring him up from the dead?" This is quieting the storm of our own frailty. It is the recognition of the supremacy of God's accomplishments over our own. It takes away all

boasting and replaces it with thanksgiving, honor, and worship.

The righteousness of faith is taking hold of the promises and laying claim to their eternal value. It is the accepting of the plan of salvation as the gift of God.

— Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The scribes and Pharisees could only see that Christ healed on the Sabbath day, dined with publicans and sinners and even ate with unwashed hands! When the scribes and the Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus, they were only interested in justice being served as she was indeed guilty. But Jesus handled the situation with the law of righteousness, mercy and grace. After their accusations, Jesus ignored them and started writing on the ground. Was he writing down the sins of the accusers? Was he writing the commandments? Or was he writing words of love and hope? By stalling for time, He gave opportunity for justice to be served when he told them that "he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Incidentally, Jesus could have cast the first stone because he was without sin! After the accusers started weighing out their own sinful deeds, they slipped away quietly. I am certain they were hoping that no one was paying attention, especially the adulterous woman. When Jesus turned back to the woman, she heard for the first time in her life wonderful words of life: "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." Not only were these words of forgiveness but also of a new life. He did not pet her sins or leave her in a sinful condition.

The spirit of self-righteousness is still present in this world today. It is always easier to criticize and abuse others rather than be held accountable for our own deeds. Jesus Christ came to this earth to bring hope and grace for each and every soul. His salvation is a saving grace and a keeping grace. "How wonderful that he would take this poor abode of sin, and wash me in his precious blood and now abide within."

Oh, what a Savior!

—Sis. LaDawna Adams

DECEMBER 4, 2016

THE LAW FULFILLED IN CHRIST

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 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.

22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Romans 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

8:3 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:

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

3:29 Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

MEMORY VERSE: Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. —Romans 13:10

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In Christ Jesus, only and through His grace, can the laws of God be truly fulfilled and obeyed.

WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 5:18 “Jot or tittle”: In the Greek text it says one iota (letter "i") or fine point. “Fulfilled”: to make complete, finish, or satisfy; What the grace of God accomplishes in the soul of man fills up and satisfies what the law was really requiring.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have already learned that the laws of God as they were given on Mount Sinai were not sufficient to justify or bring righteousness to men. The law had its purpose and value, but it was not the answer to man's need. Our lesson today deals with the truth of the law being fulfilled through Christ and the grace that is found in Him for the soul of man.

The Scriptures are very plain. To follow Christ, to be a partaker of His power, grace, and resurrected life, and to obey His blessed commandments frees us from the obligations of keeping the law as it was in Moses' time. This covers many phases of thought. The law was a shadow, and a shadow is not the object. The real object was Christ; a shadow of His grace and salvation was cast in the law. Paul counseled in Colossians 2:16-17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [the object of the shadow, or the substance] is of Christ." Jesus spoke of all the law and prophets hanging on love—love supreme for God and love for man. No love was begotten in the heart by the righteousness of the law, but in Christ, the love and appreciation we have for Him and what He did for us constrains us to willingly obey His blessed voice.

Knowing Christ in the Spirit lifts us to a plane higher than the flesh. We walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; thus the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us; thus the law is established. The holy experience of being justified and born again in Christ prepares us for the laws of God to be established in our hearts. The

law is fulfilled in our lives because of His grace and love and not of our own human effort.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus come to do with the law?
2. On what two commandments do the law and the prophets hang?
3. What is the fulfilling of the law?
4. In whom is the righteousness of the law fulfilled?
5. How is the law established?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

What a blessed truth for us to grasp and embrace today! Christ has fulfilled the law and by His grace we can walk in the way that will satisfy every demand that the law placed upon humanity. Mankind needed a Savior, not only to save him from the awfulness of his sins, but to generate and produce righteousness to be brought forth in His life.

The right ways of the Lord and the standard of His holiness are the fruits of the New Testament Christian. The pattern that Christ laid out for us to follow through the inspirations, anointing, and guidance of the Holy Spirit satisfies the great demands and spiritual essence of the law. We do not have to keep the law any more because the real essence and vital life of the law are carried out in the fruit of our lives as Christians. It is not that we ignore the law and its precepts or seek to discredit it in any way; rather we sense our inability to do so. God wanted His law fulfilled, but realized that man could not fulfill His law on his own. Man needed a helper and a Savior. Thus Jesus came into the world, setting forth the pattern of godliness and righteousness for us all to follow. His work was finished on Calvary, the law was satisfied, justice had been meted out on Calvary, and now by the grace of God we can live that spiritual, holy life with which God is well pleased. Instead of working and trying to win God's praise and favor, we become His workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto good works, in

which God has planned that we walk. The boasting is excluded, and we only acknowledge the grace of God for every Christian virtue seen in our lives.

We are won to love Christ supremely, and this love for Christ gives us love for our fellow man—a love that looks more on the welfare and benefit of others than our own. The law is established, satisfied, fulfilled, met with all requirements, and fully blessed of God in the soul of man. Praise the Lord for His marvelous grace and the New Testament given to us in Christ!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

The word *fulfill* or *fulfilled* has appeared at least six times in our lesson. It means to fill up, complete, be made full, perfect, supply, accomplish. Jesus Christ came to this earth just for that purpose: completing the plan of salvation was the mission he came to do. In Hebrews 10:7-9, Jesus says he came to do God's will. "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."

Just one sacrifice forever did this man offer for mankind's sins, then He sat down on the right hand of God. To "sit down" here means *to finish*. Christ did His Father's will; He completed His mission and now sits on the right hand of the Father interceding for us. His Father's will was completed. What was lacking in the Mosaic Law was now fulfilled in Christ coming to earth. We do not reject the law but rather gladly accept it as a schoolmaster that has brought us to Christ. There is now a complete and beautiful way made by God. The road is paved with the blood of Christ, the sacrificial lamb. It has a solid foundation built upon by the law and prophets. It is fully complete, there is nothing lacking. Thank God for this great salvation!

—Bro. James Bell

DECEMBER 11, 2016

JUDGMENT AND MERCY

Psalms 85:7 Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation.

8 I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

John 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

James 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

MEMORY VERSE: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. —James 2:13

CENTRAL THOUGHT: The laws and judgments of God are to be administered with mercy. They are to be accompanied by the love of God and Holy Spirit inspiration. A harsh, unkind, critical law spirit is not the spirit of Christ.

WORD DEFINITIONS:

James 2:13 “Judgment”: justice or the divine law. “Mercy”: compassion, pity, tender feelings and regard toward; an unwillingness to mete out punishment and judgment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The 85th Psalm was no doubt written concerning the return of Israel from the captivity in Babylon. God's judgment had been sore upon them, for their departure from His ways had been terrible, but it had been mixed with mercy. Mercy is being shown to them in their return to their own land. The judgment of God still stood in that He gave them warnings about not turning to folly again. But mercy and truth are met together in Christ. The truth of man's wanderings and departure from God and God's holiness are met together in mercy and loving-kindness. Righteousness and peace have embraced, bringing soul rest to the one who has erred from the way.

The Pharisees brought to Jesus the woman caught in adultery. The way that our Savior handled this clearly reveals how mercy and truth are met and righteousness and peace kiss each other. The truth of her sin was not denied, but mercy instead of condemnation was shown.

Let us always remember that mercy rejoices against judgment. Notice especially the text of scripture in James. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." If we judge by the law without mercy we shall be thus judged, but if we render judgment by the law of liberty, we shall be judged by the same. What is the law of liberty? It is the law that is based on love alone;

the love of God burning in a man's soul sets him at liberty. This liberty is found in the soul's willingness to be in bondage to Christ. It is being moved and inspired and strengthened by the grace of God. It is the opposite of the law of sin and death. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." Just the cold letter of the law will fail. But the love of God with the grace of God will inspire man to the highest and most holy plane. A message was preached once in which sinners were pictured as being in the graveyard of sin with the gates shut and locked by the Law, but Mercy came and opened the gates. This is true—mercy does rejoice against judgment.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How has the law and mercy been brought together in Christ?
2. How did mercy and judgment meet together in the case of the woman taken in adultery?
3. Did Jesus condone the evil that the woman had done?
4. What is the law of liberty?
5. What will be our judgment if we show no mercy toward others?
6. How does mercy rejoice against judgment?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

It is very easy to put out judgment on others and fail to show the mercy that is needed. It is easy to do this, but it is not so easy to reap that kind of judgment. On the occasion when the Pharisees condemned the disciples for plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, Jesus made this statement: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless" (Matthew 12:7). Oh, what depth is in these words! Quoting directly from Hosea 6:6, we see the heart of God reaching out to a lost world: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." A merciful attitude toward our fellow man, and a constant growth in the true knowledge of God will satisfy the great heart of our Creator more than all the law system ever did.

The Jewish nation was caught up in the ceremonial part of the

law, having lost sight of the spiritual value and significance therein. The sacrifices and the temple procedures of worship had become a form without life or meaning. Jesus came to bring us the life that we need. One man, after hearing Jesus explain that the greatest commandments to keep were (1) to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength, and (2) to love our neighbor as ourself, summed it up very well. He said that to do so was "more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus told him that he was not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:32-34).

Micah 6:8 says that we are "to love mercy." Now everyone loves mercy when it is coming his way, but when God really wants us to love mercy is when we must show it to our fellow man. Instead of condemning, we will be seeking to help. Hard feelings, anger, malice, jealousy, and such like are evidences of a lack of mercy. It is very evident that if we show no mercy we will be given no mercy.

The Pharisees were ready to see the woman condemned but were not ready to accept such judgment themselves. If we refuse to have mercy on others now, we will not be able to walk away free at the judgment: we will meet our judgment just as we gave it out. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, judgment is tempered with mercy, giving souls a chance to recover themselves from the error of their way.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

An elementary school teacher held up a messy, scribbled paper before her class and asked, "What do you think should be done to a student who would hand in such a paper as this?" A little boy sitting at a distance in the classroom hollered, "Whop him! Whop him!" Still holding up the paper, the teacher began slowly walking down the aisle toward where he was sitting. As the teacher drew closer the little boy realized with dismay that the paper was his own! Then, with stammering voice, he replied, "M-m-m-miss _____, I believe I'd just make him stand in the corner!"

How well this describes human nature! How easy it is to feel good about a severe judgment being meted out to the other fellow. But when the same is turned toward us, how do we feel then? We want mercy, don't we?

But Jesus said, "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matthew 7:2). In the case of the little boy, the teacher decided to go ahead and give him a paddling instead of just make him stand in the corner. His was a lesson well learned!

—Bro. Harlan Sorrell

DECEMBER 18, 2016

THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 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;

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

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

MEMORY VERSE: And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:10-11

CENTRAL THOUGHT: After the law had failed, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be the Savior of mankind. He came in human flesh to make the perfect sacrifice for the atonement of sin so that we can be sanctified and free from sin and its bondage forever.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is very evident that the Jewish nation in general was looking forward to the coming of the Messiah; however, as it was with other matters that had to do with their relationship with God, their minds were quite clouded and obscure as to what the work of the great Redeemer would be.

The vain and self-righteous leaders viewed the Messiah merely from a political and fleshly aspect. Their hearts were set on being delivered from the jurisdiction of Rome. They wanted to become a great nation in the eyes of the world again. However, this was far from the truth. Christ's coming into the world was not for their political prestige. It was to deal with the issue and the root of their true condition: Jesus came to bring salvation for the soul. He came to make the sacrifice that would erase the wrath of God from the account. Men and women were to be changed from the ways of sin and evil to the strait and narrow way of righteousness and truth.

God was not satisfied with the system of burnt offering and

sacrifices that had been going on for years and years. The writer here in Hebrews draws from the Old Testament writings in the 40th Psalm: "Sacrifice and burnt offerings for sin thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me." In the Old Testament we read, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened" (Psalm 40:6). It is interesting to note the variation in the expression here. The writer translates the phrase "mine ears hast thou opened" into "a body hast thou prepared me." The raw Hebrew renders this, "ears hast thou digged for me." Let the reader draw his own conclusion and bring the two texts together. The scripture in Psalm 40 is undoubtedly as prophetic of Christ as it can be. It was necessary for Christ to assume the nature of humanity. Thus He could share in their sorrows and perfect for them with His divine power the life that He willed for them to know.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was God dissatisfied with the sacrifices under the law?
2. Why did Jesus have to come in the flesh?
3. What sacrifice did Jesus make?
4. What was accomplished by this sacrifice?
5. How often was Jesus to make this sacrifice? Why?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

The law was just a shadow of better things in the future. It foreshadowed the great sacrifice that Christ would have to make of Himself upon the cross of Calvary. The many animal sacrifices that were offered under the law did not suffice for man's sin. They were accepted only as a type and a shadow of Christ's offering of Himself. Jesus Christ became the victim for man's redemption. When Jesus came into the world He knew that He was destined for the cross. The burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin did not meet the approval of God. "I come to do thy will, O God. In the volume of the book it is written of me."

Jesus stood on the pinnacle of time. Viewed from the past by those who had long before sealed their faith and testimony in death,

He bears the weight of their sin. Believed on and adored by all who would thereafter look to Him, He perfects that which concerns them. The sacrifice that He made on Calvary is sufficient to work deep into the human heart and cleanse it from every trace of sin. The law and its unnumbered sacrifices could not do that. Every year the people would return and offer the same sacrifices. Once a year the High Priest would don his holy garments and make the fearful approach to enter the Most Holy place. All of this was but a shadow: now, the real has come. The Substance of that Shadow now approaches. The fulfillment of all of those sacrifices is now offered upon the cross of Golgotha.

Oh, the magnitude and wonder of these truths! Oh, dear reader, stand amazed and view the glory of this scene: let the Spirit of God burn it upon your soul. The Lord Jesus, the King of Glory, has brought a perfect plan for the souls of men. We can be saved from our sins forever! We can be sanctified wholly and made as pure as heaven! We can be lifted from the entanglements and sins of the world to a heavenly life in Christ and live in preparation for His coming. Praise the Lord for His gift and great love!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

In *The Christian's Secret to a Happy Life*, Hannah Smith illustrates the difference between the law and grace. A woman could oversee and manage a household as a servant, but if the owner of the household married her, she could be doing many of the same responsibilities but now she does it as a wife who has married the householder. She now has an invested interest in the household and the motivation would be completely different. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Animal sacrifices never cleansed the heart of man; man was still unclean and the Holy Spirit cannot abide in an unclean vessel. When Jesus shed his blood, the perfect price was paid and the cleansing of the heart made it possible for the Holy Spirit to come in and dwell.

Philippians 2:13 says, "It is God which worketh in you both to will

and to do of his good pleasure." The sanctified heart has the enabling power of the Holy Spirit abiding within, giving him the desire and mind to do his good pleasure.

The Holy Spirit works from within. The fruit and service is one of liberty and not of bondage.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

DECEMBER 25, 2016

THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS SHAKEN IN CHRIST

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

29 For our God is a consuming fire.

MEMORY VERSE: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we tum away from him that speaketh from heaven. —Hebrews 12:25

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In the giving of the law of Moses the earth quaked fearfully. In the giving of the New Testament in Christ, the spiritual heavens, the realm of the souls of men, are shaken. We should give diligent heed, for we shall not escape if we do not yield to Him who speaks now from heaven.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This is the final lesson in our series of studies concerning the law of Moses and the law of grace in Christ Jesus, the Lord. We have seen how faith was first implanted in the soul of man as a standard for God's dealings and man's responsibility. We have studied how the law was given, how it failed, why it failed, and why the Savior needed to come. We have beheld the wonders of His grace and what it can do for the soul which the law could not do. For our final lesson, we have chosen to dwell on the serious side of the dispensation of grace. We are not only to welcome and rejoice at the inception of the grace of God into our lives, but we are to realize the seriousness and the responsibility that is ours thereby.

When we receive the grace of God we become very responsible creatures. God is expecting something of us. Those who despised Moses' law and turned away from the voice that spoke on Mount

Sinai were punished. They did not escape. How much more should we reverence and respect the voice of God that speaks to us now by way of the Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus, the Word of God?

It is not for us to just take or leave; it is for us to receive and give allegiance and obedience to. If we refuse it, the consequences are dire and certain. If we receive it and then fail to diligently pursue the mark and yield to the will of God, we are going to face an awful judgment.

We must not receive the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1). We must give the more diligent heed to the things which we have heard. As the book of Hebrews also teaches, Christ has an inheritance above the angels. Therefore, we ought to sincerely and earnestly pursue the truth that is in Christ and follow in His steps. Let us receive that kingdom that cannot be moved. For even though the wrath of God has been appeased in Christ, those who refuse His grace will merit a fiercer anger from God and from Christ.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our fate to be without holiness?
2. Is there any danger of losing the grace of God?
3. What is the fearful and serious warning in our lesson?
4. What are we come to in Christ?
5. How should we serve God? Why?

COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

There is a tendency for people to say, "We are under grace now, so we do not have to be so careful." This is erroneous thinking. We do not have to be under the strain of condemnation, but the dispensation of grace has brought great responsibility upon mankind. The grace of God has been provided for all, but there is much on our part to exercise and to do for the grace of God to be effectual in its administration. We must follow and pursue peace with our fellow man; we must follow holiness with God.

Under the law we could not be holy, but in Christ we can and must be holy. We want the law of holiness to be written upon our

hearts that by lives of purity we may be worthy of His name. We must be diligently on our guard for any deviation from the strait and narrow way. Satan is not going to leave us alone. He will be permitted to try us from every quarter.

We are not come to a phenomena such as was seen on Mount Sinai. It was a fearful sight that caused Moses to even fear and quake, but we are come to spiritual realities. Instead of to the old literal city of Zion and Jerusalem, we are come unto a spiritual experience in which we are raised up from fleshly and carnal appetites and living to a close walk with God. It is not imaginary, but a spiritual reality. This heavenly Jerusalem that we are come to in the grace of God is the Church which He purchased with His own blood. We come to it and are made a part of it when we are truly born again.

Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. His blood sprinkled on the heart pleads for favor and mercy with God. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, but Christ's blood cries out for mercy and pardon. This voice of the covenant shakes the spiritual places. It refines and purifies the soul; it leaves nothing in its path unturned. It is like an ever working leaven that spreads throughout the entire man. It has been the means of every spiritual awakening down through the Church age. This scripture in Hebrews 12:26, 27, was one of the main texts that moved and inspired the early pioneer ministers and helped usher in the Evening Light Reformation. It is the New Testament Covenant of Grace. Mankind has a tendency to drift from it into formality and man-rule, which go along with a law spirit, but revivals and spiritual awakenings have restored it time after time. We today need to be constantly renewed in spirit and refreshed in the glory of the Spirit of the Living God sent down from Heaven.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

REFLECTIONS

“For our God is a consuming fire.” Moses shielded his face with his hand as he looked upon an awesome but fearful sight: a bush ablaze, yet, as he stared in amazement, not turning into lifeless, charred embers, but standing, leaves, branches and all, as strong and vibrant as when he had admired it early that morning.

He drew nearer to find meaning in the mystery. So we, looking on the wonder of salvation—Christ in you—can only gaze in silent awe. A consuming fire—dwelling in us? But other words come to add explanation: “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” Lamentations 3:22-23). And, “. . . the good will of him that dwelt in the bush. . .” (Deuteronomy 33:16). As Jacob was preserved and transformed by his encounter at Peniel, as Isaiah was purged by the living coal; as God’s people, represented by the burning bush, have emerged with only the cords that bound them burned off, let us also receive the kingdom into our hearts; be purged, be shaken, be liberated.

Being under grace does not mean that we are free from all responsibilities of faith and obedience. Having Christian duties and obligations to obey does not mean that we have to *work* to *deserve* or *obtain salvation*. Contrary to popular religious thought, there *is* still a yoke of restraint upon our lives; however, it is light—not heavy—and we walk at liberty because it is *love* that constrains us. What we do, we do because of the love of Christ in us.

In Christ, truly, mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have embraced. The consuming fire is enveloped in good will and compassion. And we are saved.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



Leslie Calvin Busbee 1938~2016

Leslie Calvin Busbee was born August 25, 1938 in Guthrie, OK, to Ray and Thelma Davis Busbee, the fourth of seven children. Bro. Leslie loved to tell of his happy childhood, playing with cousins, attending Guthrie schools, and, most importantly, going to Sunday School and services at the chapel on 6th and West Warner. His home was a loving home, and the importance of family ties was something that stayed with him his entire life. From little up, he was taught about God, his parents lovingly guiding him into paths of good character and manliness. His Sunday School teacher made a deep impression on his young mind as she described with tears what Jesus meant to her. Then, as he grew up, there were many other people whose lives helped shape him into the man he was, and their memory was blessed to him!

When Bro. Leslie was a tall, lanky, freckle-faced boy of 10, his brother, Louis, gave him a guitar and taught him to play. Thus began a life-long love. He became very popular in his teen years, singing all the songs of that time, and even having one of his high school teachers turn over the entire class time to him and his guitar. He could have gone to the top in the world of country music, being

voted “Most Likely to Succeed” in his senior year, but it all changed when Jesus won His heart, and after that he purposed to sing only those songs that would please the Lord, giving his talents for use of the Master. Bro. Leslie also learned to play the piano, and throughout his life spent many hours for his own enjoyment, at the nursing homes, and with family and friends playing and singing hymns on both the guitar and piano. He had a wonderful voice of wide range, and the Lord also used him many times leading the singing in the services.

The world had a strong pull for Bro. Leslie in his youth. In addition to his musical talent, he was a fine basketball player, and was sought out by the high school coach for a position on the team, but his father wisely discouraged that. He had a steady girl friend in high school, but, again, his father restrained him, and Bro. Leslie tells us how thankful he was for his father’s guidance. When he was 17 years old, he went out one night to run. In the dark, he ran into a guy wire from a telephone pole which caught him across his throat, flipping him backwards to the hard ground. Knowing he was hurt, bleeding from his mouth and nose, he ran back to his house, calling for his mother. She called the pastor, Bro. O.C. Porter, who came to pray. But Bro. Leslie was already praying. He told the Lord that if He would stop the bleeding, he would give his heart to God and live for Him. He tells us that in just a few minutes the bleeding stopped. It was a turning point in his young manhood, and he began to seek the Lord, praying earnestly that God would save his soul. He gave up his girlfriend, telling her he could not go with her and live for God. This was very hard for him, but he knew he was doing the right thing. He doesn’t tell us an exact date, but shortly after graduation, before the Monark Springs Campmeeting, 1956, he began a loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, which lasted 60 years.

In December of that year, at the Assembly Meeting at Guthrie, Bro. Murphy Allen preached a message using Hosea 10:12 as his text. “...it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” Bro. Leslie was leading the singing, and after the message, he started the song then fell on his knees at the altar. He didn’t care who heard him, or what anyone thought. He wasn’t getting up until his soul was satisfied! Soon all Heaven came down, and he rose quickly from his knees rejoicing as the Holy Spirit filled

him through and through! Not long after that, he heard and heeded God's call to preach the Gospel.

Bro. Leslie spent a lot of time with Bro. Fred Pruitt, Bro. Darius Gibson, and other ministers, laboring with them in different areas of ministering, including time spent at the Faith Publishing House. Then he began to notice a beautiful young woman who had also felt God's call on her life and had come to give her time and talent at The Lord's Printshop. He earnestly sought God's will for him in this, and God assured him that she was the one, but that he was to wait for His timing. Bro. Leslie submitted to this, but it was 2 years before the Lord gave him clearance to tell Sylvia Forbes of his love for her. They were married on July 17, 1960, following the morning worship service at the chapel in Guthrie. This was a story he dearly loved to tell all of their life together. To this union was born 5 children. On January 31, 1964, God took their first little son, Joseph Erle, to be with Him in Heaven. Through this awful grief, the trials and triumphs of raising a family, and pastoring 5 different congregations, Bro. Leslie and Sis. Sylvia stayed deeply in love, sharing a beautiful example of a godly marriage. Bro. Leslie passed away the day following their 56th wedding anniversary.

Bro. Leslie pastored congregations in Anthony, KS; Springfield, MO; Coffeyville, KS; Guthrie, OK; and Enid, OK. After making his final move to be in with his children in Kansas, he still faithfully shared with them what the Lord gave him. His final message in the pulpit was for the ordinance service just before Easter. The very last message he preached, while sitting in his chair at his home, was about the sufferings of Jesus and how much this meant to him. Even in his weakened physical condition, he was so greatly inspired that his discourse was vibrant! During his life, Bro. Leslie never wavered in his complete trust to the Great Physician, and endured a great fight of affliction for many years. God gave him amazing strength and grace, even in this last year of declining health. He embraced the knowledge that the end of his life was at hand, rejoicing that, at last, he was going to see his Lord and Savior face to face. Up until the hour of death, he responded to his loved ones, giving them hugs and pats on the back. He flew away to be with Jesus at 3:42 p.m., Monday, July 18, 2016 while we were singing "Abide With Me," #342 in our hymnal.

In addition to his little son, Joseph Erle, Bro. Leslie was preceded

in death by his parents, Ray and Thelma Busbee; his mother in the Lord, Sis. Marie Miles, two brothers, Louis and Lawrence; a niece, Jan Busbee; a nephew, Lance Busbee; and his son, Jonathan Ray. Those left behind to cherish wonderful memories of this godly man are his faithful wife, Sylvia; one son, Phillip, of Oklahoma City, OK; two daughters: Jeanne and husband, Herschel Eck, of Bartlett, KS, and Angela and husband, Dan Gellenbeck, of Gravel Switch, KY; one daughter-in-love, Dee Ann Busbee (Jon's wife), of Guthrie, OK, two very special daughters in the Lord: Trudie Stapleton of Bakersfield, CA, and Dena Porter of Guthrie, OK; one special son in the Lord, Carl Shaffer, Meeker, OK; 18 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren, with one more great-grandchild he would have welcomed with much joy had he lived until November of this year. Two brothers: Leland and wife, Barbara, of Lorena, TX, and Loren and wife, Maxine, of Edmond, OK; two sisters: Doris Bardell of Hot Springs, MT, and Sandra and husband Richard Porter of Lake Park, GA; one sister-in-law, Dorothy Busbee, of Woodward, OK. He also leaves an innumerable host of friends and family, especially the family of God, whom he dearly loved.

Funeral services were held Thursday, July 21, 2016, under the open-air tabernacle at the Monark Springs National Campgrounds, near Neosho, MO. He was taken on Friday, July 22, 2016, to his final resting place in the Summit View Cemetery, Guthrie, OK.

