

July 2010

Dear Brethren:

From Central Texas, we send our warmest greetings to all of you, and thank you for being a part of this wonderful work. No one on earth is so blessed as those whom God has called and given a good understanding. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy [Spirit], whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). We hope this letter finds all of you in good health and diligently seeking God for inspiration and direction.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

It is that good understanding the religious of the world seek but cannot find. However, they believe they are God's chosen because they are no longer under the law but "grace faith" in Jesus Christ. Love takes the place of law.

I have some very dear friends that would be happy if I could only see things the way they see them. After all they claim, Paul said, "*You are dead to the law.*"

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 (Romans 7:4) [emphasis mine throughout].

We were under the death penalty, the curse of the law. Christ bore that curse for us when He was crucified. Paul did not say the law is dead; he said, "*YE are become dead to the law.*" Let us read it in 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." When we sin, we bring upon ourselves the death penalty which is the *curse* of the law.

One cannot bring forth fruit unto God without obeying the law. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). In other words, do not transgress the law, for sin is the transgressing of the law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). We cannot sin without transgressing the law. Why is that so hard to understand?

Then some will say: Paul plainly states in Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: *for ye are not under the law*, but under grace." However, Paul is saying that we have been freed from the *penalty* of the law, *the death sentence*, *the curse of the law*. *Christ died for us so we could live out our lives under grace*. But did Paul say grace gives us the freedom to sin or transgress the law? Absolutely not! "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Verses 15–16)

What is righteousness?

My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness (Psalm 119:172).

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest* myself to him (John 14:21).

How can anyone read these verses and say we are no longer obligated to the obedience of God's laws? Did you notice? God only *manifests* Himself to those that keep His commandments.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him (1 John 2:3–5).

"But Christ Is the End of the Law," They Say

The end of the law, or aim of the law, or purpose of the law, is to bring us to Christ—to make us like Christ. He gives us His Holy Spirit. The spirit of power working in us enables us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

The *Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown Commentary* explains verse 4 this way: "For Christ is the end [the object or aim] of the law for [justifying] righteousness to every one that believeth." In other words, it is the same as Christ saying, "The buck stops here. I am the end of the law. *I came to establish the law. I have kept the law perfectly.* I set the example. Follow after me." Jesus Christ did at His death abolish the *law of*

Moses—which was the sacrificial law. Why were those sacrificial laws originally added? Because the Israelites were transgressing God's holy spiritual law—the Ten Commandments—which are eternal. Notice what God said in Exodus 16:28: "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?"

A World Without Law

If there were no law, there would be no penalty. Just think for a moment what it would be like to live—or try to live—in a world without law. I could go to my neighbor, kill him, take his wife, children, and all that he had. It would be mine until a stronger man came along and killed me, then it would be his. There would be no penalty to pay because we would not have committed a crime. Where there is no law, there is no penalty. It would be a world gone mad—anything goes: stealing, lying, rape, murder, cheating. You could take God's name in vain, you could blaspheme His name, and it would not be a sin. Working on the Sabbath would not be a crime. [I do not mean the first day of the week, Sunday. God rested on the seventh day of His creation. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, *as God did from his*" (Hebrews 4:9–10). He created the Sabbath for mankind and commanded him to stop all his work and to rest.] So no matter what one does, it would not be a crime. Believe me, you would not want to try to live in a world that had no law.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (Romans 7:12).

But what about Romans 7:6? It says we are *delivered from the law*.

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should *serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter* (Romans 7:6).

Did you get that? We now can serve Him in the newness of spirit, not just the oldness of the letter. Now we can worship Him in spirit and in truth, but the Holy Spirit is given only to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love (John 15:10).

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 (Romans 7:7).

There are many very sincere people attending church every week, actually keeping many of God's laws without even giving it a second thought, thinking all along that the old harsh law God gave to the Israelites was abolished when Christ was crucified. Notice Christ's answer when asked how to receive eternal life:

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? (Matthew 19:16)

Christ answered in the last part of verse 17, "*But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*" Notice:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 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 (Matthew 5:17–18).

You will have to agree that heaven and earth have not yet passed away. Paul said through faith we establish the law.

Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law (Romans 3:31).

Watch Out America, Great Britain, and Most of the Western World

Our sins have come to the full, and God is going to punish the nations for breaking His holy, righteous laws. Notice what is to happen in the last days:

And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you. And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul. When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the *latter days*, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them (Deuteronomy 4:27–31).

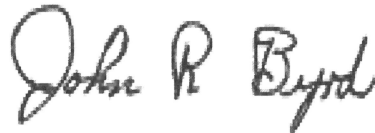
You can read how severe that punishment is going to be in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. You will also read of the many blessings on those peoples who will walk in His statutes and keep His commandments.

If you are concerned about your future, read and believe Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

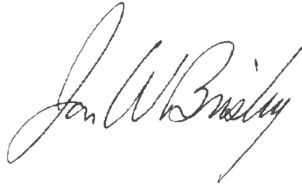
But know this, some preachers of this world will keep right on preaching that we are not under that old harsh law, and that we are under grace—just love, that is all that matters.

Notice when reading the commandments (Exodus 20), the first four are love toward God, and the other six are love toward our neighbor. The laws of God are a blessing to those people who appreciate and respect them. May your respect and love for God's laws keep you as the most blessed people on the face of this earth.

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John R. Byrd".

John R. Byrd

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jon W. Brisby".

Jon W. Brisby