

- THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS— DEUTERONOMY -

"Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'" (Deuteronomy 27:26)

YOU SHALL HAVE NO
OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE
NAME OF THE LORD YOUR
GOD IN VAIN.

KEEP THE SABBATH DAY
HOLY.

HONOR YOUR FATHER
AND YOUR MOTHER.

YOU SHALL NOT MURDER.

YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT
ADULTERY.

YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

YOU SHALL NOT BEAR
FALSE WITNESS AGAINST
YOUR NEIGHBOR.

YOU SHALL NOT COVET.



Berean Lamp Ministries
For the Body of Christ

Vol. 52
Jan/Mar 2020

The Seven Churches (Revelation 2-3)

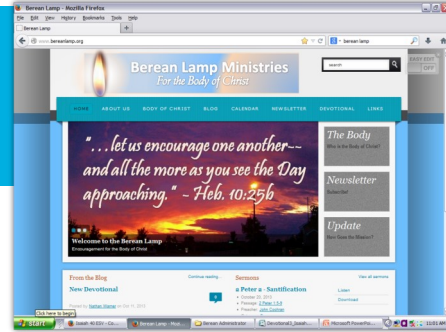


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Excerpts from the Blessing of Moses
Page 3

God's Law in the Age of Grace
by Nathan Warner - Page 4

Beware Lest You Eat and Forget
by Joshua Mathews - Page 10

The Purpose of Blood
by Beth Moller - Page 13

The Berean Lamp Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of Berean Lamp Ministries. Visit us at www.bereanlamp.org.

The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller

Visit www.bereanlamp.org/lampstand/ for an explanation of the cover art.

Administrator: Nathan Warner
Oversight Committee: Pastor Scott Moller, Deacon Bob Larsen, Nathan Warner
Editors: Natalie Warner





EXCERPTS FROM THE BLESSING OF MOSES

INTRODUCTION

*"The Lord came from Sinai, And
dawned on them from Seir; He shone
forth from Mount Paran, And He came
from the midst of ten thousand holy
ones; At His right hand there was
flashing lightning for them.*

*3 "Indeed, He loves the people; All Your
holy ones are in Your hand, And they
followed in Your steps; Everyone receives
of Your words.*

*4 "Moses charged us with a law, A
possession for the assembly of Jacob.*

*5 "And He was king in Jeshurun,
When the heads of the people were
gathered, The tribes of Israel together."
(Deuteronomy 33:2b-5 NASB)*

CONCLUSION

*"There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
Who rides the heavens to your help,
And through the skies in His majesty.*

*27 "The eternal God is a dwelling
place, And underneath are the everlast-
ing arms; And He drove out the enemy
from before you, And said, 'Destroy!'*

*28 "So Israel dwells in security, The
fountain of Jacob secluded, In a land of
grain and new wine; His heavens also
drop down dew.*

*29 "Blessed are you, O Israel; Who is
like you, a people saved by the Lord,
Who is the shield of your help And the
sword of your majesty! So your enemies
will cringe before you, And you will
tread upon their high places."
(Deuteronomy 33:26-29)*

God's Law in the Age of Grace

By Nathan Warner

"Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."
(Romans 3:20 NASB)

The Law is a huge topic, and this is not a comprehensive look at it. The question that preoccupies this paper is this: how does the Law relate to the world today?

The question of what God's Law is and its relationship to the Believer has been a topic of confusion in the Church from the beginning – think no further than the Corinthians who lived as if it was dead or, in contrast, the Galatians who tried to satisfy its requirements for salvation.

In the same spirit, some people today maintain that the Law has passed away and is no longer relevant because we live in a time of Grace, often using this argument to defend practicing sin in their lives. Others argue that while the Believer is set on the path of salvation through Jesus, we still must abide by the Law and keep it to be saved.

It seems that these two extremes have both been expanding their territory into the Church in the 21st century. We have the emergent churches telling people who are living in sin that God accepts them as they are and they have been given grace and are free of guilt, just as the Hebrew Roots movement has risen in response claiming that we must abide by the Law and keep it to be sure we will be saved. Neither is Biblically correct.

IS THE LAW DONE AWAY WITH?

Jesus Himself addressed this question: *"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished"* (Matt. 5:18). Has this happened yet? No, Scripture is very specific about when heaven and earth pass away – at the close of Christ's Millennial reign on this earth, when God does away with this earth and creates a New Heaven and a New Earth where there is no more sin and no more death (Rev. 21). The Law of God will not pass away until at least after the Millennial reign of Jesus.

Clearly, the Law has not been done away with in our modern world – more on that later.

"NOW this is the LAW of the guilt OFFERING; it is most HOLY."
(Leviticus 7:1)



WHAT THEN IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW?

Paul explained that the primary point of the Law is to bring knowledge of sin to those who encounter it: *“What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, ‘You shall not covet’”* (Rom. 7:7). Without the Law, Paul would not have known what is sin – what makes us unacceptable, unjustified, unrighteous in the presence of God.

Paul says, *“We know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully [properly, correctly], realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching”* (1 Tim. 1:8-10).

So, if the Law is not made for a righteous person, the question remains: are you, dear reader, righteous or unrighteous? This is important if we’re going to understand if we’re under judgment of the Law or not.

Before I was saved, I was an unrighteous person, and the Law of God made me aware of my sin and my need for a Savior. It was the Law that brought me to Jesus. How? You can’t realize you need a Savior if you don’t realize you need to be saved from something. Paul says, *“The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith”* (Gal. 3:24) - the law leads unbelievers to the inescapable conclusion that they need Christ. The Law is not a tutor leading Believers to Christ, because Believers have already been brought to Christ – they’ve already been justified by faith in Jesus. Justified means “having a legitimate reason” to be where you are – you have a legitimate reason to be in the presence of God – you are right and acceptable to Him.

Before I knew God’s Law, I was going to perish because even though I didn’t know I was an unjustified sinner, I was under the wrath of God for my sinful deeds. When confronted with the Law, my sin was revealed to

me, and I understood my sin deserved judgment. *“For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law”* (Rom. 2:12). The Law simply revealed my true nature to myself—I was unjustified, unrighteous, and accountable to God for my sin—I needed a Savior to save me from my destiny of judgment for my sins.

It is then that the free gift of Salvation through faith in Jesus is clear—through His righteous substitution of Himself for me, I was justified, made righteous, and saved from the Law’s judgment. *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross”* (Col. 2:14).

It is not by obeying the Law that we are justified before God because we cannot obey it—which is the point of the Law: *“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin”* (Rom. 3:19-20).

The point of the Law is to prove to man that he is not justified before God – you are not right before Him, and there is nothing you can do to make yourself right before Him – all so that you realize you need something outside of yourself to make you right with God, and the only thing God has offered man to make us acceptable is faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith” (Rom. 3:23-25a ESV). *“So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good”* (Rom. 7:12 NASB), because it reveals to the unbeliever that what has separated them from God is sin and they are destined for judgment unless someone intervenes on their behalf as an advocate or savior – and it points to Jesus Christ – He is the only way.

The Law’s purpose is to condemn all men by testifying against their sin. The Law neces-

sitates a savior. In chapter 7 of Romans, Paul illustrates his past struggle trying to keep God's Law: *"Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"* (Rom. 7:24b-25a) Through Him only, *"man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law"* (Rom. 3:8).

The Law is good, if used correctly to reveal sin in the unbeliever's life in order to lead them to salvation in Jesus Christ.

WHY THEN DO SOME MAINTAIN WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY THE LAW?

Many people today still maintain that we must live by the Law to remain justified before God after we have put our faith in Jesus. For example, some say if a Believer sinned and then a moment later stepped into the street and was killed by a truck, they'd wind up in hell. Others say we must keep the Sabbath, observe Jewish festivals, not eat prohibited foods (i.e. pork), or many such combinations of the ordinances to remain in Jesus' Salvation.

Firstly, people who obey laws are trying to justify themselves to the authorities, for if you keep the law, you have nothing to fear from the law. But as we saw earlier, the point of

God's Law is not to offer justification to any man, because no man can keep it, for *"by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin"* (Rom. 3:20). *"A man is not justified by the works of the Law...since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified"* (Gal. 2:16b). The point of the Law is to reveal our sinful condition and lead us to Jesus. *"For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it"* (James 2:10). *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Rom. 3:23). *"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one"* (Rom. 3:10-12). *"The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe"* (Gal. 3:22).

At this stage, we need to understand there are two components to God's Law: Moral Law (Ten Commandments) and the Mosaic Law of ordinances about behavior, observances, food, etc, which Paul refers to as *"do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"* (Gal. 2:21). Let's look at the Law of Ordinances first, because

"SPEAK to Aaron and to his SONS, saying, 'This is the LAW of the sin offering: in the PLACE where the burnt OFFERING is slain the sin offering shall be SLAIN before the Lord; it is most HOLY.'"

(Leviticus 6:25)



that is the bulk of the Law.

LAW OF ORDINANCES: For the Believer, the Law of Ordinances is left largely as issues of conscience (Rom. 14), for *“one person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind”* (Rom. 14:5). *“One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him”* (Rom. 14:1-4). *“Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense”* (Rom. 14:20). *“For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”* (Rom. 14:17).

MORAL LAW: Paul answers this question for us: *“Do we nullify the [Moral] Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law”* (Rom. 3:31). How so? The Moral Law (Ten Commandments) leading to Christ as a tutor finds its fulfillment in Believers through the indwelt Holy Spirit—our guardian, our manager (Gal. 4:2), our teacher of holiness: *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you”* (John 14:26), for *“now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor [referring to the Law, not the Holy Spirit]. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”* (Gal. 3:25-27). The Law is the tutor that showed us our need for Christ and for those who have come to Christ, the Holy Spirit is now our tutor, raising us up through sanctification to be Sons of God, like Jesus.

But we can only be the Sons of God because the blood of Christ’s sacrifice clothes us in His righteousness, *“so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit”* (Rom. 8:4). *“And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write*

them” (Heb. 10:15-16). The Holy Spirit bears His fruit in us, which is *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law”* (Gal. 5:22-23), for *“love is the fulfillment of the law”* (Rom. 13:10).

So, the Law of Ordinances has no hold on us to condemn us, and the requirements of the Moral Law for justification before God have been fulfilled by Christ’s imputed righteousness to us. We no longer need to try living by the Law to seek justification before God. Instead, we are justified by the blood of Christ, and we walk by direction and teaching of the Spirit to please our Father, imitating God *“as beloved children”* (Eph. 5:1). *“If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law”* (Gal. 5:18). Thus, we act out the moral law, which the Spirit puts into our hearts to do in imitation of God and His one begotten Son.

IS GRACE A LICENSE TO SIN?

On the other side, some false teachers teach we have a license to sin. But we do not because we have undergone a change: we are *“born-again”* (John 3:3), receive *“adoption as sons”* (Gal. 4:5), and become *“the children of God”* (1 John 3:1). This is a change both in position and in nature.

CHANGE IN POSITION: Believers go from being unjustified before God and deserving of judgment to being justified before God by Jesus’ righteousness credited to us (Rom. 4:5; 23-25). A true profession of faith in Jesus means God removes you from slavery to the world by His divine power and transfers you into His household as His child through adoption. Does this new position mean we are no longer slaves and can do what we want? *“Having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness”* (Rom. 6:18), meaning that *“as long as the heir is a child [dependent], he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.... Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God”* (Gal. 4:1-2;7). As a good child, you must *“present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification”* (Rom. 6:19b). The conclusion is: we have no license to sin.

CHANGE IN NATURE: Believers also experience a change in their nature spiritually, becoming a “new creature” (2 Cor. 5:17), receiving the Holy Spirit inside them. The Father “sanctifies” His children through the indwelt Holy Spirit, making them more like Jesus through the Law of the Spirit.

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:2-5).

The Law of the Spirit of Life is not a Law for Salvation, as we have already been justified

by Christ’s credited or imputed righteousness—it is the Law of the Father’s House, administered by the guardian of God’s Household, the Holy Spirit, Who nurtures, educates, and disciplines us to bear His fruit, which fulfills the “spirit” of the Law (Gal. 5:22-23; 5:14).

We’re not to judge or condemn our fellow Believers with the Law of sin and death—we’re not to say, “You’ve got a terminal illness!” because the Law for righteousness has ceased for everyone who Believes. But if we see a Brother committing unrepentant sin, we are to come to them with the Word of God and say, “Brother, our Father said to do *this* to please Him and you are not doing that—you are doing the opposite—you’re doing what He said not to do!”

Believers can resist and rebel against the Holy Spirit at times (and seasons), but God is a good Father and He disciplines us to correct us and mature us in His ways. If a child of God continues to grieve the Holy Spirit or quench His direction in their lives, without repenting, there are serious consequences. Firstly, in this

“SANCTIFY them in the TRUTH; Your word is TRUTH.”

(John 17:17)



life, there is discipline (which is to make you a disciplined son, worthy of the responsibility to be bestowed in the age to come): *“My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He scourges every son whom He receives.” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?...He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness*” (Heb. 12:6-7, 10b).

Also, there are consequences in the disqualification of rewards in our inheritance if our works are worthless (because of our rebellion and resisting the instruction of the Holy Spirit and God’s Word), for *“each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”* (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

Think of when a legal will is read and children receive their different inheritances of responsibility in a father’s estate—allotted as the father thought his children deserved based on the character they had manifested in their chores. The children of God are no more free to sin without consequences than a two-year-old is to tantrum and rebel against good parents. And so, we should be *“trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord”* (Eph. 5:10) - this is found in His Word.

Another reality that “illustrates” this point is found in the Bride of Christ. Every Believer has been betrothed to Christ as their husband, for Paul explained, *“I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin”* (2 Cor. 11:2). A large aspect of coming together in marriage is learning what is pleasing to your spouse and seeking to please them. As the Bride of Christ, where do we learn what is pleasing to Christ? His Word—under the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

For Jesus *“loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word”* (Eph. 5:25b-26). So many

Christians are ignoring Jesus’ Word, avoiding it, distracted from it – they say, “I want to please Jesus, but I don’t know what is pleasing to Him, so I think if I did this, it might please Him.” Or, “I feel if I do this, it must be what He wants.” Or, “I know what He says He wants, but I don’t think that’s really what He wants. I’ll do what I feel Jesus would like.”

“On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it” (Luke 11:28). As Jesus prayed for us to His Father, *“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth”* (John 17:17). *“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God”* (Col. 3:16). *“Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls”* (James 1:21). And so, we are to be in His Word! We must pay attention to His Word!

The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit – *“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart”* (Heb. 4:12). The Spirit not only wields it through you on other people, but the Spirit wields it in your heart too – discerning your attitudes and the thoughts of your heart!

Are we seeking to please Him or ourselves? Are we living our lives for Him or for what we want out of it? Are we trying to learn what is pleasing to our Lord? Are we seeking to imitate our Father?

Concerning our relationship to the Father, Paul tells us to *“be imitators of God, as beloved children”* (Eph. 5:1). *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’”* (1 Peter 1:14-16). Concerning our relationship to Jesus, Paul says, *“The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him”* (1 Corinthians 6:17). Let us be one in Spirit with Him.

Beware Lest You Eat and Forget

By Joshua Mathews

“And when you eat and are full, then beware lest you forget the Lord....”
(Deuteronomy 6:11b-12a ESV)

What would you think of a beggar who, after being invited into the home of a wealthy man and fed and clothed, began to arrogantly demand whatever he desired? Instead of rightly being humble and thankful for undeserved generosity, imagine the ungratefulness one must possess to have such expectations upon others.

This picture is not much different from a story which we find in the Bible. God chose a small family of people to be His own prized possession. When they were at their lowest point, He heard their cries for help and delivered them from a life of slavery. Not only were they restored to their previous way of life but God promised to further bless them by leading them to a land of abundance and blessing.

But before they entered this promised land, God led them through a great wilderness in order to test them. He gave them His Law and showed them how they were supposed to live their lives, and yet they complained at every turn and demanded more and more to satisfy their impatient hearts.

At the end of their journey, right before they entered the land, God reiterated the Law He had given them and reflected on how they had responded to Him:

“The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.”
(Deuteronomy 8:1-2)

Why did God need to test them? Did He not know how they would respond to Him? The testing in the wilderness was not a surprise to their all-knowing God. Instead, it revealed to them the ease with which their own hearts would turn away from God. God continued:

“And He humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3)

It is easy to forget in moments of need what is really important in life. When they were hungry and feeling their desperation for physical nourishment, God was trying to demonstrate to them that the way to truly live is in full dependence upon Him. What truly sustains a man is not bread or water: it is only that which comes out of the mouth of God.

Our own lives demonstrate how easily we can fall prey to this same temptation. Even though we are completely helpless and dependent upon God for all that we need and have, how often do we still find ourselves arrogantly expecting or demanding that God will give us everything we want?

Jesus said that the “poor” or literally “beggars in spirit” are those that are blessed by God. We are to humbly and thankfully receive what God has given us.

Listen to the description of the vast, blessed land that God had promised to them:

“For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land He has given you.”
(Deuteronomy 8:7-10)

The Apostle Paul explains in Galatians 3 that when God promised to Abraham this land to his “offspring,” this did not merely refer to the children of Israel who would physically come to live in the land of Canaan. Rather, this promise speaks of Jesus, the Messiah, as the offspring of Abraham Who would fulfill the promise “*in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Genesis 12:3).

This means that all those who are in Christ are heirs of the promise to Abraham and we have received “*the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 1:1). Jesus is our promised land to which we have been brought by the mighty hand of God – in the same way as Israel was brought into Canaan.

While the promised land was certainly wonderful, it was not to be the end of all earthly temptations. Hear God’s firm warning:

“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments and His ordinances and His statutes which I am commanding you today; otherwise, when you have eaten and are satisfied, and

have built good houses and lived in them, and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold multiply, and all that you have multiplies, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery....”
(Deuteronomy 8:7-10 NASB)

We have seen how easily we can move from being grateful for God’s blessing to selfish ungratefulness. How then do we heed this warning: “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God...”?

In Hebrew, the word translated “beware” is the word (שָׁמַר *shamar*) and means “to watch, to guard, to exercise great care over, to keep the eye upon.” A watchman for a city was to stand guard upon the wall and carefully watch in order to sound the alarm if anyone with ill-intent attempted to threaten or overthrow the city. This was no casual task; it required intent, resolve, and endurance.

God promised Israel that it would “be well”



with them and their days would be “prolonged” in the promised land if they would not forget Him (Deut. 6:2-3). Likewise, we must be vigilant if we are to receive the full blessings that are available to us in Christ. But how do we move into this careless mode of life where we can disregard the Giver of all that we have? The answer is in this same text:

*“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by **not keeping His commandments**....”*

The word translated “keeping” is the same word used for “beware.” The way that we begin to forget our Redeemer and God is by neglecting to “keep” His commandments. This is not an instruction to attempt to “obey” all that God has decreed; it is a command to watch over intently, to guard as a treasured possession, to gaze continually upon the Word of God.

Just as the birds of the air sought to eat up the sown seed of the farmer – as told by Jesus in the parable of the sower – so also the enemy of our souls seeks to distort, conceal, and distract us from God’s precious Word. By doing so, His Word is “snatched away” and prevented from bearing fruit in our lives.

“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:15)

The good soil that bears fruit is the one that keeps the Word. Let us not simply hear and forget or read over and later neglect God’s Word, for man only lives by every Word of God. If we are to remain humble as a beggar would after receiving a great gift, we must not disregard the transforming Word of God which keeps us thankful to Him for all He has given us.

As a watchman that watches intently lest the city be destroyed without warning...

As a shepherd who looks after his flocks to protect them from the dangers they would be so helpless to evade...

Let us keep and guard and treasure the Word of the Living God at all times – as if our life depends on it. Because it does.

“Blessed is the man... [whose] delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:1-2)

*“Let the WORD of Christ richly DWELL within you, with all wisdom TEACHING and admonishing one ANOTHER with psalms and HYMNS and spiritual songs, singing with THANKFULNESS in your HEARTS to God.”
(Colossians 3:16)*

The Purpose of Blood

By Beth Moller

Leviticus has always been a challenge for me to read. However, over the past three weeks I have seen the old covenant from a new perspective, and it has made me so much more appreciative of what the old covenant represented.

During a recent study of Hebrews through Bible Study Fellowship, many things jumped out at me in new, impactful ways. Specifically, three concepts stood out to me: comparing the old and new covenants, the purpose of shedding of blood, and Jesus as our perfect High Priest compared to earthly high priests. Studying these three topics gave me a new appreciation for what Jesus did for us and what that would mean in the context of the old covenant. Prior to this study, I hadn't truly seen and appreciated what Jesus did in making the old covenant obsolete and establishing the new covenant as our perfect High Priest and perfect sacrifice.

In Hebrews 10:1 (NIV), it says, *"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are com-*

ing - not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship."

There was a purpose for the old covenant. In Leviticus, God laid down a law given to the people through Moses. The old covenant required the shedding of blood over and over again. This blood was a visual representation of the cost of sin. The people's sins caused death. I love the idea of the Law being a shadow. God was showing the people truths about Jesus through every sacrifice. Each animal that gave its life for the people's sins could not actually remove their sins at all. Rather, the blood they shed showed the people that in order for them to be made right with God, there had to be death and the shedding of blood. The sacrifices are a reminder of sins but could never actually take away sins.

In many ways, these sacrifices pointed to the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ. The animals were innocent of the people's sins, yet they symbolically took them on. In addition, it was clear in the old covenant that each person was a sinner. Even the high priest was required to first sacrifice for his own sins before he could sacrifice on anyone else's behalf. Leviticus

*"For it is IMPOSSIBLE for the BLOOD of bulls and goats
to TAKE away SINS."*

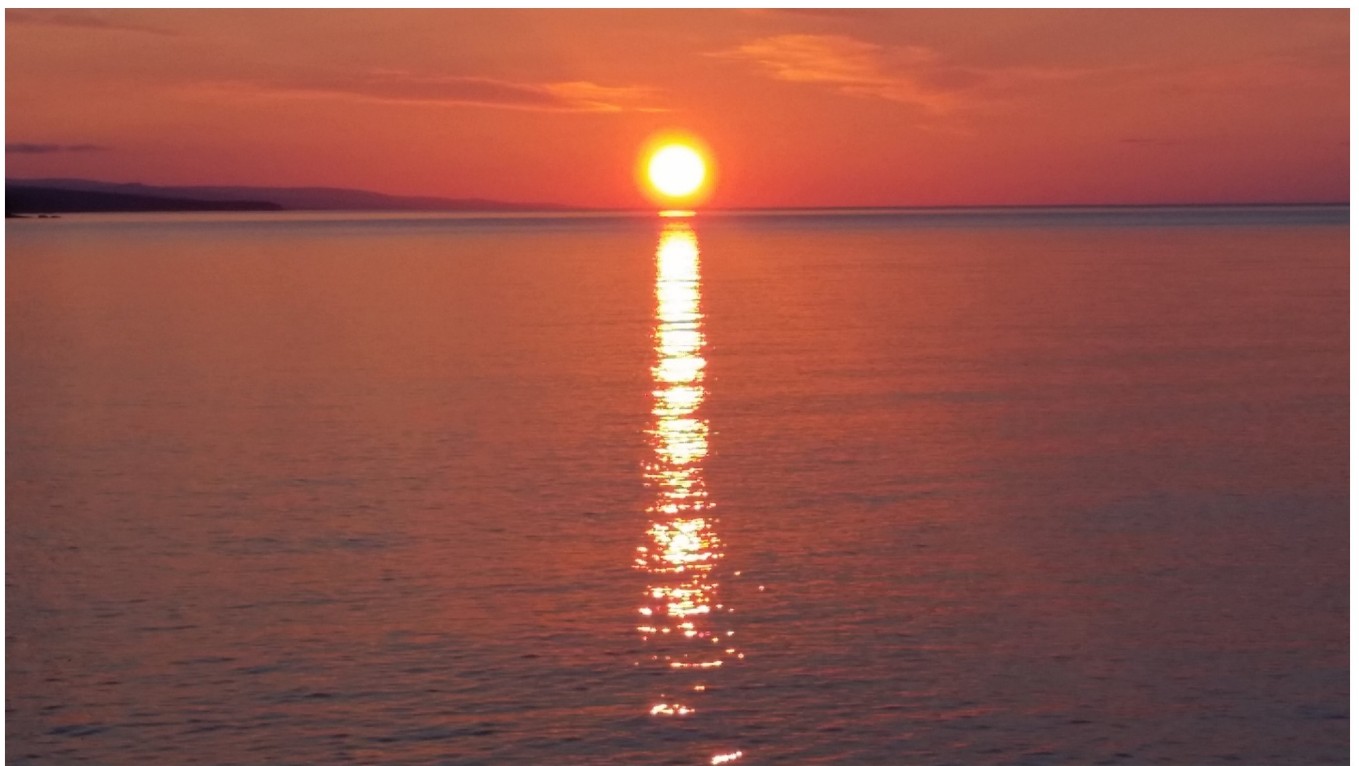
(Hebrews 10:4)

chapter 9 records the priests beginning their ministry and Aaron's first sacrifice of an animal for his own sin. Leviticus 9:7-8 says, *"Moses said to Aaron, 'Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people' So Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself."*

Once the high priest had sacrificed an animal for his own sins, he could sacrifice on other people's behalves. Yet as Hebrews makes clear, those sacrifices were never good enough. Hebrews 10:3-4 says, *"But those sacrifices were an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."* The sprinkled blood would have been a rather gory example of what had to happen for the people's sins to be dealt with. However, the blood of animals was a key illustration of the sacrifice that was coming that would deal with sin forever. The new covenant through Jesus perfectly fulfilled the need for the shedding of blood to cover our sins. When Jesus came, the old covenant shadow was replaced with glorious realities and the final, perfect sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest. There is no longer a need for continual sacrifices offered by sinful high priests. In Hebrews 9:11-12 we read, *"But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, He went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption."*

We are reminded later in the chapter of the importance of blood. The writer of Hebrews tells us, *"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"* (Hebrews 9: 22). If we go back to Leviticus, we see that God told the people through the Law that blood was important. Although the context of Leviticus 17:11 is God commanding the Israelites not to eat blood, it states that the blood makes atonement. Leviticus 17:11 reads, *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."* God's standard shows us that the payment for

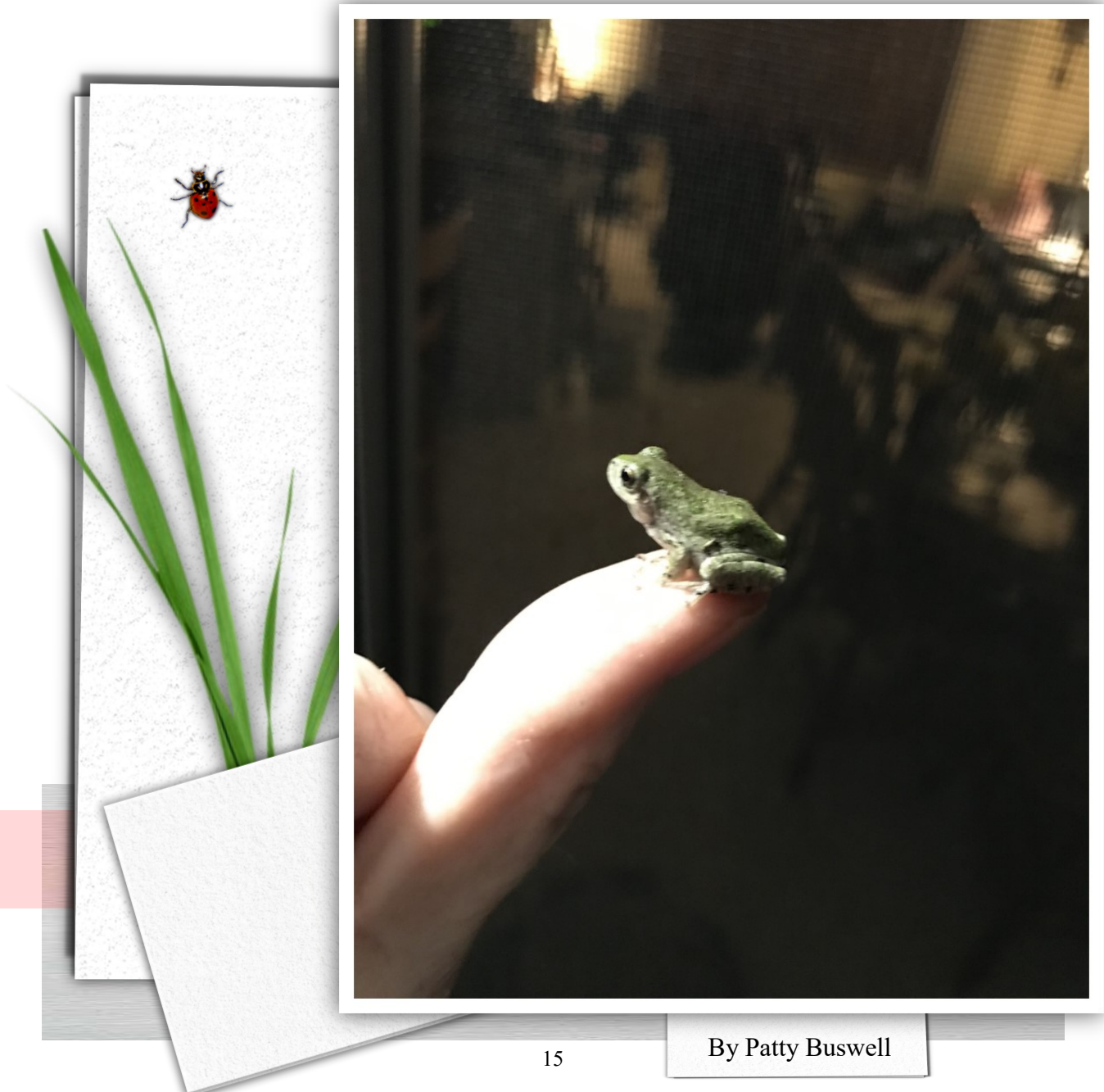


sin is death, and in order for us to be forgiven there must first be death. While the priests had to offer sacrifices over and over again under the old covenant, we can now look to our High Priest for His ultimate fulfillment of the shadow He provided the people through Moses.

Hebrews 10:11-18 sums it up like this: *"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this Priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time He waits for His enemies to be made His footstool. For by one sacrifice He has made*

perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First He says: 'This is the covenant I will make with them after that time,' says the Lord. 'I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.' Then He adds: 'Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.' And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary."

Praise God that He provided a perfect sacrifice for us, One who is our High Priest and our mediator with the Father. Seeing what Jesus has done for us is truly made richer by viewing it in terms of answers to the shadows of the old covenant.



April - June 2020 Newsletter Theme THE BOOK OF LUKE

Submission Deadline: May 24

Publish Date: June 2

Themes to think about in the Book of Luke:

Luke was a physician—how do you think that influenced his Gospel?

We learn the most about Mary in this Gospel—why is that?

What makes the Book of Luke different from the other Gospels?

Why did Luke dedicate this Gospel to a Gentile?

What are some interesting aspects of Luke's genealogy of Jesus?

Why is the Gospel of Luke sometimes called “the Gospel to the poor”?