

MSB241

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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CHRIST, THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

By John C. Ribbens

In one of the most powerful statements of the New Testament, Jesus declared, **"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill"** (Matt. 5: 17). Nevertheless, in spite of this majestic declaration, few men seem to comprehend the magnitude of this truth. Following His transcendent victory over sin and death, two men (angelic beings) appeared to a small number of His disciples at the tomb where the Lord Jesus was laid and said, **Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again** (Luke 24:5-7).

Now two of His disciples walked that same day on the road to Emmaus discussing the things that had taken place. As they were talking, Jesus came to them and began walking with them and heard their discussion. Jesus asked them, **"What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, and are sad?"** Their response was that it concerned Jesus of Nazareth who was a mighty prophet in His words and actions before God and all the people. They complained that the chief priests and rulers had caused him to be condemned to death and crucified Him. When Jesus heard these words He said to them, **O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered and to enter into His glory? and beginning with Moses and the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself** (Luke 24:25-27).

They were unaware of it, but here, in their very presence stood the great Jehovah of the Old Testament confirming the fact that it was He Himself of whom both Moses and the prophets had spoken. What most men fail to comprehend is that God, in Christ, is both the author and the declaration of the mighty works of God. Every word of the living God, therefore, finds both its expression and authority in the One claiming, **"I and the Father are One"** (John 10:30). Arriving at Emmaus He seemed at first to desire to leave them, then they appealed to Him to stay with them since it was late in the day, and He went in. Scripture goes on to say, **And it came to pass as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight** (Luke 24:30-31). As further proof of His essential nature and His equality with God.

Then they immediately returned to Jerusalem where the eleven were meeting and they confirmed He was risen. Suddenly Jesus appeared in their midst saying, **"Peace be unto you."** They were all terrified as if seeing a spirit, and He said to them, **Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have** (Luke 24:38-39). He showed them His feet and His hands, and they did not immediately believe, being overcome with joy. Then He said to them, **"Have ye any meat?"** and they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it and did eat before them. Then He said to them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Me** (Luke 24:44).

No greater demonstration could be given these men that in their midst stood the Messiah, the great Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the Lord Jesus of the New Testament. When we begin to contemplate the multitude of prophetic utterances about Him contained in the Pentateuch, in the prophets and in the Psalms, we stand in absolute awe of the greatness of God.

Earlier in His ministry Jesus had said, **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are**

the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children (sons) of God (Matt. 5:3-9).

Confirming His spoken word, Jesus said, **For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law until all be fulfilled** (Matt. 5:18). The mention here of one "jot" has reference to the smallest Hebrew letter. The tittle refers to a small ornament placed over letters in the Hebrew text. What may appear insignificant in the transmission of God's truth to man is of great importance to God in order to preserve His thoughts accurately, and convey them to men. To illustrate this, when Christ said, **"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,"** He meant exactly what He said. Every attempt on man's part to violate this truth is therefore sin and an offense against God.

Fundamental to our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ are the words of our Lord who said, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets** (Matt. 22:37-40). Think of the impact this would have on society today if men were but willing to make a total commitment to God. Men living under divine government will, by divine decree, be expected to conform in microscopic detail to these divine laws of God. Since these principles are the basis for all the law and the prophets, they are explicitly valid and cannot be trifled with. If they were voided, they would lose their intrinsic value, returning men to anarchy. The fact that both the law and the prophets carry such enormous weight is testimony to the character of the judgments of God. They are His righteous order. Peter, speaking during the early days of the Acts Period to "ye men of Israel," declared, **But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled** (Acts 3: 18). If we fail to acknowledge the sufferings of Christ as revealed in Isaiah 53:1-10, we cast disrepute on the physical sufferings Christ endured as it relates to God's love for mankind, and even our personal salvation. Either Christ suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God as 1 Peter 3: 18 says, or the Bible is simply a great hoax. If, on the other hand, we acknowledge our faith in the undeniable fact of His suffering and death on the cross for our sins, then we give honor and glory to God, which He most righteously deserves.

Luke records that when Paul and Barnabas **came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Ye men of Israel and ye that fear God give audience** (Acts 13:14-16). At this point Paul began to proclaim in the clearest language that which was contained in the law and the prophets. To conclude, **he said, Men and brethren, sons of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent** (authorized). **For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him** (the Messiah) (Acts 13:26-27). Paul, after confirming that they had fulfilled all the prophecies, then adds, **Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses** (Acts 13:38-39).

What Paul said provides the most positive evidence for the basis of salvation through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. It was founded in the irrefutable word of the law and the prophets. If the proclamation of the word of the law and the prophets is not believable, then even you and I are dead in sins. The validity of the message Paul proclaimed is based on the irrevocable word of the law and of the prophets. This leads to the undeniable fact of the inseparability of Christ (Messiah) and the law and the prophets. While standing before Felix, (a freed man of the emperor Claudius), Paul declared, **But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust"** (Acts 24:14-15). By means of this bold proclamation, Paul asserted his unwavering belief in the credibility of those things written in the law and the prophets. If men reject the validity of the Old Testament prophets, they become guilty of sinning and bringing reproach on the living and inerrant word of God.

Beyond all question, the dominant message of the Bible is the Kingdom of God. This great truth has long been hidden under the rubbish heap of men's creeds and religious dogma. In a bold affirmation of our justification,

Paul declares, **But now the righteousness of God . . . which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation though faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus** (Rom. 3:21-26). On the basis of this awesome declaration we who believe are justified, redeemed and forgiven, because of the majestic work of Christ whose work is inseparably linked to the law and the prophets. In John's third epistle, verse 4, John declares, **"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."** So powerful were His words and so awesome His works, that the statement made by the men who had seen Him feed the five thousand, and saw the twelve baskets of left over food, recorded this: **Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Christ did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world** (John 6: 14).

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