

Time

Walking in the garden, I noticed my young nut tree had lost all its leaves. Now it was reduced to two stalks. I wanted to take off the side-shoot, so the tree would grow upwards and gain height. 'Since the Winter was over, the side-shoot should break off quite easily', I thought. Gripping the stem and taking the side-shoot in my hand I gave it a quick twist downwards, expecting it to break off cleanly. The shoot flexed in my hand, feeling like a snake, I released it quickly, surprised and inspected the shoot for damage. 'Nothing! how can it be so flexible?'

A scripture came to mind, *"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"* (Luk 23:31).

I wondered if I had time to fetch the sharp secateurs before Baxter found me? He suddenly came bounding round the corner and ran up to meet me. I quickly pretended to take weeds out of the grass, distracting him from the tree. Last time he had taken a fancy to the tree and only left four inches of stem! My Rottweiler has an insatiable appetite for sticks and is always on the lookout for more. As I walked back to the kitchen, I started to think about when it was, that he had devastated the young tree. 'It must be a few years ago, as he was a lot smaller then!', I thought. 'How time flies?'

Pink Floyd's song about Time goes like this:

"You run and you run, to catch up with the sun, but it's sinking;
Racing around, to come up behind you again;
The sun is the same, in a relative way, but you're older;
Shorter of breath, and one day, closer to death."

Yep, That's a pretty good observation! Is time passing, just a change in angle of the sun? We regard the movement of the Sun as fixed and constant, but God can change that in an instant. See *2Kings 20:11* and *Isaiah 38:8* also *Joshua 10:12-13* and where can one find the Book of Jasher?!

We are reminded about 'the things of life', *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* (Gen 18:14)

Our lives are a collection of days, flashing in our eyes, the total length of which is unknown to us. One thing for sure; is that we won't get much older than one hundred and twenty? *And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."* (Gen 6:3)

Yesterdays paper, showed a man born in 1890, who is still alive at 118 years! A few still come quite close!

Why do people choose to believe in evolution when it means excluding the possibility of life after death? I choose to believe the Bible and accept that creation happened exactly the way it is written in Genesis. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* (Gen 1:1)
If you don't believe that, then bit by bit, you'll have nothing, and no-one left to believe in!

As Moses said, we have two choices before us, life or death, blessings or curses. I choose life and all the blessings God has prepared for me. I didn't always think like this. I used to think that the Bible is only to be quoted in Sunday morning services. Then I started to read it; from the beginning, for myself. What an education! I discovered something else too. Some preachers are misrepresenting and misunderstanding Bible verses. I decided to make a study of the Bible for myself and not to rely on the interpretations of others. (Jer 31:30)

The first point which irritated me was that most people regard God's law as a negative issue? Coming from a technical background we know that 'laws make sense of chaos'. It's the scaffolding of theories and leads to the development of methods to manage situations and control problems. Law identifies the correct way to do things and clears up confusion by stating the best, acceptable or safe way to do something. Imagine what road traffic would be like without road markings, road signs, traffic lights and regulations?

God's law is the same; to do something properly, sometimes takes a little more effort, but the results justify the work. When speaking it takes as much effort to bless, as it does to curse, and less effort to smile, than to frown.

Three observations on the righteousness of Abraham :

- 1) *And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. (Gen 15:6)*
- 2) *"For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." (Gen 18:19)*
- 3) *"Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws." (Gen 26:5)*

Our future is decided when one chooses Life in Christ, over death in serving self interest. If we aren't acceptable to God, we don't inherit eternal life. To become acceptable to God, we must know His Son, Jesus Christ, and have a personal relationship with Him; we must keep God's laws. To religiously go to church and doing acts of kindness alone, is insufficient. Even the righteous works; of healing people in Christ's name and chasing demons out of people, does not automatically qualify one for salvation!

Jesus said :

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' " (Mat 7:21-23)

Jesus warned :

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." (Mat 5:17-18)

Jesus also included more strict interpretations, of 'lust' as adultery and 'hate' as murder etc. 'Love' not 'religion' becomes the driving force for keeping God's Laws. Love for God and love for our fellow man.

Something I recently realised, Adam and Eve were obviously not Jewish when God implemented the Sabbath Day law. It's for all people on the earth, but how many people keep the Sabbath Day (Saturday) holy?

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Gen 2:1-3)

This is later highlighted in the fourth commandment of God found in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15.

"Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do no work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Salvation for the Gentiles.

Thus says the Lord: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil." Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord speak, saying, "The Lord has utterly separated me from His people"; Nor let the eunuch say, "Here I am, a dry tree." For thus says the Lord: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." (Isa 56:1-5, also read verses 6-8)

The promise of great blessing for honouring God's Sabbath day law.

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken." (Isa 58:13-14)

"Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am the Lord who sanctifies them." (Eze 20:12)

"I am the Lord your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgements, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God." (Eze 20:19-20)

Jesus also said :

"For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." (Mat 12:8)

And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath." (Mar 2:27-28)

So nothing really has changed regarding respect for God's Law other than the physical act of circumcision.

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jer 31:33)

The first covenant was made with the mark of circumcision in the flesh and the second covenant is made with circumcision of the heart. This is a change of heart, in serving God and not one's own, selfish interests. Jesus is the final perfect sacrifice made for covering the sins of man. The Jewish ceremonial laws, animal sacrifice and ritualistic acts of worship have been abolished, 'nailed to the cross', but the Ten Commandments are still valid. The 'Holy Communion' of bread and wine is the new feast we observe and celebrate.

Paul said :

For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. (Rom 2:12-16)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

There is power in the spoken name of Jesus. Jesus is the Word of God and it is through Him that all things are created.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Gen 1:3)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (Joh 1:1-5)

To understand and get to know God, one has to study God's Word, the Bible, Jesus Christ the Son of God. By knowing God's Word, we can speak God's Word into any situation or circumstance we find ourselves in. God honours His Word and the devil has to flee. Darkness cannot remain where there is light.

We are blessed with a wealth of scripture, the 'Word of God' for every situation. When Jesus was tempted by the devil He said "It is written" each time and the devil could not argue with Him.

We are made in the image of God : *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27)*

I said, "You are gods, And all of you are children of the Most High. But you shall die like men, And fall like one of the princes." Arise, O God, judge the earth; For You shall inherit all nations. (Psa 82:6-8)

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him." (Joh 10:34-38)

The miracles performed by the Son of God testified that Jesus is the Son of God and that the Spirit of God was within Him. When we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, and our spirit is born again, we too become sons of God, and the Spirit of God comes to dwell within us. It is the Spirit of God who rectifies our mind; sanctifies it, as we read and absorb the Word of God. We bring the light of the Word of God into our minds and chase out the worldly darkness. We too, can do the miracles that Jesus did, if we exercise our faith and believe it with all our hearts. It is in having the correct attitude of our hearts, producing the good fruits of the spirit, acting in faith and doing the good deeds which benefit others, which testify that we are sons of God. People around us will see the light of righteousness shining in our lives. I have heard some say as Christians; "We should rule as kings"? I believe; "Christ rules as Lord, and we must serve Him and our Christian neighbour".

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