



The Voice of Truth



December 20, 2009

Has God Ever Left Any People Without Law?

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Some teach the doctrine that the Gentiles were not under any law. To prove their teaching, that Gentiles were not under any law, they teach when Paul wrote, "*For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law*" (**Romans 2:12**). Or, "*For when the Gentiles that have not the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having law, are the law unto themselves*" (**Romans 2:14**). So, it is taught that the Gentiles were totally without law.

WRONG! God has never left any people without law. Even in the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, there was law. In fact, there was negative and positive law. "*And Jehovah God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" (**Genesis 2:15-17**). We all know what happens next; both sinned by being disobedient to God (**Genesis 3:6-19**). "*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned*" (**Romans 5:12**). People without law one cannot sin: "*For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law*" (**Romans 5:13**). From the time of Adam, God dealt with men under the Patriarchal law. When Paul wrote **Romans 2:12**, he obviously meant that many of the gentiles as have sinned without the Law of Moses will perish without it. It is certain that they were not without any kind of law. If that had been the case, they could not have been charged with sin, for Paul wrote, "*Where there is no law, neither is there transgression*" (**Romans**

4:15). Therefore, where there is transgression, there is law, divine law. Sin is transgression of God's law, "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law*" (**1 John 3:4**). The Bible says that the sinfulness of the people caused God to destroy the world, all but eight people by the flood (**Genesis 6**).

In the book of **Amos**, the prophet starts off with severe rebukes regarding the nations around Israel. Many transgressions had seen committed by Edom, Moab, Ammom and Tyre (**Amos 1:11-2**). God would not have wasted time rebuking them if, as some who erroneously teach, the gentiles were not answerable to God. Gentiles were not under any kind of law. Well, broken law demands pay! The nations are to be punished because of their transgressions. What about Jonah and Nineveh? "*And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee*" (**Jonah 3:1-2**). "*Yet forty days Nineveh shall be overthrown*" (**Jonah 3:4**). If Nineveh did not repent they would become as Sodom and Gomorrah. "*And the people of Nineveh believe God*" (**Jonah 3:5**). Nineveh was a pagan city, nonetheless, they believed God. Jesus declared, "*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold a greater than Jonah is here*" (**Matthew 12:41**). "*And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he would do unto them; and he did it not*" (**Jonah 3:10**). When God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, His marvelous mercy was extended to them. When their faith in God led to repentance and brought forth fruits thereof, their relationship to sin and God's righteousness

was altered. If they were not under law, how could they have sinned? *“For through the law (cometh) the knowledge of sin”* (**Romans 3:20**). Would God be just in punishing the people of Nineveh if they had no law, could not be doers of the law? The gentiles transgressed divine law. What law? The gentiles violated Patriarchal law, the law which they were amenable.

Question: Was not Balaam a gentile prophet (**Exodus 19:24**)? What about Melchizedek (**Genesis 14:8**)? This implies a law of worship and the priest assist the people in obeying that law. **Romans 1:18ff** teaches us that the people have never been without the knowledge of God, *“that they may be without excuse”* (**Romans 1:20**). The gentiles transgressed divine law. The gentiles were never under the Law of Moses, for that law was given to the Jews only (**Deuteronomy 5:1-3**). However, the gentiles sinned! It therefore follows that the gentiles transgressed some law, but what law? The gentiles violated the Patriarchal law, the law which they were amenable. The correct conclusion is that the gentiles sinned by violating the law to which they were amenable (Patriarchal law), and the Jews sinned by sinned by violating the law to which they were amenable (Law of Moses). *“For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God”* (**Romans 3:23**). ♦

“A Martyr For Christ” By Jarrod Jacobs

On my wall I have a picture of several preachers of the gospel from the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Some of these men I have heard of, and many I haven’t. However, one man stands out in that picture. This is a man named W. M. King. He stands out because above his picture there is a caption which reads, “A Martyr For Christ”. I don’t know anything else about that man, but that inscription alone speaks volumes to me!

This simple, yet deeply moving epitaph for brother King reminds me of the statement made about Antipas in **Revelation 2:13**: *“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest,*

even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.” Just as in the case of the picture on my wall, I know little about Antipas, but what God chose to reveal in Scripture speaks volumes! Antipas and bro. King are not the only ones who have died because they were faithful to God. What can we learn from these (and other) martyrs?

A Martyr Is Living Revelation 2:10.

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Being “faithful unto death” (KJV) literally means be faithful to the very taking of your life. This is what martyrs do! When faced with the possibility of losing their lives or losing favor with God, people like Antipas chose to lose their lives!

In addition to Antipas and brother King, another example of a martyr for Christ is a man named Polycarp. Polycarp was contemporary with the apostle John, and suffered death due to his faith. When threatened with death for his refusal to renounce God and worship Caesar, he responded thusly before being burned at the stake: *“For eighty-six years I’ve served Jesus, and he has never wronged me in any way. How, then, can I possibly curse my very King and Savior?”*¹

Even today, Christians need to be faithful to God to the very taking of our lives. Martyrs for the cause of Christ show us just what it means to be faithful.

A Martyr’s Example Abides.

Solomon wrote, *“I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity”* (**Ecc. 8:10**). In contrast with the evil ones that are often forgotten after their death, years after the death of various martyrs for

Christ, we are still talking about them! Their example remains. The apostle Paul taught that the good works of the faithful cannot be hid (**I Tim. 5:25**). In addition to the martyrs we have mentioned, don't forget Stephen, the very first martyr for Christ (**Acts 7**). Certainly, he left an example that not only teaches us, but it had to have also made an impression on a certain Saul of Tarsus (**Acts 7:58**)! Stephen, when he knew he was going to be killed, did not apologize, change his teaching, nor in any way compromise so as to "live another day." His good example abides and teaches us bravery in the face of man's wrath.

A Martyr Has Vision.

In addition to martyrs specifically named in the Bible, remember that **Hebrews 11:35-38** lists the things which happened to the Lord's faithful in years gone by. *"Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:)"* One's life ending in a cruel death is not what people desire. Yet, these folks died such deaths, knowing that they would have a "better resurrection"! They understood that true meaning and purpose in life is not to be found here on earth, but with God!

Hebrews 11:35-38 is but one section of Scripture where we see the vision of the faithful. Their principles would not allow them to forsake the Lord. Therefore, they accepted the consequences of being the friend of God and an enemy of the world (cf. **Jas. 4:4; Jn. 15:18-20**). **Hebrews 11:13-15** certainly applies to them, because they, like Abraham, Noah, and others, *"now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."* The man who has his eyes only upon

the "here and now" will not have the vision necessary to see the "city" that is yet to come! Let us thank God for those who were faithful to the very taking of their lives, and died in service to God.

Conclusion

Seeing the realities of what folks in the past have endured for God and for the cause of Christ, let us examine ourselves (**II Cor. 13:5**). Are we faithful to the Lord? Does **I Corinthians 15:58** describe us? If not, why not? Are we standing strong and enduring (**Matt. 10:22; Eph. 6:10**)? If not, why not? Are we better than those martyrs? Are we enduring more than they did? Are our enemies stronger than theirs? As the apostle said, we have not yet "resisted unto blood" (**Heb. 12:4**), and we pray it will not be so in this land. However, there are many this day who are enduring such trials and afflictions. Let us pray for them, and then prepare, ourselves.

May the words of **Hebrews 10:38-39** ring in our ears and settle in our hearts, so that we live it in our lives! The Holy Spirit said, *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."*

Endnotes: ¹ Bercot, David, [Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up](#), p. 2

Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

Caring About the Truth By Jonathan L. Perz

It never ceases to amaze me how little people care about the truth today! Whether it is in the form of a political lie, an e-mail that is nothing more than an urban legend, some new money making fad or craze or the telling of "little white lies" ... men have little or no esteem for the truth. Knowing that Satan is the father of all lies and that most of the world remains in sway of the wicked one, this should not come as a surprise (**John 8:44; John 5:19**). Nevertheless, the impact

of such a general indifference to truth upon the lives of men is monumental.

God's word is truth (**John 17:17**)! We can have absolute confidence in it! Yet it remains meaningless to one who is not genuinely interested in truth. Like some of the Jews in Jesus' day, it cannot help them, it cannot save them and it cannot reach them, because they do not want to hear it (**John 4:45-47**).

Until a person comes to terms with his attitude about the truth, he will never learn to appreciate the power of God (**Rom. 1:16**) and the importance of Jesus in his life (**John 14:6**). Those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness (**Rom. 1:18**) long enough will

inevitably exchange it entirely for a lie and fall prey to much of the depravity that exists in this world (**Rom. 1:25**). Many have simply turned their ears away from the truth and have embraced the fables of men (**2 Tim. 4:4**). Those who do not obey the truth are self-seeking (**Rom. 2:8**), unloving (**1 Cor. 13:7**) and often deluded (**2 Thess. 2:10-12**).

It is fortunate for mankind that God cares for us and, in His longsuffering, desires that we all are saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (**1 Tim. 2:4**). It all begins with our attitude toward the truth. Therefore, let us simply open our hearts to the truth and purify our souls by obeying it (**1 Pet. 1:22-23**).

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

Just Suppose

1. Suppose that your church membership was good only for one year at a time and that renewal depended on your faithfulness in attendance, stewardship and service. Would you retain your membership in the church?

2. Suppose that membership was limited to those who could give a valid excuse for absences. Would your absences be acceptable?

3. Suppose that some parents could look into the future and see the dreadful results of neglecting the teaching of Christ. Would they be different parents?

4. Suppose members were as enthusiastic about church events as they are about sporting events. Would there be a marked difference in the life of the church?

5. Suppose that every member attended church services as much as you did. Would we need more seating, or would the building be closed and for sale?

6. Suppose that renew our dedication to Jesus Christ. Our attendance and stewardship would increase and all would rejoice in the Lord! ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17** m. **10:9-10** ; **1 Pet. 3:21** ; **John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Our Address

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com