

# RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Talking about the Law of God to a Christian usually brings the response of “We’re under grace, not under Law.” This is one of the most ignorant statements a Christian could ever make. Of course we are under the Law. If we weren’t under the Law, we would not need Jesus, our continual sacrifice for sin. Is there a time of the day or night that we don’t need to be washed clean? Is there a moment when we don’t need his covering? If you don’t think you need Jesus 100% of the time you could be in big trouble. But didn’t Paul say precisely that, that we are not under the Law but under grace? Yes, he did. But grace is written into the Law, grace exists only in the Law because it is *only* in the Law that we find our substitute in death. Grace is not something thought of lately. It is not something invented in the middle of the game. Well, God said, the people cannot keep the Law so we are going to give them grace. No, that’s not the way it is. Grace is there from the beginning of time and, actually, from before the foundation of the world. Salvation, the way of escape, exist only in the Law God gave to Moses.

The problem is that people take what Paul said without checking the Scriptures for themselves. When Paul brought the Gospel to the Bereans they checked the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul was telling them was true. They were commended for that, for being both open-minded and careful. Eventually, many were turned away from the Gospel, but a few were probably saved. Which is, actually, all we can hope for, that a few will be saved, a remnant God says. At the very least we should be like the Bereans and ascertain, check, make sure we understand what Paul says by reading what Paul, and all the writers of the New Testament, call “The Scriptures,” that is, the Old Testament. People want to know what Paul said without knowing what Paul knew.

What Paul knew is what today we call The Old Testament. You want to know what Paul knew? Read the Law of Moses, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Do I advocate that you should follow the Law? Well, yes and no. No, in the sense that I don’t care if anybody obeys the Law or not. People are free to choose. Apparently, people are free to choose to be lost, too. But as far as being free to not follow the Law, what commandment should I violate? Should I murder? Should I steal? Should I have other gods before me? Should I dishonour my mother and my father? Should I have graven images and bow down to them? If Jesus is the payment for my sins, why can’t I murder somebody for money? One hit every couple of months and I can probably do O.K., pay my bills, groceries,

might even save a little money, I don't need that much to live. If I don't charge too much I could have repeat business. The other part of whether we should follow the Law is yes, we should follow the Law. Why? Well, not to be saved. But when you are saved the desire will be there to follow the Law. The reaction to being saved is not, alright, now I can disregard the Law all I want. No, the reaction to being saved is that you want to be more and more obedient to him. First of all, you have to know what you are being saved from, that is, you are being saved from the horrendous torment of hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Second, you should ask yourself how is it that I was chosen to be saved? What prompted God to reveal to me that out of his mouth proceed mercies for evermore? What possible reason would he have to save a miserable being such as me? The reaction to being saved should be amazement at his unmerited favour. Maybe at the time of Paul, the clergy, the religious class, was imposing this yoke on the people that they had to follow every tenet of the Law in order to be saved, and that's why he said we are under grace, not under Law. Somewhat similar to the yoke the Christian Church puts on people today, there is always some kind of work you must do either to be saved, or to prove you are saved, or to maintain your salvation. But the Law, itself, doesn't say that we have to follow every tenet of the Law in order to be saved. There was a part of the Law that, yes, you absolutely had to obey in order to be saved: You had to offer your sacrifice for sin. God commands us to be saved, and he provides the payment for our sins in the Law. If God wanted to impose the Law without a payment he would have said, here it is, you have to do this or else you go into the fire. But he didn't, he gave us a substitute. He had to, otherwise, he would have had to destroy us all.

No one knows the desperate wickedness of the heart of man. By the way, what is that fire that burns but does not consume? And the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? Is the fire a literal fire? Or is it a great remorse and the cry of helplessness, knowing there is no escape? Remorse for the great opportunity ignored and ridiculed, that Jesus is actually the payment for sin. The book of Leviticus contains some of the most beautiful pictures of our Jesus, it is the book most detailed in regard to the sacrifices to be made for sin. And among those sins are sins we don't know about, yet there are sacrifices even for those. It may seem strange to some, but for me the Law is *so* very comforting. I take refuge in it. I appeal to it, I run to it. I realize that preachers, in general, use the Law and the Old Testament to beat people over the head with. I'm not in that gig. In every Law and in every court of Law, there are two opposing teams of lawyers, one for the prosecution and one for the defense. I am a lawyer for the defense and I appeal to the Law fully.

I'm not done with this. Much more to say. In the meantime, you can be sure God is with us all the way into eternity.