

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Resurrection 2

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The reason the Jewish clergy had for wanting to kill Jesus was blasphemy. Jesus was making himself equal to God. Jesus said to one sick of the palsy (paralyzed), thy sins are forgiven thee. By saying to this man, that his sins were forgiven Jesus was assuming the authority of God. Who can forgive sins but God? That was not the only time Jesus had declared himself to be God. The Jews wanted to kill Jesus for blasphemy. But they had no authority under the Romans to kill anybody. So, they brought him to Pilate and when Pilate said what accusation bring ye against this man they responded by saying that if he (Jesus) were not a malefactor they would not have brought him to him. Pilate could not understand why the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, the charges against Jesus were not clear to Pilate. Pilate then told the Jews to judge Jesus according to their own Law. When those who wanted to kill Christ for blasphemy realized that their reasons did not make sense to Pilate, and he was not going to go along with killing Jesus, they threatened Pilate with lack of allegiance to Caesar because he (Pilate) was accepting the presence of someone whom many people were calling King. The rulers of the Roman Empire did not want any trouble from Palestine, which had been a headache to them from the beginning, and certainly, they did not want anybody to challenge their authority by being called a King. Peace was of great concern to the establishment in Rome and it was up to Pilate to keep the peace in that region. Pilate figured if killing Jesus was what these people wanted, fine, let them have it, appease them and keep them quiet. Caesar was the top dog, Pilate's boss, and certainly Pilate did not want to get in trouble with him. As history tells us, at the unyielding pressure of the Jewish clergy, the Romans under Pilate's command killed Jesus.

In Luke chapter 16 verses 20 to 31, Jesus tells the story of two men, one rich, the other poor. The poor man was a beggar named Lazarus. The rich man lived a sumptuous life, while Lazarus survived by eating the crumbs that fell off the rich man's table. They both die, and Lazarus is now in the bosom of Abraham, while the rich man is in a very hot place of torment. The rich man in his suffering pleads with Abraham that he would allow

Lazarus to come to him with his finger dipped in water to cool his tongue. Abraham responds by saying that there is a gulf fixed between them that can not be crossed. The rich man says in his anguish; send Lazarus to my father's house, Luke 28-31, "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come to this place of torment."

"Abraham said unto him, they have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them."

"And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

"And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

What is Abraham really saying? Is he saying that if you do not believe Moses you will not believe Christ? Is that what he is saying? That you have to believe Moses before you will believe Christ? There are millions of people all over the world who believe in Christ but do not necessarily believe in Moses, or the Torah, the religion of the Jews. But where does Christianity come from if not from the Torah? Christianity did not spring out of nothing, in a vacuum. The Law God gave to Moses is the basis, the *only* basis for the existence of Christianity. The Torah is the only authority that exists where we can call Jesus the Lamb of the Passover, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He is our morning and evening sacrifice, our continual sacrifice for sin. None of that is an invention of the Christians. The foundation of Christianity is in the Law God gave to Moses. There is an unbreakable, inextricable, living, integral bond between the Torah and Jesus. The link connecting the Torah with Jesus is like a circular bolt of lightning.

The story of Lazarus and the rich man illustrates the fact that if you don't believe Moses and the prophets you will not believe Jesus even though he rose from the dead. There is a synergy between the Torah and Jesus unlike anything else in this world. The lock between the Torah and Jesus is our sure handle. The more you take in that Jesus is the payment for sin, the more you will seek reassurances of that in the Torah. And there are plenty of reassurances in the Torah. You do not necessarily have to believe Moses *before* you believe Christ. But if you believe Christ you *will* believe Moses.

The vast majority of Christians don't know their roots and, for the most part, they are discouraged from looking at those roots. There is always the simplistic and

completely inane response of “we are not under Law, we are under Grace.” The Law was for the Jews, but we Christians are beyond that. For all those who have been, and are being, misinformed by most Christian teaching Grace and Law do not deny each other. Grace is built in the Law. Grace does not exist outside the Law, and grace did not begin with Christ. If anybody says that grace began with Christ he would have to say that nobody was saved before Christ. Because there is absolutely no way that anybody can be saved other than by grace. There is no other way to be saved and there never was. The grace in the Law does not come from obeying the Law. That is not the route to salvation, obeying the Law only fulfils our minimum obligation. Obeying the Law does not accrue anybody any points. You get no points for obeying the Law. The grace that exists in the Law is not the possibility that one could be spared from Hell by fulfilling the Law. The Grace that exists in the Law is our substitute in death, the substitute for us, in death. I love it.

Interestingly enough, the more you feel covered by his grace and not under the weight of the Law, the more you will want to be obedient to his Law.

At any rate, the only part of the Law that *perhaps* could be met to some degree of pretty good, would be the physical part of the Law, the carnal, the visible part of the Law. The problem is the invisible part of the Law, which resides in the area in our unconscious, the area we cannot control. It may seem obvious, but we cannot consciously control the unconscious. Your brother did something to you long ago that really hurt you and, at that point, of fuming against him you wanted revenge. You know that wanting revenge is wrong, so, when you became a Christian and were confronted with the saying of Jesus that you have to forgive your brother not just seven times but seventy times seven, you forgave your brother. But the Law says in Leviticus 19:17, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, etc...” Did you forgive your brother, but feelings of resentment still sting in your heart from time to time, like a thorn still there somewhere inside? It’s like when you go pick blackberries and get a tiny thorn in your finger. You can’t see the thorn but it hurts every time you touch something in a certain way. You know that until the thorn comes off it will not stop hurting, and it is the same thing with the thorn in your heart. It has to come off for it to stop hurting. How does the thorn come off, how is it finally

removed? Can you make it go away, can you will yourself to remove it? Well, no, because your will cannot control your unconscious. What we have inside of us is out of reach of our conscious will. The thorn comes off, yes; and forgiveness takes place, yes, but only when the Holy Spirit shifts your eyes away from past offenses. Forgiveness, and its healing, happens when the focus changes. God the Holy Spirit, little by little or sometimes all at once, changes that focus and your eyes begin to look forward to eternal life. Past offenses lose their importance, their sting. We are in this world but we are not of this world. This world is temporary, but we are looking for an eternal world. The present becomes the urgency to disseminate the Good News of grace and eternal life ahead.

The resurrection of Christ is the theme. The resurrection proves, manifests, shows the splendour of the grace of God. Was there grace before Christ? Of course there was. Grace was there from the beginning of humanity, before Christ, before the Law, before any human ever thought of needing grace. Adam and Eve had no way of providing a covering for themselves, God granted them an unmerited favour (grace) by providing skins for their cover. God killed some animals to get the skins for Adam's and Eve's cover, God provided a death for them. What was their nakedness that they needed a cover? Their nakedness was that they had no defence against their transgression. They tried to cover themselves but that was not good enough. Fig leaves are not blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood, blood is necessary and plant matter doesn't do it. The price for sin is death and a death has to occur for that sin to be covered. Is not Christ our cover?

The resurrection of Christ proves that the grace of God is real and that we can look at the future, not with anxiety, but with great expectation.

More to come.