

# RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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The Good News

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The effort should always be to save as many as possible. No obstacles should be placed in front of the sacrifice. God slayed his own son so I can escape death and go on to eternal life, and am I going to stand between a thirsty man and the well? Am I the one to prevent someone from partaking of the sacrifice? God forbid. I was told to feed the sheep, not to flog the sheep. Some of the sheep are weak, some are very weak, some are at the edge of ultimate despair, their faith wanes. Should I be the one in charge of bashing them on the head because they are not up to par? Should I grind the faces of the poor? Kill the infirm, tell him he is not proving to be a Christian because of his behaviour? I ain't gonna do it. Because I found that the ultimate authority, God, the God of the Bible puts no qualifications for partaking of the gift of salvation. In fact, God, the God of the Bible *commands* us to be saved. I only have Christ, I have to rely on Christ, there is just no other hope for me.

I know who I am; I am a thief and a murderer. I don't carry out those acts, of course, but the tendencies are there. He sees into my core, how can I deny it? Nevertheless, if my Bible is the word of God and if Jesus came back from the dead, I am going to Heaven. Wicked or not, I am going to Heaven. How can I be so sure? Because I am sure that the God of the Bible exists, just as he says he does in the Bible. And the God of the Bible says that he has provided a sacrifice for me. Not only has provided a sacrifice for me, but he has *ordered* me to partake of that sacrifice. He has clarified a reality between us in which he says 1) the price for sin is death, and 2) he has provided the payment for that sin. It's a take it or leave it sort of thing. You want to take it? Fine. You don't want to take it? Fine. But to each choice there is a different consequence. Each choice is based on what you believe. Is the Torah of the Bible the actual word of God? Is what Moses left us *the* Scriptures? The word Scripture is related to scribing, writing. Who wrote the writings, the Scriptures? It was God. God himself wrote the Law on tables of

stone, and gave them to Moses. The man Moses received those tables of stone from God. But the Scriptures are not completely clarified with the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are very condensed. There is a lot of guidance that needs to be expounded, shown, clarified to us. How would we know, otherwise? We are, covetous, treacherous, larcenous by nature. "...but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," (Lev 19: 18) for instance, has a lot of implications. You cannot defraud your neighbour, you cannot remove your neighbour's landmark, you have to return what you neighbour loses and you find, if his ox or donkey falls into a ditch you are supposed to rescue it, etc. Those are some of the commandments derived from loving the neighbour as yourself. You have to look out for your neighbour all the time. The Law reveals my nature, the Law reveals that if I can get a little bit more land by just rolling a stone, a landmark, a couple of feet, my crop will be bigger and I will make more money. Who's gonna know if push this stone over a little bit? And if I find a wallet, do I return it? Probably, it makes us feel really good when we do the right thing. But the first impulse, the very first one, before you think, is "Finders, keepers." We don't know how wicked we are, only the Law can show us. But if the Law condemns it does it for a reason, and one reason only: To save us. If it were not by the Law, we would not know our dire need for the sacrifice. At the same time, it is the Law that grants us the unmerited favour of a sacrifice. The Law kills and makes alive. And who can hinder? Defying God is useless. He has all the power. Better to surrender than to burn in hell. When an army surrenders to another, there is always bitterness on the part of the conquered, and most of the time, a feeling of anticipation of revenge on the part of the conqueror. Not so with God. There is no badness big enough that God cannot, or will not, cover. He is always ready to pardon. There is no bitterness in surrendering to God because God is not after revenge. He doesn't need anything. He does not seek to humiliate us. And he surely does not need revenge. Had he abided by the Law the human race would have been snuffed out at the very beginning. And were he to exact the Law today, I certainly would not be alive forevermore today. He should have fried me long ago. Surrendering to God is not surrendering to punishment, but surrendering into

love, and life much more abundant.