

# RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Salvation

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The more that it sinks into the mind that salvation is a real possibility, that there really is a Heaven and that one day we will live forever with God in that Heaven, the more that appears as a real possibility, the more we will search the Scriptures for assurance that this is true.

And what is Heaven? We know it is a place, a specific place, where God lives but to which we don't have access at the moment. Beyond that, I don't really know, but it seems to me that we would live in a world very similar to the one we live in now, because he says that there will be a *new* Heaven and a *new* Earth. He does not say that there will be a *different* Heaven and a *different* Earth. When he made the world at the beginning, he said it was good, so there would be no reason to change it. However it is, when one considers in that moment of pause, when this world is seen starkly, with no illusions, and the futility of this life weighs heavily on the spirit outside of eternal life, outside of God, the God of the Bible, as I say, when one considers, without being crazy, the possibility of eternal life with God, the mind falters. We have absolutely no idea of what that would be like. Can you imagine living forever with God without Death lurking about? And the more we see this as a real possibility, the more we will search the Scriptures for assurance that this is true.

Once in a while somebody writes saying that I teach we should follow the Law of Moses. I do no such thing. And what about discipling, and sanctification, and admonition against sin? First of all, I am not a teacher, or a preacher or a prophet, nor the son of any of those. I'm just a low-tech, small-potatoes Levite carrying my pin. That's what I got and that's what I'll do. From the beginning of humanity's time grace was present. God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness after their transgression. God had to kill some animal to provide these coats, blood was shed for Adam and Eve. Their nakedness had to do with them being defenseless in the presence of the Law, which dictated that they should die for their transgression, but God provided a substitute. This was completely and absolutely an unmerited favour in the part of God. God did not have to provide this substitute, this clothing for their nakedness. His provision of this covering is the first example we have of grace. Adam had no idea of the consequence of his action. Satan tripped him up, all right. Death? What is death? Yet, God was completely justified, but even worse for us *compelled*, *obliged*, *constrained*, at that point, according to the simple Law he had established, to kill

them both, Adam and Eve, on the spot. In fact, the moment that Adam transgressed the whole universe became polluted. That one tiny little sin polluted the whole universe. By all rights, God should have wiped out the whole universe in that very moment. But he provided himself a lamb, and in the fullness of time, after the Law of sacrifices had become imbedded in the psyche of the Israelites, God sent an integral part of himself, his son, to die for us. There is no way to know Jesus without knowing the Old Testament. Specifically the first five books, the Law God gave to Moses.

Whom am I talking to? I don't really know. But I have a hunch that perhaps there are some in the audience who, when they hear me talk about absolute grace and salvation they just go, yea, yea, yea, I know all about that, that's cheap grace, you should be preaching against sin, purification, sanctification, working out your salvation, presenting your body a living sacrifice, faith without works is dead, discipling, etc. It's interesting that many of those who despise the Law God gave to Moses still want to put people under some kind of law, anyway, because otherwise it would be cheap grace. I know all the words. The words don't mean a thing. Besides, under whose tutelage should I put myself to be disciplined? If you don't know that you are rotten to the core, that you were no good before, you are no good now, and you will never be any good, if you don't know that, you are not mature enough. I expect you to know you are a rotten sinner, and that you need Christ's covering desperately.

For any changes to be real they have to be spontaneous. Yes, there is purification, but it happens in a very subtle way. I never say that one should follow the Law God gave to Moses in order to be saved. But the more you consider what salvation really is, the more you will want to know about it. You will search your Bible to make sure all the stuff about being saved from hell by the death of the Lamb our Christ Jesus is true. As you read, you will see that you are already following part of the Law because you have to appeal to the Law to claim the Blood of the Lamb as payment for your sins. There is no grace anywhere outside of the Law God gave to Moses. There is no place, except in the Law, where there is a sure payment for sin. Now, the more you read, the more you will follow the Law because you will begin to discern that the Law is for our benefit, not his. Purification, sanctification, discipling, all happen as you read your Bible. More and more you will know the will of God. More and more you will get the internal restraint that will prevent you from munching gratis at the supermarket. Less and less you will gossip, when you read that God says "Thou shall not curse the deaf." Believe me, there is no shame in wanting to be obedient. "Cheap grace" is a pejorative used by people who at some level despise the gift of God. How offensive that must be to him! To look at this incomprehensible gift and call it "cheap . . ." But anybody can make all the mental gyrations they want. Quote so-

and-so. I tell you what, you are not worth the grease that takes to make a candle to burn in the fire. We are a bunch of creeps looking for rewards when we deserve punishment. I'm not sure that the human mind is equipped to grasp, or understand, or make sense of the possible reason why God loves us. Personally, I don't know why he loves us. When Adam transgressed, God immediately interposed himself with the covering for their nakedness. He didn't have to do that. There is not enough repeating that God did not have to provide a means to save us. He was *obliged* to destroy us. Instead, he stepped in with Jesus, our saviour.