



Session 5 - The Law Continued

This was happening in Paul's time in Acts.

Acts 15:1-2,4-5 (NASB) 1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue...4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

These Pharisees had believed and yet they were teaching that in order to be saved that people did indeed need to be circumcised and be willing to obey the Law.

Peter is going to respond to this in this way:

Acts 15:7-11 (NASB) 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

Peter says 2 very important things here:

- **The way people are saved:** *Verse 8* "God knows the heart and He gave them the Holy Spirit because the people "Heard & Believed". "Just as He also did to us", in other words whether you may think that you were saved because of circumcision and your willingness to obey the Law but you weren't.
- **If you are a believer but then incorrectly believe and teach that you came a different way (add obedience to the Law & circumcision, baptism, classes, works etc) to salvation then you will put a heavy yoke upon yourself and those you are teaching.** *Verse 10*

Peter then goes back and reiterates that salvation comes from the Lord Jesus' grace to us.

For us as believers there is something extremely important that we should look at from these verses.

What is the yoke that Peter is referring to? - The Yoke that Peter is referring to is the yoke of legalism. The belief that it is about my works or my obedience to the Law. This idea will always choke out something very, very important. It chokes out the heart and relationship which is what the Law was REALLY about.

This yoke of legalism will cause us as believers to miss something that He desires for us in our lives. Something that makes living life as a believer far more fulfilling and richer than anything else.

That is an understanding of grace.

Galatians 5:3-4 (NASB) 3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

Romans 6:14 (NASB) 14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

We are able to walk on the plane of grace. If one tries to engage the law in a trans-actionary sort of way then they are viewing and engaging the law in a lower (fallen from grace) way then it was intended.

Look again at what Peter had to say in our verses in Acts 15.

Acts 15:10 (NASB) 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear."

Our fathers - Who is Peter referring to? To the group traveling in the Wilderness!! This group leaned on the Law. They believed they were supposed to obey it. They believed it was for them to use instead of being FIRST AND FOREMOST for the coming Messiah to fulfill as a man.

What does viewing and interacting with the Law in this way do to us?

It causes us to **trust ourselves** for our perfection instead of Him. This in turn causes us to inadvertently make ourselves bigger and inevitably makes Him smaller and when He becomes smaller we no longer fear Him or revere Him.

THIS MISINTERPRETATION OF LAW WILL NEVER LEAD ANYONE INTO CANAAN AND IS EXACTLY WHY THIS GROUP DID NOT MAKE IT IN TO CANAAN.

Jesus said the following:

Matthew 11:28-30 (NASB) 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

When Jesus was talking about His yoke being easy and His burden being light what was He actually saying?

Yoke - zygos (zü-go's)

1. a yoke that is put on draught cattle
2. metaph., used of any burden or bondage
 - a. as that of slavery
 - b. of troublesome laws imposed on one, esp. of the Mosaic law, hence

the name is so transferred to the commands of Christ as to contrast them with the commands of the Pharisees which were a veritable 'yoke'; yet even Christ's commands must be submitted to, though easier to be kept

Easy - comfortable or pleasant

Burdens - phortion (for-tē'-on) -

1. a burden, load
 - a. of the freight or lading of a ship
2. metaph.
 - a. of burdensome rites
 - b. of the obligations Christ lays upon his followers, and styles a "burden" by way of the contrast to the precepts of the Pharisees, the observance of which was most oppressive
 - c. faults of the conscience which oppress the soul

Deuteronomy 12:9 (NLT) 9 because you have not yet arrived at the place of rest, the land the LORD your God is giving you as your special possession. 10 But you will soon cross the Jordan River and live in the land the LORD your God is giving you. When he gives you rest from all your enemies and you're living safely in the land,

Hebrews 3:8-11 (NASB) 8 DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, 9 WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED Me BY TESTING Me, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. 10 "THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS'; 11 AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.'"

BIG QUESTION - If the Law was put in place not for us for salvation but to point us to Him, what are the odds that the Law is still being used to point us to something about Himself?

Trying to use the Law to perfect oneself through obedience was only going to be able to be done by One individual. Jesus came to fulfill the requirements of the Law and by so doing He set you and I free. We are free!!

Galatians 5:1 (NASB) 1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

John 8:36 (NASB) 36 "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

His desire is for you and I to cross over the Jordan and into the Abundant, Spirit Filled Life:
John 10:10 (NASB) 10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

The Law is not there for me to fulfill it. The Law is there to point me to the fact that He wants my heart fully surrendered to Him in everything at all times before He wants my works.