

Christ Fulfilled It: I Faith It

Luke 2:21-24

I grow in my faith the more I trust Jesus is who He says He is and Jesus will do what He says He will do. There is a phrase in v. 23 that perfectly describes the life of Jesus: *'As it is written in the Law of the Lord.'* Our Lord's birth in Bethlehem, His life and ministry in Galilee, His death and resurrection in Jerusalem, and everything else about Jesus was done in accordance with *'the Law of the Lord.'* What is this "Law"? **The Pentateuch**, the *five books of Law* (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), **is the Law**. The Law reveals the **creation of the world**, the **calling of Israel** into covenant with God, and the **Christ!** When we read 'the Law' (i.e. the Pentateuch) as a grateful follower of Jesus Christ we must be careful:

I. Don't forget the Law was designed to bring people to Christ.

Remember when Jesus walked with those two men on 'the road to Emmaus' after His resurrection? *"Beginning with Moses (i.e. Law), Jesus explained to them the things concerning Himself"* (Lk. 24:27). Paul wrote the Law was our **tutor** leading us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The word tutor (Gr. *pedagogue*) is not a synonym for 'teacher.' The Law is like an *old slave* who 'guards' a student until maturity (faith). Christians can gravitate to the bondage of Law and miss the truth and freedom in Christ (Mark 9:7).

II. See the Law as a mirror that reveals our imperfections and pride and God's faithfulness.

"If it had not been for the Law, I would have not known my sin" (Rom. 7:7), and I add, *"My Savior!"*

- (a). The Law demands full obedience to God by people in covenant with Him (Exodus 19:5).
- (b). *God's blessings were dependent* on full and complete obedience (*"if you... then I"*; Deut. 28).
- (c). God's people (Israel) promised their complete obedience: *"All this we will do"* (Exodus 19:8). Unfortunately, the history of Israel (and the world) is complete disobedience to the Law of the Lord. The Law of the Lord demanded 'death' for the disobedient. What makes a particular sin so awful is the character of the one against whom the sin is committed (i.e. child abuse, murder, rape, etc...)

III. Realize that Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law and then 'caused it to disappear' (Hebrews 8:13).

Paul says that Christ is "the end of the law" (Romans 10:4, NIV) and He **"canceled the written code"** and "took it away, nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:14), causing 'the Law of Moses' to disappear. *"The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith"* (Gal. 3:24).

Objection: *"For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law"* (Matt. 5:18a). Sounds permanent?

No. Jesus said, nothing from the Law disappears **"until everything is accomplished"** (Matt. 5:18b).

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:25). In the Bible 'heaven and earth' refers to God's covenant with Israel. Let me show you two such texts:

- (1). "I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, **to establish the heavens, to found the earth**, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'" (Isa. 51:16).
- (2). "Listen, you heavens, and I will speak. Here, you earth, the words of my mouth" (Deut. 32:1).

In this verse, Moses is speaking to **the people of Israel**, not the literal heavens and the earth.

"Heaven and earth will pass away" (the Law of Moses), but *"My words will never pass away."*

IV. Because Christ fulfilled it and we faith it, we must always refuse to replicate it.

It is an unfortunate occurrence when evangelical church leaders take the Old Covenant (which has been abolished), slap Christian terms it, and then try to bind people to full obedience to church laws, promising God's blessings through our obedience, and lose sight of all the blessings of faith in Christ!

Christ Fulfilled It; I Faith It (Application)

(1). Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Law in my stead, and as a result, I am considered by God to be perfectly righteous *"not because I have a righteousness that comes from my obedience to any law, but because I have a righteousness that comes from God and is found by faith in His Son"* (Philippians 3:9). The truth is God sees no sin in me.

(2). Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Law in my stead, and as a result, all the blessings of God are mine, not because of my obedience to any law, but because *"He shall supply all my needs according to His riches,"* not mine (Philippians 4:19). The idea that God blesses me 'when' I give to the church, or 'when I bless Him,' or 'when I (fill in the blank)' is no more the good news of the gospel than Islam, Buddhism, or any other 'ism' built on man's alleged attempts to appease God. The truth is God needs no gift from me.

(3). Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Law in my stead, and as a result, everything in my life that I need will be freely given to me by God. *"For if God did not spare giving us His Son, how shall He not freely and graciously give us all things we need?"* (Romans 8:32). Sometimes God will allow me to hit rock bottom in order for me to see that He is the Rock. Unlike the Old Covenant where there were conditions on God hearing my prayers (II Chronicles 7:14), petitions for what I need now are always heard by God because the Holy Spirit is always interceding for me during my times of weakness (Romans 8:26). God never ceases loving me and works all things for my good (Romans 8:28). The truth is God always working good for me through all things.

(4). Jesus Christ has fulfilled the Law in my stead, and as I begin to grow deeper in my trust and confidence that Jesus is who He says He is and He does what He says He will do, then I can't help but go out and love people in the same manner He has loved me! This is the Royal Law of Jesus. The words of Jesus, which endure forever, clarify the Royal Law. This is my New Covenant law - *"To love other people in the same manner He's loved me"* (John 13:35). The truth is God sends His love through me.

The way I live as a New Covenant believer in this world:

- (a). I accept people in sin as if they had no sin, for Jesus sees no sin in me.
- (b). I freely give what others need, expecting nothing in return, for all I need I have in Jesus and I receive it via simple faith in Him, not by my performance or obedience to Him.
- (c). I will love others and do good, for my God and Savior Jesus Christ is all the time loving me and working all things for my good.

The way I would live if I failed to see Jesus bringing an end to the Old Covenant way of life:

- (a). I would always point out the sin and failure of others in conforming to God's laws (however those laws may be defined), because God always judges my failures of obedience.
- (b). I would do for others what I could, but I would expect others to do something good in return, for God's blessings to me are in proportion to my obedience to Him.
- (c). Though I would say I loved people unconditionally, I would really only love people based upon their abilities to keep the expectations I have for them, for though God truly loves me, He is only pleased with me when I perform as He expects.

Old Covenant living wears people out. It is lifeless and requires a great deal of guilt and shame for people to continue in it. Jesus came to destroy the Old Covenant way of living and give to *you real life!*