

THE LAW IN THE HEART

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 8:1-13; 9:1-5.

LESSON 439 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 8:1-13

1 Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land

Bible References:

Notes:

The Apostle Paul gives a little summary of what he has said before concerning the Priesthood of Jesus. All the priests on earth were ordained to offer sacrifices, so, if Jesus was to be a Priest, He too must offer a sacrifice. The sacrifice He offered was Himself. He was the Lamb of God, the supreme sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. All the sacrifices that had been offered through the centuries by Levitical priests had been illustrations, or shadows, of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus was a much better Priest, and His sacrifice was just as much better -- so much better that one cannot compare them.

Particular Instructions

The earthly priests had served in the Tabernacle and Temple, which had been built according to instructions God gave Moses when Moses was in the mount for 40 days and nights. They were very particular. God gave minute details about how the curtains were to be made and embroidered; how they were to be fastened -- some with gold clasps, others with silver clasps. God gave the size that the boards should be, of what kind of wood, and that they were to be overlaid with gold. (You can read all God's instructions in the Book of Exodus.) The Tabernacle in the wilderness was an impressive structure, and very expensive because of all the gold, silver and precious stones that were used in it. But much greater than that, is the heavenly Tabernacle where Jesus is officiating as our High Priest. Paul tells us that after He died and rose again, He sat down at the "right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

Two Covenants

In the lesson we are studying, the "first covenant" refers to the Law, which God gave to Israel through Moses. The second covenant, or "new covenant," was a fulfilment of that which God made with Abraham: the promise of Jesus. Under the New Covenant, God's law is written on our heart. When we are born again, our heart is changed so that we want to do what is right. At sanctification, when the inbred sin (that with which we were born) is removed, we truly have the law of God in our heart and we have power to overcome sin at all times. The law of God on our heart lets us know what is right and what is wrong (if we will listen when the Spirit of God warns us against wrong).

Pleasing God

There was nothing wrong with the Law that God gave to Moses. It fulfilled its purpose: to show man the sinfulness of sin, and to show him that in his own strength he could not obey God's rules. Godly men had lived before the Law was given: men who had the law of God in their heart and obeyed Him. Abraham was called the friend of God. So he surely was pleasing God. God spoke of Job as "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1:8). Enoch walked with God and went to Heaven without dying. He certainly pleased God. All these

of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.
10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

13 In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 9:1-5

1 Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

men were righteous through faith. "The just shall live by faith" (Hebrews 10:38). They had God's law in their heart and did not need the Mosaic Law to show them how to behave.

But as time went by, peoples hearts became so hard, and so few wanted the will of God first in their lives, that God had to give them a Law they could see. Along with the Ten Commandments were the rules of offering sacrifices, and of personal cleanliness in washing and in what they ate. God wanted His people, the Israelites, to stand out as a special people, separate and different from the rest of the population of the world.

When God had finished giving Moses all the Law and rules of conduct, the people answered: "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3). That was a covenant, or an agreement. God stated His side, and the people agreed to it. This happened when they became a nation, soon after they came out of Egypt. But they did not stay with their promise. Within forty days, while Moses was still in the mountain, they broke those solemn promises they had made.

Led by the Hand

God had been very good to them. He said He had taken them by the hand, as a mother would a small child, and led them out of wicked Egypt. Another time God said: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself, (Exodus 19:4). But because the people disobeyed Him, He let heathen nations fight against them and kill many of them. Others were killed by plagues when they sinned -- sometimes many thousands died at one time. All the disobedient ones who were 20 years old or older when they left Egypt died in the wilderness and were not allowed to enter into Canaan.

Sin will always bring punishment. God may have much patience, and people may commit terrible sins and go unpunished for a long time; but eventually judgment will catch up with them if they do not repent. God's Word states: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). If the sinner does not repent before he dies it will mean eternal punishment -- not just the death of the body.

God's Law on the Heart

When Jesus died and rose again, and sent the Comforter on the Day of Pentecost the New Covenant went into full effect -- the covenant where God's law is written on the heart. Today we enjoy the blessings of having the law written on our heart when we are truly born again, and sanctified. After the Jews have suffered in the Great Tribulation some of them will accept Jesus as their Messiah, and will be born again, too. Then during the Millennium, a thousand years of peace on this earth, Israel will again be a righteous nation and rule the world with Jesus as King. The overcoming saints of God will also have a part in this rule. Then Israel will have the law of God "written on the heart." God said: "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10). As long as the Jews refuse Jesus, God does not own them as His people.

All who live during the Millennium will know God, "from the least to the greatest." Think how wonderful it will be to live in a world where Jesus is King, where everyone knows the Lord and enjoys His blessings. The wild animals will no more be fierce: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6). "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea," (Isaiah 11:9). What a wonderful change that will be

from all the trouble and bloodshed that we have today!

The New Covenant

When Jesus fulfilled the Law and gave us the "new covenant," written on our heart, the one they already had became "old." Maybe you have had a good dress or suit that you wore only on special occasions, and kept it for "best." But when you got a new one, a better one, suddenly the other one was "old" to you. So it was with God's law. It was all right for the time being, and fulfilled its purpose; but when Jesus gave a new and better law, the other became "old." Jesus said: "Ye have heard that It was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment [that was under the Law]: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21, 22). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave many examples of how His law was better than the Law of Moses. When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James and John, on the mountain, Peter wanted to honour Moses and Elijah; but God spoke aloud of Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). It is our duty today to listen to the words of Jesus, and to obey them.

QUESTION

1. Who is our High Priest?
2. Name some ways in which God's instructions for the Tabernacle were particular.
3. What made the "first covenant" old?
4. Name some men who pleased God.
5. Why was the Law of Moses given?
6. What did the Israelites say after God had given them the Law?
7. What judgment is pronounced against the sinner? (Ezekiel 18:4).
8. When will the Jews accept Jesus as their Messiah?
9. How long is the Millennium to be?
10. What will conditions be in the world during the Millennium?