

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.13.4

This issue of Parables Bookshelf continues the book *Laying Down the Law*.

A Law For Stony Hearts

In the preceding chapter we looked at the unique environment Yahweh provided for the Law of Moses, an environment that no longer exists. In this post I want to look at a parallel theme. The Law of Moses was written for a specific type of man. Those who have been born again of the Spirit of Christ are no longer this type of

man.

In the New Testament we find that there are two types of men who exist today. These are the natural man born of the first Adam, and the spiritual man born of the Last Adam.

I Cor. 15:44-48

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man is from

the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

When the Law of Moses was delivered, there existed only one type of man on the earth. All men were earthy. Among the most common things that we find when we dig into the earth are stones. This is also what we find when we look inside the natural man. In the soil of his flesh there resides a stony heart.

Food for Thought

"A state of mind that sees God in everything is evidence of growth in grace and a thankful heart."

Charles Finney

"Grace is but Glory begun, and Glory is but Grace perfected."

Jonathan Edwards

Scripture Memory

Romans 6:12

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts...

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- Series 1.13.4
- *Laying Down the Law*
- Chapters 11-14

Laying Down the Law

Ezekiel 36:26

I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh...

When we study the Scriptures as a faithful workman, rightly dividing the Word of God, we discover that the Law of Moses was written for men with stony hearts.

I Timothy 1:8-10

We know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine...

Paul declares elsewhere that, although we all began our lives as slaves to sin, this is no longer our identity. It is altogether inappropriate to describe the new creature in Christ as lawless, insubordinate, ungodly, a sinner, unholy and profane. Such a description describes the life of all men before salvation in Christ, but not afterwards.

We all began our lives as slaves to sin...

I Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Yahshua and by the Spirit of our God.**

Before the creation was framed, or had fallen into corruption, Yahweh had a plan for the redemption of

that creation. He determined that a span of 4,000 years would pass before He sent His Son to deliver men from their bondage to sin.

Until the Son of God should be sent forth as the Savior of the world, mankind would lack His Spirit and nature. Inwardly mankind would remain spiritually dead. They would be constantly going astray. Even men who were passionate for God, such as King David, would find their hearts leading them into great transgression. Until the day described as “the fullness of the time” arrived, Yahweh determined that these men of stony hearts should be placed under a guardian and instructor. This instructor was the Law.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 3:23-24

Before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ...

The Law that God delivered through His servant Moses to the children of Israel was perfectly suited for those to whom it was made. This is why David could declare the Law to be perfect.

Psalms 19:7

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul...

The Scriptures testify elsewhere that the Law of Moses was far from perfect.

Hebrews 7:18-19

For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and un-

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profitableness, for the law made nothing perfect...

The Mosaic Law was perfectly suited for men of stony hearts, but it is altogether insufficient for spiritual men. It will lead no man to perfection. Because perfection was not the goal of the Mosaic Law, it could still be described as perfect within the parameters of the role for which it was created. The Law revealed to man his sinfulness, his spiritual deadness, and his need for a Savior. The Law led men with stony hearts to Christ that they might receive a new spirit and a new heart.

Ezekiel 11:19

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh...

It is Christ who makes men perfect.

Colossians 1:28

Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Yahshua.

Christians who are returning to the Law as their guardian and instructor for living have failed to discern that the Law written for stony hearts is inadequate to lead them to perfection. A new Law is needed that will take men past childhood and on to spiritual maturity. It should come readily to mind that Christ has given His disciples a new Guide and Instructor to replace the old one. This Guide is the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-13

It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..., when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...

Were these not the same functions the Law performed for men with stony hearts? The Hebrew word for Law is Torah. Torah means "Instruction." Before men had the Spirit to dwell within them, they had to receive instruction from the Father from a source external to them. This was the Law written on tablets of stone.

What we have observed from a multitude of Scriptures, is that this external Law did not contain the fulness and substance of the mind of God. It only contained a shadow of His thoughts. There is One Who knows the complete mind of Yahweh. This is the Spirit.

I Corinthians 2:10-12

For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God...

Some Christians, in reading the words of the Old Testament prophets, conclude that, under the new covenant, Yahweh will take an exact copy of the Law delivered to Moses and write it on the hearts of men. This is great error. When Yahweh testifies that He will write His law on the hearts of men, He is speaking of that much fuller, richer, and substantial revelation of His being that can only be perceived through the Spirit.

The Mosaic Law was perfectly suited for men of stony hearts...

Jeremiah 31:33-34

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Yahweh: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to

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the greatest of them, says Yahweh.

God is speaking here of placing His Spirit within man to serve as a Guide and Instructor. The Law communicated only a shadow of the mind of God, but the Spirit will reveal the substance. The apostle John refers to the passage above in one of his epistles.

I John 2:27

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

The Spirit of Christ is the anointing. It is He that teaches us. The Spirit of Christ has become our Torah, Yahweh's Instruction, written on our hearts.

Is the Old Testament still profitable for instruction? Of course it is! However, if we see only its shadows, and are content with them, the Old Testament will actually hinder the saint from advancing toward maturity in Christ.

This is a topic I have often raised with the people of God. We must move past the shadows of the Law to

*Is the Old Testament
still profitable for
instruction?*

the substance found in Christ. One example I often give is found in the shadow of Sabbath rest found in the Old Testament. Many saints today declare themselves to be "Sabbath Keepers." Yet

they are doing nothing more than keeping the shadow. They have fallen short of entering into the substance of Sabbath rest. Yahweh will not be satisfied until His sons and daughters enter into the substance of Sabbath rest.

Hebrews 4:9-10

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Christians can make a good showing in the flesh by not working one day a week, but they have not experienced Sabbath rest until they have ceased from their own works on a daily basis. The substance of Sabbath rest was observed in Christ. He testified repeatedly, "I never do anything of My own initiative. I only do the will of the Father."

People of God, please hear me! It is this SUBSTANCE of God's will that He has now written on the hearts of men who have received the Spirit. God has not written the shadow of the Mosaic Law on man's hearts. Why do men fail to perceive this? Because they are looking outwardly to the Law, rather than inwardly to the Spirit.

Consider also that there were things written in the Law of Moses that made concessions for man's stony hearted condition. The Spirit, revealing the will of the Father in the hearts of the saints, makes no such concessions. The Spirit testifies as did Christ, "Therefore you are to be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." What the Law of Moses permitted stony hearts to do, the Spirit will most definitely not lead the saint in Christ to do. Let me give you an example.

Matthew 19:3-9

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and

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marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

These words of Christ reveal that the Law of Moses made allowances for men with stony hearts. Christ said that Moses permitted a man to divorce his wife "because of the hardness of your hearts." Christ revealed that this ordinance contained in the Law does not constitute the perfect will of God. To arrive at the perfect will of Yahweh we have to go beyond the commandments of the Law.

Remember what the Scriptures declare. The Law made nothing perfect. God sent forth His Son so that men could be perfect. In the Sermon on the Mount, Yahshua repeatedly showed that the Law for stony hearts is insufficient to make men perfect. Christ, in delivering what has been called the Sermon on the Mount, said:

Matthew 5:48

"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Just prior to this, He gave a list of commandments found in the Law of Moses, revealing how each one fell short of making men perfect. He then gave new instructions (Torah) that went beyond the shadow.

Matthew 5:21-22

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."

Matthew 5:27-29

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Matthew 5:31-32

"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Matthew 5:33-34

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all..."

Matthew 5:38-42

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away."

Matthew 5:43-45

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven..."

In some instances, Christ gave instructions that were diametrically opposed to the commandments found in the Law of Moses. The goal of Christ's instruction is perfect men who bear the image of His Father. This was not the goal of the Law. I ask you then, "Is God going to write the Law of Moses on men's hearts to make them perfect?" Absolutely not. There must be

The goal of Christ's instruction is perfect men...

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a change of Law.

Hebrews 7:12

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

In the next chapter we will look further at the distinctions between the old law, and the new.

The Law of Liberty

Have you ever considered why the Law delivered to Moses was written on tablets of stone? The stone tablets symbolized man's heart. Yahweh provided a parable to show His people what would happen when His law is written on stony hearts. The immediate, and irresistible, result is that the Law is broken.

Before the Law was written, Yahweh **spoke** His commandments to the children of Israel. In their naivete they believed they could keep the commandments of Yahweh. They said, "All the words which Yahweh has said, we will do" (Exodus 24:3).

Yahweh chose to reveal the truth of the matter through the form of a parable. He recorded His Law on tablets of stone and delivered them to the hands of Moses.

Deuteronomy 9:10

"Yahweh gave me the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God; and on them were all the words which Yahweh had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly."

The word rendered in English as "written" is the Hebrew *kathab*. It literally means "to grave or inscribe." I believe the use of this word reveals that the Law of God was literally engraved into the stone tablets by the finger of God. Yahweh's commands were

not simply written on the surface as with ink. This parallels Yahweh's effort to put His Law deep inside the stone heart of man. He knew it wouldn't work. He wanted man to understand that it would not work.

Moses had just received the Law when Yahweh instructed him to hurry and return down the mountain. The people who had said they would do all the words of God were grossly violating His commandments. Moses descended to find Aaron serving the people before the golden calf. The people were unrestrained, acting immorally, and bringing reproach to God. When Moses saw this he cast the tablets of the Law to the ground, breaking them into pieces.

Yahweh was revealing that it was impossible to set His Law in stony hearts.

This was no rash action on Moses' part. He had just spent forty days in the presence of the holy God. The glory of Yahweh was upon him. His actions were inspired by God. Moses completed the parable. Yahweh was revealing that it was impossible to set His Law in stony hearts. Attempting to do so would always result in the Law being broken.

Immediately following the tablets of the Law being broken, Moses commanded the Levites to slay their brothers, neighbors and friends. The Levites became the ministers of the Law following this event. In truth, they were already acting as its ministers when they went about slaying men without partiality. Those who minister the Law of Moses must of necessity be ministers of condemnation and death, for this is the ministry of the Law. The Law of Moses is rightfully called *the Law of sin and death*.

Romans 8:2

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Yahshua has made me free from the law of sin and death.

I wish to spend a moment looking at this statement of the apostle Paul. In these words we have named the two laws. Let us compare and contrast them.

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- Old Covenant: Law of sin and death
- New Covenant: Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

The counterpart of *death* in the old covenant is *life* in the new covenant. Following the parallels here, we see that *sin* in the old covenant is replaced by the *Spirit* of Christ in the new.

The old covenant was given to men who were **ruled** by sin. We read this previously in a quotation from Paul's letter to Timothy. The Law of Moses was written for the ungodly, profane and rebellious. It was written for men who were slaves of sin.

The new covenant has been given to men who are **ruled** by the Spirit.

Romans 8:1-9

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Yahshua, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Yahshua has made me free from the law of sin and death... For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.

On the one hand we have an old covenant given to men who are dead spiritually and ruled by sin. On the other hand we have a new covenant given to men who are alive in Christ and ruled by the Spirit. We should have every anticipation that the substance of these two covenants will be very different.

What do men do who are slaves to sin? They sin.

They cannot keep from doing so. Men who are strangers to the life of Christ might desire to please God, but they find the ability is not present in them.

Romans 7:15, 24

For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do... O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Men who are slaves to sin need something to restrain them. Yahweh does not desire men to sin. Therefore, to men in the tyrannical bondage of sin, Yahweh made a Law that was intended to restrain. It was filled with prohibitions. As we read previously, there are 365 negative commandments in the Law of Moses.

Thou shalt not murder.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not lie.

Thou shalt not covet.

Etc., etc.,

Men who are slaves to sin need something to restrain them.

The list is long, for there is great wickedness bound up in the hearts of fallen men.

I am certain that you already know these things about man's condition **before** he became a partaker of the divine nature. I share it to help you see a great truth that many Christians have not comprehended. Let me present this revelation in the following manner. We have already seen that the two covenants are presented as having characteristics opposite of one another. (Death versus life; ruled by sin versus ruled by the Spirit). Consider, then, the following:

If men ruled by the sinful flesh sin, then what do men ruled by the Holy Spirit do?

There is only one thing the Holy Spirit desires to do. It desires to live in holiness and righteousness.

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Of those born of the first Adam it is written:

Romans 3:10

"There is none righteous, no, not one..."

Of those born of the Last Adam (Christ) it is written:

I John 5:18

We know that no one who is born of God sins...

I John 2:29

If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

I John 3:9

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

I know the arguments which will arise in the minds of the readers. Many saints have wrestled with these statements of the apostle John. Observing transgression in their lives, they question whether they have truly been born of God. Others deny the things John has stated are

By faith we must put off the old man, and put on the new.

true. They say these things are for a future day, but are not the present experience of those who are Christians.

People of God, John is stating accurately the present truth of every person who has been born of God, born of the seed of Christ. This is to be our present experience, but it must be entered into by faith. By faith we must put off the old man, and put on the new.

Ephesians 4:20-24

But you have not so learned Christ... that you put off,

concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

That work accomplished by Christ on our behalf must be entered into by faith. We must reckon our deliverance from sin to be complete, and walk in the knowledge of our union with Christ.

Romans 6:11

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Yahshua our Lord.

The covenant delivered through Moses had to be fulfilled by works. The covenant delivered through Christ is fulfilled by faith. We must believe those things God has done for us through Christ.

- We have been set free from sin.
- Sin no longer holds us bound.
- We have died to sin.
- We have become the righteousness of God in Christ.
- We are a new creation.
- The Spirit of Christ dwells in us.
- We have passed from death into life.
- Whereas we were formerly slaves to sin, we are now slaves to righteousness.

All these things are true of those who are partakers of the life of Christ. To the degree we reckon them to be true, we will find that they become our experience.

Embracing the Law of Moses will hinder you from entering into this overcoming experience of life in Christ. The Law treats men as if they are slaves to sin. It seeks to restrain them. The life of Christ needs no restraint. Even as Christ ever lived to do the will and pleasure of His Father, so too do all those who are born of His seed. Our great need is to enter into the life of Christ by faith.

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Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and ***the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith*** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

What is this faith of which Paul speaks? It is precisely what he has described. We believe that Christ is in us. He is alive and present. He is both directing and energizing us. He is ever revealing the will of the Father to us and producing in us the desire to do that will.

Philippians 2:13

For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...

Our Father wants us to understand our vital union with His Son. We are dead to sin and alive "in Christ." We are to reckon it so.

What type of Law would Yahweh give to those who are walking in the revelation of their new life in Christ? Not a law of prohibition, for those who are born of Christ do not sin. The new creature in Christ lives to do the will of the Father. Therefore, the law for those who are in Christ is a law of perfect liberty.

James 1:25

But he who looks into the perfect ***law of liberty*** and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

James 2:8, 12

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the

Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well... So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the ***law of liberty***.

Seeing that the new creation man desires only to please the Father, there is nothing prohibited from him. This is what Paul is declaring in the following Scriptures:

I Corinthians 6:12

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. ***All things are lawful*** for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

I Corinthians 10:23

All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. ***All things are lawful***, but not all things edify.

If Paul still saw himself as under the Law of Moses, he could not have said "all things are lawful for me." All things are not lawful under the old covenant, for it was written for men who were slaves to sin.

In contrast, John tells us that no one who is born of Christ sins. Seeing that they do not do so, all things are lawful for them. What type of things might the new creation man want to do? Paul gives us a list in the following Scripture. Pay close attention to the words he ends with.

The law for those who are in Christ is a law of perfect liberty.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. ***Against such there is no law.***

Christ is the perfect expression of the Father. All of the fruit listed above are part of His nature. For

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those who are joined to Christ, these things have also become their nature. We can do all these things as

There is no law to restrict us from being loving, or patient, or self-controlled.

much as we want. There is no law to restrict us from being loving, or patient, or self-controlled. Seeing that those born of the seed of Christ desire ONLY to walk right-

eously, they do not need the Law to restrain them. The Law of Moses was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous.

Consider once more the condition of those who are **not** partakers of the life of Christ. Such ones are slaves to the lusts of the flesh. The things their flesh wants to do must be restrained. Yahweh has given fleshly men many laws of prohibition.

But those in Christ are not in the flesh. They abide and walk in the Spirit. There is a new law for them. The perfect law of liberty. It is the law of liberty that Yahweh has written on the hearts of those who have received a new spirit.

Herein is revealed one of the terrible consequences of embracing the Mosaic Law. It causes spiritual men to view themselves as sinners that need to be restrained. On the other hand, the Law of Liberty induces men to see themselves as heavenly beings born of holy seed whose desire is always to please the Father. What a Christian thinks about himself will shape his life.

Proverbs 23:7

For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

People of God, this leads us to perceive perhaps the greatest challenge of the Christian life. It must be entered into by faith.

Galatians 3:25-26

But after **faith** has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through **faith** in

Christ Yahshua.

Do you believe you are a new creation? Do you see yourself as having died to the sin-enslaved person you were before Christ? Do you reckon yourself to be dead to sin? Do you perceive yourself to be “alive to God,” energized and enabled to live a life pleasing to Him? Have you entered into the realm of living where you can confess with Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me?”

As long as Christians embrace the Mosaic Law, they will hear the voice of the guardian and schoolmaster speaking to them as sinners who must be restrained. They will be hindered from perceiving the new creation they have become in Christ.

We must perceive our union with Christ. We must see ourselves as spiritual men. The Mosaic Law keeps taking us back to life before Christ. The Law was given B.C. (Before Christ). The church is living a B.C. existence. Let us go forth into A.D.. It is **A** new Day.

The Road Less Traveled

There are two main paths, or doctrinal positions, embraced by the majority of Christians today. One path promotes keeping the Law of Moses, or a body of laws endorsed by their group. These laws are used as the chief instrument to guide believers in their daily lives and various decisions. The other path teaches that Christians are free from the Law, and they are to do what their conscience tells them is right. Both of these doctrinal positions may allow for the Holy Spirit to guide the saint, however, this guidance is exceptional rather than the norm.

In actual practice, these two positions have some overlap. For example, groups who teach that the Law of Moses is still in effect do not practice all of the Law. Some make a show of keeping the Law, but the soul ultimately finds some application of the Law that satisfies self.

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Some years back I had correspondence with a man who was a lawyer by profession. His occupation appeared to be symbolic of his life, for his doctrinal position was that all Christians must keep the Law of Moses. I observed this man handle one particularly difficult situation in a very disingenuous manner.

This man was married and had a wife and young children. The family had a dog, a golden retriever. This was the family pet and it was allowed in the home. Some friends came to visit the family and the dog got excited and bit one of them. Later, another family came over who had a small daughter and the dog bit her as well. This man was now faced with a crisis. The animal in his care was known to bite, and after this was revealed the dog had caused injury to another person. This man wanted to do the righteous thing, and he began to consider what the Law of Moses required in such an instance. He focused on the following:

Exodus 21:28-32

If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.

Although this animal was not an ox, this man discerned that the principle was the same. The Law taught that people were responsible for the actions of their animals and must prevent injury from occurring to others. This lawyer considered that his dog had bitten someone before, so this second event was very serious. He arrived at the conclusion that he must kill the dog in order to prevent it from biting another person. He told me he intended to take the dog outside and shoot it. He made this known to his family, and they greatly protested. This was the be-

loved family pet, and they were exceedingly grieved to have to carry out the requirement of the Law on Rover.

(I do not say that this man rightly applied this law, for the dog did not kill anyone.)

Looking for a way to quell the uprising among his family, the man told me later that he had determined that the family dog did not actually bite the young girl. He wrote to me that the dog merely “pushed her with his teeth.” This line of reasoning provided him with an out so that he did not have to kill the dog. This was truly a lawyer’s solution. He found a way to make the Law arrive at the judgment he desired.

The soul is not going to voluntarily choose crucifixion.

Although this may appear to be an extreme example, it reveals a pattern that occurs with great regularity among those who are led by Laws and creeds. The soul of man has a proclivity toward arriving at interpretations of the Law that deliver it from undesired sacrifice and suffering. When men are led by a code of conduct, the soul serves as the arbiter and judge of how that code should be applied. It stands to reason that the soul is not going to voluntarily choose crucifixion.

A concomitant consequence of looking to the soul as arbiter and judge is that the man or woman fails to look to the Holy Spirit to reveal God’s judgment. This man, in looking to the Law to reveal to him the righteousness of God, failed to walk by the Spirit. In effect, he had become “severed from Christ.” Paul warned the Galatian believers this would be the consequence of those who sought to be justified by the Law.

Galatians 5:4

You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law...

Laying Down the Law

This lawyer's approach to the Christian life was very different from that of the apostle Paul.

Galatians 2:19-20

"For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me..."

The Law was given to man PRIOR to the Spirit of Christ being sent to indwell mankind. Those who have been born again of the Spirit of Christ have that same Spirit resident in them to guide them into the way that is pleasing to the Father. Christians are to "walk by the Spirit."

It does not matter whether one adopts the Law of Moses as their guide, or some code of laws developed by their church or denomination. If Christians are looking to a body of laws to guide them, they will fail to look to the Spirit to perform this vital function.

As I wrote in an earlier chapter, the moral Law contained only a shadow of the righteousness found in

Christians are to "walk by the Spirit."

Christ. The Law required man to give a tithe of his increase, but Christ said no man could be His disciple unless he gave up ALL his possessions. Consequently, those guided

by the law often consider themselves to have performed the will of God when they have only embraced a shadow of His will and not the very substance of it.

There is a second group, very large in number, among the body of Christ today, who have cast away the Law. Like Abraham, they have sent away the bondwoman and her son. Yet, unlike the promised Seed who came 2,000 years ago, they have not come fully into subjection to the rule of the Father through the Spirit. The main source of guidance for this group is the same as the first group. They are directed by the soul. Like Israel in the days of the

judges, "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

This group has focused on the Scriptures that declare the saint to have died to the Law, but they have neglected the inseparable counterpart to this truth. They have not come into a fulness of union with Christ through the indwelling Spirit. Rather than being directed and empowered by the Spirit, they are led by the soul.

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, **so that you might be joined to another**, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

There is some admixture here with those of the other path. Many have adopted the practice of rejecting certain parts of the Law their soul finds unattractive, while keeping the parts that hold some allure. For example, many who proclaim a message of liberty and grace teach that tithing should be practiced. Indeed, among those who set aside the Law of Moses, a great many continue to hold to this one aspect of the Law. The reason is not hard to discern. Many ministers want freedom from the rule of the Law, but they still like to get paid. They fear that if they were to leave the matter of giving to the individual, telling them to be led of the Spirit, giving would drop off precipitously.

If the saints were to be led of the Spirit, I have no doubt that the vast majority of ministers and ministries today would find that their money tree has become barren. This would actually have a very positive effect of culling out that which is of the soul, while giving renewed supply to that which is of the Spirit.

One common denominator between the two paths mentioned is that they both permit the Christian to operate out of the soul. There is no wholesale surrender to be led of the Spirit in all things. There is no conformity to Christ who testified, "I do nothing of

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My own initiative. I only do those things my Father commands Me to do.”

There is a third path, however. It is the path least chosen. Of this path Christ testified, “Few there are who find it” (Matthew 7:14). This is the path of the Spirit-led life. This was the path Christ followed, as well as the apostles. It is this path that I have been led to embrace and teach.

The reason this path is the least traveled is that it is by far the most costly to the soul of man. A man must take up his cross daily and follow Christ if he is to walk this path. It is a path where the soul’s desires must be laid upon the altar. The soul itself is subjected to crushing, for the path God would lead His sons down is one of suffering and loss in this world.

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake...

The firstborn Son of God was perfected by suffering, and by a similar path must all the sons of God be brought to spiritual maturity. No man needs to go seeking a way to suffer for Christ. All that is required is that they surrender to be led of the Spirit in all things. Yahweh has an afflicted path perfectly designed for every son and daughter whom He receives.

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and afflicted is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The above words of Christ contain one of the themes Yahweh directed me to share with His people as I traveled across the country this past year. Many translations render the last verse “**narrow** is the way which leads to life.” This is an entirely different

word from that of the first sentence where we read “Enter by the **narrow** gate.” A literal and more accurate translation of the words of Christ would declare that the gate is narrow and the way is afflicted that leads to life. Because Yahweh will ALWAYS lead His saints down an afflicted path when they yield to be led of His Spirit, most eschew this way.

It is far easier to adopt a moral code than to surrender one’s entire life to another. Your dreams, your plans, your possessions, your very life must be given over into the hands of God if you are to follow the path that Yahshua walked. This is why Yahshua testified that a man must hate even his own life (psuche - soul) to be His disciple (Luke 14:26).

Though the way be exceedingly difficult, it is the only path that leads to life.

Only by surrendering our lives to Yahweh to be lived according to His desire and will; only by embracing a Spirit-led life, may the saints find themselves being led into those experiences necessary for their perfecting as sons.

It is far easier to adopt a moral code than to surrender one’s entire life to another.

As we saw in previous chapters, the Law was given to the people of God in their immaturity. The Spirit will lead the people of God to their adoption as sons and to an inheritance imperishable in the heavens. There is a prize set before the body of Christ. Only a few will attain to it. The saying is true that “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Will you choose one of the popular paths of Christianity today, knowing that they will not lead to perfection? Or will you accept the invitation Christ presented to the rich, young ruler; “If you would be perfect... take up your cross and follow Me”? There is only one way to follow Christ. We must surrender our lives to the Father as He did. We must not live for our own will and pleasure. We must follow the Holy Spirit wherever He leads. We find a description of these perfected sons in the last book of the Bible.

Laying Down the Law

Revelation 14:1-5

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads... ***These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.*** These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

How did these overcomers arrive at Mount Zion? They followed the Lamb WHEREVER He led them. Lamb's go to a sacrifice. They are meek and easily led. They are not like Ishmael, having the nature of a wild ass, stubborn and rebellious.

In Gethsemane Christ was not wrangling with the Law's will for His life. He was speaking to His Father.

Luke 22:42

"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

People of God, be of good courage. Will not God provide all grace and strength needed for those sons who will yield to accept the path of His choosing? Indeed, He will. There is a ***fellowship*** in His sufferings to

Man must be born again.

be found no other way. Nothing can separate us from His love.

A New Creation

Galatians 6:15

For in Christ Yahshua neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

In these words of the apostle Paul we come to the

heart of what is truly important. Paul says that neither keeping the Law (circumcision), or not keeping the Law (uncircumcision), avails anything. That is to say, neither Law-keeping, or freedom from the Law, can bring any man to that perfect and mature state that the Father desires for His sons. Being under the Law will not bring you to conformity to Christ. Freedom from the Law will not either. Becoming a new creation will. Man must be born again.

One night a ruler of the Jews came to visit Yahshua. This man's name was Nicodemus. He was well versed in the Law, being an instructor of all that Moses had written. For 1,500 years the Israelites had been under the tutelage of the Law. It served as their guardian and school-master. Yet, the Jews, like all men, had hard hearts. The main message of the Law had not been perceived, or received. The message of the Law is that man, apart from Christ, is spiritually dead. The natural man cannot please God. Man must receive a new heart and spirit. He must be born again.

When Christ met with Nicodemus that night, He went straight to the heart of what mattered most.

John 3:1-3

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Yahshua by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Yahshua answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

For many years, the abruptness of Christ's answer has grabbed my attention. There is no chit chat. There is no response to the comments of Nicodemus. It is as if Christ begins an entirely new conversation, for He understands that Nicodemus is a blind leader of blind men. He will never find the answers he needs on his own. Christ must take Nicodemus by the hand and lead him to the truth.

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John 3:4-8

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Yahshua answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus struggled to comprehend what the Messiah was declaring to him. 1,500 years of the Law's instruction had not led God's people to a knowledge of the truth. It was very difficult for this man, in one brief moment, to hear spiritual truth spoken and grasp it.

John 3:9-13

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?" Yahshua answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?"

Nicodemus was no less intelligent than other men. His failure to comprehend the truth Christ presented to him was caused by his spiritual condition. Spiritually, Nicodemus was dead. Therefore, the words of Christ, which were spirit and life, sounded like foolishness to his ears.

I Corinthians 2:12-14

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot under-

stand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

In these words, the apostle describes an important difference between men who have been born of the Spirit and those who have not. A spiritual man is able to receive the thoughts of God. What the Spirit speaks to a spiritual man is comprehensible. The same message is nonsense to one who has not been born again. Nicodemus' problem was that he was a natural man.

Although the Law had served as Yahweh's appointed school-master and instructor to the Jews for 1,500 years, its lessons were not learned. The reason is disclosed in the following Scripture.

Romans 7:14

For we know that ***the law is spiritual***, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Over the course of fifteen centuries the Law had acted as tutor to the people of God. As mentioned previously, Torah means "instruction." The Law was continually presenting its lessons. Some of the lessons, such as those contained in the feast days, were repeated every year. Other lessons, such as that contained in the shadow of the Sabbath, were repeated every week. Some lessons were given on a daily basis.

The Law was continually presenting its lessons.

Despite the continual, repetitive presence of all this instruction, the people of God were not perceiving the lessons contained in the Law. They did not understand that the Passover celebrated annually was pointing them toward the Lamb of God who would be slain for the sins of the world. They did not perceive that Pentecost, which was celebrated fifty days later, was forecasting that day when the Spirit would be given to indwell man, setting the Instruction of

Laying Down the Law

God on man's hearts. They did not comprehend the profound lesson contained in the weekly Sabbath; that Yahweh longed for men to cease from their own works in the same way that He rested from His. This rest was not to be one day a week, but an every day cessation from works of personal initiative that man might live instead to always do the will of the Father.

Tragically, many Christians continue to look at the Law as a body of ordinances that are to be under-

Are you a partaker of the Spirit of Christ?

stood in a strictly literal sense. They do not perceive the "spirit" present in these instructions. Like the Jews before them under the tutelage of the Law, they are "ever learn-

ing and never coming to a knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7). Until the spiritual substance of the Law is understood and applied in a person's life, the saint will not make any progress toward maturity in Christ.

Hebrews 10:1

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never... make perfect those who draw near.

Nicodemus had been focused upon the Law to a greater degree than most, for he was a teacher of the Law. Yet, he did not perceive its lessons. Nicodemus thought it would profit a man to be circumcised. He did not see that what was truly needed was for man to become a new creation. The natural man must become a spiritual man. Those who are of the earth, earthy, must become heavenly creatures. Man needed a new heart, a new spirit. He had been born once, but he needed to be born a second time.

Many Christians have the mistaken concept that their identity as a member of the body of Christ is determined in a similar way as those who became Jews under the Old Covenant. They believe that if they accept a certain body of teaching, and if they bring their conduct in alignment with the rules of this belief system, then they are a Christian. Depending upon what denomination, or body of teaching a

person embraces, some will find themselves keeping the Law (circumcision), while others do not (uncircumcision). Neither position makes one a child of God. Something else is required.

Romans 8:9

But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

This is what is truly important. Have you been born of the Spirit? Are you a partaker of the Spirit of Christ? Do you hear the voice of the Father and understand what He is speaking to you? Have you received a new heart that longs to do that which is pleasing to Yahweh? Has God placed His Spirit, His own divine nature, within you? These are the things that avail much!

Nicodemus, like many men before and since, believed that devotion to the Law would satisfy the Father. He did not understand that the sons Yahweh sought were those who had His nature. Many men believe they are born with the nature of God. They believe if they simply apply themselves to good works that they can produce something God will find acceptable. This was the error of the Jews. It is an error as old as Cain.

Cain brought to Yahweh an offering from the fruit of the ground. This is symbolic of man bringing forth an offering to God from his flesh nature. Man's flesh was formed of the dust of the earth. I am convinced that the offering Cain brought to Yahweh was magnificent to behold. It would put the best produce of a farmer's market to shame. Yahweh had no regard for Cain's offering, not because it was inferior as some suppose, being a half-hearted offering to the Father, but because of what it represented.

The very best that the natural man can produce is of no value in God's sight. This is what provoked Cain. He had labored to bring to God an offering that was the very best he could produce. Cain was persuaded that the offering was worthy of God, that it should elicit Yahweh's praise and approval. When God showed no regard for it, Cain was angry.

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Many men and women today look at the Law as a means to offer to God an offering acceptable unto Him. They believe if they manifest a devotion to it, making their lives align with it as far as they are able, even going to great lengths and sacrifice, then surely God will look upon what they are offering with satisfaction and praise. The truth is, Yahweh has no regard for what they offer to Him, for it is an offering that arises from the flesh of man. It is man giving something he has produced through the sweat of his own labor to God.

Men react violently, and with great anger, when they are told that their very best efforts are despised by God. Nevertheless, the testimony of God is that only what His Spirit accomplishes is satisfying.

John 6:63

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.

From the body of Christ's beginning, there have been men who begin in the Spirit, but then turn back again to the Law as a means to offer to Yahweh an acceptable sacrifice. Having begun in faith, they turn again to vain works of the flesh.

Galatians 3:1-4

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Yahshua Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain - if indeed it was in vain?

Perhaps you are sensing that something very profound is being spoken in these words, but you are having a difficult time grasping what it is and how to apply it to your life. This would be an excellent time to practice the counsel of James.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

What Paul is declaring is not natural wisdom, but spiritual. It can only be comprehended through the exercise of spiritual senses. Even as Christ opened the eyes of blind men, and unstopped the hearing of the deaf, so too is He able to give spiritual sight and hearing to the people of God. I understand that my teaching is a vain thing if not attended by the quickening presence of the Spirit. May Yahweh grant sight and hearing to His people!

Consider the questions poised by the apostle Paul. "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of

faith?" How does a man become a partaker of Yahweh's divine nature through the indwelling Spirit? We cannot work ourselves into divinity.

We must hear the message that Christ has reconciled God and man through His atoning sacrifice, and that He has sent forth His Spirit to indwell man. If we believe these things, then we will by faith petition the Father that He might give us His Spirit to indwell us.

We cannot work ourselves into divinity.

Luke 11:9-13

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ***If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!***"

Laying Down the Law

This is how we receive the Spirit. We ask for it, believing our Father will give us His Spirit. Our Father knows we cannot live one day pleasing to Him apart from being born spiritually. If natural men will give their sons what they need for life, how much more will our heavenly Father do so?

Paul then asks, “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the

Becoming perfect men, spiritual men, is the Father’s desire for us.

flesh?” Becoming perfect men, spiritual men, is the Father’s desire for us.

This process toward spiritual perfection is begun when we receive that incorruptible seed of the Father. We cannot work

for it. We cannot produce incorruptible seed on our own. We must simply believe that the Father desires to impart this seed to us, ask Him for it, and receive it.

Having done so, what folly it is to think that our progress toward spiritual maturity will be accomplished by any other method than the one by which we began. Even as we believed that God would give us His Spirit, we must now believe that He will daily give us all things we need to walk in godliness.

II Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness...

We must see ourselves as partakers of the divine nature, and believe that we can live a victorious life as a spiritual creation in the midst of a dark and sinful world. This overcoming life is lived out in the Spirit. We have our communion daily with the Father by the Spirit. We hear His voice, and believe that He has given us the power to obey all He asks of us.

To turn back to the Law as our instructor and guide is to turn away from the Spirit. The Law was the instructor of men who were spiritually dead. The Law too was dead. It was written on stone, not flesh. It had no ability to impart life. The Spirit is life.

II Corinthians 3:6

[It is He] Who has qualified us [making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient] as ministers and dispensers of a new covenant [of salvation through Christ], not [ministers] of the letter (of legally written code) but of the Spirit; for the code [of the Law] kills, but the [Holy] Spirit makes alive.

[Amplified Bible]

If we will set our focus upon the Spirit, listening to His voice, we will find ourselves led into the perfect will of God. Satan knows this to be true, and has waged unceasing warfare upon the saints. He has convinced multitudes that God no longer speaks to man. Such a conclusion is inconceivable to those who know the Father. What Father would cease speaking to His sons the moment they receive His Spirit? If Yahweh spoke to natural men in abundance in the days prior to the Spirit being given, it is unthinkable to believe that He will not speak to those who have received His Spirit.

I Corinthians 2:12-14

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

People often argue that the Law was Spirit breathed, so it must apply to them. People of God, the Law truly was Spirit breathed, but it was made for the unrighteous. The Law was not made for the righteous.

It is like a man who argues that he should take his wife’s medical prescriptions because they both go to the same doctor and he has found the doctor’s counsel to be sound. Will the man take the medicine prescribed for his wife’s menopause and be benefitted? Do you not perceive that the Spirit can speak something that is true, and apply it to a certain group, but it was never intended for another? The Law was made for the unrighteous, not the righteous. The Law is Spirit breathed, but if you are a spiritual man

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it was never prescribed for you!

What has Yahweh prescribed for the spiritual man?
He has prescribed a life led of the Spirit!

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

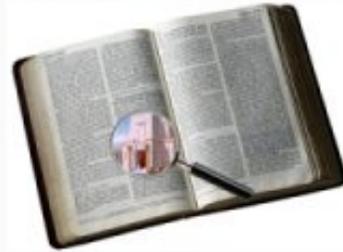
Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

This is the prescribed course of living for the spiritual man. The natural man was led of the Law, but the spiritual man is led by the Spirit.

The natural man was led
of the Law, but the
spiritual man is led by
the Spirit.

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PARABLES PRECEPT— Is That in the Bible?



Did you know that the Bible does NOT say how many wise men came to visit Christ after His birth? It is almost universally taught that there were three wise men. There might have been a dozen, or more.

Where do people get the notion that there were three? It is from

a hasty reading of the gospel account of their visitation.

Matthew 2:1, 11

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem... After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Because three different types of gifts are mentioned, people often assume that there are three

magi. It is quite possible that quite a large caravan of wise men and their servants came to Jerusalem, for we are told that the entire city was stirred by their visit.

The possibility that there were three wise men cannot be ruled out, for the Bible never mentions a specific number. On the other hand, the tradition of there being three magi cannot be established as fact from the Scriptures.