

TRUE LIBERTY

By Br. Bakht Singh.

INTRODUCTION

God told Abraham, His friend, that his seed would be in a strange land, would serve there 400 years and afterwards they would return to their land (Gen 15:13-16). Jacob and his children went to Egypt because of famine in their land. There they multiplied and became great. Pharaoh the king of Egypt took knowledge of this and made them slaves. They were put to too much hardship. Then they cried unto the Lord and He remembered His promise to Abraham, He sent His servant Moses to bring out the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. According to His word He judged the Egyptians by His mighty miracles and plagues and delivered the children of Israel. Then Israel came out of Egypt and began marching towards the land of promise and we find that though they came out of Egypt, Egypt was not out of them! They had always a tendency to go back to the old life, the life of bondage. We too have the same nature. Though the Lord has made every provision for us to be free from all bondages, we tend to go back to bondage in one way or the other. We learn precious lessons from the journeys of Israel.

In studying the journey of the people of God from Egypt to Canaan, we understand that Egypt speaks of bondage, slavery, darkness and condemnation. When we are saved by God's grace, we are delivered from every bondage and every condemnation, and the Lord wants us to come into His fullness. The land of Canaan speaks of that fullness, and unless we overcome the different trials and temptations on the way, we will not enjoy that fullness. The experience of the new birth depends only upon our faith, and the very second we believe on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, we are forgiven; but our enjoyment of the fullness of God depends upon our obedience and faithfulness, and that is why we have to go through that journey in the wilderness to be tested whether we have a living faith or not.

We can see step by step the lessons which could be learned from that journey, and then we come to know how the Israelites came to mount Sinai, how the Law of God was given them and for that purpose.

THE MEANING OF 'THE LAW'

Let us see from God's word what the law means. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John.1: 17). "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law that the man which doeth these things shall live by them." (Romans. 10:5).

All that was conveyed through Moses to the children of Israel, in the form of commandments, ordinances, feasts and sacrifices, is called 'The Law'. And through it God intended to show the meaning of righteousness, which he demands of man, and to which no man can attain by his own efforts. However Seventh day Adventists assert that the Ten Commandments were not included in the Law, but form a separate part by themselves. Thus they try to argue that though the Law has come to an end, the Ten Commandments still remain. They make a distinction between what they call Ceremonial Law and Moral Law, and say that the Ceremonial Law has come to an end but the Moral Law remains. Such a distinction is not made anywhere in the scriptures.

When the Lord Jesus Christ answered the lawyer who came to question Him, He made it plain that the Commandments were part of the Law. Let us see Matt.22: 34-40.

“But when the Pharisees had heard that He has put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus said unto him, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. ”

In replying to the Pharisees and Sadducees the Lord groups the Old Testament into two parts, ‘the law’ and ‘the prophets’. Again in Luke 24:27, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Our Lord calls the same two parts, ‘Moses’ and ‘all the prophets’. It is therefore clear that all that God said to Moses on the Mount, that is, the Ten Commandments, divers Laws for every day life, the sacrifices offered in the Tabernacle and the feasts of Jehovah, all together form ‘The Law’. And so the Ten Commandments cannot be separated from circumcision or the sacrifices or anything else included in the Law.

Mark very carefully the words of the Question the Lawyer asked the Lord Jesus Christ, “Master which is the great commandment in the Law?” Note the Lord’s answer, “ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment, and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” According to Deut.6: 5, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might” and Lev.19: 18, “Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.” We can say that the Lord included the Ten Commandments and all the other laws given by God to Moses, in the term, ‘The Law’.

Paul the Apostle when speaking of the law calls it “ the book of the law” : Gal.3: 10, “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them”. This also refers to the observance of days, and months, times and years. Gal.4: 10, “Ye observe days and months and times and years”. Thus Paul too makes no distinction between Ceremonial Law and Moral law.

Again in Exodus chapters 19 to 22, we read that Moses went on the Mount to receive God’s commandments, and was instructed in various matters. In Exo.20: 1-17, we have Ten Commandments, and then follow other diverse laws and ordinances. Therefore the Ten Commandments are the part of the Law.

The Seventh Day Adventists draw our attention to Exo.20: 10, “But the seventh day is Sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy men servant nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.” They say, what about this commandment? Do you observe the Ten Commandments and keep the Sabbath? You have to observe Saturday as Sabbath for your salvation. If not you are breaking God’s Commandments and are coming under God’s judgments”. They say that our Lord

Jesus Christ observed the Sabbath and did not change it. They are such cultured liars; they mislead and misguide people and bring them into bondage by their deceptive and evil teaching. Without saying who they are in a very subtle wicked way to hide their true colors, they induce people in a correspondence course from Poona called "the Voice of Prophecy". Printed lessons are received every week. Many people get interested in this course, which in the beginning contains some amount of Bible study, but their main purpose is to influence people into observing the Seventh Day.

THE OBJECT OF THE LAW

See the object for which God gave the Law. First, it was given so that people might understand God's definition of sin. We read in Rom.3: 20, "" Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Secondly, the law was given to us to understand God's holiness. "Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Romans 3:19. The law was there and they knew right from wrong, but when they tried not to commit sin, they failed and had to admit that not a single person had the strength or human energy to obey and fulfill what God said and thus the whole world became guilty, and every mouth was stopped before God.

I could walk through the streets of a city with simple innocent, shy faces, saying I am a good man; nobody had heard me quarrelling or telling lies, or seen me steeling and people may believe me. But when I stand before God and say that, God's hand will shut my mouth and say, " How dare you say so. Look at yourself and My standard of holiness." I can deceive men but not God. Thus the law enables men to understand God's holiness.

How did that happen? Moses went on the mount and a great fire from heaven came on the Mount; there was an earthquake and nobody dared to go near. When they saw the fire they trembled and said, "God is Holy, He is a consuming fire." If they dared to go near where God was speaking, they would have been consumed and reduced to ashes. If that fire was so holy that nobody dared to go near it, how dare you come near the fire of God? That was a glimpse of God's holiness and God says, " compare yourself with that sight, look at your hands and feet and say you are holy, and then come near my fire." Nobody was allowed to go up the Mount except Moses. Thus the mouth of every man was stopped.

Thirdly the law was given to help us to know how terrible sin is. "Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful". Rom.7: 13. The law was given to make sin still more sinful. In other words, to help us to understand how dangerous, destructive and horrible sin is.

Centuries ago, people had no knowledge of the tuberculosis bacilli because they were invisible to the naked eye. When a person coughed excessively they thought he was possessed with an evil spirit and used magical means to remove it. But with the invention of the microscope, by which even the tiniest germ is visible, people have been warned of the damage, and the destruction caused by these bacilli.

Those who have been careless are now extremely careful, and take precautions not to intentionally go near the person who has the disease.

We think so lightly of sin and say, "Oh, it is only a thought, only a desire only friendship, only affection, only a little association not much." But the Lord tells us how dangerous a small thought is. How much destruction has been brought into homes and lives by one thought! How much darkness by one dark step! The law was given for that purpose, to make sin look exceedingly sinful.

Fourthly, the law was given to bring to Christ as we read in Gal.3: 24, "Wherefore the law was our school master to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." There is no salvation in the law. It cannot make any body righteous or bring him near to God. The law i.e. all the sacrifices offered, circumcision and commandments, prepared and trained the people like a schoolmaster for Lord Jesus Christ, and when He came, there was no longer any need for schoolmaster. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth " Rom.10: 4. Christ is THE END of THE LAW. How clear God's Word is, that when the Lord Jesus Christ came He put an end to Law. Now we are no longer under circumcision, Sabbath or Sacrifices, we have come under grace. It is not by doing something that we become righteous, but by believing. These Seventh Day Adventists come under God's Judgment for changing the word of God.

FALLEN FROM GRACE

In the early days of the church era, people were taught that unless they were circumcised or observe special days, they were not saved. "Ye observe days and months, and times and years" Gal.4: 10. That is why the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle in such strong language and said that when they did so, they were going back to their old ways. He was afraid that his teaching might go in vain and they might lose everything/ this is the Devil's old trick not a new one. "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain" Gal.4: 11.

When God has forgiven your sins already, and you have become just before God through your faith, these Seventh Day Adventists say that by observing the Sabbath and keeping the Sabbath you can be fully saved. Mark all the references carefully.

Sabbath – A reminder of Bondage

Now see for what purpose God gave the Sabbath, and why we are now free from it. "But the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou: not thy son, and thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid servant, nor thine Ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:14,15).

God told the Israelites that because they had been bond slaves in Egypt under the Egyptians and had served false gods, it remind them of that, he commanded them to keep the Sabbath. Every Sabbath they remembered their

slavery due to disobedience, and the chains of sin that bound their hands, feet, tongues, ears, eyes, bodies. The Law was weak and nobody became righteous through it. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ became man and fulfilled the righteousness, which God demanded through law.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:1-3).

What man could not do, the Lord Jesus Christ did and set us free from every bondage. He bore our burdens, punishment and condemnation and became a curse for us. That is why we are completely free and come under a new law- the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, while those who come under the former old law come under the law of sin and death. Thus in observing the Sabbath, the Israelites remembered their slavery under their slavery under their hard task- masters, but now, the Lord Jesus Christ has broken all chains of bondage and has given us His own true rest.

Through Grace-Liberty and Rest

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise, being left us of entering his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard of it. For we who have believed do enter into rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spoke in certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, if thy shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief” (Heb. 4:1-6).

“Rest” speaks of that perfect peace which our Lord gives us. Bondage takes away peace. God rested on the seventh day with perfect peace, and we enter into that peace. Our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matt.11: 28 “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” We do not have to do anything to become righteous, we only believe from the heart that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sake, as our burnt offering, peace offering, meat offering, trespass offering, and thus we are righteous. He became our Sacrifice, Circumcision and Sabbath and we are now free.

THE CROSS-A FINISHED WORK

“Which things are an allegory for these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.

For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children, But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren, that beareth not; break forth and cry, thou that travaiest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she, which hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scriptures? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free." Gal.4: 24-31.

The Law given on Mount Sinai brought bondage, slavery, and men became guilty; but now we are under a new covenant. Even though Ishmael was a son of Abraham, yet both he and his mother Hagar, were cast out, and neither had a share in the promise, which God gave Abraham. In the same manner, all those who come under bondage will be cast out for trying to become just and righteous by Circumcision, Sabbath or by man's effort.

Roman Catholics want to become righteous by taking part in their Priest-made Masses on Sunday mornings or weekdays, rather than believing on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. These Seventh day Adventists like Roman Catholics will be cast out and will have no share whatsoever in God's inheritance, because they prefer to come under bondage. God gave them Salvation and our Lord Jesus Christ completed the work of Salvation on the cross when He said, "it is finished". But the Seventh Day Adventists are trying to add something more to salvation saying, "No, Lord, it is not finished, we are Seventh Day Adventists, Lord! We must add Sabbath to Salvation".

Suppose you construct and complete a beautiful building and someone says it is not complete. He then takes a broken piece of earthen pot, puts coal tar on it and draws some ugly figures and then stamps it on the building to complete it: How would you feel? That is how these Seventh Day Adventists are trying to add to the work of Salvation. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us. He paid the complete penalty for our sins, bore a curse and became a curse for us when he died on the cross for us. That is why we say it is all finished, and now we have to believe it and receive it by faith.

A NEW COVENANT

"So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law so that she is no adulteress though she married to another man. Therefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another even to him Who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom 7:3,4).

Paul says that if a woman marries while her husband is alive, she is an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free to marry somebody else. The old Law is like that. It is now dead to us and have no claim on us, and we are now married and are alive to the new Law of grace. Imagine a widow remarrying and someone

bringing the bones of her former dead husband and compelling her to keep them. Have you ever seen a woman keeping the bones of her dead husband in her house? Paul said that the woman is free from her dead husband. The Seventh Day Adventists are trying to bring dead bones into our homes; we are dead to the old Law and have been married to the new law of God's grace. Why then should we go into bondage? The Apostle Paul strongly warns the people of Rome and other places of the great danger of wrong teaching.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter” (Rom 7:6).

We are free from the old Law and have come under the new Law, the law of the spirit. You may question me, “Then why do we repeat the Ten Commandments?” It is the devil's trick and it has become a common custom in many buildings on Sunday morning for the congregation to stand up and repeat like parrots the Ten Commandments and the Apostle's Creed. We are not told in any part of the Bible to repeat these passages. We are not under any commandment but we have come under God's grace. Our Lord has taught us that when the Spirit of grace comes into us, we automatically love and serve God and love our neighbor and fulfill the law, not by merely repeating the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer or the Apostle's Creed. We cannot on our own fulfill the law, but by the Lord Jesus Christ living in us, and by being led by His Spirit, we fulfill God's righteousness. The more we are led by the Holy Spirit the more we fulfill divine laws. Thus we have not come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion.

THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake). But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels” (Heb 12: 18-22).

Mount Sinai brought bondage and fear. Nobody became righteous and just by the Law people learned what sin was, their mouths were closed, they began to see the horror of sin and the Law prepared them like a schoolmaster for Christ. Now we are come unto Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Heavenly City. This is our Heavenly goal. Whether we worship under a tree, in a brick or stone building, in a tent, under the starry sky, or by a river bank, the place does not matter very much, but it is the Spirit among the people that matters. When we worship God in Spirit and in truth, He is pleased. He does not want a big building; He wants us to build His Heavenly City. Now a days, men are very proud of their big, grand, stone buildings, but there is no real life of the Lord Jesus Christ there.

Do not go into bondage again, but look for a Heavenly City, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and where we have the benefit of His advocacy, His blood for cleansing, the protection of God's saints, where there is true oneness. That is our

privilege. But where there rites, ceremonies, and rituals, it means the devil has robbed people of their liberty and their joy.

Do not allow the enemy to deceive you any longer. The Lord has set you free; remain free, and enjoy your liberty as a child of God. Worship Him in Spirit and in truth. Do not go back into bondage and be a slave to any formality but live in the spirit. You may say you are born again and may take part in the Lord' Table in a simple way, but if you do not live the life you profess and live in enmity and jealousy, you will bring death and bondage. The Spirit of God must work freely. May the Lord break every bondage and keep us free. Read all the references very carefully and see for yourself what the Law is and what grace is. Then obey what God tells you.