

EVERY JOT & TITTLE

By Jim Golden

Remember in Matthew 5 Jesus said, "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass away from the law till all is fulfilled"? Listen how the Message translation puts it. "God's Law is more real and lasting than the stars in the sky and the ground at your feet. Long after stars burn out and earth wears out, God's Law will be alive and working."

Jesus goes on to say that if we break even the smallest commandment and teach others to do so we will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but if we do them and teach others to do them we will be called great. Because, unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we absolutely will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5: 19 & 20).

Remember this is our Savior talking - grace and mercy love and forgiveness in human form. From those few sentences it doesn't sound like we really have much hope. We have been taught that we are under a new covenant, a covenant that relieves us from having to keep or fulfill the law, but that doesn't sound like what the author of that covenant was saying. It seems pretty clear that we are all going to be gone before He will abandon His laws with their judgments and consequences. If that is the case, then who has any hope of gaining the quality of righteousness needed to get into the kingdom of heaven?

I certainly don't. The scribes and Pharisees didn't and they obeyed the law and all its precepts. Paul the apostle said as concerning the righteousness which was in the law, he was found blameless, yet he called that righteousness dung. It looks like a pretty grim outcome for most of us, at least on the surface, but let's consider a few things before we give up hope.

There are two covenants, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Let's just take the first commandment and look at that for a moment. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your entire mind and with all your strength." It is the same in both covenants. I don't think that any of us has to look any further. That one is enough to condemn the best among us. Even after we received Jesus as our personal savior how many of us can truthfully say that we have successfully obeyed this one, everyday, all the time? It is time for most, if not all of us to throw in the towel, unless, we consider this.

In the first covenant or the Old Covenant these commandments were given by God as a way to direct and guide His people into an abundant and prosperous life. "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). The one major

flaw was their ability to be influenced by the lust of the devil (John 8:44). Because of human nature man is incapable of fulfilling the law of God. Now let's look at the second or New Covenant. Jesus, its author and finisher, said that we were not off the hook in this "New Covenant" either. So as the song says, "What's a poor boy to do?" Perhaps a glimpse at the heart of the covenant's author will help.

Remember that God's actual being—the "stuff" He is made of—is love! His love has made the provision. I believe in this New Covenant the commandments are no longer the things that bring judgment to us because of our inability to keep them, but rather God's personal and immutable promise to each one of us saved by the blood of Jesus. Hallelujah! Jesus is the Son of God and the Son of Man. He represented both God and mankind in this New Covenant. By doing so He met all the demands of His own law on our behalf and not just legally. I believe that as we, through these exceedingly great and precious promises spoken of by Peter, partake of the Divine Nature we will see that nature within us actually form the Law of God within us. We have eternity with our covenant keeping God to watch this magnificent Covenant fulfilled. Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). He Himself is being formed within us. The Law Himself is our life. AMEN!

The next time you read the Ten Commandments take a moment to remember that you are a child of God's love and that the "commandments" are now His prophetic promises to you. As you read them allow your mind's eye to see Jesus speaking these words to you, "My child, I promise you that if you will agree with Me in what I am saying to you it will surely come to pass." "YOU SHALL LOVE ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH YOUR ENTIRE MIND AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." AMEN—SO IT WILL BE!