

CHAPTER 1:

Grace in the Law of Jubilee

The law of Jubilee is the legal foundation of grace. While some disparage the law of God, thinking it is somehow in opposition to love or grace, the law actually establishes grace. There is a law of faith (Rom. 3:27), and by it “we establish the law” (Rom. 3:31).

There is also a “*law of the spirit of life in Christ*” that overcomes the “*law of sin and death*” (Rom. 8:2). While many today think of law as evil, unjust, fleshly, and unspiritual, Paul says that the law of God is “*holy, and just, and good*” (Rom. 7:12) and even “*spiritual*” (Rom. 7:14). Paul says that his flesh serves the law of sin, but his mind serves the law of God (Rom. 7:25). Paul does not grumble about having to obey the law of God. He says “*I delight in the law of God after the inward man*” (Rom. 7:22), which is his spirit. I often wonder how it is that Christians do not always share Paul’s sentiment.

Justification Before the Law

Sinners who come before God’s throne either receive grace (justification) or suffer the judgment of the law. This simply means that the sinner must know how to legally appeal his case before the throne (the bar of justice in the divine court). Since we are all sinners worthy of judgment, that is what we will receive unless we know the lawful way to obtain grace. Grace means acquittal or forgiveness in spite of the crimes (sins) we have committed.

When the charges are read to us in God’s court, how will we plead our case? Many Christians will tell the Judge, “Your Honor, there is no law against those sins; don’t you recall that you repealed those laws at the Cross? ‘*Where no law is, there is no transgression*’ (Rom. 4:15). You cannot judge me, because all laws were repealed, thus all things are now lawful.”

The Judge may answer you like this: “I told you that I came *not* to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). I told Paul that I did *not* make void the law through faith (Rom. 3:31). I told John that sin is still the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). I have always told

you that I would judge sin. Did you really think you could continue in sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1)? Never did I make sin lawful. I only changed the forms by which men may obtain grace when they sin. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity (lawlessness)."

To obtain grace, a sinner must answer in a way such as this: "Your Honor, I admit that I am a sinner, that I am guilty as charged of violating your law. I repent of my lawless attitude, thinking I could sin with immunity. I confess that you are just in all your ways and may justly sentence me to death (Rom. 6:23). However, Jesus already paid the full penalty for my sins, and I have accepted His provision. The law is thus fully satisfied, for my debt has been paid."

The Judge will answer: "Let the record show that this man's sins have already been paid for in full. Therefore, this court extends grace to him and releases him. He is no longer under the law, but under grace. Go and sin no more."

If a criminal shows no remorse or repentance for his sins and thinks that he somehow has a license to sin with immunity, God will not extend grace to him. He is attempting to obtain grace in an unlawful manner—by putting away the law. The Bible calls this "lawlessness" (Greek *anomia*). God does not acquit the guilty by repealing His law; He acquits by upholding the law and paying its full penalty Himself. Never was the law upheld and respected more than when Jesus died on the Cross to pay the full penalty that it had prescribed for our sins.

Has Any Part of the Law Been Put Away?

Your view of the law will determine your view of sin. Many Christians believe that God legalized all sin; others believe that He legalized only certain sins, but upheld a few—the Ten Commandments. Either view is what the Bible calls a "lawless" attitude. No laws were repealed; but some did change form. No longer is it necessary to sacrifice a lamb at the Temple to receive forgiveness of sins; we now present the Lamb of God to the court as penalty for our sins. No longer do we purify with blood or water; we are made pure by the blood and water that came out of Jesus' side at the Cross. No longer do we need to go to temples of stone and timber, for now God inhabits our bodies as Temples of the Holy Spirit. In each of these cases, we do not violate the law; we merely fulfill its requirements in a different and better manner.

As a general rule, the moral laws remained intact. Only the means of Justification or purification from sin were altered. The things done in the Tabernacle or Temple were changed, but all the laws dealing with our fellow men outside the Tabernacle or Temple have remained to define sin and make sin sinful. There is no crime unless there is a law to make it a crime.

This does not mean that anyone is obligated to obey the Jewish laws. Jewish law is talmudic, rather than biblical. Talmudic law is what Jesus called "*the tradition of men*" (Mark 7:8) or "*the tradition of the elders*" (Matt. 15:2). These were Jewish *interpretations* of the law which were not only incorrect, but they actually rendered God's law void. Jesus had harsh words for the Pharisees for putting away God's law through their traditions.

Jewish laws do not necessarily define sin according to God's law. The lawyers in Jesus' day were doing then what many lawyers have always done. They search for loopholes to justify their clients or to benefit themselves. They often care little for the spirit of the law (the lawmaker's intent and purpose for the law), but redefine the letter of the law to suit themselves. We have the same problem today in America. The Constitution says one thing, but the lawyers and even the Supreme Court have reinterpreted it to suit their own views and benefit their clients. For example, the separation of Church and State originally was intended to keep government off the backs of churches; now they say that it means churches cannot involve themselves in governmental matters or speak out against immoralities and injustices that have been legalized by lawmakers.

Jesus put away many Jewish legal interpretations because they made void the law of God. But Jesus never once put away God's law. He knew the intent of the Lawmaker, and He gave its interpretation according to what His Father intended from the beginning.

Under the Law: What Did Paul Mean?

Paul says in Romans 6:14-15,

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace. ¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Many Christians do not understand Paul's terminology. Some say that "under the law" refers to an obligation to keep the law. But if we are no longer obligated to keep the law, then why does Paul forbid us to sin? Sin is always defined as violation of the law in Paul's writings, and indeed throughout the Bible. 1 John 3:4 says,

⁴ Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

John's statement is in full agreement with Paul's view, where he says that "*by the law is the knowledge of sin*" (Rom. 3:20) and "*I had not known sin, but by the law*" (Rom. 7:7). The law defines sin. So how is it that Paul seems to contradict himself in Romans 6:14? Is he really telling us that we now have no responsibility to keep the law, i.e., to refrain from sinning?

The phrase "under the law" refers to *the Law's attitude toward you*, not your attitude toward the law. A sinner who is convicted of sin (crime) is "under the law," and the law will stand over him to force him to pay restitution to his victims. A sinner who has been released from his sentence—either by paying the debt in full, or working it off, or having a near kinsman redeem him from debt—is "under grace." In such a case, the court closes his case, because it has no further work to do and has no further interest in him. The law has no jurisdiction over those who are under grace. It only gains jurisdiction when a person commits a crime (sin).

For example, if a thief has been convicted of stealing \$1,000, the law of God would sentence him to restore to his victim double (Ex. 22:4). If he did not have the \$2,000 to repay his victim, he would have to work off his debt for a length of time determined by the judge. If the thief were sentenced to work 60 days, this would mean that the thief is "under the law" for 60 days. When his sentence is complete, he is brought back to the court, where it is determined whether or not he did indeed work off his debt. The judge reviews the case and pronounces him "under grace." The man is no longer considered a thief, for his debt has been paid.

The law convicts all men of sin. But as Christians, we are not "under the law." Why? Because Jesus paid the debt for us, and the law was satisfied. What then? Shall we continue in sin just because Jesus was good enough to pay off our debt? Of course not! Shall we continue in sin because we are no longer under the law but under grace? God forbid! Christians need to know that grace is not a license to sin. Grace

is only the condition of someone whose sin-debt has been paid, so that the law no longer has occasion against him. The definition of sin has not changed, nor has God ever given man the right to redefine sin. God has given us His law to give us the knowledge of sin, if we will take the time to study it. Once we know and understand the law, the conscience can discern *how to apply the law of God properly to one's personal life.*

The Law of Redemption

In the Bible, all sin is reckoned as a debt. When a man sins, say, by stealing, the law reckons his sin as a debt to be paid to his victim. This is called restitution. The principle of redemption must be understood within the same context. To redeem someone is to redeem their debt note. Jesus came to redeem us from our sins. That is, He paid the full payment of restitution required for our sins. As our Redeemer, He has certain rights prescribed in Leviticus 25:47-53,

⁴⁷ And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family; ⁴⁸ After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: ⁴⁹ Either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. ⁵⁰ And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of Jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him... ⁵³ And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him [the kinsman-redeemer]; and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight.

The law here tells us that a debtor always has the right to redeem himself, and a near kinsman always has the right to redeem the debtor. In these cases, the master who has a debtor in servitude to him has no option but to allow the redemption to take place. However, if the would-be redeemer is *not* a near kinsman, then he does have an option. This is why it was so important for Jesus to come as a near kinsman. He did so on two levels: (1) "He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16) in order to redeem the House of Israel; and (2) He took upon Himself flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14) in order to

be a near kinsman to mankind in general. Thus, He can deliver all *"who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Heb. 2:15).

The debtor who is redeemed is to serve his redeemer "as a yearly hired servant" (Lev. 25:53). In other words, the redeemer buys the servant's debt note. The servant simply changes masters and now works for his near kinsman. He is not free in the absolute sense, even though he has been redeemed. Paul appeals to this law in Romans 6, right after telling us we should not continue in sin just because we are under grace. Continuing in that passage, we read:

¹⁶ Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? ¹⁷ But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin [the stranger that waxed rich by us], but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸ Being then made free from sin [the foreign master], ye became the servants of righteousness [Jesus Christ and His law]. ¹⁹ I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. ²⁰ For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness... ²² But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Sin was a harsh taskmaster while we were apart from Christ. But our near Kinsman, Jesus Christ, came to redeem us from the debt that we could not pay. He redeemed our debt note, and so now that we are made free from sin—the taskmaster—we have "become servants to God" and are expected to follow His law. In our obedience to His law, we are "servants to righteousness," and we have "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Therefore, we conclude that the law is still highly relevant to Christians. It was not put away or destroyed by grace when Jesus redeemed us from Master Sin. Instead, Jesus redeemed us according to the righteous law of redemption, and by that same law, we are now servants of God, subject to His law. Let us discard the notion that we

are now totally free to do as we please according to what we think is right or wrong. We should indeed follow our conscience, but only insofar as it is saturated with the Word. If our conscience has been "seared" (1 Tim. 4:2) by the spirit of lawlessness, it will not serve us properly in discerning right from wrong.

The Law of Jubilee

Leviticus 25 explains the law of Jubilee as well as the law of redemption. If a man in Israel lost his land through poverty and debt, he had to work for others to repay his debt. But no matter how far into debt he went, he would always return to his land inheritance at the end of the Jubilee cycle. Leviticus 25:54 says,

⁵⁴ And if he be not redeemed in these years [of servitude], then he shall go out in the year of Jubilee, both he and his children with him.

This is grace at its highest level. No man can go so far into debt that he cannot be redeemed by grace in the end. The Jubilee not only allows it; *it demands it*. We know that there are many who have *not* appropriated the redemptive grace of Jesus. What is to become of them? Are they doomed to remain in bondage to Master Sin forever? No. The law has a "statute of limitations" on sin and debt bondage. This is the law of grace. It is manifested and demanded by the law of the Jubilee, so that even if they are not redeemed during those years of servitude, they must be set free at the Jubilee purely by an act of grace.

This is an outrageous statement to those who have been taught that God will punish men without end and without any hope of a final redemption. It is ironic that those who believe in grace at the expense of the law of God are less merciful in their outlook toward sinners than those who know the law of Jubilee and how it establishes true grace. Paul knew about this principle, however, and thus he wrote that all of Creation is groaning in travail, awaiting the manifestation of the Sons of God. All Creation lives in hope for the Great Jubilee of Creation. But to deal with this further in this present study would be a tangent. I would simply refer you to another book of mine, [Creation's Jubilee](#), available upon request (\$15 each, postpaid).

The 490 Times of Forgiveness and Grace

In Matthew 18:21-22, we read,

21 Then came Peter to Him and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven [490 times].

Jesus was revealing what we call the “law of Blessed Time,” which governs the patience, forgiveness, and grace of God. Because of this law, God does not strike people dead immediately when they sin (even though we too often wish He would do so, particularly when we are the victims of injustice!).

Note the Jubilee connection. The number 490 is a period of ten Jubilees. This is the basic unit of measure in long-term Bible prophecy. It surfaces only three times in the Bible: Genesis 4:24, Matthew 18:22, and Daniel 9:24. Yet all of history is measured in Jubilees and 490-year periods, because this is the basis of God’s prophetic calendar. The final Creation Jubilee is ultimately the goal of history and the subject of prophecy.

As we will see in Chapter 2, the year 1986 A.D. is the 120th Jubilee from Adam. In terms of Creation, it is the end of six days of a Creation week—5880 years of chronology, but 6,000 years of “legal time.” In one sense, we have already entered into the first Creation Sabbath millennium. The reason this Jubilee is not yet fully manifest will be discussed in a later chapter, but the Scriptures speak plainly of this seeming discrepancy, telling how God will resolve it.

For now, however, let me just make the point that this is only the first sabbath millennium of seven, leading to the great Creation Jubilee. All of Creation presently groans in travail awaiting the manifestation of the Sons of God (Rom. 8:19). The Sons of God will manifest first, followed by the Church, and finally all of Creation will be freed into the glorious liberty of the children of God. But every man in his own order, as Paul says. The details of this plan are shown in my book, [Creation’s Jubilee](#).

The Creation itself, I believe, will be set free by the law of Jubilee after 1000 Jubilees have passed. This will be 50,000 years of legal time, but only 49,000 years of chronology (1000 x 49). This is the Jubilee on the Creation level, which is the highest and most far-reaching level. It will affect all of Creation.

Jesus’ Parable of Forgiveness (Jubilee)

When Jesus told Peter to forgive 490 times, He immediately told a parable to illustrate this principle (Matt. 18:21-35). This is a very important parable, since it provides the keys to how God has worked with whole nations and the Church throughout history.

A certain king had a servant who owed him 10,000 talents, a huge debt. When it came time to foreclose on the debt (after 490 days) the servant begged for mercy, and the king forgave the debt. However, that same servant then confronted his neighbor who owed him a small amount of money. The neighbor begged for mercy, but the man would not forgive the debt. Instead, he threw his neighbor into prison and sold his family into bondage to pay the debt.

When the king heard of this, he canceled the mercy and grace which he had previously extended to his servant. He threw him into prison until the full debt of 10,000 talents should be paid. The moral of the story is given in Matthew 18:35,

³⁵ So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Jesus was not really talking about monetary debts, but about "trespasses," or sins. This is one of many New Testament passages where we see how sin is reckoned as a debt. The servant with the huge debt represents a great sinner. Any time someone secures a loan, the debt note is dated, so that both parties know when it comes due. Since this parable is an illustration of the principle of "seventy times seven," one might say that the debt had to be paid after 490 days.

The certain king was obligated to "forgive" the debt for that specified amount of time. We call it a "grace period." The grace period is the time allotted to repay the debt. It ends with the time of reckoning the accounts and possible foreclosure. But this is also a parable showing us how the principle of Jubilee works in a very practical sense. In fact, this is a Kingdom parable, showing us how God dealt with Israel and Jerusalem. I will explain this shortly.

Peter's Lack of Understanding

When Peter asked if he should forgive seven times, he showed that he did not understand the Jubilee principle. There are three "rests" in the law: the 7th day, the 7th year, and the Jubilee (7 x 7

years). The seventh-day rest is the most fundamental level of rest. All servants, and even animals, were to be given a day of rest. This included those servants who were debtors.

The seventh year was a land rest, when no one was allowed to sow or reap (Lev. 25:4-5), except that the poor could eat what grew of itself (Ex. 23:11). The oxen were given a rest. All Hebrew servants were sent home and given a year's vacation from servanthood (Ex. 21:2). It is like suspending the payments on a debt note for a year in order to give employees a true rest. Without that suspension of payments, the employees would be forced to continue working throughout the rest year in order to make their payments.

However, the servants who had sold themselves for debt, or sinners who had been sold by the court to repay their victims, may have to return to their servanthood after the rest year. They would work six years and rest the seventh. While this "seventh-year rest" is greater than a weekly sabbath rest, it is still not the greatest rest. The greatest rest is the Jubilee, when all debts are canceled and every man returns to his inheritance. The Jubilee ends all servitude, and all men are able to begin again with a clean slate, debt free.

In the first two rests, the debts are held in abeyance for either a day or a year. They are "released" temporarily, but are not forgiven fully. The Jubilee after 49 years is when all debts are permanently released.

In Jesus' day, the people had been observing the weekly rest day and the seventh-year rest ever since their return from the Babylonian captivity in 534 B.C. So they understood the principle of forgiving seven times. But Peter did not carry that principle to the Jubilee level of seventy times seven (490). They had never made that principle a part of their daily lives, and so they did not understand its application on the highest level. Jesus took it not only to the level of the 49-year Jubilee cycle, but to the 490-year cycle of ten Jubilees. He did this to reveal a hidden principle of Bible prophecy that most do not comprehend today.

Every student of Bible prophecy is familiar with Daniel's 70 weeks (490 years). But because few know its underlying basis in the laws of time, they do not fully comprehend the purpose of a 490-year cycle. We have already seen how this parable applies to our personal lives in the area of forgiveness. But this personal application certainly

does not exhaust its significance. It is also the key to understanding how God deals with nations on a corporate level.

God's Obligation to Forgive the Nation 490 Times

When an individual Israelite trespassed against God or became unclean for any reason, he was required to go to the Temple and offer a blood sacrifice to atone for his sin. The animal's blood was poured out under the altar, depositing the man's sin there, and the priest covered it with the dust of the ground. Throughout the year, as more and more Israelites did this, the Temple became more and more defiled by the sins on its grounds. And so, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest was to make a sacrifice and take some of its blood, bringing it into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle it upon the mercy seat of the Ark. In so doing, he obtained atonement, forgiveness, and mercy for the nation.

God forgave the nation of Israel once a year, or 49 times every Jubilee cycle, or *490 times every ten Jubilees*. Jesus knew that under normal circumstances, God would forgive the nation 490 times before reckoning the account to determine whether to give them an extension of grace. Thus, to illustrate His answer about forgiving 490 times, Jesus began the parable in Matthew 18:23-24 by saying,

²³ Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king [God], which would take account of his servants. ²⁴ And when he had begun to reckon...

In other words, the king (God) had forgiven 490 times over a period of 490 years, and it was time to reckon the account. Under normal circumstances, He was obligated to forgive the nation 490 times before reckoning the national debt (sin). However, without understanding the connection between the 490 times of forgiveness and the king's time of reckoning, most people have missed this very important way in which God deals with nations. Worse yet, they are unable to understand the purpose of a 70-week period, particularly that which Daniel prophesied. This lack of understanding is calamitous, since Daniel's 70 weeks is the foundation of most modern Bible prophecy teaching.

Exactly how all of this applies to Daniel's 70 weeks will be treated in a later chapter. In order to understand the timing of Daniel's 70 weeks, one must see how and when it began and ended. Unfortunately, so many theories have been taught over the years

whose proponents did not comprehend the basic purpose of a 490-year period, we will have to lay many foundations of historical and biblical events before we can construct a proper understanding of that prophecy.

Blessed Time, Judged Time, and Cursed Time

As a matter of convenience, I use the term "Blessed Time" to describe the 490-year grace period leading to the Jubilee. The ten thousand talent debtor in Jesus' parable represents the nation of Israel when we apply this principle on a national level.

In studying biblical history, I learned about two other major time cycles closely related to Blessed Time. In comparing these three cycles, it is apparent that Blessed Time (490 years) is the grace period that God gives to a nation that is basically obedient to His law. In other words, it is applicable to God's "servant." The debtor in Jesus' parable is called the king's "servant," and therefore the king does not foreclose until the end of 490 times of forgiveness.

However, not all nations even make the attempt to serve God and cannot rightly be called "servants." Nations which for one reason or another become liable for obedience to God's law, but which remain blatantly rebellious and disobedient, are not given a full grace period of 490 years. Instead, their grace period is shortened to 414 years, which is a cycle I call "Cursed Time." It is important to understand that Cursed Time is actually a grace period, in which God allows a nation 414 years of grace before foreclosing on its debt to the law. The basic principle governing it is the same as Blessed Time; the only difference is that it is 76 years shorter.

There is a third grace period for a nation that is *obedient, but late*. I call it Judged Time, a period of 434 years (i.e., 62 "weeks"). This time period is applicable specifically to the nation of Israel and Judah from their Jordan crossing to the Babylonian captivity. Israel was supposed to enter the Promised Land after being in the wilderness for less than two years. Ten of the 12 spies gave an evil report, causing the people to lose faith. Because of their disobedience, God prohibited them from entering the land for another 38 years. Thus, they entered the land *late*, after spending 40 years in the wilderness. Because of this, God would reckon their account on 434-year cycles, rather than giving them a full 490 years. This I will show in more detail in a later chapter.

When Israel was given the law at the foot of Mount Sinai, the day was thereafter commemorated as the Feast of Pentecost. Approximately 490 days later was the 50th Jubilee from Adam, when the 12 spies gave their report. If Israel had believed Caleb and Joshua and entered the Promised Land at that time, they would have entered on Blessed Time. Not only would their decision have been made on a 490-day cycle, but they would have returned to their inheritance on the 50th Jubilee from Adam (50 x 49 years).

Unfortunately for Israel, in entering the land late, their grace period was shortened to just 434 years. A study of chronology proves this, revealing not only the purpose of Judged Time, but also two distinct ways in which God has reckoned Israel's account in the past. Understanding these Bible principles gives us a wealth of knowledge of God's ways, which Paul said are "*past finding out*" (Rom. 11:33). While I realize that we cannot possibly comprehend all His ways this side of the glorified body, I note that God "*made known His ways unto Moses*" (Ps. 103:7). The possibility of knowing at least some of God's ways encourages us to know Him better.

Why Was Grace Conditional Upon Forgiving Others?

In the parable of Matthew 18:21-35, the servant who refused to forgive the debt of his neighbor found himself likewise no longer forgiven of his 10,000 talent debt. How can this be?

To many preachers, this is one of those "hard passages" in the Bible, because they attempt to relate it to one's salvation. In so doing, they end up teaching that if we as Christians do not forgive all those who have wronged us, then we will lose our salvation. The problem with this view is that essentially it demands perfection, and thus puts a burden upon Christians that they are unable to bear. If such a view were correct, who then could be saved?

Christians should certainly learn to forgive, but this is not a quality that Christians always manifest immediately upon their conversion. The ability to forgive is easy only for those who have never been wronged in major ways. For the majority, however, forgiveness is possible only over a period of time as the Holy Spirit works in their lives. Bitterness and unforgiveness do not disappear automatically with salvation, nor should one's Justification be attached to one's ability to forgive or eradicate years of bitterness in one's heart.

Justification is by faith alone. After one is Justified, then God begins to work in the heart of the Christian to root out the works of the flesh, the bitterness, the unforgiveness. This is part of the Sanctification process, not Justification. Jesus' parable is therefore not teaching us about how to "stay saved." It is not about "falling from grace." It is showing us the difference between the Overcomer and the Christian in general. For a full discussion of this, see either [Creation's Jubilee](#) or my three-part series of smaller booklets: [The Purpose of Resurrection](#), [The Barley Overcomers](#), and [The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#).

Jerusalem is the Unforgiving Servant

As I said earlier, this parable in Matthew 18 is a Kingdom parable. No doubt Jesus had Jerusalem in mind when He gave this parable, because the servant who owed 10,000 talents fits precisely with the way God dealt with Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day.

Six hundred years before Christ, when the king of Babylon was getting ready to lay siege to Jerusalem, the invasion was God's way of foreclosing on their debt note. Their "grace period" had run out, and judgment was impending. In Jeremiah 34, we find that Jerusalem then prayed to God, asking for mercy, even as the debt-laden servant did in Jesus' parable. And so the Word came to Jeremiah that gave them the solution. If they would but heed this Word, God would get rid of the Babylonian armies, and the city would be spared. God would not foreclose upon Jerusalem, and He would not command that they and their households be sold into bondage. The Word was that they should declare a rest year—something that they had never done! We read in Jeremiah 34:8-10,

⁸ This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem: to proclaim liberty unto them, ⁹ That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or a Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew [Judahite] his brother. ¹⁰ ...then they obeyed and let them go.

What a tremendous day that was! All the bondmen and bondmaids were released from their debt and servanthood! Jerusalem issued an official proclamation releasing all the servants. God was then

in a position to forgive Jerusalem her debt to the law as well. God would send the Babylonians home, and the people would remain free. Unfortunately, their obedience to God was only skin deep. We read in the next verse (Jeremiah 34:11),

¹¹ But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

In other words, the people of Jerusalem acted like the unforgiving servant in Jesus' parable. They had been forgiven a huge debt of sin, but they could not forgive their neighbors of their small debts. As a consequence, God's grace came to an end. No extension of grace was given to them. God canceled their Jubilee and sold them into bondage for the next 70 years. The unforgiving servant was sent to debtor's prison to pay off his 10,000 talent debt until the last farthing should be paid.

In a later chapter, as I deal with that time of history, I will be able to show the timing of this event in Jerusalem's history and how they came to owe God 70 years. But for now, we need to focus upon the general principle of forgiveness and the Jubilee, showing how this works in our own personal lives.

The Overcomers are the Forgivers

If you are one who aspires to be a part of the remnant who will not be sold into bondage at the end of this age, you must know and practice the law of Jubilee in your own personal life. If not, you will be sold into a kind of captivity, and like Israel under Moses, you will "die in the wilderness" (Num. 26:65) without receiving the promised inheritance in the First Resurrection. You will not necessarily die physically, but you will not inherit life in the "Barley Harvest." You may inherit a land inheritance in the Kingdom, but you will not receive the "land" inheritance lost in Adam—the glorified body. Those who are not glorified at this first appointed time must await a later Resurrection at the close of the Tabernacles Age.

The remnant of Overcomers is not a group of super-spiritual supermen and superwomen. It does not require great intelligence or great spirituality to become part of this group. (Please, no stones just yet!) You do not have to be a great prophet, or win thousands of souls for Christ, or perform great miracles. There is only one requirement:

learn to forgive your debtors. The key is obedience to the law of Jubilee. We are told in Matthew 6:14-15,

¹⁴ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Paraphrasing this, if you practice the Jubilee principle toward others, God will do the same with you. And particularly at the end of the final 490-year grace period of the Church, when He reckons the accounts of the Church, those who cancel all debts of others will be released of all their own debts, that they may return to their true inheritance—transfiguration and immortality—in the First Resurrection. The biblical patterns of Israel's feast days indicate that the Resurrection will occur at the Feast of Trumpets of some year, even as Passover prophesied of Jesus crucifixion, and Pentecost foretold of the Spirit's coming in Acts 2.

We do know that the Church Age lasted 40 Jubilees, from 33 A.D. to 1993 A.D. This is also four periods of 490 years. The Church's critical moment of visitation thus came in 1993 AD, at which time they were disqualified, and the mandate to bring forth the Kingdom was passed to the Overcomers. But we are getting far ahead of ourselves.

Old Jerusalem's history is the pattern toward the New Jerusalem. Old Babylon's history is the pattern toward Mystery Babylon in our day. If you want to be part of the remnant company of Overcomers, read Jeremiah 34 and Matthew 18. That is what these passages are all about.

Jerusalem was ungodly all their days. They stoned the prophets and set up idols in their hearts continually. Yet when it came to the end of their grace period, it all came down to one issue: would they release all those who had wronged them? Would they do like Jesus did on the Cross, praying, "*Father, forgive them*"? Would they do as did Stephen, the first martyr, who, as he was being unjustly stoned, prayed, "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*" (Acts 7:60)?

In Matthew 6:12, Jesus taught us to pray, "*And forgive us our debts [transgressions] as we forgive our debtors [those who transgress against us].*" Those who sin against us are indebted to us, according to God's law. We are their creditors. If we retain their sins

against us, they are retained; and if we release their sins, they are released (John 20:23).

In other words, if we insist upon pressing charges against those who wrong us, God will back us as our attorney (Greek, *paraklete*, 1 John 2:1), because the law is always on the side of justice. If we decide to drop all charges and forgive the offenses of others, God will drop all charges against them as well. When Jesus and Stephen dropped all charges, these were not just empty words. They were spoken as decrees in the court of the highest heaven, and God did indeed drop all charges.

As in the days of Jeremiah, we today are given an identical choice, which will determine whether we escape the sword of Babylon or not. We may either retain the debts of men by holding grudges against them, or we may declare a Jubilee over all our debtors.

What a marvel that God would make it so simple that *anyone* could become a part of the remnant of Overcomers! Until I read Jeremiah 34 and Matthew 18, I thought I had to attain some sort of quasi-sainthood as the Church defines it—yet all my works, my education, even my faith only proved to be filthy rags. Everything I did seemed only to prove I was unfit.

Qualifying for remnant status is *not* a matter of works, no matter how good those works are. You will not qualify by working miracles, or by spending long hours in prayer daily, or by disciplining yourself to read the Bible for many hours a day. Miracles are good, and it is even better to pray and read the Bible. This may be the road to a better understanding of the Word, which is certainly helpful, but it is not the path to remnant status. You were not saved by disciplining the flesh; neither will you be *perfected* by disciplining the flesh. Galatians 3:3 says,

³ Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

This is good news for all Christians except those who are proud to be called Doctors of Theology or Great Men of Faith, those who love to look down from their lofty towers of super-spirituality and thank God that they are not like other men, or those who practice strict asceticism and live austere lives to “buffet the flesh” and make it spiritual.

Such men will find the law of Jubilee to be an offense, because the doors to remnant status are thus thrown open to even the lowliest of Christians. They need no degrees in theology, they need not be called Pastor or Reverend, they need not write newsletters or books, they need not be on the radio or TV preaching the gospel to the world.

The remnant people will be ordinary housewives, little old grandparents, children, men living and working in the real world—people who do not have a call to go to Bible College, start ministries, or preach great sermons. They are poor people who must work for a living and simply do not have the time to read their Bibles prayerfully four hours a day.

It is time we take the Kingdom out of the hands of the “Great Men of God” and bring the Kingdom down within the reach of the little people. Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

How to Keep the Jubilee

People are always people. We are the same as our forefathers in Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah, who were able to forgive their debtors one day, but take it all back the next. It is very easy to forgive, and most people do so—until the next time their neighbor offends them. Suddenly, all the old offenses are brought up again!

Many will forgive a neighbor to his face, but then gossip about the situation behind his back, making sure everyone knows what a stinker he is—and how innocent they are, by way of contrast. So long as we do this, we have no right to condemn the people in Jeremiah’s day for taking back their forgiveness and bringing their servants back into bondage. We are just as guilty as they ever were. Man’s nature has not changed at all.

I’m sorry—*did I say this is easy?* No, it is simple, but not easy. Anyone can qualify, but few will. Some are busy disciplining the flesh to qualify as an Overcomer. I admire their self-confidence, even if it is temporary. But the vast majority have given up before they started. Few realize that it is only a matter of learning the art of grace, and that God is busy teaching this to us every day by giving us people to forgive.

Grace is an art. Why does God send trouble your way? Why does He allow people to offend you? To give you opportunity to learn the art of grace. As a Christian, you have been enrolled in God’s

school, and the prime course of study is *Grace 101*. Most of us flunk the course year after year. Instead of learning grace, we learn bitterness, which makes us as profane as Esau. In casting aside grace and forgiveness, we likewise cast aside our birthright, selling it for a mess of pottage made from the root of bitterness. We prefer harboring petty resentments, instead of forgiving, as God did for us. Profane people will not be of the remnant group.

Esau thought he got a bad deal from God. He knew it was Jesus who stripped him of the birthright, which he felt was rightfully his. His descendants have resented and hated Jesus ever since, and have striven to regain that lost birthright by force and cunning. This bitter attitude characterized Esau. Hebrews 12:15 says,

¹⁵ Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

Probably the most subtle problem in our subconscious mind is our bitterness and resentment against Jesus for allowing us to go through troubles and trials. We think we deserve better, particularly if we have “decided to follow Jesus” and are doing the best we can. We think God owes us something for our decision, as if we were kind enough to become God’s servants.

The night God revealed Jeremiah 34 to me, my wife and I had a long talk. It came to light that we thought God owed us a better living, since He had taken away my job, preventing me from earning my own living. While God was always faithful to provide enough to pay all the bills, feed, and clothe our family of seven, there were always extras that we could not afford. Things like medical and dental work, which we felt were necessities. Things like research books for the ministry work and educational tools for the children.

We discovered a hidden attitude that said, “God owes us a living, because we have left all to follow Him; we deserve better than this.” In other words, we found an area where we had not *forgiven God*, but were instead a little bitter toward Him. We had to deal with this more than once until the art of forgiving God became a habit. (Eventually, it becomes part of your nature.)

Others are bitter because God does not heal them. After all, did He not promise to heal all our diseases? He should provide for all our needs, because we are Christians, His servants, His Sons. God

owes us! Right? Is not this what most miracle-workers teach you in order to “build your faith?” They seem to think that God *must* heal you, because He owes it to you. Yet the simple fact is that *not everyone is healed*. I do not understand why this is, but I know it is so.

And so this leaves many Christians bitter against God for not providing for all their needs. They take God before the law and insist upon restitution. They exercise their “lawful rights,” holding Him hostage to His Word.

In reality, God has deliberately *not* provided everything promised in his Word, in order to give us opportunity to walk by faith, rather than by understanding. It is also to give us opportunity *to release God from His obligations*, to rest in Him, knowing that no matter what God does, He does all things well. In other words, we are called to declare a Jubilee over God!

God creates a “tension” by promising something and then not delivering upon it—at least not in the time and manner we had expected and wanted. Suddenly, we react in anger and bitterness against God. We are “hurt” that the One who loves us would treat us this badly. But if He had not done this, we could never apply the Jubilee Principle to the most basic problem in human nature—bitterness against God.

Jesus is our prime Example. He was totally innocent, yet He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. What a terrible injustice He had to endure! We are called to partake of His sufferings (1 Peter 4:13). If we would reign with Him, we must first suffer with Him (2 Tim. 2:12).

Job is the main Old Testament pattern of suffering. What Job suffered was totally unjust, from man’s point of view. But to his credit, Job did not ascribe sin to God. Instead, he waited and prayed for understanding. When the season of trial was completed, God did give him understanding. Then Job rejoiced, for He then knew another side of God that few had ever seen.

Before Job’s trials began, he knew the sovereignty of God as a philosophical or doctrinal position. At the end of his trial, He knew it by personal experience as well. This truth is best expressed in Job 2:10,

¹⁰ What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

The average simplistic Christian today thinks that God does only good, and only the devil does evil. Whenever something bad happens or he gets sick, "The devil's after me again." If we are truly the Sons and Daughters of God, we should get to know our Father and His character better than that simplistic view. We need to understand that God has a "left hand" as well.

Joseph learned this lesson in his years of suffering in the dungeon after his brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt. Years later, when his brothers were afraid he would retaliate against them, he told them in Genesis 50:19-20,

¹⁹ Fear not; for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Joseph was an Overcomer. He saw that God had a purpose in all those trials, and it was a good purpose. God could have delivered him at any moment, but He did not. It took years for Joseph to work through his bitterness and to come to a true knowledge of God and His character. But this verse shows that Joseph was not a bitter man. He had overcome. He had not only learned to forgive; he had learned that his brothers had only been part of a great Master Plan of God that would result in saving many people alive.

If we can learn to release God of His (temporary) injustices toward us, we can release the sin-debt that any man owes us. This is the real secret of the Jubilee. One who does not understand this has never truly understood the meaning of grace.

Jesus told us what our attitude should be when God appears to mistreat us. Luke 17:7-10 reads, in the NASV,

⁷ But which of you, having a slave plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, Come immediately and sit down to eat? ⁸ But will he not say to him, Prepare something for me to eat, and properly clothe yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunk; and afterward you will eat

**and drink? ⁹ *He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?* ¹⁰
So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, **We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.****

We must have this attitude of humility if we hope to be part of God's remnant people. Only with such an attitude can we avoid blaming God for not providing what He promised in His Word, or for what we feel are legitimate needs. If we cannot forgive God, how can we forgive our neighbor? And if we do not forgive our neighbor, how can we truly celebrate God's Jubilee?

It all begins with our attitude toward God. Let us not be children of Esau, who do his works, but let us be children of God, well seasoned with grace and forgiveness toward all.