

THE LAW

In Ephesians 4:14 Paul speaks about something he calls a “wind of doctrine.” He urges us on to spiritual maturity so that “...we should no longer be children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine...”(NKJV).

Observing the Christian church through the years, one notices that every so often a new doctrine comes along, blowing through the church and sweeping numerous gullible believers along with it. The subject of these “winds” is not necessarily important but has included things such as: “being slain in the Spirit,” “discipleship,” “getting golden teeth,” “Jesus coming back in 1988,” “barking like dogs,” and “returning to Judaism.”

This return to Judaism appears to have several streams such as: returning to the practice of the Jewish festivals, pronouncing the name of Jesus correctly in Hebrew, and keeping the Jewish law (at least those parts of the law these folks find convenient to keep).

It is interesting that Paul calls these phenomenon “winds.” This word is reminiscent of how we are taught that angels are called “winds” or “spirits” (Heb 1:7). You probably realize that angelic spirits, be they on God’s side or on the side of the darkness, have power. They can influence the minds of large numbers of people very quickly. A sudden thought or idea can impel entire populations in a given direction in a very short time.

An example of such powerful influences of spirits is given to us in the book of Revelation 16:14 where we read: “These are spirits of evil deities *which* do signs, going out to the kings of the entire world to gather them together for the battle of the great day of the Almighty God” (FLNT).

In the case we are discussing, it is the believers who are influenced by such powerful beings, being deceived by them to go chasing after some new

Christian fad, practice or teaching. This seems to be a very common phenomenon today.

In his day, Paul was constantly “battling,” through his writing and teaching, with those who were insisting on the practice of Judaism. This theme is persistent throughout his writings. It seems that there were many converted Jews who did not understand the gospel message thoroughly. They still wanted to cling to their old religious ways.

To combat this message and tendency, Paul used many and various arguments. We will spend some time here and examine some of them. Although many readers may wonder why this subject is even being discussed – perhaps thinking that the book of Galatians should be enough to persuade anyone and everyone – this does not seem to be the case.

Let us begin by examining a passage in Matthew 5:17,18 which many quote in their attempts to justify a return to, or a keeping of, the law. We read: “Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle will in any way pass away from the law, until all things are fulfilled” (FLNT).

Please notice that Jesus did not say the law would not pass away until it all was thoroughly, finally and correctly kept. Instead, He used the word “fulfilled.” This Greek word PLEROO means: “to make full, complete, consummate.”

It is beyond question that the Old Testament law was full of typology. It was sort of a prefiguring or “shadow” of the spiritual realities which were to come to us in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:1 teaches us: “For the law, being a shadow of the good things to come and not the very substance of those things, can never make those who draw near perfect...” (FLNT).

In Colossians 2:17, after listing a number of the demands of the law, including what kind of food you eat and drink, or observing the feast days or the Sabbath day, Paul says: “This is because these things are just a shadow of the

spiritual things which were to come, but the fulfillment {or substance} of them is now in the Anointed One" (FLNT).

There is no doubt that Jesus, in His life, death and resurrection, partially fulfilled the law. One of the most obvious fulfillments was the legislation concerning the necessity of the Jews sacrificing a lamb on the day of Passover. It seems obvious that Jesus fulfilled this "shadow" of the law with the sacrifice of Himself so that God would "pass over" our sins and not condemn us to destruction.

There are also countless other aspects of the law that Jesus fulfilled, completed and consummated. Yet this is only a part of what God means when He speaks about the law being "fulfilled" in Matthew.

You see, the law is a kind of definition of God's righteousness. It is sort of an abbreviated form of, or a description of, the character of God. What he is like, of what He approves and disapproves, what harmonizes with His character and what doesn't, is written down for us in His law.

I use the word "abbreviated" here because it is impossible, with human words, to describe the totality of God's holiness and righteousness.

God gave us His law so that we could understand a little of who and what He is. One of His desires in so doing was that man would become holy as He is.

This is very important. God really does want us to become holy. As part of this project on His part, He gave us His law so that we could glimpse a small part of His holiness. Although the history of the Jews shows us that this law-giving was not powerful enough to accomplish God's objective, He has not given up on this goal to make us holy. He is still working on this project today, however now He is working in a new and living way through Jesus Christ.

When we speak of fulfilling the law, we mean to say that its objectives are being accomplished. It means that God's purposes in giving the law have been completed. Simply adhering strictly to the law is not "fulfilling" it.

When Jesus lived His life on this earth, He lived out this God's righteousness. He never once did or said anything which violated God's holy nature. His life, including His speech, actions, attitudes and even the expression of His face, expressed the Father's holiness in every way. This was one of the ways in which He fulfilled the law.

Yet this was not the end. We already stated that Jesus' fulfillment of the law was "partial." Why is that? Did He fail in some way? No! It is because it is God's will for His people, His church to also "fulfill" the law. This means that we too are supposed to live out a genuine righteousness: the righteousness of God himself. Jesus' fulfillment of the law was limited because it only involved one person. Now God's will is for this fulfillment to occur in a much larger way.

How is this going to happen? Is it accomplished by following the law or being filled with the life of the Father? Is it done by human efforts or willpower, determination, etc? Of course not! It is done by the holy life of Jesus living in us.

Romans 8:4 teaches us that God's Son did His work: "...so that the ordinances of the law would be fulfilled in those who don't conduct their lives following the flesh [which includes keeping the law] but following the Spirit" (FLNT). You see, in believers also there is supposed to be an ongoing, daily fulfillment of God's law. Jesus' plan is not to do away with law. It is also not for us to continue trying to keep it. Instead it is to fulfill it by His living in us and through us.

To combat the tendency of those who did not really understand the gospel message and were trying to revert to keeping the law, Paul used various types of arguments. He was trying, through many different means, to show believers that the law is no longer in force for them.

One of these arguments, which we read about in Romans 7:1-6, involves the picture of marriage. Paul reminds us that, according to the law, a woman is “bound” to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, she is freed from the bond of the law to her husband. He then states that: “...you also have died to the law [which was our previous ‘husband’] through the body of the Anointed one, so that you could be *legally* ‘married’ to another, even to the One who has risen from the dead, so that we would bear fruit to God” (FLNT).

Wait a minute. Did he say that we “have died to the law”? In verse one of this same chapter Paul says: “...the law has dominion over a man as long as he is alive?” But if we are dead – that is we have died with Jesus – then the law can no longer be considered to be in force. It has no application and can have no application to dead men which is what Paul insists that we are.

Furthermore, by saying that we should “be bearing fruit to God” (vs 4) he means that we should be exhibiting Jesus’ righteousness or “fulfilling the law” instead of keeping it. In Philippians 3:9 Paul reaffirms this by saying: “*I want to be found in him not have a righteousness of my own which comes from keeping the law but one which is through the faith of the Anointed One, i.e. God’s own righteousness which is ours through faith*” (FLNT).

Let us read another passage together. “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which are *exposed* through the law worked in our members to bring forth the fruit of death. But now we have been freed from *the demands of the law* – dying to that in which we were held – so that we can be serving in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter *of the law*” (Rm 7:5,6 FLNT). This then is one of Paul’s very strong arguments: we are now dead and therefore the law does not apply to us.

Paul reinforces his argument about our death putting an end to the law saying: “For since I ‘legally’ died *with the Anointed One*, I died to the law also, in order that God would *now* be my life *source*” (Gal 2:19 FLNT).

Another one of Paul's arguments against the law is that these "ordinances" have been blotted out. We read in Colossians 2:14: "*He blots out the array of written ordinances which were against us and even opposed to us. He has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*"

Obviously, these "ordinances" are the demands of the law which Moses wrote down. Then he continues his argument in verse 16 saying: "Therefore, *since the written ordinances have been 'blotted out,' let no one judge you with respect to religious ordinances such as what kind of meat you eat, what you drink, or concerning a religious feast day, or observing a new moon, or a Sabbath day. This is because these things are just a shadow of the spiritual things which were to come, but the fulfillment of them is now in the Anointed One*" (FLNT).

Paul then repeats his earlier argument concerning our death and how it impacts our relationship to the law. He says in verses 20 and 21: "Since you died with the Anointed One to the essence of this world, why, as though still a part of the world do you subject yourselves to earthly, *religious ordinances such as: don't touch this, don't eat that, or don't handle some other thing? These are just regulations concerning perishable things, all of which are destined for destruction.*" Obviously such human ordinances have no value to dead people.

Another of Paul's arguments against law keeping by believers has to do with a curse. He reasons: "For everyone who depends on the works of the law *to be right with God* is under a curse..." (Gal 3:10 FLNT). Why should depending on the law, which was given by God, bring us under a curse? It is because we can't do it. We are not strong enough to keep the law. Even with the "help" of the Holy Spirit we just can't do it.

Therefore, since we end up failing to keep it, we come under the curse of not keeping the law. Paul then shows us how Jesus took this curse upon Himself by being crucified thus freeing us from trying to keep the law which brings us under this curse.

Paul teaches us that: “For the Anointed One is the end of the law resulting in righteousness for everyone who is believing” (Rm 10:4 FLNT). So, Paul says that Jesus is the “end of the law.”

How can this be when Jesus taught us that the law would not pass away? It must be that in Jesus we fulfill the law. It is ended by being fulfilled. Please notice that this happens by our living, ongoing faith. We are freed from the old law so that we can be governed by another law. This new law is called: “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rm 8:2 NKJV).

Paul also teaches us that the law is being “discarded.” In the passage of 2 Corinthians 3:7-13 he speaks about the “ministry of condemnation” which was written by “engraving on stones.” This then must refer to the ten commandments which were written on two stone tablets and, by implication, the entire Old Testament law.

He then tell us that this “ministry of condemnation” is “being discarded. “For if that which is being discarded had glory, that which remains is much more glorious” (2 Cor 3:11 FLNT). This word translated “discarded” here in Greek is KATARGEO which means:

According to Dodson:

I bring to naught, sever, abolish

(a) I make idle (inactive), make of no effect,

annul, abolish, bring to naught, (b) I discharge, sever, separate from.

According to Strong:

to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively

According to Thayer:

1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative

1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficacy

1b) to deprive of force, influence, power

2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish

2a) to cease, to pass away, be done away

2b) to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one

Paul explains that even though this “ministry of condemnation” had a kind of glory, there is an even greater glory. That is the glory of Jesus living out His life through us.

TAKING AWAY THE VEIL

Further on, using the analogy of the veil Moses put over his face to hide the glory which shone there, he speaks about a veil which is covering the minds of the Jewish people. He then says that this veil remains over them. They cannot see clearly. What is it that they can't see? It is that: “...*it is not being revealed to them that the old covenant is discarded in the Anointed One*” (2 Cor 3:14 FLNT).

Now some might think that it is the “veil” which is being discarded according to these verses. But no, it is the taking away of the veil that lets them see what is *really* being discarded. It is the Old Covenant which is discarded in Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, for many today this veil still remains in place.

In chapter four of Galatians, Paul spends a lot of time developing a theme. This theme is that those who are “under the law” – that is those obligated to keep it – are in bondage. This bondage is so severe that he compares it to being a slave. In essence, he says that before we knew Christ, “...we were enslaved under the earthly principles *of the law*” (Gal 4:3 FLNT). “But when the time came for the fulfillment *of his purposes*, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that he could release by ransom those who were under the law...” (Gal 4:4,5 FLNT).

Later in this same chapter he continues with this theme using the allegory of Hagar (the maid of Abraham's wife, with whom he had a son) and his son Isaac who was born from his true wife.

He begins by saying: "Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, don't you understand what the law says?" "These things contain an allegory. For these women represent two covenants. One is from mount Sinai, bearing children for bondage *to the law*, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the Jerusalem that now is, for she is in bondage *to the law* with her children" Gal 4:24,25 FLNT).

Paul concludes this explanation by saying: "For freedom the Anointed One set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and don't be tangled up again in a yoke of bondage *to the law*" (Gal 5:1 FLNT).

In fact, a careful reading of the entire letter to the Galatians makes it very clear that God has something much better in mind for us than trying to practice the law. "For you, brethren, were called to freedom. Only don't use your freedom as an opportunity to gratify the flesh, but through love serve each other as slaves. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal 5:13,14 FLNT).

Of what use then is the law? The law is useful to convict us of sin. Paul teaches us that the law is sort of a tutor or schoolmaster. Its purpose is to teach us about righteousness and so bring us to Christ to attain that righteousness.

We read: "So the law has become our tutor to bring us to the Anointed One so that we might be being considered just through faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor (*the law*). For you are all children of God through faith in the Anointed One, Jesus" (Gal 3:24,25 FLNT).

Paul also teaches about another reason for the law. We read in 1 Timothy 1:8-11 "But we know that the law is good if a man uses it correctly, which is using it with the following understanding: that the law is not made for a righteous man but for the rebellious and the unrighteous; for the ungodly and the sinners; for the unholy and the morally unrestrained; for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers; for assassins; for the sexually immoral; for pedophiles; for kidnappers; for liars; for those who don't keep their word;

and for those who practice anything else which is in opposition to healthy teaching and not in harmony with the message of good news of the glory of the blessed God with which I was entrusted.”

When we receive the life of God through Jesus, we should be being made righteous from the inside out. We should be expressing God’s own holiness more and more.

But if we are not; that is, if we are resisting the operation of the Holy Spirit to convict us of some sin in our life, then the law can show us where we are wrong. It can’t fix the problem, but it can certainly shine light into us so that we can see where we are not righteous as God is.

THE WRITER OF HEBREWS

The writer of Hebrews makes another kind of argument concerning the law. His reasoning concerns the priesthood. He reminds us that the priesthood of Aaron was established through the law of Moses. Then he shows us that today Jesus is our High Priest similar to Melchizedek of the Old Testament. He then reasons that to have a new priest from a tribe which does not descend from Levi requires a change of the law.

Since it was by the Old Testament law that Aaron and his descendants were made priests something must change. He says: “For when the priesthood is changed it becomes necessary to change the law also” (Heb 7:12 FLNT).

He goes on to say that God’s oath which He swore to make Jesus a priest “annuls” the previous law from which Aaron derived his priesthood. We read: “For in this pronouncement [of verse 7:17] there is an annulling of the previous commandment...” (Heb 7:18). If, therefore, we accept Jesus of Nazareth as our High Priest today, we must also accept the fact that the old law has been annulled to make room for Him as High Priest.

(Now the reader should realize here that you can’t just change a part of the law. It is a complete document and must be accepted or rejected as a whole. You cannot just pick and choose which laws you wish to keep and which you

don't like. Paul states: "Now I affirm to everyone who receives circumcision that he is under an obligation to practice the entire law" (Gal 5:3 FLNT). If you decide to keep one part of the law, you are obligated to keep all of it.

For example, if you think that you must keep the Sabbath as required by the law of Moses, then you also can't wear clothing with two different types of fabric woven together, such as "wool and linen" or cotton and polyester (Deut 22:11). Therefore, if you want Jesus as your High Priest, you cannot try to keep some or all of the laws and commandments associated with the Levitical priesthood at the same time.)

The writer of Hebrews strengthens his argument by emphasizing that the new covenant (contract) was made by God swearing an oath. The law – the first covenant (contract) – did not involve God swearing an oath but the fact that He swore an oath shows the seriousness and importance of the second contract.

He also explains that the law of Moses needed to be annulled "because of its weakness and ineffectiveness." We read: "For *in this pronouncement* there is an annulling of the previous commandment because of its weakness and ineffectiveness" (Heb 7:18 FLNT). He calls it "weak" and "ineffective" because it was unable to make anyone perfect (vs 19).

Paul helps us understand the reason the law is so weak. It is because it depends upon human efforts such as will power, determination, dedication, earnest desire, etc. Romans 8:3 reads: "For the law was ineffective, being weak because it *only worked* through *the efforts* of the flesh." He continues by saying that God's plan for sending His Son is: "...so that the ordinances of the law would be fulfilled in those who don't conduct their lives following the flesh but following the Spirit" (Rm 8:4 FLNT).

The legislation which God wrote on stone was ineffective because it was subject to man's efforts. Now God has sworn a solemn oath to do away with the old, ineffective covenant and bring in a new one. This covenant is being

written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit. When we allow Him to do this in us, this is really effective!

You see, God's plan is for us to really be made perfect. Someone who is truly walking in faith should express a righteousness which is superior to the law. Jesus proclaims: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom *which comes from the heavens*" (Mt 5:20 FLNT).

The scribes and Pharisees tried very hard to keep every bit of the law. In fact, their whole lives were devoted to this single objective. Yet God expects something more from us. He expects our lives to be so full of Himself that His righteousness is expressed in us and through us. God's life within us is capable of revealing the entire character and personality of the Father, thus "fulfilling" the law.

Another argument which the writer of Hebrews puts forth is that the Old Covenant law, along with its rituals and sacrifices, doesn't satisfy God. This is important. Law-keeping does not satisfy the Father. However, the indwelling Christ of the New Covenant does. We read: "By first saying, 'Sacrifices and offerings don't satisfy your *true* intentions, neither do you take pleasure in them,' (which are *the things* offered according to the law) and then saying, 'Look, I have come to do your will,' he does away with the first in order to establish the second" (Heb 10:8,9 FLNT). Jesus does away with law in order to establish true righteousness in us through the agency of His own life.

A NEW WIND

Recently, a new kind of twist to the idea of "law-keeping" has come to my attention. It is that, although the Gentiles are not obligated to keep the law, the Jews who are converted are still under this obligation. At least one person has insisted that Peter and the other converted Jews still kept the law.

It is clear from reading the New Testament that not all the converted Jews had Paul's understanding – which he claimed had come directly from Jesus (Gal 1:12) – and that some of them continued to adhere to the law. Since this

new idea has come to the fore, we will spend some time examining it in the light of the scriptures. To some degree this argument depends on insisting that Peter and other significant figures in Jerusalem continued to adhere to the law.

When examining this question, the first thing we can notice is that Paul claims that Peter did not “live like a Jew” which must mean that he was not religiously complying with all the norms and regulations of the law. Paul, while rebuking Peter for withdrawing and not eating with the Gentile believers anymore said: “If you, being a Jew, live as the Gentiles and not as the Jews...” (Gal 2:14 FLNT). What’s this? Peter didn’t live like a Jew but instead like a Gentile? Could this mean that to some degree he had stopped adhering strictly to the law?

Also, we read that when Peter and those Jews with him withdrew, they: “betrayed their convictions” or “acted in a hypocritical manner” (Gal 2:13). This can only mean that they had already formed genuine convictions contrary to the law which forbade them to eat with Gentiles.

Logically, this conviction was that it was no longer necessary for them to keep the law. But when some others came along from “James,” who were still bound by religious tradition, their upbringing and fear of men led them to betray what they really thought and to act hypocritically.

The next item we must consider is that in Jesus, “...there can be neither Jew nor Greek” (Gal 3:28). In other words, there are not two separate categories any longer. They have been made one.

We read: “For he is our peace, the One who made both *Jews and Gentiles* one, having broken down the partition barrier between them, having destroyed the *motive for* antagonism in his physical body *through his death*” (Eph 2:14 FLNT). And how did He do this? “...by deactivating the law made up of commandments and decrees so that he could create in himself from the two, one new “man,” so making peace” (Eph 2:15 FLNT).

The word “deactivate” in this verse is KATAERGEIO in Greek and means according to Thayer:

- 1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative
- 1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency
- 1b) to deprive of force, influence, power
- 2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish
- 2a) to cease, to pass away, be done away
- 2b) to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one
- 2c) to terminate all intercourse with one

In light of these scriptures, it is impossible that there are still two categories of believers: one which is free to not keep the law and another which still must do so.

Although Paul received this revelation directly from the Lord, there seem to be other brothers who were involved in the life of the early church who lacked this revelation. One such brother who stands out is James.

This James was not one of the apostles. The “James” who was chosen by Jesus was killed early on in the history of the church. This other James was one of Jesus’ brothers who assumed a position of prominence among the believers after Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In many of the instances of different early believers reverting to practicing the law, we find this James behind it. For example, when Peter drew back and stopped eating with the Gentiles, it was because “...certain *brothers* had come from James...” (Gal 2:12). Please notice it doesn’t say that they came from Jerusalem, but from “James.”

When Paul and others came to Jerusalem to resolve the question of whether or not the Gentiles needed to keep the law, Peter seemed quite clear that they were not obligated. We read this account in Acts 15 where he recited for them what God had showed him about the Gentiles and how God had acted towards them concerning faith and salvation.

But then James stepped in. It seemed as if he just couldn't stand it that the Gentiles could get off with no laws at all to keep. Therefore, he felt the need to create four "little" laws for them. He admits that it was his idea by saying: "Therefore, my judgment is..." (Acts 15:19 FLNT). Then he goes on to list his four "dogmas" (Gk).

It seems that Paul and the others went along with these little rules because it was not a heavy burden, being nowhere near as burdensome as trying to keep the whole law. So, they came to "unanimity" (Acts 15:25) and agreed with his suggestion. Later they said: "For it seemed to be good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden..." (Acts 15:28 FLNT).

But in saying this, they must have been merely indicating that they had peace about the question of not laying a heavy burden on the Gentiles. Nowhere does it say that God spoke to them directly or that it was He who ordered these four dogmas to be kept. The truth is it was James who invented these things and the others just went along with it.

Although these brothers imply that the Holy Spirit upheld them in this conclusion, there is some serious doubt that God initiated it. If you think about it, it cannot be true that God values these four little laws above all the hundreds or even thousands of others contained in the Old Covenant. These include laws such as: not to murder, lie, commit adultery, rape, covet, steal, etc.

It is impossible that eating a strangled chicken, for example, which James sought to forbid is more evil in God's eyes, and therefore a more important law for the Gentile believers to keep, than these and many other extremely serious offenses. Is eating a strangled chicken worse than murder? Is it more offensive to God than adultery? Think about this a little.

There is no compelling logic to explain why the Gentiles should keep only these four rules and no others. James was correct when he said it was, "my judgment" (verse 19) that they should keep these four laws. Furthermore, three of these four "dogmas" seem to pertain to what we should or should

not eat. Yet, Jesus taught that it is not what enters into our mouth which defiles us, but what comes out of it (Mk 7:15).

What we must conclude is that James, who seems to still have had a strong connection with the Jewish ceremonial law, suggested this; and since he seemed to be influential, and it was a light burden, the others went along with the compromise which gave them a sense of spiritual peace. Later however, Paul contradicts this admonition, at least concerning food sacrificed to idols (see 1 Cor 8:4-8).

To further investigate the influence of James with regard to the law, let us look at one of Paul's trips to Jerusalem. When Paul went to Jerusalem and was made a prisoner it seems that he did this against the guidance of God.

Why would someone think this? First, the Lord told him not to go. We read in Acts 21:4: "These disciples said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not go to Jerusalem." Numerous other prophets also told him of the many ruinous things which would happen to him there. Yet he persisted and went anyway. His motives for going are unclear, but it seems that even Paul had a few vestiges of the old religion left in him.

The catalyst for his being captured and imprisoned was his making a vow along with some other men and going to the temple. This was suggested to him by the "elders" in Jerusalem among whom was James, who is the only one mentioned by name (Acts 21:18).

Here James is again, involved in suggesting a little law-keeping so that the local Jews wouldn't realize what Paul really thought and taught. Although the scriptures don't say specifically that it was James who suggested this, it is entirely possible and in keeping with his other activities.

This writer understands these actions of Paul of going to the temple and taking this vow to be a mistake. Besides the bad results of his actions, he was also participating in something which did not harmonize with his teachings. Besides all the numerous verses which we have just examined, he also taught us that we are the true temple (1 Cor 3:16).

Furthermore, he was waiting in the temple during a time of “purification” for an “offering” to be made for him and the others. This word “offering” can mean a bloodless oblation or a “sacrifice,” presumably involving blood.

Now why would Paul be waiting for such a thing? How could he possibly need any kind of oblation or sacrifice in the old temple, after entering into Jesus the Anointed One? What conceivable “purification” could have been accomplished by any kind of physical washing or abstinence which Jesus did not fulfill through His death and resurrection?

Paul and Peter both taught us that we are already “washed” and “purified” in Jesus (1 Cor 6:11, 1 Pet 1:22). Paul is clearly involved in a compromise here to accommodate and pacify other brethren by doing some activities which do not fit well with the rest of his teaching. The results of his compromise with something which was less than the truth, had disastrous results.

So we see that a little law-keeping was not blessed. Paul himself teaches us that: “A little yeast leavens the whole lump of dough (Gal 5:9 FLNT). The context of this verse is Paul teaching us that the law does not and cannot justify us. Therefore, it is clear from the context that the “little yeast” or “little leaven” means “a little law-keeping.”

This is just what Paul did in Jerusalem which cost him his freedom. This writer suspects that this experience gave Paul an even clearer understanding regarding the law which is reflected in his later writings.

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