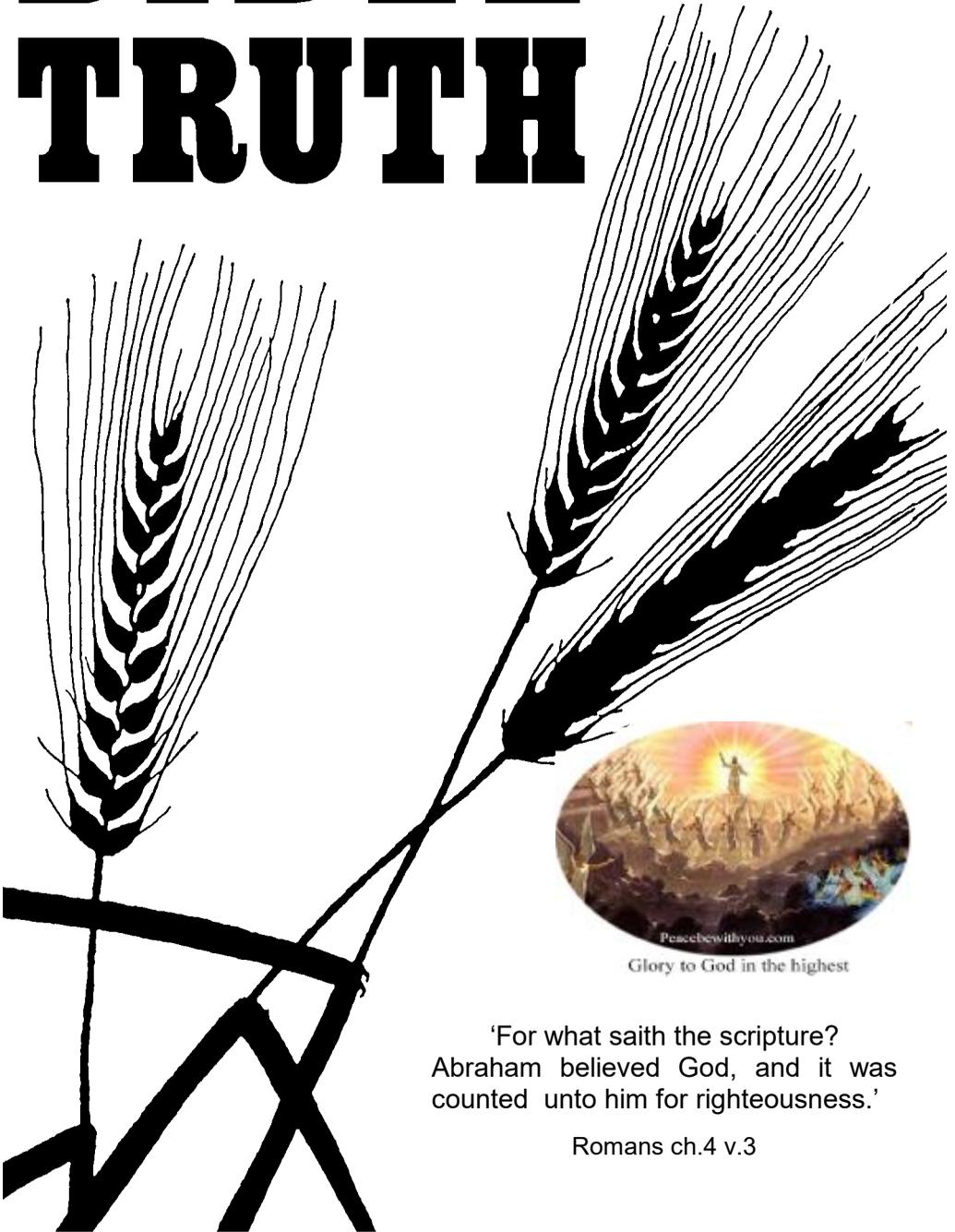


# BIBLE TRUTH

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'For what saith the scripture?  
Abraham believed God, and it was  
counted unto him for righteousness.'

Romans ch.4 v.3



# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM AT SINAI

by the late Rev. C. S. McKelvey

The Law God gave to Israel at Sinai was perfect. It was the system of law which so perfectly harmonised with the laws of nature that the keeping of it was bound to bring life, health, prosperity and happiness; therefore it could not be changed. To do so would be to break the laws of nature with dire results. The law was made national to the Israel nation only, and not to any other nation; those who offended against the law became separated from their God. Thus there had to be a national system of worship so that the nation and individuals could have a way back to God when they sinned.

The third portion of the law is the curses. To enforce law you must have penalties, and so penalties are named.

The scene at the mountain was most impressive as God came down to meet His people. At first the Lord called Moses up to the mountain to act as a mediator between God and the people and gave him the conditions of the benefits of the covenant that He was offering them. Moses then called the Elders of the tribes and all the people said 'All that the LORD hath spoken that we will do ...' (see Exodus ch.19 v.8). Then followed the awe-inspiring event when the presence of the Lord came on the Mount and we read this.

'And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.'

Exodus ch.19 v.19

The people were terrified at the sound of the voice of God and said,

'... unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die'.

Exodus ch.20 v.19

God always intended to speak to the nation direct, in an audible voice, just as he had done with the Fathers, but He accepted the condition laid down by the nation, and it was the only condition they made to the whole of the Covenant that was presented to them. God

said He would no more speak to them with a voice but would speak to them through the prophets. Thus prophets came into being, appointed by God to be the mouth-piece of God to the people. The prophets had to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to pass on the message completely; and it had to be verbatim, without any error.

## **The Priesthood**

This represented the people to God, offered sacrifices on behalf of the people and prayed in their name. In this covenant God linked Himself with His people Israel by every bond possible; He was their God, their Lord, their father and their husband.

We are often told that the Old Covenant was oppressive with its 'thou shalt not, and if you do, then you will be punished'. All national law, the whole world over, is based on this foundation, even our own, but in our law we have the limitation of penalties that can be imposed for the breaking of the laws and no Court can go beyond this limit. The law of the Lord was just and the limitation of the penalty is plainly stated in the passage: 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. It is not justice if a man has knocked out one tooth of another man to take two of his teeth in return. Thus in one simple sentence the justice of the law is plainly stated. There are also many parts of the law that show when mercy can be afforded.

The whole law was based on two commandments only: love to God and love to our neighbour. Therefore, it could not be oppressive. The Ten Commandments were built on the foundation of love and the keeping of them would be quite natural without any effort if we loved God with all our heart and our fellowmen as ourselves. It would be wise if our leaders studied these laws afresh in the light of present day scientific knowledge.

There is much to be learned from the law of the Old Testament concerning food, clothing, treatment of the land, hygiene, international affairs, finance and illness. The Lord taught isolation for infectious diseases and for a long time diseases have spread because the nations of the world did not know this law. The Old Covenant was for the training of the people for the great service which, at a later date, they would be able to perform to the whole world; therefore, the promises made to the Fathers were in abeyance and could not go into operation. However, the Lord brought the Old Covenant to an end by fulfilling all the curses under the law and paying the full price for sin.

‘For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’

Galatians ch.3 v.10

This provision had to be made in the Old Covenant for the alteration of its clauses at a later date. Moses placed this clause into the Old Covenant when he stated,

‘I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him’.

Deuteronomy ch.18 vv 18-19

Peter claimed, quoting the following, that the prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ.

‘For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.’

Acts ch.3 v.22

Thus He came with full power to amend the law and to lay down conditions of the new constitution that would be taking its place in the Christian age.

This great declaration of the constitution has been erroneously named ‘The Sermon on the Mount’, the statesmanship of Jesus was evident throughout this declaration of the principles of the Kingdom.

Now, when we read the Lord’s words we find He deepened the meaning of the law and showed that sin came not only in deed, but in thought too. Throughout the whole of the discourse there is not a single mention of the curses. The Lord was bearing them Himself. In their place He substituted degrees of reward. There is not a single mention of sacrifices or an order of worship by which sacrifices were to be offered. Thus He abolished the old priesthood and became the one perfect sacrifice on behalf of the people and prepared the way for the establishment of His own Church with Himself as its founder and foundation. So the Apostle Paul rightly says the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. This is another way of saying that the Lord was the Prophet who came to amend the law. Thus, Israel was freed from the Old Covenant in order to come under the law of Jesus Christ which is a higher standard of conduct than envisaged in

the Ten Commandments. Israel was bound by the Old Covenant and could not possibly get out of it. If they kept the law they would be blessed; if they broke the law they would be punished. They were bound by the law as much as we are bound by our laws today. Even when Judah and Israel became two separate nations they were both held by the Sinai Covenants. Only God could bring that Covenant to an end by fulfilling all the curses and paying the price for sin.

And so we turn to Zechariah ch.11 v.10 in which we are told that when the Lord Jesus Christ was broken on the Cross, the Lord brought to an end the Old Covenant of Sinai. When the thirty pieces of silver were paid as the price of blood the Lord divided entirely the house of Israel from the house of Judah, spiritually as well as nationally. From that day the New Covenant would apply, based upon all the covenants made with the fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. Israel has come into those promises being a Christian nation, but Judah has clung to an old, out-of-date Covenant which does not give them any contact with God at all; they are outside the covenant of promise until they come into the New Covenant through Christ, explaining what Moses meant when he said,

‘ ... every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people’.

Acts ch.3 v.23

‘Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.’

Zechariah ch.11 v.14