

Hebrews 9:24-28 NIV

“Are you waiting for the right person?”

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

“Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world.

“But now he (Christ) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”

To understand the first part of this text requires lots of Old Testament history.

Far more than we can explain in 20 minutes.

As you might guess, the Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians.

In the Apostles' time, some were urging Jewish Christians to obey the laws Moses gave their ancestors 14 centuries before.

Isn't it good to obey laws?

As a general rule, yes.

In the case of these Jewish Christians, though, obeying Moses' Law was a step backward.

It was once thought that taking frequent baths was not good for you. The thinking might have been shaped by the fact that clean water was not plentiful in the past.

According to one website, in Boston, it is still a crime **to bathe** more than **once** a week. It is **illegal** to take a bath unless one has been ordered to by a physician.¹

Those laws were apparently once enacted but are now thought too ludicrous to enforce.

¹ home.simplyweb.net/jhirschy/weirdlaw.htm

In the first century, folks were trying to hoodwink Jewish Christians into obeying laws that were no longer necessary.

The laws were needed in Moses’ time:

A) Israelites were preparing to become a sovereign nation. They needed social structure because they had never governed themselves.

In the summer of 1952, the owner of the construction company for which I worked won a contract to remodel a huge grain storage warehouse in Shaniko, Oregon.

The first night we were there, my boss and some of the older employees thought it would be fun to hunt jackrabbits.

My brother-in-law loaned me a 22 rifle and I joined the group of 6-8 guys in the back of a pickup.

We bounced across the hills in the dark hoping to find some rabbits.

Before we started, the boss said that we needed some rules.

If a rabbit showed in the pickup lights, no one could fire a shot until all had gotten out of the back and lined in a row.

You understand why the boss made that prohibition.

When people live in communities, certain principles and laws are necessary.

In 1450 BC the Israelites were becoming a nation and they needed a good set of laws.

They needed health laws, safety laws, marriage laws, environmental laws, etc.

Other facts about Moses’s Law escape many folks.

B. The rituals and ceremonies of Moses’ Law helped Israel to understand that sin is costly.

If a person violated certain commandments, he/she might have to sacrifice a sheep, goat, or bull—a very costly ritual.

A person found guilty of stealing had to give back what was stolen plus 20 %.

Many folks refuse to accept that sin exists, and as a result, do not recognize the toll wrongdoing takes on them and society.

C. Living right also makes us feel better.

I pray that someday soon, folks will see the connection between their sin and the depression and hopelessness that currently plague most societies.

The Lord gave Moses wise, insightful laws that kept Israel safe and improved the mental and physical health of citizens.

Something changed, however, that even many scholars seem to forget.

There was a difference between 1450 BC when Moses’ law was given and 30 AD (Jesus’ time).

Israel refused to keep God’s laws and they lost their nation.

In Jesus’ day, Israel was no longer an independent country.

Jews were scattered all over the known world, which meant that many of those laws could no longer be applied.

Take the Sabbath law for example.

No person or farm animal was to do any work.

When Israel was a sovereign nation, that rule was in effect.

In the first century, Israel was not self-governing; the Romans ruled Israel.

Suppose a Jewish slave, owned by a Roman pagan, wanted to obey the Sabbath.

But the pagan did not want to let the Jew observe the Sabbath Day.

The pagan slave-owner demanded that the Jewish fellow work the entire Sabbath.

How could the Jewish person obey the Sabbath law?

When Israel was a sovereign nation, everyone was expected to keep the Sabbath.

No slave owner could demand that a slave disobey the Sabbath laws.

But the Mosaic laws no longer fit the new situations in which Jews found themselves.

Probably 75% of Christians are not aware of another fact.

On the cross, Jesus freed all people from the Ten Commandments and all other Mosaic laws.

Colossians 2 makes this very plain:

“God forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code with its regulations that was against us and that stood opposed to us, nailing it to the cross. . . Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or with regard to a religious festival, a new moon celebration or a Sabbath day.”²

Christ simplified obeying God.

Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic Law for everyone; it does not regulate anyone now.

If we put God first,

treat others the way we want to be treated,
and follow Jesus’ example,
we discover joy, purpose and hope.

² Colossians 2:13b, 14, 16 NIV

“The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”³

We don’t need to worry about remembering a book of laws and statutes.

As the New Testament outlines and shows, we follow Jesus’ example of love, total honesty, and putting God first.

At one time I was the assistant manager of a large service station close to the Hollywood Freeway near Hollywood and Vine.

The facility (open 24 hours a day) was a training station for dealers, sales reps and service station employees.

We constantly trained new dealers and company employees.

Even late in the evening, 3-4 employees would be on duty.

Norma and I lived about 45 minutes away.

One night when I was off duty, a newly hired employee called on the home phone.

For some reason, the lead shift employee was not present.

³ Galatians 5:14 NIV

Neither the young fellow who called nor the other fellow on the shift knew how to repair a flat tire and did not know how to operate the device called an Iron Tire Man.

That thingamajig was popular in those days for removing and replacing tires on wheel rims. **Tire companies still use automated forms of the device.**

By phone I instructed the fellow step by step how to do it and he got it done.

It sure would have been easier and faster had someone been there in the flesh to show him.

That is one difference between the old covenant Moses gave to Israel (the Ten Commands) and the New Covenant, Jesus.

In the flesh, Jesus showed us how to act, what to do, and what to say.

Jesus perfectly kept God’s commands; we follow his example.

That is a reason he said, “Follow me.”

We look to Jesus, the son of God and imitate his life.

We look to him not just as a perfect life- example.

Jesus reassured also that when he returns, he will deal with all evildoers.

He will come back to fairly judge all people.

He will take those who have trusted him and followed him to a place where evil, fighting, and hate do not exist.

He has promised a place of no tears, no fears, and no death.

“Just as a person is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”

**For whom are you waiting and looking?
To whom do you look for answers?**

When I was in my late teens and early 20s, I often heard my dad say, “When my ship comes in, I will do such and such.”

To me now, his talk about ships is curious.

My dad was born near the Spoon River in central Illinois, and he grew up in the Oklahoma Panhandle.

One does not see ships in those areas.

It was a figure of speech, of course, that gave me the impression dad hoped that one of his three boys would bring wealth to the family.

Once that occurred, dad could enjoy a life he never found working on the railroad.

From comments he often made, I don't think I was the son who would be sailing that ship.

His expectation, though, was a common one.

Consider how many people look for someone to improve conditions and make them happy.

- Many invest in politicians who promise to reward them with joy.
- Some put their hopes in science.
- Others in environmental causes

Most people are awaiting and looking for someone to bring their ideal situation.

The truth is every human being will eventually disappoint us; no human is perfect and every human dies.

In addition, no human being knows what perfection is.

In a book entitled *A New Kind of Man*, John Charles Cooper observed:

“We may say we want a new leader, but that *is* not what we really want. What we want *is* a Messiah who will give us the word that *is* agreeable to us, that appeals to our preferences and prejudices, so that we can follow it wholeheartedly. But this *is* not what a true leader does.

“A leader tells us what we ought to hear, not what we want to hear. This is the difference between a false messiah and a true one. A false messiah . . . caters to and inflames our fears, hates, angers and resentments. A true messiah—such as Jesus—rebukes us, shows us our errors, makes us want to be better, and asks us to make sacrifices for *others*.

He is never followed by every man, often is killed by the majority. All the true prophets make us feel worse. They knew and said that the trouble wasn't with our enemies, but with ourselves. They demanded that we shed our old skin, and become New **People**. This is the last thing we want to do. What we are looking for is a leader who will show us how to be the same old **person**, only more successfully.”⁴

Are you looking for the right person?

If we are not transforming ourselves into Jesus' image and not waiting for his justice, we shall be dismayed and disappointed.

Here is a Scripture almost no one reads:

“(6) God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you (7) and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. (8) He will punish those

who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

“(9) They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power (10) on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

“(11) With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. (12) We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵

Are you waiting for Jesus, trusting him, and hoping in him?

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⁴ Cooper, John Charles, *A New Kind of Man*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, p-97.

⁵ 2 Thessalonians 1:6-12 NIV