

## YOU THOUGHT THAT WOULD SAVE YOU, DIDN'T YOU?

**TEXT: —> Joh 5:39,40 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.**

THERE IS ONE WORD IN THIS STATEMENT THAT WE USUALLY MISS... THE WORD "THINK."

WE SAY, **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, FOR IN THEM YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.** BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT JESUS SAID. HE SAID, "**Search the scriptures; for in them ye THINK ye have eternal life.**"

YOU SEE, THEY HAD MISSED THE POINT. THEY HELD TO THE SCRIPTURES. THEY WERE FAMILIAR WITH THE SCRIPTURES. THEY LOVED THE SCRIPTURES. --BUT THEY DID NOT BELIEVE IN JESUS! SO, THEY NEEDED TO DIG DEEPER; THEY NEEDED TO LOOK BEYOND THE PRINTED PAGE AND SEE WHO THE SCRIPTURES ARE POINTING THEM TO! UNTIL THEY DID, THEIR HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE WAS ONLY AN ILLUSION! --AND I AM AFRAID WE MAY SOMETIMES FALL INTO THE SAME CATEGORY TODAY.

YOU SEE, ON THIS OCCASION, THERE WAS A JEWISH FEAST GOING ON AT JERUSALEM. A CROWD OF JEWS HAD GATHERED THERE TO WORSHIP. JESUS WENT THERE, TOO.

AS JESUS PASSED THE POOL OF **Bethesda** WHICH WAS NEAR TO THE TEMPLE, HE SAW A LAME MAN THERE; A MAN WHO HAD BEEN LAME FOR 38 YEARS. JESUS HEALED THE MAN.

THE RELIGIOUS JEWS ACCUSED JESUS OF BEING A TRANSGRESSOR BECAUSE HE DID IT ON THE SABBATH DAY.

JESUS EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD THE BACKING OF GOD, HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN, WHO HAD ENABLED HIM TO WORK MIRACLES, AND THAT **MOSES** (WITH WHOM THEY WERE FAMILIAR THROUGH READING THE SCRIPTURES) HAD PROPHESED THAT HE WOULD COME (probably referring to (Deuteronomy 18:15) and other passages.)

THEY THEN ACCUSED JESUS NOT ONLY OF BEING A LAWBREAKER (FOR HEALING ON THE SABBATH, AND TELLING THE MAN TO TAKE UP HIS BED AND GO), BUT ALSO OF **BLASPHEMY** BECAUSE HE REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS THE SON OF GOD.

THESE JEWS WERE THE RELIGIOUS ELITE OF THE DAY. THE "SCRIBES" WERE THE ONES WHO COPIED THE SCRIPTURES (as they didn't have printing capabilities in that day); THEY NO DOUBT HAD MEMORIZED A GREAT PORTION OF THE SCRIPTURES; THEY KNEW WHAT IT SAID AND WHERE IT WAS FOUND. AMONG THEM WERE THE "**LAWYERS**," WHO WERE NOT "SECULAR" LAWYERS, BUT THOSE WHO WERE SKILLED IN INTERPRETING AND MAKING APPLICATION OF THE LAW OF MOSES. AND THEY APPLIED IT IN A VERY COLD AND LEGALISTIC MANNER.

THEY TOOK THE COMMANDMENTS OF MOSES AND EXTRAPOLATED ON THEM TO MINUTE DETAIL... FANATICALLY ENFORCING THE PROHIBITION OF WORK ON THE SABBATH DAY; EXTENDING THE LAW OF TITHING TO INCLUDE EVEN TITHING OF KITCHEN SPICES... BUT THEY

LEFT OFF THE HEART OF THE MESSAGE OF GOD OF THE INWARD ATTITUDE OF LOVE AND MERCY AND FAIR JUDGEMENTS. JESUS IN FACT ACCUSED THEM OF "STRAINING AT GNATS AND SWALLOWING CAMELS," (Matt. 23:24).

YOU MIGHT SAY, THEY KNEW THE SCRIPTURES BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW THE LORD... THEY KNEW THE WORDS, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW THE AUTHOR. THEY KNEW THE COLD, HARD LEGISLATION, BUT THEY DID NOT KNOW THE WARM-HEARTED LOVE. --AND SO JESUS DID NOT FIT THEIR BILL, AND THEY FLATLY REJECTED HIM.

SO, IN OUR TEXT, JESUS SAID, "**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.**" KEEP SEARCHING THEM, IN OTHER WORDS. YOU JUST "THINK" YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE FROM YOUR FAMILIARITY WITH THE SCRIPTURES, FOR YOU HAVE MISSED THE POINT. YOU THINK YOU CAN BE MADE RIGHTEOUS BY YOUR METICULOUS LEGALISM AND TENUOUS ADHERENCE TO THE TECHNICALITIES OF THE LAW, BUT YOU HAVE MISSED THE SPIRIT, THE VITAL PRINCIPLE, FROM WHICH THE COMMANDS EMANATE.

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL SAID IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: 2Co 3:5,6: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; ***not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.***" (That's KJV. The RSV says, "our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.")

THEY HAD THE WRITTEN CODE, WHICH THEY APPLIED EVEN TO A FANATIC MEASURE... BUT THEY MISSED THE SPIRIT OF THE MESSAGE.

RULES AND REGULATIONS, IF STRICTLY ENFORCED, MAY MAKE A PERSON APPEAR PIOUS... BUT JESUS WANTS OUR DEVOTION TO COME FROM THE INSIDE OUT. AS HE SAID, Mt 23:23 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, ***and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith...***"

**WHAT GIVES US LIFE? JESUS SAID, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."** (John, 5:40)

WHAT IS JESUS SAYING? HE IS SAYING THAT THE COLD, HARD FACTS OF THE SCRIPTURES WON'T MAKE US ALIVE. ONLY HE CAN DO THAT. AND IF WE WILL SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES FROM THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE, ***THEY WILL LEAD US TO HIM, AND WE CAN HAVE LIFE!***

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Joh 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

1Jo 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, ***and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.***

**A LOOK AT ANOTHER PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE: THE YOUNG MAN, TIMOTHY, HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP ON THE SCRIPTURES, AT THE FEET OF His grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, (2 Tim. 1:5.) NOW PAUL WRITES TO HIM: 2Tim 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

WE HAVE ALL HEARD HOW THAT THE MAN OF GOD CAN BE THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES. BUT DID YOU NOTICE WHAT HE SAID IN VERSE 15? --THEY ARE ABLE TO MAKE US WISE UNTO SALVATION through faith which is in Christ Jesus!

THE SCRIPTURES MAY MAKE US UPSTANDING CITIZENS AND DISCIPLINED SUBJECTS... BUT THEY WON'T MAKE US "WISE UNTO SALVATION" UNTIL THEY LEAD US TO CHRIST!

PAUL SAID, Ga 3:24, 25: "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster ***to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*** But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." --THE SCRIPTURES MAY ***DISCIPLINE*** US, BUT ONLY CHRIST CAN ***SAVE*** US!

CONCERNING THE JEWS AND GENTILES, PAUL WROTE: Ro 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who didn't follow after righteousness, attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith; 31 but Israel, following after a law of righteousness, didn't arrive at the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they didn't seek it by faith, but as it were by works of the law. They stumbled over the stumbling stone; 33 even as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense; and no one who believes in him will be disappointed." (W.E.B.) HE WENT ON TO SAY: (Rom. 10: 1:) "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

PAUL SAYS, Ro 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his

sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

HE CONTINUED: Ro 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 **Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God...

PAUL WENT ON TO SAY: Ro 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

HE CONCLUDES THE CHAPTER: Ro 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** THEN HE BEGINS THE NEXT CHAPTER: Ro 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

**THEN LOOK AT JOHN CHAPTER 8.** WE HAVE ALL HEARD THESE WORDS MANY TIMES: Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 **And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**

DOES JUST KNOWING THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD'S MORAL STANDARD... OF WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG... MAKE US FREE? --YOU SEE, THERE IS A "PERSONIFICATION" OF TRUTH... AND THAT PERSON IS **JESUS!**

THEY SAID, IN ESSENCE, "What do you mean, **be made free?** We're not slaves... never have been." JESUS ANSWERED THEM: Joh 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: **but the Son abideth ever.** 36 **If the Son (THE SON... THE SON!) If the Son** therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed!

JESUS SAID, "Joh 14:6 I am the **way**, the **truth**, and the **life**: no man cometh unto the Father, **but by me.**

CAN THE WORD OF GOD SAVE US? YES! Jas 1:21: Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save

your souls. --BUT ONLY IF WE LET IT LEAD US UNTO JESUS! --1 Jo 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. ***This is the true God, and eternal life.***

ARE YOU IN CHRIST? Ga 3:26 For ye are all the children of God ***by faith in Christ Jesus.*** 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.