

Introduction

When I started working on this book it was just a simple *Bible study* on the *Minor Prophets*, as I worked on the first two chapters it seemed to be lacking something.

My prayers were answered when I “*happened to watch*” a documentary on the religious leaders who were participants in the *American Civil Rights* movement.

It was from that documentary that I learned about two prominent men in the *Civil Rights* movement they were *Reinhold Niebuhr* and *Rabbi Abraham Heschel*.

Reinhold Niebuhr was a *Christian Theologian* who had a close friendship with *Dr. Martin Luther King* and *Rabbi Abraham Heschel*, all had the same deep convictions about nonviolent protest justice war and, *Civil Rights*. They were religious men who were promoting *Equality* while at the same time holding vastly different *religious convictions*.

The one deep conviction and belief they all held in common was a “*Christ Like*” *Love and Respect* for all mankind.

As I was watching the program, I found out that *Rabbi Heschel* had authored a book titled *The Prophets*. I ordered the book on-line so that I could get a *Hebrew Rabbis* insight and thoughts on the *Old Testament* prophets.

The book “*The Prophets*” delivered much more than I ever thought it would, some of *Rabbi Herschel’s* thoughts were not in total alignment with my *Christian* ideas on prophetic teachers but he did have a deep *personal understanding* of *Father God* and *The Holy Scriptures*.

The time I spent reading and thinking about *Rabbi Herschel’s* interpretation and comments on the prophesy of the *Hebrew* prophets was the key that opened the door to understanding the *Root Cause* of the *Hebrew’s Repetitive and Disastrous* --- “*sin cycle*”!

This “*sin cycle*” was the continual and disastrous repetitive failure to *Obey “The Written law”* that was given to them by *Yahweh*, the *Hebrew* people would *sin* and then repent only to *sin* again.

This new deeper understanding about *sin* was also a *Valuable Tool* for me to understand why we as *Christians* today can fall into the same “*never-ending cycle*” of *sin* and “*Incomplete*” repentance.

What I started to understand more thoroughly was that the “*Manmade Cause*” for the *Hebrew “sin cycle”* was a *two-part* problem “*Not Knowing Who*” *Yahweh* is and the *heavy burden* of “*Legalism*”!

The major cause for this repetitive problem is rooted in the “*Oral Tradition*” *manmade laws and restrictions* that *misguided* and *sinful Hebrew* religious leaders added to *Father God’s* --- *Totally Complete Law!*

It is important for both *Christians* and *Jewish “Believers”* to realize that today in our modern times we can become *Victims* of the same *good intentioned* religious and *Destructive* --- *False Teaching*.

Legalism:

“The act of putting law above gospel by establishing requirement for salvation beyond repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Legalism reduces the broad inclusive and general precepts of the Bible to narrow and rigid codes. Ultimately it creates a system that obligates God to bless those who have proven themselves worthy. It thus tends to underestimate both the sinfulness of humanity and the holiness of God.”

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Why do some organized religious movements tend to always develop a system of *Legalism*, and why do the followers of the *compromised* religious movement put up with --- "*Legalism*"?

1. The *sinful* organized religious movements make up laws and restrictions to gain control over the members of the movement. The faithful fear being thrown out of the religion if they fail to follow the laws and restrictions. The originators of the restrictive laws are the same people who will enforce the laws, this gives them power over the members of the religion or church.
2. The power of *Legalism* gives an organized religion the power to collect money and property above and beyond the 10% tithe required by *God's Law*. The extorted funds can be used to enrich the religious leaders, or they can be used to expand the facilities and acquire tools to recruit more followers for their religion. They then gain more people more money more power!
3. The complicated restrictions of strict *Legalism* make it impossible for the followers of a *Legalistic religion* to understand and follow the restrictive religious requirements on their own.
So, as a result the *faithful followers* must have a religious leader or teachers with "*special wisdom*" to guide them to understanding, it is --- "*the blind leading the blind*"!

What are *The Ten Commandments* of *Father God*, and why was "*His Law*" recorded in the *Holy Bible* for all mankind?

2 Timothy 3:15–17 (NLT)
True Wisdom!

¹⁵ *You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ *All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.* ¹⁷ *God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.*

It has been taught by some knowledgeable *Bible teachers* that the *Ten Commandments* of *Father God* are like a mirror, a mirror we can hold up and see how and where we have "*Failed*" to follow *Father God's Written Law*.

How can we as *sinner*s know if we are *sinning* if we cannot see where we have gone wrong, the reflection in the mirror must be clear of *obstructions* and easy for us to see.

The *obstructive* use of *Legalism* blocks the clear reflection of our *sinful state*. The reflection of our *sinful life* is covered up with man's laws and restrictions.

The *legalistic additions* to *The Ten Commandments* are like *Post-It notes* stuck on the surface of the mirror. The *Legalistic* restrictions "*obscure*" the reflective instructive power of the *Ten Commandments* of *Father God*!

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This lack of *clear understanding* due to *obscured or restricted* spiritual information can cause a person that is in a *sinful state* to lose “*Faith*” in their religion.

This situation of a lack of *clear vision* caused “*Doubt*” in some *Hebrews*, this *doubt* caused many *Jews* to lose “*Faith*” in *Yahweh* “*The God of Abraham*” and then turn to *pagan* religions and *false gods*.

For the everyday *Hebrew* worshiper, this manmade *Legalistic Hebrew religion* was just too *complicated* and *restrictive*. The confused *Hebrew* people would say, “the worship of a golden calf idol or god will not complicate our life”. The *Hebrew people* should be able to practice both religions, besides the *pagan* religion is *so simple* and it is *much more fun*.

I have attached *Rabbi Heschel’s* words and thoughts on why he thinks the *Jews* have at times *Lost* their “*Faith*” in the *Hebrew* religion and the --- *The God of Abraham!*

Abraham Heschel: *The Prophets* - Pages # 54-56

“The fertility of nature is an astounding wonder. To the non-Hebrew population of Palestine, or Canaan, a land surrounded by desert, the mystery of growth, the marvel of spring, remained a perpetual surprise. There were powers behind all this the local gods of the land, called the Baalim, who were regarded as the givers of wool and flax, of oil and wine, of grain, vines, and fig trees. The conquest of Canaan by Israel was a process extending over several centuries. The Hebrews did not destroy the Canaanites, but merely occupied parts of the land, while other parts remained in the hands of the Canaanites. For some time, there was constant warfare between the two groups, but gradually hostilities ceased, and the Hebrews began to mingle.

Psalm 106:35–39 (NLT)

Adultery!

³⁵ *Instead, they mingled among the pagans
and adopted their evil customs.*

³⁶ *They worshiped their idols,
which led to their downfall.*

³⁷ *They even sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to the demons.*

³⁸ *They shed innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters.*

*By sacrificing them to the idols of Canaan,
they polluted the land with murder.*

³⁹ *They defiled themselves by their evil deeds,
and their love of idols was adultery in the LORD’s sight.*

Without totally abandoning *Yahweh*, the *God* of their “*Fathers*” the *Hebrew* also worshiped the *gods* of the lands they occupied sacrificing on the tops of the mountains making offerings “upon the hills under oak poplar, and terebinth because the shade was good”.

The *sinful pagan rites* included “*sacred prostitution*” (sexual acts as part of a religion) as well as *intoxication* with *pagan wine* as they worshiped. It was *sinful worship* of *pagan gods* and the land rather than *worshipping Yahweh, The Creator of Heaven and Earth*.

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Pagan gods who in return for *sinful gifts* provided fertility of the land; they demanded the gifts of incense *sinful* physical pleasures of the flesh, and even the *flesh and blood* of their own children.

At the same time the *Hebrews* rejected worshipping only *Yahweh* who in return for “*All*” His *Blessings* and *Protection* required only *Righteousness Love Justice Mercy Faithfulness*, and a “*True*” *Commitment* to the *One True God* --- *Yahweh*.

The *Hebrew* people needed to “*Remember*” *Yahweh* is the “*LORD*” of the *entire earth* as well as the *Master Architect* of history and all times.

“*They make for themselves molten images*” and *sacrifice sinful blood offerings* to them.

The *Hebrew* people do not realize their stupidity, “*men kiss calves*” --- “*A people without understanding shall come to ruin*”.

Hosea 4:6 (NLT)

They Do Not Know Him!

⁶ *My people are being destroyed
because they don't know me.*

*Since you priests refuse to know me,
I refuse to recognize you as my priests.*

*Since you have forgotten the laws of your God,
I will forget to bless your children.*

Continuation of *The Prophets pages #54-56*

What fascination did the cult of Baal and Ashtoreth hold for the people? Pagan gods not only appeal to the imagination and are beloved by poets and painters alike; they are more comprehensible than the invisible God of Abraham. The conception of one God Who created heaven and earth is hard on the imagination. There is such multiplicity and variety of beings, there thousands of communities, millions of human beings, countless numbers of days and nights--and only one God? Pagan gods, moreover, are easily approached and appeased. “*Quote from Pindar, Nemean Odes*” :“*Men and gods are of one race; and both from the selfsame mother we draw our breath---in some measure we come near at least to the Immortals, either in respect of our mind or outward form.*”

Rabbi Heschel is correct about the basic reasons the *Hebrews* have continually *Failed* to follow the “*Law*” of *Father God*.

However, *Rabbi Heschel* fails to include the *serious problems* caused by the complicated destructive restrictions of the *Hebrew* priest's “*Man-Made*” *additional* religious laws.

They are the complicated *Laws* and *Restrictions* that were added by the “*Oral Traditions*” and the burdensome *Legalistic laws* the *sinful Hebrew* religious leaders (who did not know who *Yahweh* was) forced on --- *The Children of Abraham*.

In closing it would be useful and productive to note the *Truly “Protective” Information* recorded in some of the teachings *The Holy Bible* contains concerning --- “*False Prophets*”.

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The *Warnings* are clear for all religious leaders of our time who *Feel the Need* to place *Legalistic* restrictions on those who are seeking a *Jesus Christ* centered “*Relationship*” with *Father God!*

Matthew 18:5–6 (NLT)
The Fate of False Prophets!

⁵ “And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. ⁶ But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Mark 7:5–9 (NLT)
Honor His Law!

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, “Why don’t your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony.”

⁶ Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’

⁸ For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”

⁹ Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition.

I *Pray* that all who read this book will look to *The Holy Bible* and seek “*Discernment*”, check the *Holy Scripture* to find out if my writing is *Scripturally correct*.

I also *Pray* that the readers of my book will use this information to draw closer to a *Genuine* “*Relationship*” with *Father God* and *Our Lord*, and *Savior Jesus Christ*.

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