"It is Finished"

Jesus conveyed the purpose of His mission by what He said and did. This mission was confirmed by what God did to the veil in the Jewish temple. When Jesus breathed His last breath on the cross, He uttered "*It is finished*" and at that moment the veil was torn apart from top to bottom **(Joh.19:30).** It confirmed what Jesus came to do. Apart from the most important goal of making atonement for sin so that repentant sinners could be reconciled to God, He also came to make a change to the existing religious system of the Jews.

The symbolic message of the torn veil (Matt. 27:50).

In Scripture God sometimes uses physical demonstrations to illustrate spiritual truth. So, for example Paul refers to the Rock in Exodus 17 and explains that it symbolizes Christ Jesus **(1 Cor.10:4**). When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about spiritual rebirth, He explained by referring to the snake that Moses had to hang on a pole for people to look at to be healed of snake bites **(Joh.3:14, Num.21:9**). To confirm the important division that took place between the Old and the New Testament at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross, God caused the dividing veil in the temple to tear in two. At that moment Jesus cried out *"It is finished (***Matt. 27:50**). According to **Hebrews 9:16** it was then that the New Testament came into force, because it explains that a testament (*diathéké)* only takes effect at the death of the testator. The tearing of the veil thus symbolically illustrates the transition of the old dispensation to that of the New Testament.

By word and deed Jesus indicated what He came to do.

It is said that first impressions last. Was that the reason for His the very first miracle in public? Did He symbolically want to emphasize the reason for His coming to earth?
At a wedding at Cana He changed 6 stone jars containing water for ceremonial washings into wine. The 6 stone jars represent the rigid, formal Jewish system of religion which was influenced by the traditions of men which nullified the Word of God (6=man, **Matt.15:6).** The new wine represents the New Testament which Jesus came to inaugurate (**Joh.2:1-11, Matt.26:26-27).** Against this background Jesus' first miracle becomes meaningful – by turning ceremonial water into wine He demonstrated His intention of changing the rigid Old Covenant into the blessings of the New Testament. When one wonders why so much wine was used at a wedding (each jar contained about 75 -100 litres), one must consider the fact that friends and family usually feasted for a week after the wedding.

The lesson of the old and new wineskins (Matt.9:17)

"Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; else the wineskins burst, and the wine runs out, and the wineskins perish. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved together"

In the context of what Jesus was doing and teaching, this parable makes it clear that He was saying that the principles of the New Testament would not fit in with old systems of religion. The lesson of this parable is experienced even today when one sees how difficult it is to

introduce certain New Testament principles into traditional religious institutions. For many, the change required is just too radical!

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

In this parable Jesus demonstrates the difference between the sometimes unmerciful attitude caused by rigid law keeping and the attitude of the New Testament law of love

> *"Jesus said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who stripped him of his clothing and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by coincidence a certain* ***priest*** *came down that way and seeing him, he passed by on the opposite side. And in the same way a* ***Levite,*** *also being at the place, coming and seeing him, he passed on the opposite side. But a certain traveling Samaritan came upon him, and seeing him, he was filled with pity. And coming near, he bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And going on the next day, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, Take care of him. And whatever more you spend, when I come again I will repay you"* **(Luke 10:30-37).**

There must be a reason why a Levite and a priest are specifically mentioned. Because they avoided the wounded man next to the road, they are usually the ones considered in a negative light to be calloused and unmerciful. What must be kept in mind though, is the fact that both these men were educated in Old Testament law. They were therefore, most likely, knowledgeable of what was written in **Numbers 19:16:**

> *"And whoever touches one that is killed with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days."*

They were thus good, faithful upholders of the law!

In this parable Jesus illustrates the fact that rigid law keeping, as found in the conduct of the Levite and priest, often leads to unmerciful attitudes. In this parable the legalistic Old Testament law keeping attitude of the Levite and the priest is contrasted with the merciful conduct of the Samaritan who represents the Royal law of love as mentioned in **James 2:8.**

Examples of Jesus breaking Old Testament laws and traditions – all conveying the purpose of His mission:

"When a change in the priesthood takes place, there must also be a change in the Law" **(Heb.7:12)**

His conduct was one of the reasons the Jewish religious leaders wanted Him out of the way!

Jesus contradicted Old Testament laws concerning food

He ignored some Old Testament laws concerning food and declared that nothing that enters the body from the outside can make a person spiritually unclean. Thus, contradicting the law He declared all food to be clean **(Lev.11, Mark.7:14-23).**

Jesus touched corpses and also those who were declared unclean by the law (Lev.22:4, Luk.7:11-14, Matt.8:2-3).

Jesus symbolically referred to the drinking of blood

Jesus shocked the Jews when He declared that unless one drank His blood and ate of His flesh, one could not be saved! According to the law they were forbidden to drink blood (**Lev.17:14**, **Joh.6:53)**.

Jesus healed the sick on the Sabbath and declared that He was also the Lord of the Sabbath (**Luk.13:10-17, Mark.3:1-6, Joh.5:1-18, Mark.2:28).**

Jesus desecrated the temple by chasing out money changers with a whip (**Matt.21:12-13)**

Jesus ignored the ministry of the priests and He did not offer the prescribe offerings when He forgave sins (Matt.9:2).

Jesus contradicted Jewish traditions and laws by associating with women, sinners and with those who were considered unclean by the law (Joh.4, Matt.11:19).

Jesus and His disciples ate without ceremoniously washing their hands (Mark.7:2).

Paul confirms a change of law

"Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths" **(Col.2:16-17).**

"Now if perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—for on this basis the people received the Law—what further need would there be to speak of appointing another kind of priest according to the order of Melchizedek, not one according to the order of Aaron? ***When a change in the priesthood takes place, there must also be a change in the Law"*** **(Heb.7:7-8).**

Predictions concerning the rapture

Recently frenzy and confusion was caused by predictions that the rapture would take place on 23 September. These predictions were based on the timing of the Jewish Feast of Trumpets. Some even proclaimed that they physically heard the trumpets of the Jewish feast of Rosh Hashanah being blown! Previously in 2014-2015, in spite of what the New Testament has to say about moons, world wide sensation was stirred up by the significance attached to the recurring blood moons during that time. Even a superficial reference to a NASA website would have revealed that blood moons were a natural phenomenon that have occurred in regular cycles throughout the ages!
Again, in 2017 some stargazers proclaimed that a certain formation of the stars was a fulfilment of Revelation 12 and that the rapture would take place during that time. In similar

fashion predictions about the second coming have been made throughout the ages. All have come to nothing!

As far as Christians are concerned, all the hype can be avoided by just taking seriously what the New Testament has to say about Jewish feasts, sabbaths, new moons and date setting!

"But of that day and hour no one knows, no, not the angels of Heaven, but only My Father"
(Matt. 24:36).

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