

GOD'S LAW IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY



Kings praised it - Judges enforced it - Governments adopted it - Wise men respected it.

As strange as it may sound God's law is very much alive today. It has had a very definite part in the heritage and identification of the ancient nation Israel throughtout history and, believe it or not, God's law has contributed to the leadership of Britain and the United States in the world just as the Bible said it would.

For our regular readers, it will come as no surprise that the modern nations of Britain and the United States are mentioned in the same context as the ancient nations of Israel because they are one and the same. If you are not familiar with this important historical truth and its meaning for today, write for our free booklet "The United States and Britain in Prophecy".

But why would the laws given to ancient Israel have endured the centuries and be the very fabric of modern Israel (Britain, its former dominions and the United States) when so many nations and their laws have come and gone leaving only vestiges for historians to glean? The story is fascinating and cannot be started without knowing the source and purpose for those laws. God gave "laws" to Israel, which included commandments, statutes and judgements, "so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time" (Deuteronomy 4:40

N.I.V.). So God intended the laws He gave ancient Israel would produce well being in Israel as long as it existed and to be an example for other nations if they wished to have the same blessings (Deuteronomy 4:6,8). To see the many specific blessings that would be enjoyed by Israel or any other nation that lived according to God's law, read Leviticus Chapter 26 and Deuteronomy Chapter 28. Also they warn what would happen if God's laws were not followed.

"GOD'S LAWS" - The Meaning

The Hebrew word for "law", referring to the commandments, statutes and judgements, given to Israel comes from the root "torah" and "horah" meaning "to point out and direct". The expanded meaning according to Hastings and other Bible authorities is "authoritative direction in acceptable lines of human conduct which produces peace and order in the family, in the state, in all spheres of human relationships and preserves the dignity of the individual".

With a law that would produce that result is there any wonder God prophesied that other nations would say of Israel, "surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people...And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today" (Deuteronomy 4:6,8). It is not surprising, then, that King David would describe it as "perfect"; "reviving the soul" and such to make those who are willing to learn, "wise" (Psalms 19:7) or that James would refer to it as the "perfect law that gives freedom"

(James 1:25) and that Christ, knowing the benefits it would heap upon all nations and individuals who would obey it, would confirm that it would be preserved until God's plan for all mankind had been accomplished (Matthew 5:18).

"GOD'S LAW" - In History

As soon as God created human beings His law was in effect so if they followed its principles, they would have peace and order as all human relationships developed and the dignity of the individual would be preserved. (For a full explanation write for the interesting article "Ten Commandments before Moses") Nearly 2500 years later, approximately 1450 B.C., when Joshua lead the nation of ancient Israel out of the wilderness and into the promised land, he was admonished that if he caused the nation to carefully do all that was written in God's law, they would "be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).

During the next 1000 years the Commonwealth of Isreal, referred to Biblically as the Whole House of Israel because it was made up of 12 separate nations or tribes, prospered greatly and had the prestige of a successful nation while they lived according to God's law but when they ignored, forgot and did "that which was right in their own eyes", they no longer prospered, nor had prestige among nations but went into captivity. However when Judah, one of the nations of the Commonwealth of Israel, returned from captivity in about 444 B.C. and rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem, they realized what they had lost for not following God's law and were thankful to have it again as

part of the fabric of their life (Nehemiah 8:28). Nearly 500 years later, Christ told the same thing to the rich young man - the only way to have a full and successful life, which would lead to eternal life, was to keep God's law (Matthew 19:17).

King Alfred the Great (849 to 901A.D.) who was the Anglo-Saxon king of Wessex, part of Britain, one of the nations of the Commonwealth of Israel that did not return to Jerusalem after captivity but migrated to the British Isles, made God's law the foundation for the law of the land. This is confirmed by the Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th Edition, Volume 2, page 889 - "The outstanding name of the 9th century is that of Alfred the Great. He appended to his laws a free translation of the Ten Commandments and an abridgement of the enactments of Exodus 21 to 23."

That God's law continued to be the basis for the laws of Britain and the foundation of its society is evident in the reign of King Henry the VIII (1491 to 1547 A.D.) when he decreed "that all persons may lawfully marry, but such as are prohibited by God's law" and adopted Leviticus Chapter 18 as the prohibited degrees within which marriage was not permitted. It is obvious that King Henry's enactment was not an isolated incident in history when reference is made to "Commentaries on the Laws of England" by Sir William Blackstone, who lived from 1728 to 1780 and while Solicitor-General of England wrote the first text book setting out all of the laws of the land and commenting on them and their source. In The Introduction to the

"Commentaries" pages 39 to 43, Blackstone in discussing "The Nature of Laws In General" makes the following comments:

"When the Supreme Being formed the universe and created matter out of nothing, He impressed certain principles upon the matter from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be...as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature...so inseparably interwoven (are) the laws of eternal justice with the happiness of each individual, that the latter cannot be attained but by observing the former... This law of nature ...is binding over all the globe in all countries and at all times: no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this;...(because man's) reason is corrupt and his understanding full of ignorance and error...divine Providence...hath been pleased at sundry times and in diverse manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered we call revealed or divine law and they are to be found only in the holy scriptures...Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws."

During the years 1750 to 1900 the British Empire spread and flourished throughout the world and carried with it the Laws of Britain which, as Sir William Blackstone

so clearly stated, had as their foundation God's law. God designed His law to produce peace and order in the family, in the nation, in all human relationships and to preserve the dignity of the individual. Is it surprising that the British Empire was known for its just legal systems? It then can be more easily understood why United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other countries and territories which had been part of the British Empire are world leaders in seeking to preserve the dignity of the individual through Human Rights legislation and diplomacy. All because they have God's law as the foundation of their legal system.

Another example of God's law enduring throughout history is the American Revolution of 1776. Although the 13 American colonies threw off the rule of Britain because they felt they had been unjustly governed, they preserved the legal system which was based on God's law. Even judgments by courts in Britain and United States prior to the late 1800s, the age of "higher criticism" that spawned the theory of evolution, often recognized God's law as the foundation of the law of the land. For example in Taylor's case Lord Chief Justice Hale stated, "Christianity is part and parcel of the laws of England and that to cast obloquy upon its precepts is to speak in subversion of the law". In the case of Sparhow V. Union Pass. R. Co. 54 Pa. St. 406, Strong J. said "Christianity is a part of the common law of this state (Pennsylvania)...It was part of the common law of England long before this state was settled...(it)

is an indictable offence at common law to write or speak of Christianity contemptuously."

"GOD'S LAW" - Evident Today

That God's law has endured through the centuries and is the foundation of the laws of modern Israel is graphically evident in the twentieth century laws of United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the other countries that have a legal system based on the common law of England. In these countries; - for killing to be Murder today, requires "premeditation", "guilty mind" or "malice aforethought" just as in Exodus 21:12-14; - Assault causing bodily harm requires fair compensation for the victim which is explicitly provided by Exodus 21:18,19; - in the law of Negligence there is a responsibility to control an animal known to have vicious tendencies, called the principle of scienter, as set out in Exodus 21:28-30, to protect persons from falling in an excavation or open pit as found in Exodus 21:33-34, to see that a fire or smoke does not spread and cause damage summarized in Exodus 22:6, and that chattels left in a person's control are not damaged, called law of Bailment and found in Exodus 22:7-15; - prohibited degrees within which individuals can marry are basically the same as set out in Leviticus 18; - unconscionable transaction relief legislation providing relief from excessive and harsh costs of borrowing also provided for in Exodus 22:25; - exempted from seizure for debt are "necessary and ordinary wearing apparel, household furniture, utensils, equipment, food and fuel" following

the example of Exodus 22:26-27. There are other direct similarities equally as startling, too numerous to claim coincidence.

It can be readily seen that part of the heritage and identity of the peoples of United States, Britain and former Commonwealth countries was God's law as the basis of their legal systems which resulted in peace and order in all aspects of life, dignity of the individual and leadership in the world as God had prophesied (Deuteronomy 4:6,8 Ps. 147:19,20). But modern Israel discarded their heritage and are fast losing the resultant blessings.

However there will be a time in the near future (our generation) when God's enduring law will again be recognized as the source and guarantee for peace and order in the family, in the operation of the state, in all spheres of human relations and as the preserver of the dignity of the individual. This system of law will be sought by all nations (Micah 4:1-5) and then there will be World Peace Through Law - God's Law.