

Rev. Ken Overby

Jewish Awareness Ministries

## Saved and Purified by Grace Not by Law

### Part 1

#### Legal Confusion

I asked our college Bible study group, “Are we as believers supposed to keep none, part, or all the Law? The answers were equally divided between the first two; none or part. The correct defense for keeping none of the law was given. “Christ is the end of the *law* for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”<sup>1</sup> Another reasoned that we are to keep the nine commandments repeated by Jesus, Sabbath being the omission.

#### Is the Law in three categories or one?

One extensive study shows that Christians on average believe they are responsible to obey about 28% of the Law of Moses.<sup>2</sup> Why only 28%? They reason that the “Law” is separated into three categories; civil, ceremonial and moral. Only the Israelite citizens had to keep the civil laws. Then they reason that men who were NOT Levites were exempt from the laws for priests, the laws for women and for slaves. So if you are not a priest, a woman, or a slave that leaves you with only 245 out of the 613 laws according to one orthodox Jewish young man I was talking with recently. I said to Omir, forget about the 613 or the 245, “**how are you doing with the 10 commandments?**” in checkmate he dropped his head with a grin. So if you are not a Jew, only about 170 moral laws remain or about 28%.

One Israeli asked a great question, “So if Jesus was Jewish and Christians follow Jesus then why don’t Christians keep the Law of Moses? I said “Gentiles were not invited to that meeting God called at Sinai...we didn’t get the memo.” I rubbed it in a little and said, “So we are free to eat pork, shrimp, lobster. He asked this while riding in a van on the Sabbath going to our shooting range. I wanted to ask, “So why are you breaking the Sabbath?”

For the purpose of theological study, the Law of Moses is divided into three categories: civil, ceremonial, and moral. However, these divisions or categories are not original to scripture. “The Law” is always referred to as monolithic. Breaking a Law is like dropping a ceramic vase on a stone floor. The whole vase is shattered. Jesus emphasized the cohesive inspiration of the entire law. “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:18)<sup>3</sup> Paul a former Pharisee in Judaism referencing the Old Testament said, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”<sup>4</sup> **Moses said God expected Israel’s obedience to all the Laws. Deuteronomy 31:1-13 “Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may ...observe to do all the words of this law.” Who was to obey? All the residents of Israel “men, women and children.” Nowhere in Old Testament scriptures were gentiles who lived physically outside of the jurisdiction of the nation of Israel commanded to keep the 613 laws or the 245 or the 170.**

Yet as sinful Jewish and gentile humans looking into the same mirror of the Law which perfectly reflects God’s holiness, Romans 3 states “*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law...*” Paul goes on to say “*that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.*” “*For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*” Romans 3:19, 23. There are those of the seed of Abraham under a covenant of the Law of Moses, but all humanity has come short of the righteousness of God.

#### Are Gentiles under the Law of Moses?

Paul explains in Romans 1 & 2 that all gentiles had a God given knowledge of creation, therefore they had a Creator and a God- given conscience of law or right and wrong. When our 5-year-old grandson takes a toy from our 3-

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 10:4

<sup>2</sup> The Law Then and Now: What About Grace, John B. Metzger, Grace Acres Press, p. 80

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:18

<sup>4</sup> James 2:10

year-old granddaughter, she not only knows that it is wrong but lets everybody within a three-block radius know it's wrong. The whole world over the most remote tribes with no Bible or knowledge of God have rules and consequences.

Romans 2 states, *"<sup>14</sup>For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: <sup>14</sup>Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;"* If they can accuse or excuse, they have God's law in their conscience. Eve excused her action and accused the serpent and she had never heard of the Ten Commandments much less Moses. **For Jews or Gentiles, who lived before the Law, during the Law and since the Law, one thing is sure - all are guilty of violating the laws of our holy creator God.**

Paul stated in Romans chapter 3: *"<sup>9</sup>for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; <sup>10</sup>as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup>There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>19</sup>Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>23</sup>For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"* Romans 5:12, *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"* **Any way you figure how many laws which group must keep, it comes down to the same number.** Romans 3:12 **"there is none that doeth good, no, not one."** Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

### So why was the Law given to Israel?

1. To provide atonement and access to God that foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of Jesus. Hebrews 10:1-15
2. To keep them pure as a channel through which the promised seed of Messiah would come. Galatians 3:19 The promise of a redeeming Son was first given to Eve and then through Abraham.<sup>5</sup>

**The identity of Jews before the age of Grace was rightly the character of Jehovah by observance of the Law of Moses. It determined what they wore, ate, how they worked, the acquisition of wealth, worship, and that their relationships would make them stand out as different from the pagan gentiles and dedicated to their God.**

*Deuteronomy 14:2 For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*

### Are there any common denominators in the Law for Jews and Christians?

No but there are UN-common denominators. Unless we literally interpret the Gospels in a **dispensational context**, the scriptures about the observance of the Law of Moses cannot be rightly divided. Dispensational interpretation of scripture clarifies the distinct differences.

### What is Dispensationalism?

God worked in different ways with people as He progressively revealed more about Himself to man. He expected from Adam and Eve obedience to one command. He gave Noah 7 commands. He gave Moses 10, then the nation of Israel 613. He didn't expect Noah or Abraham to keep invisible rules that He hadn't spoken yet. Adam & Eve were in the Dispensation of Innocence. After that came the Dispensation of Conscience, then the Dispensation of Law. Since Jesus came, kept 100% of the Law, and died for the sins of every sinner and offers salvation by grace through faith, we live in a time period called the Dispensation of Grace. As those living in each dispensation had a fuller revealed scriptural knowledge of God, God dealt with them according to what He revealed. Obviously we don't relate to God with animal sacrifices anymore – not because we are more sophisticated. Hebrews 1:11 *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,*

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis. 3:15; 15:6

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"*

## Saved, and Purified by Grace Not by Law

### part 2

From the article [The Mosaic Law, a new prospective on an old problem.](#) Doug Friedman  
Ariel Magazine Winter 2016 / Volume 1 / Number 21

#### 4 False views of the Law for Christians

- (1) "Yeshua never did away with the law; therefore, we must observe it."
- (2) "We should now look at the law through the eyes of Yeshua."
- (3) "All believers, especially Jewish believers, should obey the law."
- (4) "The law is not for salvation, but for sanctification."

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" John 1:17.<sup>6</sup> First, we must grasp that the gospels give the account of things that happened under the final days of the Dispensation of the Law, before the dispensation or era of grace known as The Church Age. In Galatians 4:4,5 Paul tells them, "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, **made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law**"<sup>7</sup> Being born Jewish, He was "under the law." He was subject to the law of Moses just like he was subject to Joseph and Mary as a child. His life exhibited His divine ability to "fulfill the law." Matthew 5:18<sup>8</sup> **Failure to completely keep the Law of Moses would have disqualified Jesus as Israel's Messiah and our Savior. Therefore, when we open up our Bible to the New Testament and read the gospel accounts of Jesus, we are reading about the LAST person to live and die under the Law of Moses. Jesus lived during Old Testament times under the Dispensation of the Law. His disciples were Jews under the Law of Moses. The new era or Dispensation of Salvation by Grace BEGAN when Jesus' eyes closed on the cross.**

#### Can we apply the Law of Moses for Jews to the gentile joint-heirs of Jesus?

**The identity of Jews before the age of grace was meant to be a reflection of the character of Jehovah by observance of the Law of Moses. Our identity is in Jesus Christ evidenced by devotion to Him and His Laws.** A sharp contrast must be made between law and grace to rightly divide between the Laws of Moses for Jews and laws of Christ for the justified. Because of the abuses of a "lawless grace" by professing Christians or carnal believers, far too many have looked to the law as a behavioral restraint thereby letting the Law define the truth about grace, instead of letting grace define the truth about the Law. On the other extreme, the failure to grasp the Law of Christ motivated by grace in the work of sanctification leaves us bound by the taskmasters of guilt and fear; trying to gain God's acceptance by keeping enough of the laws to earn His smile and avoid His chastisement. **Under grace our only acceptance by God is that we are accepted in the beloved son of God.** Romans 3:19,20 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

<sup>6</sup> John 1:17

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 4:4,5

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:17

### **Neither justification nor sanctification can be accomplished by the keeping of the Law.**

Scripture states that we cannot be saved from our sins by keeping the Law of Moses. “by *the deeds of the law* there shall no flesh be justified”<sup>9</sup> **The law of Moses provided expectations of holiness with no enablement.** The writer of Hebrews stated that the old Mosaic covenant “decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Hebrews 8:13<sup>10</sup> Jesus’ blood blotted out the demands of the written ordinances and “nailed them to his cross.” Colossians 2:14<sup>11</sup>

### **Since the grace of Christ is our foundation, then growing “in grace” should be our ideal.**

This identity comes only through “the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” not by the knowledge of Moses. One author has identified over 600 commands in the New Testament. Are these new commandments of Jesus just the same old Law minus that “Jewish stuff”? No, the Law of Christ is not just “Torah light” for gentiles. Scripture is clear regarding salvation that “The just shall live by faith.” Are we saved under grace but sanctified by some of the Law? NO **What are the rules that guide new law living?** It is evident that the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ,<sup>12</sup> Avoidance of the former schoolmaster’s glare, is not a proper motivation.

\* I remember meeting a former school teacher for the first time since high school? My 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher receives my newsletter. It was intimidating sending her my newsletter the first time. My relationship with her used to depend on my grammar, now it depends on her grace.

### **Who determined that Moses’ Law became the default setting to guide sanctified living for Christians?**

When the Pharisees made void the Law of God through their own commandments, they rendered **salvation** a works only equation. When we under grace substitute Moses’ or any man’s commandments for the law of Christ it renders **sanctification** a “by works only” equation as well. Paul asked, “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” Jeremiah prophesied that God would give a new covenant “written on their heart”. This is not the same old Law just written on a different surface – hearts instead of stone. **If only grace can save us, then only grace can sanctify us.**

**If we boast of our freedom from legalistic religious rules and refuse to grow in grace by the knowledge of Jesus, we expose our naked immaturity at best or at worst our rebelliousness to our Lord. “Why call ye me Lord, lord and do not the things I say” (Luke 6:46).**

Under grace our motivation of practical righteousness is no longer fear of the fire of Sinai reigning down on us, but the passion of the fire of Pentecost in our hearts. The outcome is active obedience to the commands of Christ to love Him and one another.<sup>13</sup>

Disregarding the laws of love while filled with the Holy Spirit is not an option because He who motivates us does so out of love for the Lord of holiness. Dozens of times we are commanded to “love one another.”<sup>14</sup> Bearing one another’s burdens and forgiving one another is love’s fruit.<sup>15</sup> We limit our liberty out of love so as not to be a stumbling block to weaker brothers.<sup>16</sup> We should not never use our liberty as a license to sin.<sup>17</sup> **The Spirit of Jesus yearns that we yield to**

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<sup>9</sup> Romans 3:20

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 8:13

<sup>11</sup> Colossians 2:14

<sup>12</sup> Galatians 3:24

<sup>13</sup> John 14:15,21,23,24

<sup>14</sup> John 13:34

<sup>15</sup> Galatians 6:2

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:9

<sup>17</sup> Romans 6:15

**Him as He did to the Father. "I do always those things that *please him*."**<sup>18</sup> Obedient love to Him fulfills the perfect law of liberty.

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<sup>18</sup> John 8:29

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### Part 3

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”* Galatians 4:21<sup>19</sup> When Jerusalem believers visited, Peter backpedaled and only ate kosher. Paul strongly rebuked Peter for this hypocrisy.<sup>20</sup> **The only prevention of the two extremes of the leaven of legalism or of the looseness of license is the Biblical understanding of the superiority of grace over law coupled with discipleship in the Spirit empowered practice of the new law of Christ.** Galatians 5:13, *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself... Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*

#### **The differences between law and grace are counterproductive.**

“In the very nature of Law there is no grace, because a holy God is completely offended by our sin and our depraved hearts. Law is the prosecuting attorney with no one to defend us as we stand before a holy God while the Law correctly accuses man as a sinner. The merit of Messiah’s work on the cross of Calvary is the foundation of grace. The blood of Messiah satisfies all the holy, righteous demands of God and thereby gives us, the walking dead men, new life and eternal fellowship with Him. The grace of God cancels out the law of the Mosaic system.”<sup>21</sup>

#### **How do we live a sanctified life by grace?**

This brings us back to our text John 1:16, *“And of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace.”* Jesus was full of grace and He is the truth. Have you received Him as the way, the truth and the life? He fully supplies all you need for salvation upon your faith in Him. He fully supplies all your strength for life. **What does it mean “we received and grace for grace”?** Here’s a few commentators’ explanations for the phrase “grace for grace,” sometimes translated grace upon grace or grace against grace. Colin Brown wrote, “a perpetual and rapid succession of blessings, as though there was no interval in between the arrival of one blessing and the receipt of the next.”<sup>22</sup> Another wrote; “Continuously flowing from the God of saving grace is more grace.” *2 Corinthians 12: 9-12, “His grace is sufficient. His power is made perfect in our weakness.”* Bishop Moule in the late 1800’s illustrated it like standing on the banks of a river. He wrote, “Stand on its banks and contemplate the flow of the waters. A minute passes, and another. Is it the same water? No. The old water, had been displaced by the new – “water instead of water.” He pictures a never-ending unstoppable flow of grace through our being. The source of that is His saving grace. It is not only God’s unlimited favor but also His supernatural dynamic empowerment. This continuous flow of grace for grace is the supply of sanctification by the Word and Spirit.

Remember Jesus’ words to the woman at the well; John 4:14, *“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”* His grace supplied the **power for our salvation**. Just like the river water is harnessed by men to produce electrical power,

- the Holy Spirit empowers us to live Christ’s perfect law of liberty through the constant daily flow of God’s **grace for sanctification**. The electricity began to be generated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the moment you were saved.

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<sup>19</sup> Galatians 4:21

<sup>20</sup> Galatians 2:11,12

<sup>21</sup> The Law Then and Now: What About Grace, John B. Metzger, Grace Acres Press, p 109

<sup>22</sup> NIDictionary of NT Theology. P1179

- We are **empowered to serve one another in love** by obedience to the law of Christ, ie: his commandments.
- Jesus **promised the power to speak** the gospel to the lost. “But ye shall receive power/grace and ye shall be witnesses unto me...”
- We are given a never-ending **power to survive and persevere**. We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Phil. 4:13 I can continue to serve him in spite of persecution or pain, because His grace is sufficient!!

Grace for grace means His power is made perfect in our weakness. The just shall live by faith means the justified need to learn to depend on God’s Spirit for the grace/strength to serve Him and others, to speak the gospel to the lost. Let’s flip the switch and follow Jesus.

#### Four false views of the observance of the Mosaic (Torah) Law held by some Messianic believers.

- (1) “Yeshua never did away with the law; therefore, we must observe it.”
- (2) “We should now look at the law through the eyes of Yeshua.”
- (3) “All believers especially Jewish believers should obey the law.”
- (4) “The law is not for salvation, but for sanctification.”

#### The results of Freidman’s survey among Messianic congregations were as follows:

Of the 613 total

Commandments	%	Results
358	58%	Commands no Messianic or Gentile Believer observes
169	28%	Commands most Messianic and Gentile Believers observe
29	5%	Additional commandments most Messianic Believers observe
5	1%	Additional commandments that most Messianic Torah Positive believers observe
52	8%	Most Messianic Torah Positive believers don’t observe <sup>23</sup>

#### The conclusion of the Apostles and in the epistles regarding the Law of Moses

613 100% Number of commands all believers consistently fail to observe

#### The Apostle’s inspired conclusion.

**James** James 2:10, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

**Paul** Galatians 3:1-3, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Galatians 5:1,6-8, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? **This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.**”

**Peter** Acts 15:8-10,14 “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”

**Final ruling of the Apostles** – 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such

<sup>23</sup> Article The Mosaic Law, A new prospective on an old problem. Doug Friedman  
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*commandment:*"

**Response of the Gentile believers 15:30,31** "they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation."

**A test case for grace - Paul limited his liberty and that of Timothy for the sake of the Gospel to the Jews at Jerusalem**

Act 16:1-5 "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and **took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.** And as they went through the cities, they delivered them **the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.** (Circumcision of Gentile believers is not required) And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

**At first glance it seems like a contradiction** - that Paul was requiring Timothy to keep the law of circumcision in defiance of the ruling of the Jerusalem church council. Their ruling clearly ruled that gentile believers did not have to keep the Laws of Moses to be saved or to be sanctified, as Paul wrote in Galatians.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum sheds light on this passage. "Circumcision was prescribed under two covenants. First was the Abrahamic Covenant by which it was mandatory for JEWS ONLY. It was also prescribed under the Mosaic Covenant where it was mandatory for both Jews and gentiles (who converted to the God of Israel.) The dispensationalist believes that the Mosaic Covenant has come to an end with the death of Christ, so circumcision is no longer mandatory. The Abrahamic Covenant is eternal and so it still mandates circumcision, but for the Jews only. When Paul argued against circumcision in the Book of Galatians, it was against Gentile circumcision based on the Mosaic Law. For that reason, he would not allow Titus, a gentile to be circumcised. But was that the case for the Jews? Here in Acts 16 Paul had Timothy circumcised because of his Jewish roots, and Timothy was already a believer. Furthermore, the Jewish believers of the church of Jerusalem practiced circumcision, and Paul took a public vow to show that he did not teach that Jewish believers should not practice circumcision (Acts 21:20-24), though he certainly did teach against it for gentiles. Of course spiritual circumcision(of the heart) is mandatory for all, both Jews and Gentiles. This was already true in the Old Testament and did not originate with the New Testament...<sup>24</sup>

"Since Timothy had a gentile father, he is never actually classed as a Jew in the New Testament... Since all knew that his father was a Greek, this cast doubts on his Jewishness. However, because of his Jewish roots through his mother, he had the option to identify himself with the Jews and so was circumcised to make that identification complete."<sup>25</sup>

**Paul at Jerusalem in Acts 21:17-28** is arrested under false charges for bringing uncircumcised Greeks in the Temple.

*"And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, **Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.** What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: **We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.** As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. **Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.** And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple,*

<sup>24</sup> Israelology The Missing Link in Systematic Theology, Ariel Ministries San Antonio, Texas1989, pp 162,163

<sup>25</sup> Israelology The Missing Link in Systematic Theology, Ariel Ministries San Antonio, Texas1989, pp 606,716

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*stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: **This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.** Act 24:12-16, “And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city: Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me. 16 **And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.**”*