

April 23, 2015

### What About Grace? – Part 3

Shalom! Today we're going to be picking up where we left off last week; as we're dealing with the subject of grace.

“What About Grace?”

That is typically the refrain that people default to once you have cornered them and begin to share with them what the word actually teaches and they see it for themselves.

The foundational scripture that we have been looking at is *Ephesians* chapter 2, verse 8:

Eph 2:8 – “For by **grace** are ye **saved** through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: *it* is the **gift** of God: <sup>9</sup>Not **works**, lest any man should **boast**.”

Over the last two weeks we have literally broken this down. We have looked at each of the key words in this particular passage: grace, saved, faith, gift, works and boast. We have given the actual definition of these words so that we don't assume or read into it, our own English definition or understanding.

What you will find is that people have actually taken this and they have made statements like:

“You know, it's grace alone. We're saved by grace. It's grace only. Grace alone.

Some have taken it and said:

“It's faith – faith alone.”

Some people come along and say that:

“Salvation is a gift.”

What they have done, is they have taken this particular passage, this particular verse and dissected these verses to make them align with a particular belief system that often times is not what Paul is writing nor what he is saying.

We're looking at this so that you will at least be able to understand what is being said here. When people take it and use it the wrong way, you can help them to see it the right way and virtually bring correction. It's not that you are trying to correct someone.

What you are doing is that you are bringing correction in a manner that hopefully will be such that adjustments will be made in the thinking of people. That way they will be able to apply the truth, versus the confusion that is surrounding these particular verses and passage – *Ephesians 2:8 and 2:9*.

Last week we left off with the thought that concerns theology. The theology of grace did not come from Messiah. It did not come from Paul. Theology is the study of God. Man has established theology. Each man that establishes theological points of view – the founders of that theological point of view literally became the founders of a particular denomination or belief system.

That denominational belief system evolves into an organization that believes like that. When people begin to preach and teach, they establish followers. These followers are their disciples. This is what has happened throughout history. Individuals began to teach a particular doctrine or a particular teaching. They develop followers who like what they are teaching. They also develop opposition – people who don't agree. Those people develop followers.

Now you have a people who believe one way and a people who believe another way. Because of this theology and because of this doctrine, there are clashes. Sometimes these clashes lead to war – Holy Wars. These are people who are trying to force a particular doctrine; force a particular belief onto a particular society.

When people fight, they develop what you call governments. These governments develop rules and laws based on this doctrine; based on this theology and based on this belief system that now becomes law for a society.

All of this plays into it because the foundation of a lot of what you will find in societal law (they say) comes from the Bible. And yet there are so many differences in how it is interpreted. The doctrine or theology of grace did not come from Messiah or Paul, but from Luther and Westerners' theological interpretation of Luther, Paul and Messiah.

You are going to find ladies and gentlemen, that besides Paul, Luther is the most influential person on the planet as it relates to Christianity. You are going to see that things that Luther wrote way back when are still at play today. You are going to hear phrases and statements that Luther made, that are now in sermons.

Historically, three groups emerged outside of Judaism. They are the Catholics, the Protestants (Protestants evolved into what are called Lutherans). Lutherans are really Catholic Reformers. Luther was a Catholic all of his life. Luther was never a Lutheran. He was a Catholic and he stayed a Catholic. The third group of people is the Anabaptists. Anabaptists are an offshoot of Protestantism.

Catholics claim their authority from Peter as being the first Pope. Protestants are hybrids or "mutant" Catholics which claim their authority from Martin Luther. Then you have the Anabaptists who consider Anabaptism to be an offshoot of Protestantism. Others see it as a direct movement. The Amish, Hutterites and Mennonites are direct descendants of the movement. Then there is Schwarzenau Brethren, Bruderhof and the Apostolic Christian Church. These are later developments in Anabaptist groups.

Get this. The name "Anabaptist" means "one who baptizes again." You many not hear the term Anabaptist,

but you are exposed to it. When you go from one denomination to another denomination, if you have been baptized in a former denomination, they say you must be what? Baptized again. Now you have people who come into the Hebrew Roots movement and who, because of this philosophy that has been incorporated into them, feel that:

“Okay, I was baptized as a Baptist. I was baptized as a Catholic. I need to be baptized as a Messiahian. I need to be baptized as a Messianic. I was baptized in Jesus’ name. I was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now I need to be baptized in the name of Yeshua.”

That is the doctrine of the Anabaptists that has been incorporated into theology. The Anabaptists felt that if you were baptized as an infant, you were not of the age of accountability to where you made the decision to be baptized yourself. Now you see this thing emerging. You have many people within the church communities who reject infant baptism. They make statements like:

“A person shouldn’t be baptized until they are able to accept Yeshua or Jesus themselves.”

They don’t even realize that this thinking came from the Anabaptists way back yonder during the Reformation. That theology exists among people today in all walks of life and in all denominations. It is certainly adhered to in denominational congregations.

This name (Anabaptist) was given them by their persecutors in reference to the practice of rebaptizing converts who already had been baptized as infants. Anabaptists required that baptismal candidates be able to

make their own confessions of faith, so they rejected infant baptism.

What you are going to find is that many people have a myriad or a mixture of various theological arguments that have been deposited into their spirit. When you sit under a teaching and you open yourself up to a teaching, things are being deposited in your spirit that affect your belief system and shape your doctrine. When you begin to communicate, you begin to communicate what you believe. What you believe often times may not necessarily be sound, but it is what you believe. This is what happens with people when you begin to show them what the Bible teaches and their default is:

“Well, that’s not what I believe.”

Once you are able to put that mirror in front of them concerning their belief system, what happens?

“Well, what about grace? What about grace brother? Now you want to put works on me!”

The person who has had the greatest impact on faith and the modern church is Martin Luther. Although people don’t preach Martin Luther, they come at you with the term:

“Church Fathers.”

Have you ever heard that one?

“Church Fathers.”

Whenever people use “Church Fathers,” they are not talking about anybody in this book. They have already taken you out of the Bible. That is what they have done. When they have taken you out of the Bible and they want to preach the “Church Fathers” to you, what they are saying is that the way that these individuals interpreted this book is

where we have put our mark in the sand. It is their interpretation of the book.

You would think that Church Fathers would be in the book. Why aren't they in the book? It is because the church is not in the book. The word "church" is you see, but that is an evolution. These individuals want you to think that Christians were all the way back at Pentecost in Jerusalem during the Feast of Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks.

"Well, on the day of Pentecost, that's when the church was born!"

"Yeah. Really?"

That's what they say. That's what they argue and that's what people believe. They have been making this argument for several hundred years – at least for 1,700 years.

Luther taught that salvation and subsequently eternity in heaven is not earned by good deeds, but is received only as a free gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ as redeemer from sin and subsequently eternity in hell. You could say that what Luther is saying is good. You can support this – that salvation and eternity in heaven is not earned. You can't earn it. We agree to that.

You can't work for it. It can only be received and there is the key right there. You have to receive it. Now, some can argue and have argued successfully that to receive it is an action. Any action violates the "freeness" of it. You see, I can give you something, but you can reject it or you can accept it. You have a will that is incorporated into the acceptance or rejection of this free gift. If a free gift is forced on someone, it is no longer a gift.

Salvation is not forced on anyone. Anybody can accept it. Anybody can reject it and thus it is an action on their part. Luther writes this. Ultimately he comes out against free will. He rejects the notion that free will is involved. God is doing all the work. God is now – I want you to think

about this logically. God comes at you. He gives you His word. He gives you faith by grace and then He puts His Spirit on you. Now by His Spirit you can receive this word of faith by grace.

It's the Almighty that's bringing the word. It's the Almighty that's overshadowing and overpowering you and giving you the ability to receive this word totally void of any action on your part. And if that be the case, why doesn't He do it with everybody? Do you follow me? If that is how He works, then everybody on the planet will be saved. Why? Because that is His desire. His desire is that all men be saved.

So if He is only doing it to certain people and not doing it to other people, then He is now a respecter of persons. The argument doesn't hold up when you address the argument from a logical point of view. Either He is going to do it to everybody or He is choosing who He is going to do it to. This is where the Calvinists come away with the whole idea of election – the doctrine of election.

The doctrine of election says that certain people are going to be saved. The elect are the ones that God chooses. There are some that are going to go to hell because they are not elect. Well, how do you decide who's the elect and who is not the elect? You are the elect if you are born into this denomination. You now have to be part of this denomination, because "the elect" are part of this group.

Anyone who is outside of this group is not the elect. This is where it gets really weird. There are some that are the elect who believe that they have to evangelize and tell people about the good news so that they can receive it. Then there is another elect; which is among the Presbyterians and among the Calvinists.

The Calvinistic model; the Wesleyan model says that:

"Well, no, you don't have to tell people about this because God has already chosen

who is going to be saved and who is not going to be saved.”

That’s predestination. But then when you begin to try to drill down into that, the question becomes:

“So are you saying that man has absolutely no say in whether he is going to be saved or not – none?”

Believe it or not, ladies and gentlemen, this is the very argument that Yeshua had to deal with, with the Pharisees and the Sadducees. When he was dealing with the Jewish people of his day, they would say:

“Listen, we’re Abraham’s seed. We are Abraham’s seed, so we are the elect of God and we don’t have to do anything. We were born into this.”

Whether you know it or not, when a person says to you without you inquiring:

“I’m Jewish.”

That is what they are saying.

“Hi, my name is whatever and I’m Jewish.”

“Okay.”

Now you may not know what is going on, but they are saying to you:

“I’m the chosen one. I’m the chosen one. You better know this. I’m Jewish. I’m proud of it! Why? Because I am one of the chosen people. As a chosen one, I don’t need that Jesus. I don’t need that ‘may his name be blotted out’ guy. I’m Jewish.”

Luther's theology challenged the authority and office of the Pope by teaching that the Bible is the only source of divinely revealed knowledge from God. He opposed **sacerdotalism**.

This word is an interesting word. By considering all baptized Christians to be a holy priesthood, what Catholicism did is that it ushered in a replacement theology. It didn't identify itself as replacement. But what it did was that it now hijacked a priesthood system from the Jewish people and applied it to the followers of Messiah.

The Pope is the "High Priest." Then you have the priesthood. These are the Cardinals and the Bishops, the Archbishops. Those individuals were like the Levites. You have the Pope and you've got the Priests and the Levites (if you would). These are the individuals that replaced Judaism for the sake of Catholicism. Therefore you now have this hierarchy going on.

This hierarchy of *sacerdotalism* is defined as a belief that propitiatory sacrifices for sin require the intervention of a Priest. Now the people had to come to a Priest to make their confessions. They no longer had to bring an animal sacrifice.

They no longer had to bring any kind of sacrifice for their doings. They just had to do penance. Penance in Catholicism got to a place where they were selling restitution or penance. They were selling these things to people who were able to now buy forgiveness (if you would). I mean, that is what it really boiled down to. That is the belief that a special, segregated order of men, called the priesthood are the only ones who can commune directly with God or the gods.

The system of the papacy replaced the system of the Levitical priesthood. It established another priesthood that was Catholic, and which claimed Pope Peter as the founder or as the head or as the first Pope.

Those who identify with these and all of Luther's wider teachings are called Lutherans **even though Luther insisted on *Christian* as the only acceptable name for individuals who professed Christ.** That is what he insisted on. Today, Lutheranism constitutes a major branch of Protestantism and overall Christianity with some 80 million adherents.

The fact that followers of Luther called themselves "Lutherans" is clear evidence of a departure from Luther's beliefs and teachings. Luther did not set out to establish Lutheranism. Luther was a Catholic. Luther wanted the Catholic Church to reform. Instead of reforming the Catholic Church, he started what people have now theologially dubbed, a reformation. A reformation that is now called a Reformation – a Reformation that was established with Luther at the helm.

Luther became convinced that the church was corrupt in its ways and had lost sight of what he saw as several of the central truths of Christianity. The most important for Luther was the doctrine of justification. This is God's act of declaring a sinner righteous by faith. Now there it is – *by faith alone through God's grace.*

What you are going to see here ladies and gentlemen is that it *was* grace through faith. *It evolved into* faith alone through God's grace. Then it got to where Luther wrote faith alone. Luther came to understand justification as entirely the work of God.

This teaching by Luther was clearly expressed in his 1525 publication *On the Bondage of the Will*, which was written in response to *On Free Will* by Desiderius Erasmus (1524). Theologians will recognize these names because they have studied them.

Erasmus admired Luther and Luther admired Erasmus. Erasmus was a scholar. Luther was also a scholar, but Erasmus simply wanted to be scholarly. He did not want to

be part of any movement. You are going to see that this created a problem for Luther.

Luther based his position on predestination on St. Paul's epistle to the *Ephesians* 2:8-10. We read chapter 2, verses 8 and 9. Of course he uses verse 10, so let's read verses 8-10.

Eph 2:8-10 – “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of YeHoVaH; not of works, lest any man should boast, for we are his workmanship, created in the Messiah unto good works, which Elohim has before ordained that we should walk in them.”

So what you are going to see – remember that I gave the illustration. You will see that Americans have a tendency – not just Americans, but now the world has a tendency to begin to reduce letters and names to an acronym. You have a good example with the Young Men's Christian Association. That became the “YMCA.” That became the “Y.”

With texting and with ebonics, you will find that people are now using letters like “LMAO” or “LOL” or “OMG.” This is the society that we live in. Now it is like people are too lazy to sound out words or they have too many words to say, so they just use the acronym. They expect that you know the language.

“What do you mean you don't know the language? Oh, you must be old school!”

You see?

“Old school.”

It is like the Old Testament. You are outdated, old and have lost your use and value.

Desiderius Erasmus wrote that:

“free will does not exist according to Luther.”

So now they are writing. There is a writing war that is going on between these two gentlemen. Both of them are impacting society as we know it way back then. The effect of what they wrote and did way back then in the 1500s is still with us today.

He wrote:

“free will does not exist according to Luther”

...in his letter *De Servo Arbitrio* to Erasmus that was translated into German by Justus Jonas (1526). In that letter, he stated that sin makes human beings completely incapable of bringing themselves to God.

This is how this translates into Calvinism. It is called the complete degradation of, or to be completely deprived. Man is completely deprived of any ability to do any right. Therefore he does not have the ability to come to God on his own or even to receive the grace of God. This is why it has to be given as a free gift; totally void of man's interaction. Man doesn't have to do anything. But to receive something is doing something.

They will even go to the point where you can't come to a place where you ask God to come into your life. They will say that that is the work of the Evangelical. The Evangelicals came up with a doctrine and a teaching to where now comes the fiery brimstone, Evangelical hell brimstone message where it scares a person into making a confession of faith. Luther is saying that human beings are completely incapable of bringing themselves to God. They have absolutely no ability because of their complete depravity.

Erasmus described Luther as:

“a mighty trumpet of gospel truth”

...while agreeing:

“it is clear that many of the reforms for which Luther calls are urgently needed.”

When Erasmus hesitated to support Luther however, the straightforward Luther became angered that Erasmus was avoiding the responsibility due to either cowardice or a lack of purpose. Do you see this writing war? They are going at each other.

They both have access to the same audience. Whenever you have access to the same audience, it is like this:

“You are either going to come onto my team – we’re going to do this thing together or I am going to cut you up.”

What does that do? Now the people are going to have to make a choice as to who they are going to follow. And there you go, it is a split.

To Philip Melanchthon in 1524, Erasmus wrote these words:

“I know nothing of your church;”

These guys are trying to get him onto the same team. He says:

“Listen, I know nothing of your church; at the very least it contains people who will, I fear, overturn the whole system and drive the princes into using force to restrain good men and bad alike. The gospel, the word of God, faith, Christ, and Holy Spirit – these words are always on their lips; look at their lives and they speak quite another language.”

He is writing this in the 1500s. He is saying that these people are preaching this gospel with love, or they are saying things like the gospel, the word of God, faith, Christ, the Holy Spirit. But their lifestyle is totally contrary to the words that they are speaking. Now understand that Luther is watching the opulence of the Catholics and he is saying:

“You know, you guys are all about money. You are using your position of power to rape the people, to pillage the people, to fleece the people. The people are totally ignorant of what it is that you are doing because you have put yourself as a people of authority – religious authority over the people. You have usurped the power and the authority over the people. Now the people have to see you as the representative of God in the earth.”

That spirit is alive today in all denominations. Whether you like it or not, people try to force their ministers into that place.

“How come you let people call you ‘Arthur’?”

“Well, that’s what my Mama calls me. It’s on my birth certificate.”

You have people who say:

“Well, I’m the Reverend...”

“Okay, let me see your license.”

Is “the Reverend” on your birth certificate? Is “Doctor” on your birth certificate? Is “Doctor” on your driver’s license? If you want people to call you – when people introduce themselves as:

“I’m Doctor So and So. I’m Reverend So and So. I’m Bishop So and So. I’m Pastor So and So.”

It is like:

“Okay. How do you introduce yourself like that, when the fact of the matter is that now you are saying that a title is part of your name?”

“I’m Mister. Call me ‘Mr. Bailey’. Don’t call me ‘Arthur’. Call me ‘Mr.’”

Do you see? Anyway, he is saying that:

“You people are saying one thing, but your lifestyle is saying something else.”

Then in 1529 he writes an epistle. An epistle ladies and gentlemen, is a letter. Paul wrote epistles. So he writes *An epistle against those who falsely boast they are Evangelicals*. Now he is attacking Evangelicals. He says to Vulturius Neocomus (Gerardus Geldenhouwer) – here Erasmus complains of the doctrines and morals of the Reformers.

Luther was a Reformer, but these guys are like contemporaries. They are side by side. They know each other. They are watching each other. Erasmus is not trying to recruit Luther, but Luther is trying to recruit Erasmus because he sees the scholarly ability and the influence that Erasmus has over the people. And he is a writer. He is a scholar. He is a theologian. He is recognized as an authority and people listen to him.

So by building on that relationship, Luther empowers and makes himself that much more accepted and heard. People are saying:

“Well, if Erasmus is with him, wow. Okay. I’m with Erasmus. If Erasmus is with him, then he is endorsing him. So he must believe him. Since I follow Erasmus and Erasmus is following Luther, then I am going to follow Luther.”

He says:

“You declaim bitterly...”

This is what he is writing against the Reformers who he considers to be Evangelicals. He says:

“You declaim bitterly against the luxury of priests,”

You see, the priests were living luxurious lives. When you see all the pomp and revelry, I’m telling you right now. There are people in the Catholic Church that are living in million dollar mansions all over the United States. They just exposed some a year ago. Chicago, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, California – the new Pope had to come out against a lot of it. He is saying that:

“You people are living too high on the hog to be considered priests.”

This was way back in the 1500s. It was even worse than that. Now it is kept a lot more secret, but one of the richest organizations on the planet is the Catholic Church. It is so much so that it has its own state, its own zip code, its own laws and its own bank.

“You declaim bitterly against the luxury of priests,”

Luther...

“the ambition of bishops,”

Luther...

“...the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff and the babbling of the sophists; against our prayers, fasts and masses; and you are not content to retrench the abuses that may be in these things, but must needs abolish them entirely.”

“Look around on this ‘Evangelical’ generation and observe whether amongst them less indulgence is given to luxury, lust, or avarice than amongst those whom you so detest.”

In other words, he is saying that the very people who are joining your fight are living just like the people who you are fighting against. Everybody wants to be on the ground floor of the movement. If I am on the ground floor of the movement, I get to sit on the right hand or I get to sit on the left. I’ve got a place of honor in the movement.

“Show me any one person who by that gospel has been reclaimed from drunkenness to sobriety, from fury and passion to meekness, from avarice to liberality, from reviling to well-speaking, from wantonness to modesty.”

“I will show you a great many who have become worse though following it...The solemn prayers of the church are abolished, but now there are very many who never pray at all...”

You will find that when people came into the Hebrew Roots movement who used to be in Pentecostalism, many people in Pentecostalism prayed in tongues more. They

fasted more. They may have felt that their relationship was stronger. But when they come into this, often times the move and work of the Spirit ceased in their lives.

What he is saying is that these people used to pray, but now that they are rebelling; they are protesting and they are coming under a new spirit. They are not praying the rosary. They are not praying at all. Now they are reevaluating everything that they believe. He says:

“I have never entered their conventicles, but I have sometimes seen them returning from their sermons, the countenances of all of them displaying rage and wonderful ferocity, as though they were animated by the evil spirit...”

I’m thinking that I’ve come to a point where I can’t make fun of them or talk about them. I feel sorry for them. When I see well-known preachers, I want to ask them sometimes:

“Do you think that Yeshua preached like that? Do you think that he did all of that animation? All of that performance to get the people rattled?”

People like it. People love it. People in those denominations; in many of the Baptist churches and many of the Pentecostals and the Sanctified churches love when the ministers go into that “preach” mode, that hoot mode. They feel that now he is preaching. He wasn’t preaching before, but now he’s preaching.

Folks want to stand up and they want to get their look. They want to “Amen” and they want to rock and sway and do all of those kinds of things because now the preacher just started preaching. We’ve been talking all this time, but now he’s got that preach on.

“Preach preacher!”

Then you see the women. Folks start getting that look on their face like:

“Ooo this is GOOD!”

You see these faces. It’s like:

“Really? Is that what the Spirit does? The Spirit just contorts your face like that?”

If you are honest, you will see that some of these people look like they have a demon. They look like their face is all contorted. That is a “holy” look to them. This is what Erasmus is saying. He is saying:

“Look at them — their countenance.”

“...the countenances of all of them displaying rage...”

They are looking MEAN!

“...as though they were animated by the evil spirit...”

“Who ever beheld in their meetings any one of them shedding tears, smiting his breast, or grieving for his sins?...Confession to the priest is abolished, but very few now confess to God...”

“I don’t need to confess to nobody! It’s just God and me. That’s the only one I need to ask forgiveness for.”

Well, when you sin against men, you ask men for forgiveness.

“Well, I don’t need to ask no man for forgiveness because this is just between me and God.”

Well, God says that if your brother sins against you, that you go to him.

“Well, where is that at in the Bible?”

You see, you are not even reading the Bible any more.

“Well, I don’t believe that!”

“What do you mean you don’t believe that?”

“Well, that’s not what I believe.”

“Oh, so you don’t believe what the Bible says?”

This is why we’ve come to a place ladies and gentlemen, in Bible society where people don’t follow the steps of restoration. They don’t go to their brother. They look to everybody for advice on how to address their brother.

“What do you think I should do? My brother did this...”

The Bible says to go to him and him alone. Why are you talking to everybody else?

“Well, I’m just trying to get some wisdom on how to go to him. I’m just trying to get some wisdom on how to go to him.”

“Why do you need to get wisdom? The wisdom is in the word. What aren’t you doing what the word says? That is where the wisdom is at. How do you expect the

Almighty to honor what you are doing if you are not doing what he says to do? You go another way.”

“Well, he’s not going to listen!”

“Well, take two more.”

“Well, it don’t take all of that. I’ll just cut him off.”

This is what he is addressing way back then. You see, what he is saying is that the Catholic Church may have some things off, but let’s compare the people who have protested against the things that are off in the Catholic Church. Let’s look at their lives and compare it to the lives of the people that are still there. You have people who are there. They are going to confession. You have people there who are smiting their breast. They are recognizing their sinful condition; which leads them to confession.

You have people who have protested against all of that. You are not confessing your sins. You are not smiting your breasts. You are not even acknowledging your sin because you are too mad at the people who are doing the things that they are doing. It is like everything that they are doing is wrong. This is what he says:

“Whoever beheld them. They are not confessing.”

“Very few now confess to God. They have fled from Judaism that they may become Epicureans.”

Now what is an Epicurean? **Epicureanism** is a system of philosophy based upon the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus, founded around 307 BCE. You can look that up. I just gave you that. Epicurus believed that what he called “pleasure” is the greatest good,

but the way to attain such pleasure is to live modestly and to gain knowledge of the workings of the world and the limits of one's desires.

This is almost like the Catholics. Here you have people who supposedly have taken a vow of poverty, but they are living more opulent. It is like, how do you take a vow of poverty and live like a king? Then you have these individuals who are saying that you have to live modestly and that is good, but you can't tell people how to live. You can't. You can teach them what the Bible says. The Bible talks about modesty in dress. It talks about modest living. But to take that and for yourself to now define modesty – you can't.

“Continuing his chastisement of Luther – and undoubtedly put off by the notion of there being ‘no pure interpretation of scripture anywhere but in Wittenberg’”

Luther didn't intend for this to happen, but this is what happened. Luther is saying that these people; all of them are misinterpreting the Bible. The only person who has a proper interpretation of the Bible is himself. Erasmus says:

“Listen man. You are saying that the notion of there being no pure interpretation of scripture anywhere but in Wittenberg”

That is where Luther was. Erasmus touches upon another important point of the controversy. He says:

“You stipulate that we should not ask for or accept anything but Holy scripture, but you do it in such a way as to require that we permit you to be its sole interpreter, renouncing all others. Thus the victory will be yours if we allow you to be not the steward, but the lord of Holy scripture.”

That is exactly what denominationalism does. It goes into a whole other realm. In his catechism (entitled *Explanation of the Apostles' Creed*) – how many of you have ever heard of the Apostles' Creed? It wasn't written by the Apostles. It was just given a name so that you would *believe* that it was from the Apostles. Not one apostle was involved in the writing of the Apostles Creed – not one.

Erasmus took a stand against Luther's teaching by asserting the unwritten *sacred tradition* as just as valid a source of revelation as the Bible. He did this by enumerating the deuterocanonical books in the canon of the Bible and by acknowledging seven sacraments.

Now the deuterocanonical books are other books. There are a lot of them. He called "blasphemers," anyone who questioned the perpetual virginity of Mary. This is Erasmus. However, he supported lay access to the Bible. In a letter to Nikolaus von Amsdorf, Luther objected to Erasmus' catechism and called Erasmus a "viper." Now they are turning on each other. He called him a "liar" and:

"the very mouth and organ of Satan."

This was because Erasmus didn't join forces with Luther. Luther at first wanted him to join forces with him. But because Erasmus took a stand and did not join forces with him and called him out on some of the things that were done, now he has to cut him up. He has to break him down. He has to make him look like a demon, a monster and a person opposed to God.

Erasmus was accused by the monks against the Reformation that he had prepared the way and was responsible for Martin Luther. Erasmus (they said) had laid the egg and Luther hatched it. But Erasmus wittily dismissed the charge, claiming that Luther had hatched a different bird entirely.

What Luther brought in he said – he admired what Luther brought in. But by the time that Luther finished,

what Luther had brought forth did not look anything like anything that he had anything to do with.

## **Luther and the Law**

Early in 1537, Johannes Agricola (1494-1566), serving at the time as pastor in Luther's birthplace Eisleben, preached a sermon in which he claimed that God's gospel not God's moral law (the Ten Commandments), revealed God's wrath to Christians.

Based on this sermon and others by Agricola, Luther suspected that Agricola was behind certain anonymous antinomian theses circulating in Wittenberg. (Antinomian is anti-law.)

These theses asserted that the law is no longer to be taught to Christians, but belonged only to city hall. This is where Christianity is today – that the law belongs to city hall. It teaches that the only laws that we are governed by are the laws of the court – the laws of the land, the laws of man. We are no longer under the law of God. This was way back in the 1500s. These are the “Church Fathers.”

In his theses and disputations against the antinomians, Luther reviews and reaffirms on the one hand, what has been called “the second use of the law.” That is the law as the Holy Spirit's tool to work sorrow over sin in man's heart, thus preparing him for Christ's fulfillment of the law, offered in the gospel.

Luther states that everything that is used to work sorrow over sin is called “the law,” even if it is Christ's life, Christ's death for sin, or God's goodness experienced in creation. I am using these terminologies because that is the terminology he used. Luther didn't refer to Yeshua Messiah as Yeshua Messiah, but as Jesus Christ.

Simply refusing to preach the Ten Commandments among Christians – thereby as it were, removing the three

letters l-a-w from the church – does not eliminate the accusing law! He says:

**“You can take the law out of the church,  
but the law is still there!”**

Claiming that:

“the law in any form should not be  
preached to Christians anymore”

...would be tantamount to asserting that Christians are no longer sinners in themselves and that the church consists only of essentially holy people. What is Luther saying? *Luther is saying that you can't remove the law!* The law has a place in the church! The followers of Luther, if they truly followed Luther, would be following Luther.

Do you know what else? Calvinists are people who follow John Calvin. John Calvin believed that the commandments of God are supposed to be a part of the believer's life. Luther believed it. Calvin believed it. But the followers of Luther and the followers of Calvin have evolved so far away from them, that they reject what the founders believed.

In his own writings – I had Calvin commentaries. I don't have them anymore. When Calvin commented on *Matthew* chapter 5; when he talked about how Yeshua (Jesus) didn't come to do away with the law, he did a long commentary on what Yeshua meant. He believed that the law was a part of the believer's life and that if you remove the law from the believer's life, you have just damaged the gospel message. This is what Luther taught.

On the other hand, Luther also points out that the Ten Commandments when considered not as God's condemning judgment but as an expression of his eternal will, that is of the natural law, also positively teach how the Christian ought to live.

What Luther did in one sense is that he stood by the law. But in another sense, he downgraded the law. The reason why people do this is because when people start asking questions, either we keep the law or we don't keep the law. What law do we keep? Well, we do keep the Ten Commandments. What Luther is advocating here is the Ten Commandments. That is what is considered as "the law."

Calvin advocated the Ten Commandments. Lutherans read the Ten Commandments every evening service. They read two things; either the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed. If you know anything about creeds, there are three main ones. These are the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. These are the three main creeds in Catholicism and Lutheranism. You can look these up: Athanasian Creed, Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed.

One of these creeds, either the Nicene or the Apostles' Creed is read in every Lutheran evening vesper; evening service. I've never been to a Catholic evening service, but I believe that the Catholics recite the Ten Commandments. I know that the Lutherans do because I was once a minister in it and we did it in every evening service – all of the Lutherans in the Missouri Synod Lutheran church.

Here we are confessing that we are to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy, while at the same time teaching that the Sabbath is Sunday. So now you have the Christian Sabbath. All of this didn't come from Luther.

This has traditionally been called the "third use of the law." *For Luther, Christ's life, when understood as an example, is nothing more than an illustration of the Ten Commandments*; which a Christian should follow in his or her vocations on a daily basis (that means that if you really believe that the Sabbath is valid, according to his own teachings and beliefs).

## Luther and anti-Semitism

Luther wrote about the Jews throughout his career, although only a few of his works dealt with them directly. Luther rarely encountered Jews during his life, but his attitudes reflected a theological and cultural tradition which saw Jews as a rejected people guilty of the murder of Christ. He lived within a local community that had expelled Jews some ninety years earlier.

He considered the Jews as blasphemers and liars because they rejected the divinity of Jesus; whereas Christians believed Jesus was the Messiah. Luther believed that all human beings who set themselves against God were equally guilty.

He had an anti-Semitic approach. As early as 1516, he wrote that many people:

“are proud with marvelous stupidity when they call the Jews ‘dogs, evildoers’ or whatever they like, while they too and equally, do not realize who or what they are in the sight of God.”

You will find that Luther used a lot of vulgarity – I mean cuss words. Luther provoked his audience and spoke violently. You are going to see some of that here. In 1523, Luther advised kindness toward the Jews in *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*. He also aimed to convert them to Christianity.

When his efforts at conversion failed, this is the thing he did. At first he spoke well of Erasmus until Erasmus didn't join him. Once Erasmus didn't join him, he went on the attack. Now he's going to show this same behavior toward the Jewish people.

When his efforts at conversion failed, he grew increasingly bitter toward them. In his 2010 book *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*, Christian author

Eric Metaxas claimed that Luther's attitude toward Jews "unraveled along with his health."

Luther's other major works on the Jews were his 60,000 word treatise *Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen* (*On the Jews and Their Lies*), and *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi* (*On the Holy Name and the Lineage of Christ*), both published in 1543, three years before his death.

Luther argued that the Jews were no longer the chosen people but "the devil's people," and referred to them with violent, vile language, citing *Deuteronomy* 13. Therein Moses commands the killing of idolaters and the burning of their cities and property as an offering to God. Now imagine what this did. It's:

"Okay. These haters of God should be burned. They should be killed. Their cities should be burned. Their property should be taken as an offering to God."

Luther called for a "scharfe barmherzigkeit" ("sharp mercy") against the Jews:

"...to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames."

Luther advocated setting synagogues on fire, destroying Jewish prayer books, forbidding Rabbis from preaching, seizing Jews' property and money and smashing up their homes so that these "envenomed worms" would be forced into labour or expelled "for all time." In Robert Michael's view, Luther's words:

"We are at fault in not slaying them"

This amounted to a sanction for murder.

"We are at fault in not slaying them."

Luther says that if we don't kill them, we are guilty!

“God’s anger with them is so intense,”

Luther concluded:

“...that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore in any case, away with them!”

Luther spoke out against the Jews in Saxony, Brandenburg and Silesia. Josel of Rosheim, the Jewish spokesman who tried to help the Jews of Saxony in 1537, later blamed their plight on:

“...that priest whose name was Martin Luther.”

Do you see? He was a priest. Martin Luther was a Catholic priest.

“...May his body and soul be bound up in hell!”

Josel of Rosheim said that Luther wrote and issued many heretical books in which he said that whoever would help the Jews was doomed to perdition. Josel asked the city of Strasbourg to forbid the sale of Luther’s anti-Jewish works. They refused initially, but did so when a Lutheran pastor in Hochfelden used a sermon to urge his parishioners to murder Jews. Luther’s influence persisted after his death.

Throughout the 1580s, riots led to the expulsion of Jews from several German Lutheran states. Luther was the most widely read author of his generation and within Germany he acquired the status of a prophet.

According to the prevailing view among historians, Luther’s anti-Jewish rhetoric significantly contributed to the development of anti-Semitism in Germany and in the 1930s and 1940s provided an “ideal underpinning” for the Nazi’s attacks on Jews.

On December 17, 1941, seven Protestant regional church confederations issued a statement agreeing with the policy of forcing Jews to wear the yellow badge. This is all in history.

“...since after his bitter experience, Luther had already suggested preventive measures against the Jews and their expulsion from German territory.”

At the time of the Marburg Colloquy, Suleiman the Magnificent was besieging Vienna with a vast Ottoman army. Luther had argued against resisting the Turks in his 1518 *Explanation of the Ninety-five Theses*, provoking accusations of defeatism.

This is where we're going to see that Luther – well, let me just read this because this is Luther and Islam. He saw the Turks as a scourge sent to punish Christians by God; as agents of the biblical apocalypse that would destroy the antichrist, **whom Luther believed to be the papacy and the Roman Church.** Luther was the first one to come up with the statement:

“The Pope is the Antichrist.”

When you think about it, there are people today who believe that the Catholic Church is the Antichrist. The Catholic Church is the harlot church and the Pope is the Antichrist. People believe that. Luther was the first one to advocate it. Luther says:

“Listen, the Islamists – the Muslims have been sent by God”

...And that they were agents of the biblical apocalypse that would destroy the Antichrist. He consistently rejected the idea of a Holy War.

“...as though our people were an army of Christians against the Turks, who were enemies of Christ. This is absolutely contrary to Christ’s doctrine and name.”

You will see that same usage today.

“Is America in a Holy War?”

Now listen. Islam – everything that they are doing; all of the terrorists attacks by Muslims, by Islamists, they are attributing it to Mohammed. They believe that they are to establish a caliphate – to reestablish an Islamic caliphate, an empire and the institution of *Sharia* law; which is the law of God according to the Muslims.

You will find that certain parties or a certain party is trying to urge the leader of this nation to call it a “Holy War” – it is a war against Israel. This stuff is in the news. You have probably heard it. The refusal to call it a “Holy War” simply feeds into the President of the United States as a Muslim. You see, when you have rhetoric that is being spewed, you will find that this strategy goes way back – way back. And it is still being used today in a lot of ways.

The people who are not with us must be against us. In order to make us look legitimate, we have to tear everybody else down. Is that what you have to do? Why don’t you just preach what you believe to be true? Sometimes in the preaching of what you believe to be true, it exposes people.

It is not that you are trying to expose people. It is that you are preaching what you believe to be true. Anyone who is preaching contrary to what you believe to be true is now being exposed; especially if I am saying one thing and everybody else that they listen to is saying something contrary to that.

“This is what I believe.”

And this is what that person believes. And on this particular issue, we just don't agree. Can we disagree? Can we disagree without demonizing each other? Can we disagree and still have some kind of relationship? Or if we disagree, do we have to split up over every little disagreement? I will tell you something. You will have what we have today – a very fragmented society.

I don't want to spend a lot more time on Luther, but there is a lot more to spend on Luther. I said that Luther is probably the most influential person in the church world today. All of the teachings and doctrines that we are trying to expose for what they are were established way back then.

One of the things that I wanted to get to was what Luther had to do in order to get his gospel out. The reason why people translate Bibles is to give you their version. What I did and in Pentecostalism and in the mainline Baptists, there are two Bibles.

There are two Bibles in my walk that have probably been the most influential in churches. At one point, all of the churches that were of a particular denomination were reading from one of these two books. One is the Thompson Chain Reference Bible. Anybody ever hear of the Thompson Chain Reference? The other is the Dakes Bible. Anybody ever hear of Dakes?

What Dakes did – this is interesting. If you can, you will find that Dakes has commentaries. He has two columns of commentaries; two columns of scriptures into which he also inserts commentaries. He has this big old book with commentary from *Genesis* all the way to *Revelation*. People who read Dakes' Bible read all of his commentaries and preach from these commentaries.

It is the same thing with Thompson's Chain Reference. Thompson's Chain Reference Bible, you can see it. You have the words of the Bible and then you have all of the reference material and all of the commentary in the

margins. When a person reads the Bible, they read the commentary.

I can't tell you how many times I have found myself having conversations with people who want to argue with me from the commentary of their favorite Bible. Now you have all of these teachers on TV who want to give you their version of the Bible. What they are saying is:

“Listen. We want to give you an accurate version of a translation of the Bible.”

By whose standard? It is going to be bent toward the belief system of that organization. That continues on today, even with the scriptures and the sacred name Bibles. People are already encouraging me that I need to write a Bible. I probably will. It's a ways off, but it is probably going to happen to where it will have the name and try to replace or to expose some of the things. Or we will make people more aware that as you read the Bible, that here is some misleading information and misinformation.

I mean, think about it ladies and gentlemen. How in the world did “Easter” get into the book? Somebody put it there. And because they put that one word into the book, the church now celebrates Easter. If you can write your own Bible and put it in the hands of people, then they are going to read your version. All who read your version of the book are going to believe what you put into the book. It is just the way that it is.