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**BOUND BY THE LAW?**

—"The Law is Not Made for the Righteous!"—  
1Tim.1:9.—From Paul Papers



Dearest Dad and Mama,

ILY! I had a couple of thoughts that I wanted to put on paper regarding the statement in the "20/20" video where they made it a real point to broadcast the fact that "the Children of God have a reputation for keeping the law". While this is, of course, a real good testimony, it seems like in some ways the Enemy may have been trying to flaunt it to encourage those that want to inflict damage upon the Family to do so, that we are pretty easy prey in this respect.

I know what I'm about to say could easily be taken to an extreme, & in fact ruin our testimony as Christians, but I wonder if sometimes we are too bound by "the law"? (D: Right!) For example, in the case of Barz, he didn't even consider overstaying his visa time because he probably assessed & was overly concerned about what the consequences could be from the System in doing so. However, in this case, knowing his wife & her American cohorts were in town, out to rip off his kids, the repercussions were much worse by blindly going along on business

as usual & walking into Immigrations & falling into the wolves' trap! He actually should have taken his chances & not gone down to Immigrations. (D: Right!)

I remember one time you wrote something to the effect that as the World becomes more & more anti-Christ, that active Christians are going to have to get used to the fact that what they're doing is going to virtually be declared unlawful, & in effect they will need to be more & more prepared to do things that such an Antichrist Government would declare as "illegal". I don't really know what the wholesale application of this statement would involve, or even if this is yet the time for it, but a few examples did come to mind of where missionaries in essence have operated illegally or outside the law & the Lord seemed to bless it. (D: Amen.)

For example, I remember when a well-known Christian radio programme moved South: They had investigated long-term visas for their proposed new destination, but since that country's legal matters were handled by another consulate, the representative could only provide limited information. When the plans for the missionary group's move were stepped up, it turned out they all ended up arriving on tourist visas which very quickly had to be renewed. In trying to see about extensions & getting some sort of government backing or approval on this, through a well-placed contact they got appointments to see a number of government ministers, amongst them the Minister of State, whom they had several long meetings with, as well as the Assistant Minister of State, the Minister of Tourism, the head of Immigrations etc. Now with most of these officials, the Christian radio missionaries had quite a favourable contact & they seemed to genuinely like the group & respect what they were doing, but it was an election year & because they were cracking down on "foreign influence" (& for example only allowing the American Embassy 3 additional long-term visas), they weren't willing to stick their neck out for the group & grant them visas for 50-some adults plus 100 & some dependents! They were even considering seeing the

President of the country, whom it seemed very feasible to arrange an appointment with in discussing it with their contact.

—However, the day came that they got an official "no", that Immigrations would not extend their visas, & this friend & they were both in shock, as they'd really been expecting the Lord to do it. Of course, they'd all been praying desperately that the Lord would make a way for the group to stay in the country in order to continue the radio show, mail ministry, outreach, etc. Shortly after this, their friend suggested, "Well, why don't you just stay here without a visa? After all, they all know who you are & like you, they probably won't do anything to you, they'll just look the other way!" It was a rather radical suggestion, but because they knew that this well-placed contact really knew the ropes & was giving them an honest assessment of the government's "unofficial" views towards their group, they went ahead & tried it, & succeeded in staying without any problems, TTL. In fact, later when some individuals finally left the country, though overstayed by about a year, the official at the airport didn't even glance at their passports but just nonchalantly stamped them on the way out!

Then when it was time for the whole Radio Show mob to leave due to political turmoil, they just gently offered the Immigrations officials a small "gift" of some provisioned pens they had just received from fellow missionaries in Sweden, & these very poorly paid officials were more than happy to look the other way & stamp everyone's passports out of the country without any hassle.—All that to say the Lord had indeed allowed this missionary group "extensions" on their visas for more than a year so they could carry on their ministry, howbeit by a much different means than anticipated!

Another related example involves missionaries in a closed country who had been operating on what turned out to be improper visas for about 4 or 5 years. They all went through a big rigmarole of getting stamps on these loose pieces of paper every six months or a year, & everyone was pretty much aware that these papers could possibly be worthless, & in fact might not hold water with any officials, unless it was a very uninformed police officer on the street! But nevertheless the Lord kept many hundreds of these missionaries in this country for a number of years using these, along with a few financial gifts that kept some dear little Im-

migrations officials living a bit above the sheer poverty level! Miraculously enough, when hundreds of these people had to suddenly leave the country over a course of 3 to 4 months, & needed official exit visas to do so—thereby having to present these rather "unofficial" papers—the Lord miraculously protected them.—Again, this method resulted in many hundreds of dedicated missionaries staying on in that otherwise closed country for an extra 4 to 5 years, reaching countless millions of souls, thank the Lord!

Besides the main visa problem in that country's recent exodus, there were other scattered obstacles to contend with there as well. For example, one missionary with a Spanish passport had lost all his papers several months earlier, & in fact was carrying on without a passport or visa.—If he had filed for a new passport, he would have had to get a new visa, & this of course would have brought a number of legalities into question. Therefore, he decided not to file for the passport any earlier than he needed to, & thus did it just before actually having to leave the country. Thank the Lord, he just went to his Embassy, got a new passport, & with a few gifts at the border, was able to get out without any problem. (D: PTL!)

Another French girl happened to lose her passport, & when issued a new passport through her Embassy, told officials that she had just been in the country a very short time & cited a rather remote entry point into the country as where she had entered, where there was certain to be no record or files (or if there was, they would be in such a confused state of affairs there would be no hopes of ever finding anything!—All of the country's main entry points are computerised.)

When investigating all the possible loopholes as far as the possibilities of helping these missionaries get out should any problems arise, another possibility that came to mind was a more remote border crossing with a nearby country. The Immigrations checkpoint at this place is nothing more than a little adobe-like structure where ox carts stop momentarily, & in fact many times Immigrations officers are having their tea & just wave you through! As it turned out, these missionaries didn't have to use this place, but their head office was keeping it as a bit of an ace in the hole should it have proven necessary, because they could have gone that route through that border should it have proven necessary. The missionaries who would

have used it could then fly to their destinations from the neighboring country if necessary. (D: Amen!)

I realise with all of these different cases that it was only the Lord Who kept these missionaries, & the big question, of course, is where to draw the line in activities such as this. Because once you start looking for loopholes there are usually a lot to be found. I guess the question I'm asking in principle is, should our missionaries continue to keep a model stance as good outstanding Christians who do keep the law, but at the same time, keep an eye open for this whole other angle as a way the Lord might be working in exceptional situations? (D: Amen!—"As deceivers yet true," Josh used to quote!—2Cor.6:8)

Quite a few of the missionaries I've encountered had backgrounds where a little "skirting the law" was more or less second nature, since they were dealing drugs & smuggling stuff before the Lord got ahold of them. Many of them have also operated on the mission fields of Latin America & Asia & even Southern Europe for that matter, where they've learned how "money answereth all things" (Ecc.10:19), & a little gift to the right person in the right place can go a long ways in straightening out some of these red tape situations in their favour. (D: GBT!)

Of course, honesty is the best policy, as you've always taught us, & there are certain Scriptural injunctions to "obey the powers that be" etc., but I was just wondering if there were any thoughts on this subject, especially in light of the quite radical application the Lord gave you in your Letter, "Be Wise As Serpents". (D: Amen!)

I know I may very well be off the track on this, but I just wanted to ask about this angle, if many Christians are perhaps too bound by law in some situations to the detriment of the Lord's Work? (D: The time has come!)

I love you so much! I'm so thankful for all the truth that you've led us into over the years, & continue to do so. (D: TTL!)—Much much love, Paul P.

(Dad: There are plenty of examples in the Old Testament, some of which God Himself commanded!—Actually, most of us are illegal to the System!—We come in as Tourists, do missionary work, ask for donations, sell products, work etc. We could classify those as laws which forbid us to witness, which I've always said we could not obey as they're contrary to God's Laws!—There are probably

oodles of other laws we don't even know we're disobeying!—We've just gotta go ahead & obey God as best we can, try to obey Man's laws if we can, but continue to obey God whatever!—The Disciples did it in the New Testament too!—Went ahead & preached when they were forbidden, broke out of jail with the help of an Angel, constantly broke the Mosaic Laws—even Jesus did it! "Be ye not conformed to this World!" Rom.12:2.—We can't always!—It's impossible!—We try, but we can't!—We just have to do the best we can. "It's better to obey God than Man!" (Acts 5:29, 4:18-20 & 5:42 etc.)—Amen? Tx! GBY!—ILY!—D.)

**"WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN!"**—Acts 5:29.

—Compiled by WS Staff



In Romans 13:1-7, Christians are exhorted to "be subject unto the higher powers", to obey rulers, "for he is the minister of God to thee". 1Pet.2:13 further instructs us to "submit yourselves to every ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors."

How did the early Christians apply this advice? Did they obey the "higher powers" when they were ordered by them to stop preaching the Gospel?—Or later when Roman law demanded that they worship the Caesars as gods, did the early Christians comply? If they had done so, there might be no Christianity today!

There is obviously a condition to "obeying every ordinance": We are commanded to "be subject unto the higher powers and obey rulers" if they are "the ministers of God" and operating

according to God's Will. But if those in power fight the Truth, prohibit witnessing and winning of converts, or even pass laws which restrict our freedom to travel so that we cannot obey Jesus' commandment to "go into all the World," then they are not acting in a capacity of "ministers of God", but are foolishly "found to fight against God". In this case "we ought to obey God rather than Men"!—Acts 5:29,39.

Following is a listing of some outstanding Scriptural examples where God's people had to circumvent or break the laws of Man in order to obey the Law of God, and in fact, were in many instances commanded by God to do so!—"Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come."—1Cor.10:11.

### What is Right in the Sight of God?

When Peter, John and the other disciples were speaking publicly and winning multitudes to the Lord, they were arrested by their bitter religious enemies, thrown in prison, and then brought before the Sanhedrin, the highest religious court in the land. The council threatened them "and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard!'"—Acts 4:1-20.

The Apostles then went out and continued to boldly witness. Some time later they were again brought before the Sanhedrin. The high priest demanded, "'Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine!' Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men!'"—Acts 5:29.

After being beaten and further commanded to stop witnessing, the Apostles were released, "and daily in the Temple and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."—Acts 5:26-42.

### Jerusalem Jailbreak!

In any society, it is completely against the law to secretly enter a prison under the cover of nightfall to help a condemned prisoner make a jailbreak.—But that is exactly what an Angel of God did in Acts 12:1-11!

King Herod arrested Peter and had him bound with two iron chains in an inner cell of the prison, a soldier guarding him on each side. "And behold, the Angel of the Lord came upon him...And his chains fell off his hands. And he saith unto him, 'Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me!' When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the Angel departed from him."

When Peter came to and realised it wasn't a dream, what did he do?—Immediately run back to the prison, wake up the jailors and surrender himself, so as not to be illegally breaking out of jail? No! He went to a house where some disciples were, motioned them to be quiet and told them what had happened. He then departed and went and hid out—on the run from the law—in another place.—Acts.12:17.

And this was not the first time God had sent one of His Angels to pull off a jailbreak. As Acts 5:17-19 says, "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, and were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common prison. But the Angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth."

### Breaking the Law in Persia!

Sometimes laws are framed by our enemies for the express purpose of limiting our religious freedom, witnessing and other activities.

In Dan.6:4-10, Daniel's enemies tricked Darius, the Medo-Persian king, into signing a decree into law which stated that whoever would ask a petition of any god or man during a thirty-day period—except of the king—should be cast into the den of lions. What was Daniel's reaction to this anti-God law? He promptly disobeyed it! "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house ...kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."—Dan.6:10.

Having broken the law, he was thrown into the lion's den, but was miraculously spared by the Angels of God!—A story that makes it clear that it is not only Scriptural and right to break certain of Man's anti-God laws, but that it is even worth risking getting caught for doing so.—Trusting that God will deliver you because of your obedience to Him. This same principle

is clearly illustrated in the following story:

### "Be it Known unto Thee, O King..."

In Daniel Chapter 3, king Nebuchadnezzar erected a giant golden idol 90 feet high and commanded everyone within his realm to bow down and worship it. "Then an herald cried aloud, 'To you it is commanded, O people...that ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up.'" The king threatened that whoever broke his commandment and didn't worship the image was to be thrown into a fiery furnace.

Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego bravely refused to do so. They declared that their God could deliver them out of the fiery furnace, and then added, "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image!"

We know the rest of the story: How Jesus Himself came and personally protected them when they were thrown into the furnace, and delivered them. But even if He hadn't delivered them, they determined that it would still have been worth it to break the law and suffer the consequences rather than to compromise their faith and convictions.

What would you have done? In fact, what will you do in the coming days when the Antichrist is openly revealed as the leader of the government of the World and makes a law that all men on Earth must bow down to his Image and receive his Mark in their right hand or in their forehead?—Rev.13:15-18. Will you meekly "submit to every ordinance of Man", obey that law and be damned (Rev.14:9-11), or will you disobey it—even if it costs you your life—and be blessed by God forever!—Rev. 20:4.

### Secret Return to Pisidian Antioch!

In Acts 13:14, Paul and Barnabus arrived at the city of Antioch in the Roman province of Pisidia (Turkey), and began preaching the Gospel. They gained many converts but also made bitter enemies of the Jews, who "stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabus, and expelled them out of their coasts (borders)."

Paul and Barnabus were deported out of the province of Pisidia by the authorities, "the chief men" of Antioch.—But in Acts 14:20-24, they secretly slipped back in. They "returned again

to Antioch" where they continued to do missionary work secretly. They "preached the Gospel", "taught many", "confirmed the souls of the disciples, exhorting them" and "ordained elders in every church".

### "Mocked of the Wise Men"

And what about Mat.2:1-12, where Herod ordered the Wise Men to "bring him word again" when they had found Jesus?

The Wise Men went to Bethlehem and found Jesus, but "being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."—Mat.2:1-12. Was it wrong for them to deliberately disobey the law, the commandment of the king, and sneakily depart, exit the country, without reporting back?—Obviously not!

There is almost an endless list of Prophets and men of God who, when persecuted, fled the country for another land. It was Jesus' Own explicit advice in Mat.10:23: "When they persecute you in this city,  flee ye into another."

When times were especially dangerous, Jesus prudently fled from one land to another, one legal jurisdiction to another. For example, Mat.4:12 says, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison (by Herod in Peraea), He departed into Galilee." And Mat.14:8-13 says that when Herod beheaded John, that John's disciples "went and told Jesus. When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence (from Galilee) by ship into a desert place apart."—He left Herod's jurisdiction and crossed over the sea of Galilee into the nearby province of Decapolis where Herod had no legal power.

Other examples of Jesus' prudence in avoiding potential "hot spots" where His enemies were out to get Him can be found in: Mk.1:43-45; Jn.11:54; Mk.7:24.

The Apostle Paul was also continually fleeing from his bitter religious enemies, and often had to flee secretly by cover of night: "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him. But their lying in wait was known of Saul (Paul). And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket."—Acts.9:23-25.

In this instance, Paul was not only fleeing religious persecution, but the legal authorities as well—"a fugitive from justice": "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept (guarded) the city of the Damascenes with a gar-