

TWO “TILLS”

Terry Wane Benton

Matthew 5:18 has two “tills.”

“For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matthew 5:18).

The meaning of Matthew 5:18 in giving us two “tills” is this: “*Until heaven and earth pass*” is not speaking of the length of binding nature, but of its certainty of being upheld. In other words, heaven and earth could more readily pass away than any part of the Law and the Prophets until all be fulfilled. The second “*till*” qualifies the first “*till*.” “*Until all is fulfilled*” qualifies the first “*till*.”

What happens to the Law and the Prophets once they are fulfilled? They pass into a different role. They don’t pass out of existence, but they do pass into a different role, that of testifying of Jesus the Christ and telling men of their need for Jesus. They pass from the role of binding law to a role of testimony and faith building. One that testifies does not carry binding authority but does carry the force of a truthful and dependable witness. This is how the New Testament uses the Old Testament. It verifies the truth about Jesus and the truth about moral righteousness.

Jesus did not fulfill and then destroy the testimony of the Old Testament. It still testifies of Jesus, of sin, and of righteousness. But, in fulfilling it, Jesus brought its binding regulations to a close, taking over the rule of the Law and annulling the previous program for a better program in Himself. Not until He fulfilled it would anything change. So, He was not here to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. Filling up what it demanded, He could then move it aside into a testimonial role and replace it with a better covenant. After fulfilling it (Luke 24:44), He could then:

- “*Wipe out the handwriting of requirements*” (Colossians 2:14),
- “*Abolish in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments*” (Ephesians 2:15), and
- “*Annul the former commandment*” (Hebrews 7:18) and become “*a surety of a better covenant*” (22), and “*change the law*” (14) from a fleshly Levitical system (16) to an eternal and spiritual system (7:24; 9:10-15) with better atoning sacrifice, better priesthood, better provisions in Christ.

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have been experienced otherwise!

The treasurer of Ethiopia asked Philip the evangelist, “*What hinders me from being baptized?*” (Acts 8:36). Also, Ananias asked Saul of Tarsus, “*Now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins*” (Acts 22:16). The answer to these questions should never be that one need wait until the sermon is done!

For that matter, putting off salvation until Sunday is also entirely unnecessary. If a soul is convicted any other day of the week, the matter should be addressed without delay. When the jailor of Philippi heard the truth, “*he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized*” (Acts 16:33). Baptism is a matter of serious urgency.

Likewise, a prodigal Christian who is ready to seek the forgiveness of the Lord and the brethren does not need to wait until the invitation is offered to confess his trespasses and request the prayers of the righteous. Before the assembly begins, he can ask for his prayer request to be announced. He can share a note, to be read aloud, in which he admits his fault. There is no reason to wait.

Jesus preached, “*If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift*” (Matthew 5:23-24). The conscience that is burdened before worship ought to be relieved right away. Otherwise, his prayers may be hindered (1st Peter 3:7) and he may approach the Lord’s Supper with difficulty (1st Corinthians 11:29).

The invitation is merely an opportunity extended to those hearers who were touched by the message and need to respond. It is good to offer it, and even better to answer it, but it is merely an expedient means of getting a sinner to repent. Those who know to repent beforehand can, and should, do so.

“It’s the truth I’m after, and the truth never harmed anyone. What harms us is to persist in self-deceit and ignorance.”

– Marcus Aurelius

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard

Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.

Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"Man ought to be ashamed of being proud, seeing that God was humbled for his sake."

– Augustine of Hippo

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7

FEBRUARY 18TH, 2024

THE INVITATION IS AN EXPEDIENT

Bryan Matthew Dockens

When the exhortation concludes, it is immediately followed by an invitation to lost sinners to obey the gospel and to backsliding Christians to be restored to faithfulness. While the congregation sings, those whose hearts were cut (Acts 2:37) by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17), are afforded opportunity to answer that invitation – either confessing faith in the risen Christ (Romans 10:9-10), expressing repentance (Acts 3:19), and being baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), or, for those who have previously done so, but have since reverted into sin, to confess sins (1st John 1:9), express repentance (Acts 8:22), and request the prayers of the brethren (James 5:16). This is a good and godly practice; may it never change.

The foregoing is merely an expedient to affect obedience to the gospel and reconciliation with God. It is not the exclusive occasion when sinners may submit to Christ nor the exclusive occasion when wayward saints may return to the Lord.

If a sinner arrives Sunday morning, convicted she is alienated from the Savior until baptism washes away her sins (Acts 22:16), she need not sit through the majority of the assembly, anxiously awaiting that call to raise her hand or walk to the front of the room. The congregation will gladly delay the assembly to accommodate her surrender to Jesus, and will subsequently enter into worship with greater joy than would – Continued on page 2 –

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