

My Beloved Ones,

In this week's Epistle, the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans, discussing the difference between those who have the Law of Moses, and those who do not. As old pagans, this discussion is very important to them.

St. Paul begins by demonstrating how all are children of God, blessed for those who follow His ways. *"Glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality."* (Romans 2:10-11.) St. Paul, as a follower of Christ understands that *"...the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith."* (Galatians 3:24)

The Apostle understands that it is just as possible for a Gentile to good, as it is for a follower of the Law to commit a sin. *"When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts..."* (Romans 2:14-15) This deep statement brings to mind Jesus's warning to the lawyer who wished to test Him on what our Lord considered to be the Greatest Commandment in the Law: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."* (Matthew 22:37-40) This final sentence, *"...on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"*, shows us that those pagans who had not observed the laws concerning the sacrifices, the dietary commands could still be counted as sons and daughters of God by holding fast to the principles of loving God and loving their neighbor. Everything else supported those two Greatest Commandments.

Our Lord did not come to overturn the Law by emphasizing the universality of these Commandments. For, as He said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill."* (Matthew 5:17) St. Paul explains it perfectly when he says, *"...it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified."* (Romans 2:13)

Christ, opened His arms to all of those who do the will of His Father, and showed the whole world that God does not merely belong to everyone, but that, as beings created in His image and likeness, everyone is capable of reflecting the image of the Creator, not through their beliefs, but by their actions.

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